

MIMOSA

Goshwow!

...It says -

"THINK BLUE,
COUNT TWO,
AND LOOK FOR
A RED SHOE..."

TURN!

gestelner 5000

VRIL VRIL VRIL

Secrets of
the
CORFLUVIANS!

SHUFFMAN ©92



from **Dick and Nicki Lynch**, P.O. Box 1350, Germantown, Maryland 20875, U.S.A.

This twelfth issue of *Mimosa* was published in July 1992, and is available for the inflation-fighting price of two dollars U.S. or equivalent. A letter of comment on this issue will bring you a copy of *Mimosa* 13 at the end of this year or the beginning of next. We also have a continuing need for first-person articles of an anecdotal nature about science fiction fandom and/or things fans do, especially if they are of fan historical interest; publication of same here will keep you on our mailing list permanently. This entire issue is ©1992 by Dick and Nicki Lynch, with individual rights reverting back to contributors after this one-time use. All opinions expressed by contributors are their own.

☐ If this box is checked, we really need to find a letter of comment from you in our postal box to keep you on our mailing list for next issue.

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You will soon be involved in many parties. Dick found that on a slip of paper inside a fortune cookie one evening in mid-February. Looking back, from some four months distance, we can now tell you that the fortune was right. In late February, we travelled to a far-off place, to a long, multi-day party with friends from far and near, to an event purportedly devoted to fanzine publishing but with plenty of emphasis on fan history as well. It was the 1992 Corflu fanzine fans' convention, and we want tell you about it...

It's been over a decade since we were last in Los Angeles. We missed the 1984 Worldcon, which fell right in the middle of our five-year bout with encroaching gafia. Since then, there hadn't been any reason to travel there. So, with the upcoming Corflu there, we were primed and ready.

The trip out to L.A. was pretty innocuous, but the contrast between our starting point and destination reminded us of a scene from *The Wizard of Oz*. Do you remember when Dorothy looks out onto colorful Munchkinland from the drab, black & white interior of her aunt's house? It was almost that dramatic, the difference between Washington, D.C. and Southern California. The mid-Atlantic coast of the U.S. isn't known for pleasant weather in late February; the morning we drove to

Dulles International Airport, the weather was windy and rainy, and cold enough for a heavy jacket. When we arrived in L.A., it was sunny and very warm. While we were waiting for our luggage in the airport, we felt a little silly carrying jackets more suitable for Minnesota; nobody told us that when we boarded the DC-10 at Dulles that we'd be walking through the door into summer!

There was more to do in the Los Angeles area besides go to Corflu, of course. With that in mind, we arranged our travel to arrive in Los Angeles two days before the convention began. Elliott "Elst" Weinstein met us at our hotel soon after we arrived, and we spent that afternoon seeing parts of Los Angeles we'd missed in our previous trip. First stop was downtown L.A., for a quick science fictional tour of the city. We drove past City Hall, which doubled as the *Daily Planet* building in the old *Superman* TV series. (It loses some of its charm without the globe at the top, though.) Next was the Bradbury Building, whose interior was used in the movie *Bladerunner* and the "Demon With a Glass Hand" episode of *The Outer Limits* TV series. (We were somewhat let down to find out that it's actually home to a few agencies of the California state government.) The building across the street from

the Bradbury, which houses a large open-air food market, was festooned with all kinds of marvelous gargoyles and fantasy figures. Dick thought it all reminded him of stories by Harlan Ellison, "...only bigger!"

Big is what you get when you come to Los Angeles. You really need a car there. There's lots of places to see, but they're spread throughout the metro area. For instance, just west of downtown, next to the LaBrea Tar Pits, is the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, which has maybe the world's largest collection of Rodin sculptures, plus a nice collection of northern Renaissance paintings. Farther east, the old part of the city near Olivera Street is set up with Mexican merchants selling all sorts of things from Olde Mexico, at L.A. prices. In nearby Japantown, prices are much better, especially on the colorful ceramics that seem to be a specialty there. Every storefront in Japantown has a large white ceramic cat with its right paw raised in greeting. We saw a sign in one of the stores telling us about the cats: the white cat stands for good business, while the black cat represents good health. Raising the right paw stands for good service, and raising the left is for keeping diseases away. Nicki noticed one store that, instead of a cat, had a sign that read 'Cat Stolen'. Keeping in mind what we had just learned, we did *not* enter...

Nicki did wind up buying a pair of ceramic cats, which now reside next to our Rebel Award plaque on the mantle over our fireplace. But that wasn't even her prime purchasing objective on this trip. For the story on what *was*, it's time to change channels and segue to the continuing story of... ☆ Quest For T-Shirts ☆.

At this point we're forced to admit we're both chronic collectors, though not as bad as we once were. When we moved from Tennessee to Maryland almost four years ago, we had to cut back considerably on belongings that made the trip with us.

Consequently, lots of things found new owners, including Dick's collection of SF digest magazines that extended back to the 1940s, which he very sadly and very reluctantly decided to donate to the South Florida Science Fiction Society as a tax write-off. The things we seem to accumulate now are a little more esoteric. For instance, Dick now collects suspension bridges, state capitals, and U.S. counties. Nicki, on the other hand, likes to visit various college and university campuses to acquire new additions to her ever growing collection of college t-shirts.

That collection has grown considerably in the last few years; it started about 15 years ago when Dick, returning from a business trip and looking for a last-minute gift to bring back, glommed onto a University of Michigan t-shirt in the gift shop of an Ann Arbor motel. The rest, as they say, is history. We haven't counted them lately, but the ever growing number of t-shirts Nicki has completely fills one dresser and is threatening various other clothes storage space.

For our Los Angeles trip, the Hit List included the University of Southern California and Loyola Marymount University, both reasonably near the Corflu hotel. (UCLA was already in the bag from a previous trip, many years earlier.) The USC campus turned out to be your typical congested big-city university, with little to make it very memorable. Marymount, on the other hand, was spectacularly located on a highland southwest of downtown, with a sweeping, panoramic view of the city center. The next time on the evening news you see a journalist giving a story with downtown Los Angeles as his backdrop, he might be using the view from Loyola Marymount. Besides the nice view of the city, there were other sights at Marymount that caught Dick's eye as well. The exceptionally warm weather brought out plenty of string bikinis on coed sunbathers that last day of February. He was still pondering

the incongruity of it all as Nicki led him by the hand back to the rental car.

Even with two full days sightseeing, we didn't get to everything we had planned. No Hollywood Boulevard this trip; there just wasn't time. No Los Angeles Kings hockey game either, even though The Great Western Forum was only a couple miles from our hotel -- their two home games during our trip were on nights we had other activities planned. Even the statues of Rocky and Bullwinkle on Sunset Boulevard would have to wait for another opportunity.

One thing that didn't have to wait, though, was a Thursday night visit to LASFS, the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society. When in Los Angeles, it seems almost obligatory for science fiction fans to visit LASFS. Apparently, the same thought occurred to other fans in from out of town as well; besides us at that meeting were Art Widner, Bill Bowers, Dick and Leah Smith, Len Bailes, and George Flynn -- previous Corflu veterans all. It turns out that LASFS is now only about two years from its *three thousandth* meeting (all consecutive, every Thursday night). Dick noted this to LASFSian Mike Glycer by asking him, "LASFS started the Loscon convention to commemorate its 2,000th meeting. What's going to happen on its 3,000th?" Mike replied, "Gee, I don't know, maybe we'll stop it." Just one more indication that great fannish minds run in circles...

Finally, it was time for Corflu. The convention committee had publicized that vintage 1950s-era fanzine fans would be encouraged to attend this year's convention, and we weren't disappointed. It was an opportunity to rediscover some of fandom's past glories, to find out things that happened a long time ago that made us what we are. Ted White was there, of course, but he goes to every Corflu. Dick had hoped to meet Noreen Shaw, Charles Burbee, Redd Boggs, Andy Young, and

Gregg Calkins, after reading about them in *A Wealth of Fable*, but unfortunately, they didn't show (Burb was in the hospital with a broken hip). No matter, there were still quite a few earlier-era fanzine fans there: Robert Lichtman, Forrest J Ackerman, Bill Rotsler, Dave Rike, Roy Lavender, Bruce Pelz, and Dean Grennell. In particular, Dick had looked forward to meeting Dean Grennell. Back in the 1950s and 1960s, Dean was one of fandom's best photographers, both in quantity and quality, but he was even better known for his fanzine *Grue*, which was one of the best fan publications of the 1950s. It turned out that he'd brought two old fanzines with him for Dick; one of them was an issue of *Grue*, and the other was the front half of maybe the most famous single issue of any fanzine ever published, Joel Nydahl's *Vega* annish from 1953.

For those of you who haven't heard of the *Vega* annish, it's famous for its contents, but even more so for what happened to Nydahl afterwards. That issue of *Vega* was intended to celebrate its first anniversary of publication, and as a result ran to over 100 pages. Nydahl went all-out to get good material for the issue, and succeeded; the table of contents reads like a who's who of 1950s fandom: Walt Willis, Marion Zimmer Bradley, Harlan Ellison, Fred Chappell, Terry Carr, Lynn Hickman, Charles Wells, Juanita Wellons (now Coulson), Bob Tucker, Dean Grennell, Bob Silverberg, Redd Boggs, Bob Bloch, and more. The cover is three-color mimeo with tight registration. It's a truly impressive fan publication, even if we only have the first half of it. As for Nydahl, he spent so much time and money on the issue, he completely burned out and dropped out of sight, never to return. The affliction became known as Nydahl's Disease, otherwise known as *annishia gafiatus*.

Besides *Vega*, many other old fanzines made appearances at this year's Corflu. In fact, Corflu is an ideal place to acquire

fanzines, both new and old. The TAFF/DUFF auction saw quite a few of them change hands. Dick came away with a copy of *Science Fiction Fifty-Yearly*, a fanzine published by Bob Tucker and Bob Bloch in 1957, to mark their combined 50 years of fan activity. A copy of a 1944 postcard-zine, *Fan Newsletter*, brought a sales price of seventeen dollars, maybe an all-time record for a fanzine purchase price when figured on a per-square-inch basis. The *Fanthology '88* fanzine also made its appearance at Corflu, to mixed reviews.

The hotel chosen for Corflu, the Cockatoo Inn, was an older hotel a few miles from the Los Angeles International airport that seemed to be desperately trying to hang on to its dignity in the face of new highrise hotels that now surround the airport. It must have been one of the better places to stay back in the 1950s, from some of the old autographed photos of celebrities hanging on the walls of the restaurant. Now, forty years later, it wasn't exactly run down, but we suspected that many years had passed since the last time any celebrity had stayed there. The hotel's layout was a bit different in that many of the sleeping rooms were in a separate building, across the street from the hotel lobby and restaurant. The unique aspect of this arrangement was that the hotel buildings and parking garage completely surrounded one lone house. Apparently the house's owner, back in the 1950s, had decided not to sell his land to the Cockatoo, and the hotel went in anyway, right around him.

The Cockatoo was chosen for the site of Corflu, we found out, because of another fan convention, the Friends of the English Regency, that was being held concurrently (notables who attended *that* convention included Frank Kelly Freas and Larry Niven). The English character of the hotel's architecture, as well as the afternoon 'tea and crumpets' advertised by hotel publicity, seemed appropriate for English Regency.

The two conventions held only one common event, the banquet Sunday afternoon, which was memorable due to Bill Rotsler drawing cartoons on most of the dinnerware. Quite a bit of it didn't find its way back to the hotel cupboards (as you might expect), which led someone to remark, "Bill Rotsler: the dishwasher's friend."

Apart from the banquet, few fans ate at the hotel restaurant, except for the free continental breakfasts. We found that out pretty early on, after a breakfast we shared with Linda and Ron Bushyager, and George Flynn. It took well over an hour, much of which was spent trying to get the attention of the waiters. This led George to say on the way out of the restaurant, "It wasn't the best breakfast I've ever had, but it was the longest!"

After that, we took advantage of every opportunity to organize dinner and lunch expeditions away from the hotel. One of them introduced us to Peruvian food, which turned out to be not too bad (if you pick a dish not too heavy with cilantro). To our surprise, that dinner came complete with a five-member Peruvian folk music group; to our dismay, they set up their amplifiers about 10 feet in front of our table. Words are really inadequate to describe the ordinarily gentle sound of the panpipes flute boosted to the amplitude of a jet engine. Dick Smith, who was sitting across from Nicki, remarked that we'd better eat fast, because the plates were starting to vibrate right off the table. On the way back to the hotel, we found out that the food must have been more filling than we thought. We had turned in our rental car by then, but were able to squeeze into the back seat of a two-door mini-compact someone else had rented. We didn't have any trouble getting out at the restaurant, but on the return trip Dick got his shoulder and knee wedged into some crevasses in the car while trying to climb out, and couldn't. It took Nicki shoving from behind and Ben Yalow pulling from the out-

side to get him loose. It was definitely not one of Dick's finer moments...

We don't mean this essay to degenerate into an anthology of eating stories, but there was another dinner expedition later on that was even more memorable. It started out innocuously enough, with three carfuls of fans heading out to the Pelican Restaurant in Manhattan Beach for seafood. Mike Glycer had earlier headed off with one carful, while we, Moshe Feder, and Elst Weinstein would follow in Elst's car, leading Art Widner and Dave Rike in Art's two-seater pickup truck. Elst was to lead, since he's an L.A. native, but he wasn't totally familiar with this section of town. So he decided to use the directions and hand-drawn map provided in the convention's restaurant guide.

Elst wasn't too thrilled with the map, because it had been prepared by Rick Foss, a fan and friend of Elst's who was also a travel agent -- Elst knew Rick and that he often oversimplified things like this. However, the restaurant was located on one of the major streets, Highland Avenue, which was on Foss's map. All we had to do was follow El Segundo to Highland, turn down Highland for a few blocks, and we'd be there. What could go wrong? So we started out, with Elst explaining some of the area's history as he was driving, and Art trying to keep up with us. The street we were on, El Segundo, takes its name from a nearby oil refinery (supposedly the *second* one built in the area). We saw it before too long -- it was like a fairy castle, with thousands of little lights vaguely defining its shape. But just then El Segundo dead-ended instead of intersecting with Highland, and the only street available took a sharp turn to the right -- exactly *opposite* the direction we needed to go. This led into a warehouse district, deserted at eight o'clock on a Saturday night. We had to traverse a bunch of narrow little streets with stop signs at the end of every

block to find our way back to a main thoroughfare.

Elst was getting annoyed, since it was pretty certain we now wouldn't get to the restaurant until well past our reservation time. His car was a fairly high-powered Acura, and just about every block on the way out he would roar up to a stop sign and utter some epithet about Foss, then take off again. It went like this: Vrooooo! Screech! "Foss is going to have a lot of explaining to do about this!" Vrooooo! Screech! "Death to Foss!" Vrooooo! Screech! "I'll kill him!" The mythical corner of Highland and El Segundo may go down into fannish lore as the Rick Foss Memorial Intersection. It was all very entertaining to Art and Dave, desperately trying to keep up with us, who had figured out early on that we'd gotten lost.

After we finally arrived at the restaurant, a different dilemma presented itself -- where to park? Nothing was available on streets near the restaurant, and the parking lot across the street was full. We must have coasted up and down streets for five minutes before Elst, in desperation, was able to find us a parking place in a way we *still* don't believe. It happened like this:

Those of you who know Elst are probably aware that he has been involved with more than his share of fan hoax happenings through the years. One of them is/was APA-H, the late and unlamented hoax/humor apa; another is the Church of Herbangelism. The church's chief deity, Herbie, is the same character who had his own comic book in the 1960s and whose trademark lollipops possessed phenomenal powers as tools and weapons. Anyway, just as we were starting to lose hope of finding a parking place anywhere in the area code, Elst said that, although it shouldn't be done too often, once in a while if you invoke Herbie's name, a parking spot will free up for you. Within five seconds a car pulled out from the curb, leaving an open spot right in front of the restaurant, and

we were in it. It was unbelievable; it was almost enough to make converts of us...



The restaurant, it turned out, wasn't nearly full that night, and we had no trouble getting seated. The whole back area of the restaurant became sort of a mini-convention, because there must have been 25 fans there that night. Festivities went on for a couple of hours. As we were leaving, some of us decided that, since it was a beautiful moonlit night, we'd walk down the hill to the Pacific Ocean which was just a short distance away.

When the street leveled off, it dead-ended at a small parking lot containing one lonely booted car. At the entrance to the lot, a sign attracted our attention -- a whale inside a red circle with a diagonal red slash running through the circle. We surmised this must mean 'No Harpooning'. (Another sign declared that cars were *not* allowed to park overnight, which seemed to contradict the booted car.) We carefully made our way on the sand down to where impressive-size waves (to we East Coasters, at least) were rolling in.

Geri Sullivan, who was with our group, seemed excited by the spectacle of it all; we don't imagine she sees very many breakers that big up in Minnesota. Dick, on the other hand, was urging caution at getting too close to the water's edge -- these waves were a *lot* more powerful than what we'd seen from the Atlantic at last year's Ditto convention in Virginia Beach. Dick said later he had a momentary vision

of Geri getting carried out to sea by the undertow, and having to send out her convention report in a series of postcards from Easter Island. It turned out that the Pacific was trickier than the Atlantic, too -- Moshe Feder slipped and got his pants leg wet when he didn't scramble away quite fast enough. A big wave had snuck up on him when he turned his back to the ocean.

By that time, it was getting pretty late, and we'd had enough excitement, if not entertainment, for one day. But on the way back to the hotel, we experienced a 'California Moment', one of those times you realize you can be nowhere else but in Los Angeles.

Elst had wisely decided to take an alternate route back, one that didn't depend on following Foss's map, but that did put us on a wide street with a long series of traffic lights. As we were stopped at one of them, a car in the lane next to us honked at another car in front of it, and both drivers rolled down their windows. Now, we don't know what happens where you live, but where we've lived, we've seen people start fighting when this sort of thing happens. However, this was Southern California:

"Hey, Dave, your car phone isn't on!" the guy in the rear car yelled.

'Dave' looked in his car for a moment, then yelled back, "Yes, it is!"

"I've been trying to call you, and all I get is a busy signal!" Evidently, 'Dave' had his name and what looked like a telephone number posted in his back window, and the driver of the second car, who also had a cellular phone, had noticed it.

"What number are you trying?" said 'Dave'. And the guy behind him shouted a string of numbers. The light was still red.

"You've got the wrong number!" 'Dave' yelled, and recited the correct one. The signal turned green.

Meanwhile, we'd all been laughing hysterically at this. Then Elst said, "Let's call Dave!"

Elst's idea was to call 'Dave' before the other driver could, so the guy would *still* get a busy signal. It took him several traffic signals to convince us this was indeed a good idea, and we finally gave in. "OK, what was the number?"

By that time, no one remembered, but just then we reached another red light, and 'Dave' was still in the lane next to us. So Elst powered down the passenger-side window of his car, and yelled, "Hey, Dave! What was that number again?"

'Dave', at long last, suddenly noticed us, and gave us an embarrassed half-wave and smile as we tried to keep from dissolving completely into laughter. When the signal turned green, 'Dave' turned right and disappeared into the night. We managed to make it back to the hotel without further incident.



As the convention started to wind down, we had a chance to think back over the weekend, to consider just why we look forward so much each year to this particular get-together. Perhaps the strength of the convention is the people, from many different fan eras, who come from near and far to be there. As we said earlier, it's the people who attend that provide a great opportunity to rediscover things that happened in different times (and different places) that made us what we are today.

This year, Arnie and Joyce Katz from Las Vegas finally made it to a Corflu. They brought along several fans who seem genuinely interested in this form of fan activity, and we look forward to receiving fanzines from them. There were only two non-North American fans present -- Eric Lindsay from Australia and Nigel Rowe from New Zealand, England, and probably places in-between. There were also people there that we seem to see at almost every Corflu -- Don Fitch, Andy Hooper, Pat Virzi, Richard Brandt, Suzle Tompkins, and Jerry Kaufman among them. They didn't find their way into other parts of this convention report, but we appreciated their company during the weekend just as much.

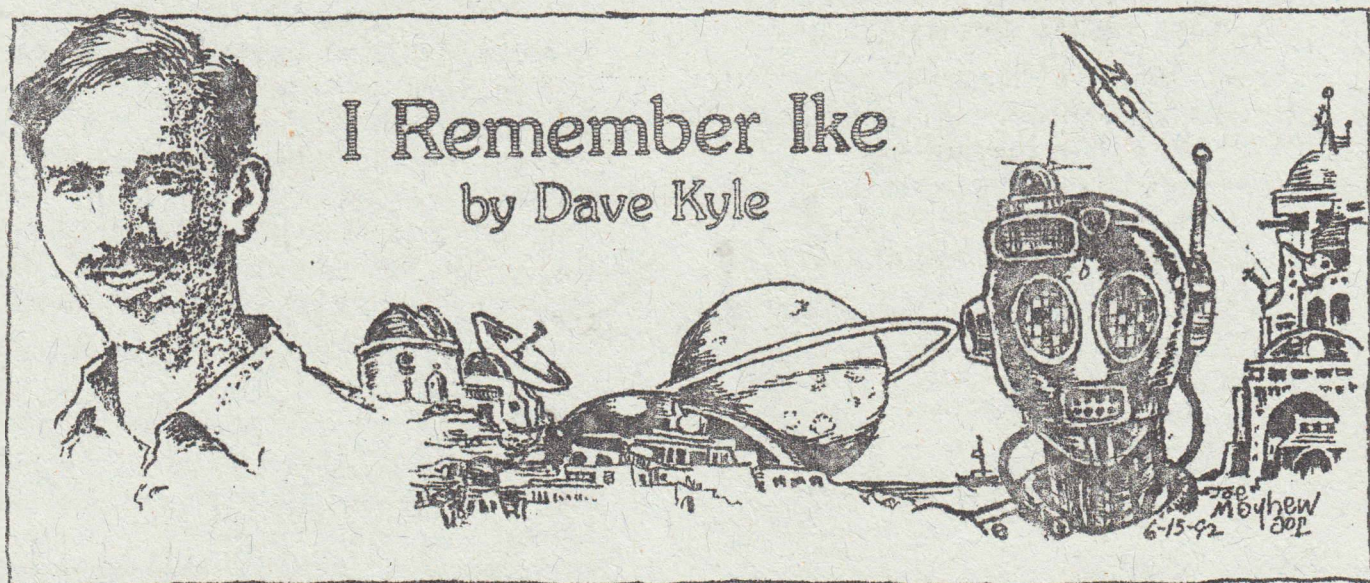
The last night of the Corflu always seems to be the best. The convention had ended, and there were about twenty hangers-on in the con suite, trying to use up the last of the drinks and munchies. Nobody seemed to want it to end. As the hours wore on, more and more people said their good-byes, wanting to get some sleep before early airplane flights the next day. Every time the group got smaller, the energy level seemed to pick up slightly, as if everybody was trying to make up for the loss. Things were still going strong when we left, but on the way out, everyone came up to us and wished us well. The last person we saw on the way out was Geri Sullivan, who grabbed our hands for just a second as she said, "It's been fun, hasn't it?"

And we said, "Yes, it has. Let's do it all over again next year."

Corflu 10 will be held the weekend of May 21-23, 1993, at the Inn on the Park in Madison, Wisconsin. Attending memberships (including the Sunday banquet) are currently \$35.00, from SF³, P.O. Box 1624, Madison, Wisconsin 53701-1624.

☆ See You There! ☆

☞ For those who keep track of such things, the 'roots' of science fiction fandom extend at least as far back as the 1930s, when the first fanzines appeared and the first science fiction conventions were held. Things that happened back then have influenced the fandom of today, and fandom back then was often a path to a successful career as a writer or editor. Maybe the most famous and successful fan-turned-writer from that era was Isaac Asimov, who even late in his life would still occasionally turn up at a convention. The following article is an anecdotal and amusing remembrance of him.



I have lost a friend. When Isaac Asimov died in early April, the science fiction world of fan and pro alike also lost a friend.

He was quite a guy. I knew him from our teen-age years of the Futurians in the late 1930s and he was, as for many in and out of First Fandom, a huge, important part of our science fiction fannish lives. In those early days, he was known affectionately as "Ike." In later times, however, he grew to dislike the appellation 'Ike' and I didn't use it for twenty or thirty years. But a half century ago has drifted back into my mind, and that's why, lovingly, I have entitled this piece as I have.

On April 22, a memorial service was held in the auditorium of the Society for Ethical Culture, on Central Park West in New York City, around the corner from where he lived. Several relatives and friends spoke, and there were probably four hundred persons present to pay homage. The atmosphere was respectful, not gloomy, and the

morning was filled with happy stories of his life. As Janet, his wife, said, "He was a joyous man. Please remember him that way."

Harlan Ellison was there. Some of the high moments of convention history were the public encounters between Harlan and Isaac. The remarks would flow fast and thick, and the audience was enthralled with their performance. Those occasions were the best attended and most memorable of all the con programming of the weekend. That Harlan should be one of the speakers at the memorial service was exactly right. And it was gracious of him, evolving from fan to pro like us older guys, to specifically single out Sam Moskowitz and me as knowing Isaac even longer than Harlan himself.

Martin Harry Greenberg (the "good" Marty Greenberg) was also at the memorial service. Marty Harry told the gathering, "He worked alone. Absolutely." According to Harry, Isaac did his own typing, personally answered his mail, did his own marketing

and business. He tried to answer all his fan mail. He received a lot of fan mail, but he claimed there were only three letters he kept: from Dwight D. Eisenhower, Orson Welles, and Tommy Smothers.

How he managed to generate so much material of such high quality is almost unimaginable, unbelievable to me. Almost unbelievable except for the obvious reason: Isaac was a tireless worker. He was proud that he could type 90 words a minute. And he didn't believe in re-writing. One revision would be enough, after that it was a waste of time when he could be doing something new.

When preparing to write a book, Isaac was known to spread papers and notes and three-by-five cards out on the floor of his home and, stripped for action in his underwear, do the necessary sorting. 'Why not use a computer?' he was asked. Why? -- because he loved the chore. As Marty Harry Greenberg says, "He had enormous stamina. Writing was as natural to him as breathing. It was just pure joy."

"Writing is my only interest," was Isaac's boast. "Even speaking is an interruption." That, in itself, is remarkable. He was the best of speakers. Only Bob Bloch and Harlan Ellison approach his perfection as an entertaining performer. But even Bob could not compete with the fast thinking, extemporaneous display of verbal fireworks which Isaac could produce. Bob Bloch admits to his need for a long and difficult preparation for his guest appearances and toastmaster responsibilities. Isaac's writings are there in various forms for us to enjoy at our leisure. But gone forever is the master public speaker which he was. Those who heard him know how exceptional he was and know how irreplaceable he will be at sf affairs. One fan who heard him talk at a Philcon not so long ago admired how organized his off-the-cuff remarks were: "Immensely entertaining, suitable for publication without any need for change or editing."

I was proud to have published his first book, *I, Robot*, the marvelous short story collection, in 1950. He stated that *Pebble in the Sky*, published in 1950 by Doubleday was actually "...my second book!" That was technically correct by 'x' weeks -- it took the smaller Gnome Press company (just "the original" Marty Greenberg and me) longer to get *I, Robot* manufactured -- as we did start first. However, *I, Robot* is the more famous of the two, and his inscription "For Dave Kyle, who made up for this lousy title with his clever designs. Isaac Asimov. 12/2/50" was extravagant but delicious flattery. He came down from Boston on the day we Gnomes were putting jackets on the books. The three of us then went to his first autographing party, probably at Steve Takac's book store, where Isaac remembered that "...it was not exactly an exuberant success. About ten people bought books and I autographed them." Gnome brought out *Foundation* the following year.

Isaac Asimov's memory was legendary, and the notations in his lifelong diaries were copious. Stanley Asimov wrote a piece on the occasion of his brother's April 22 memorial service, which was published in *Newsday* as "A Man Who Couldn't Forget." He said that people "...frequently asked me how Isaac had learned everything that he wrote about. I replied that my brother had a photographic memory. He could remember everything that he had ever heard or read. When ordinary people had a memory problem, it was because they couldn't remember something. Isaac said he had a forgettery problem. He couldn't forget."

I recall the day around 1965 I visited him in his upstairs writing room at his home just outside of Boston. The room was not large, but it had the essential elements, the big powerful typewriter and the shelves of books. In fact, the shelves ran around most of the room, about four feet in height, and contained, for the most part, copies of the scores upon scores of books he had written, representing editions in many languages,

from scores of countries. The room was cheerful and uncluttered with an attractive wallpaper with a rocketship motif. Gertrude, his first wife, had found the design, offered as something for a child's room, and had chosen it as an appropriate pattern for her husband. Isaac was proud of all those books of his. He handed me *The Greeks*, his most recent one, handsomely produced, and was pleased to point out that for him it was unusual. "Isaac," I said, "Why the history of Greece?" "Because," he said, "I like the period." Then he told me of how he had taken the completed manuscript to New York to his publisher. The unprepared editor was taken aback, and asked and received the same answer I had. "Of course, Isaac," the editor said, "We will publish it, as we will any book by you, and we will do a fine job. But please, Isaac, tell us beforehand what you plan." The editor wanted no more strange surprises. This anecdote perfectly illustrates the way Isaac Asimov approached his profession. He wrote what he wanted to write. And invariably his works were published, all with varying degrees of success. One big regret that his longtime friends had was that he virtually abandoned the field of science fiction for so much of his writing life.

However, there was something else besides his nearly infallible memory, besides that belief that he was a naturally living storehouse of knowledge. It was his dedication to keeping diaries. As he wrote, "With the new year of 1938, a turning point came in my personal life that might have seemed of the most trivial character. I started a diary...still going on today, and dozens of annual diaries stand side by side on my shelf like good and faithful soldiers... They are a series of reference books for me... The worth of the diary, however, is that it instantly proves that my own memory, excellent though it is and inordinately proud of it though I am, is not to be relied on in all respects."

A personal example of this imprecision is the date he gives, in his autobiography, as

to when we first met. Isaac says that after the first worldcon on July 2, there was a Futurian meeting on July 4, 1939 -- "...a chance for the exiles to have a microconvention of their own. I met David A. Kyle for the first time at that meeting." Actually, we already knew each other, but I had been working on my family's newspapers in Monticello, New York, in 1937-38, away at the University of Alabama in 1938-39, and therefore was only occasionally a regular at Futurian get-togethers, and missed seeing him then. The teen-age Isaac admittedly was so overwhelmed by the 'celebrities' present on that first Nycon day that, like all us youths, he was too excited to recall so many of the minor attendees like myself. Isaac on that Sunday, July 2, had been allowed to filter through the organizers' 'blockade' of the Futurians who were banned from attending the con on the grounds of being trouble-makers. Isaac considered himself part of the Futurian gang, but did not believe himself to be an official 'member'. The organizers were not unaware of his sympathies, but they couldn't exclude all the 'opposition' fans, so only the arbitrarily-labeled 'ringleaders' were banned. Later in the day, he found that as a newly-published author (especially a Campbell author as of the July issue of *Astounding*) he himself was considered a professional celebrity of sorts rather than just a prominent fan.

One recollection I won't take issue with is his description of the "...very pretty twenty-five year old girl named Ruth Landis" at her first convention. He said, "She looked, to my dazzled eyes, exactly like Grace Kelly." How he spirited her off from me on that first day has been told in my article "Sex in Fandom" {{ ed. note: in *Mimosa* 10 }}, but strange to say (or perhaps not strange to say), he reported that Dave "...was completely helpless during the convention" and didn't "...manage to grab Ruth [until] after the convention," and "...Dave Kyle had the last laugh, however... eventually he married her."

A most enjoyable time in my life connected with Isaac was the time in 1974 when he visited England -- almost at the exact moment I had a brush with death. While he was sailing across the Atlantic (don't forget, he disliked travel, absolutely refused to set foot in an airplane and had only lately come to accept high seas shipping). I was undergoing an emergency appendectomy (the British have a different name for it, but I forget what it is). Therefore for many days during which he wandered around the U.K. I fretted because I couldn't assist at being his host. Finally came the evening of June 12th when the science fiction crowd would gather at The Globe pub in central London. As promised, Isaac showed up and filled the place with excitement. That was my first time out, recuperating from my operation. How lucky I felt myself to be. So did Ruth, my wife, who Isaac embraced with as much enthusiasm as he had shown when she still was a neo-fan at the 1955 Clevention. He felt the atmosphere was that "...of an impromptu convention." The following Friday night was his scheduled appearance at Commonwealth Hall in London where he had been scheduled for an address to Mensa, the high-IQ group. The joy of the moment was not only that I was allowed to attend, hobbled as I was, but that Arthur C. Clarke, who happened to be in the country, was there and made the introduction.

I've praised Bob Bloch for his witty humor and Harlan Ellison for his sharp tongue and wit when matched with Isaac, but a meeting of the titans, Asimov and Clarke, was an exhilarating event of flashing lightning and rolling thunder. Then too, besides all my British friends and unexpected Americans like Jay Kay Klein, it was like a dry and sedate Globe gathering. Best of all, I met Mother Clarke for the first time and Fred, Arthur's brother, who has become a very dear friend.

Arthur started off by saying he wouldn't "...waste any time *introducing* Isaac Asimov. That would be as pointless as introducing the

equator, which, indeed, he's coming to resemble more and more closely." He referred to Isaac as "...an ecological catastrophe. Have you ever thought of the entire forests this man has destroyed for woodpulp? All those beautiful trees turned into Asimov books." He ended his remarks by saying, "The rumour that there is a certain rivalry between us should have been put to rest, once and for all, in my recent *Report on Planet Three*. For those of you foolish enough not to have obtained that small masterpiece, the dedication reads: IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE CLARKE-ASIMOV TREATY, THE SECOND-BEST SCIENCE WRITER DEDICATES THIS BOOK TO THE SECOND-BEST SCIENCE-FICTION WRITER." Isaac, in return, revealed "...what kind of guy Arthur is... When he saw I was perfectly at ease [on the ship from which they saw the previous year's eclipse] and had overcome my fear of traveling and was standing there with nothing between myself and the sea but some thin steel, he said, 'Isaac, at great expense I have persuaded the captain of this ship to show *The Poseidon Adventure*'. But let us talk about science fiction, which, after all, is what we both do -- I because I am a great writer, and Arthur because he is a stubborn writer."

There's hardly any argument in science fiction circles that the three finest contemporary science fiction authors are Isaac Asimov, Robert A. Heinlein, and Arthur C. Clarke. Sometimes Ray Bradbury's name is coupled with them, but, as more of a poet and fantasy writer, not often. Most thrilling and satisfying to me is the fact that all four of them were all genuine, active science fiction fans. All except Bradbury have won Hugo and Nebula awards, all have been Guests of Honor at World Science Fiction Conventions, and all were or are extremely popular with fans, not only as writers, but as warm-hearted, generous, wise, witty, and thoughtful human beings. Fandom is proud of them. It was the relationship of Clarke and Asimov which was the most remarkable in the special field of sf. They were the greatest of spirited

rivals, full of admiration for each other and effervescent with delightful humor. On many occasions I enjoyed Isaac as a mixture of scholar and comic. Once he kept me wide awake with his entertaining chatter while others slept as I drove a carload of us through the Pennsylvania night back to New York from the Midwestcon in Ohio. I had a sampling of the repartee between him and Al Capp, whom I had chosen as a special banquet guest at the 1956 Newyorcon (Nycon II) which I chaired. They drove back together (with Hal Clement Stubbs) to Boston -- oh, how I wish my ears could have gone along!

Asimov could command large fees for his speaking engagements, yet in later years he did relatively few of them. Despite the gregarious generosity he displayed with his time and advice, some considered him parsimonious when it came to money. And, as well organized as his life was, he was very much a stickler for detail. Some different examples will illustrate the point. When he was issued a check for a royalty payment which was in round numbers, leaving off twelve cents, he complained: "I don't want any more money than I earn," he explained, "but I don't want a penny less." One time Forry Ackerman, as an agent and with tongue-in-cheek, sent him a pro-rated payment check, plus -- to be exact -- a half-cent postage stamp.

Here's the best story of all: After several years when he had accumulated royalties, he was owed a great deal by Gnome Press. He went to New York with a strict admonition from his then wife Gertrude to collect what Marty Greenberg (Gnome's treasurer) owed him. She indicated that he had better come back with a payment. Isaac showed up at the Gnome office. Marty confided to him that the latest shipment of books was being held up because of an unpaid bill and that if the bill could be paid the books would be released, the orders would be filled, and cash would flow again so royalties could be paid. Sly Marty could touch the right buttons. Isaac went back to Boston without any royalty payment. He had a difficult time keeping

Gertrude from knowing that he had, instead of collecting from Marty, actually lent him some money.

A role which Isaac liked to play was that of "The Sensuous Dirty Old Man," an actual tongue-in-cheek title of one of his books. In keeping with his role, there was always the threat of an Asimov pinch on some resilient portion of a female anatomy. My daughter Kerry at Nebula Awards banquets was always prepared for evasive action. A young woman, Melanie Donovan, who had been raised as a neighbor of mine outside Potsdam, New York, thought Isaac was charming just on the telephone. She had gone to the big city to be an editor of children's books. Her phone discussions with him on a proposed project were sprinkled with spur-of-the-moment limericks especially for her. Ribald, of course. (His *Lecherous Limericks* and its companion books are legendary.) Later, when they met at an ABA convention and she introduced herself, she received the official Asimov seal of friendship -- a strategic pinch. Although he played this role, it was well-known that whereas he could be the aggressor, in earlier days on many occasions when he found himself a victim, the hunted instead of the hunter, he would literally flee. One time Judy Merrill cornered him, called his bluff, and I will always remember how near terror he seemed to be.

For a futuristic and science writer, he had a strange complex. He hated to fly -- in fact, he couldn't fly. He had "profound acrophobia" -- fear of heights. His self-limiting use of modern transportation was a thing he shared in common with Ray Bradbury, who was even worse with automobiles. Now I myself, a veteran Air Force retiree, shunned air travel after World War II for a long time because it was scary. Heights still make me uneasy. That's why I was impressed by a remarkable change in him after he and Janet moved into their Manhattan high-rise apartment. Their place was big and with many large windows giving a grand view of Central Park looking east. Isaac was very pleased

with this panoramic view. To show it off, he opened a door and had me step outside. We were on a flimsy, so it seemed to me, fire escape platform, all slatted steel and minimal metal railings. I moved back quickly in secret horror. "Isaac," I said, "It's like living in an airplane with a porch! How can you stand it?" He was completely blasé about my comment -- I don't remember any response. I was thoroughly surprised and have thought about that moment and his sky-high apartment ever since.

One day when I was visiting in Isaac's apartment, the telephone rang. I didn't listen to the conversation, but when he hung up, he turned to me and with great glee said, "I have just agreed to sell my *Foundation* series rights for three-quarters of a million dollars!" He smiled, satisfaction written all over his face. "That Marty Greenberg!" he chortled, adding an unfavorable comment. "If he had treated me right... He could have shared. Now he gets nothing." I don't remember the exact words, but I do remember the idea expressed. I was dumfounded. Almost a million dollars! Gnome Press had originally published the *Foundation* trilogy in hard covers -- Gnome had scored again in publishing history, but... "Isaac," I said gently, "Remember, I was the other half of Gnome." It didn't seem to register -- his moment was so exciting, so satisfying that he paid no attention to my one feeble, spontaneous, half-protesting comment. Isaac has gone on record with his thoughts: "Sometimes I stop to think of the money Marty could have made if he had made a real attempt to sell [the rights], and had given me regular statements and paid me on time, so that I would write still more books for him. Other authors got their books away from him eventually, and almost each one of those books were classics in the field. Marty had been sitting on a gold mine and had not been aware of it. He went for the short-term pin money." Oh, my! I sometimes stop to think of the money I could have made, too, if I had paid attention to Marty's management while I was

away up near Canada developing my radio stations. I never expected the *Foundation* series to become the universal success it has become, obviously. The original dust jacket, an attempt to capture the sweep of his epic tale, was one of my first published artworks since the days of my black-and-white illustrations for the old pulp sf magazines in the early 1940s.

That the *Foundation* series should, after so many years, bring Isaac his first Hugo was certainly fitting. He was never more proud than when he got that achievement award. He had been a fixture at sf cons for years, and during those times he had often fondled the rocketship trophies and passed them out to the winners. From time to time he would remark, with characteristic good humor, on the frustration of the moment. I remember his good-natured banter with Arthur C. Clarke when Clarke's story "The Star" won the Hugo at the 1956 Newyorcon. That day ten years later, in 1966, when he actually got one to take home, he bubbled over with pleasure: "A special Hugo for the best all-time series, *Foundation*."

Isaac's final words, of the dozens of millions of words he wrote, are simple and direct: "To my Gentle Readers who have treated me with love for over thirty years, I must say farewell... It has always been my ambition to die in harness with my head face down on a keyboard and my nose caught between two of the keys, but that's not the way it worked out... I have had a long and happy life and I have no complaints about the ending, thereof, and so farewell -- farewell."

Already I miss him very much. ♦♦



☞ We suppose that just about every science fiction fan has been asked at one time or another just what it was that attracted him or her to science fiction in the first place. For us, it was the so-called 'sense of wonder' that's characteristic of well-written science fiction. From there, it was just a short step to attend a convention in hopes of meeting a favorite author, and before we could stop to catch our breath, we were publishing a fanzine. In other places and much earlier times, such as pre-war Great Britain, fandom wasn't yet widespread enough to be easily discovered, but that original 'sense of wonder' influence still existed. The following article is an example of this...



Among the earliest magazines to come my way, were copies of Gernsback's *Every-day Science and Mechanics*, which extolled the latest inventions be they real or products of Hugo's fevered brain.

There was also a speculations spot telling you just what to invent of you wanted to become a millionaire. One illustration for a money-maker showed a whole town going up in flames with just one house standing untouched amidst the inferno. It was coated with fireproof paint! Hugo pointed out such stuff didn't exist, but anyone inventing it could write their own check. Naturally, I had a bash, but I'm afraid my mixtures of water, dirt, old paint, salt, sugar, vinegar, and so on failed the trial 'houses' I made from cardboard boxes. I never did become a millionaire.

The January 1924 issue bore the headline, "\$12,000 IN GOLD OFFERED AS

PRIZES!" but the small print inside, revealed that this was broken down over a year into twelve monthly installments of \$1,000 each. This sum was further subdivided into progressively smaller 'prizes' of \$100, \$50, and on down, for ideas, articles and photographs. All of which meant Hugo was simply filling his magazine for peanuts.

The cover illustration depicted a buxom female tootling merrily along on a bicycle which picked up its power from an underground cable. This was 'soon to be tried in France,' a typical Gernsbackian ploy whereby his more outrageous ideas were always being developed as far away as possible, usually in darkest Europe where none of his readers were likely to be spending the weekend.

Then there was a display of the winning ideas in a toy-designing competition. Believe it or not, but the first prize of \$5.00 (NOT

\$12,000 in gold), was for a toy roundabout powered by cockroaches hidden in its base!

"Latest Patents" showed us what inventors had in store. This depicted a winged auto. It was claimed that this idea would not only reduce tyre wear, but allow the vehicle to leap over an oncoming car to avoid a head-on prang. I often wondered what would happen if two such cars met. Another bright idea was for a shoe-salesman's footstool equipped with a built-in air conditioner to waft away pongs from customer's feet.

Gernsback also proposed a 'loud hailer' to be mounted atop skyscrapers. Called 'The Municipal Announcer,' it was to broadcast items of civic or national importance, along with details of robberies, accidents, or murder. All this fascinating information would be heard 'up to five miles away.' Presumably the people who were to live and work in these buildings would be recruited from the ranks of the stone deaf. Making matters worse, Gernsback's design also called for aircraft landing platforms on the lower decks to add to the racket.

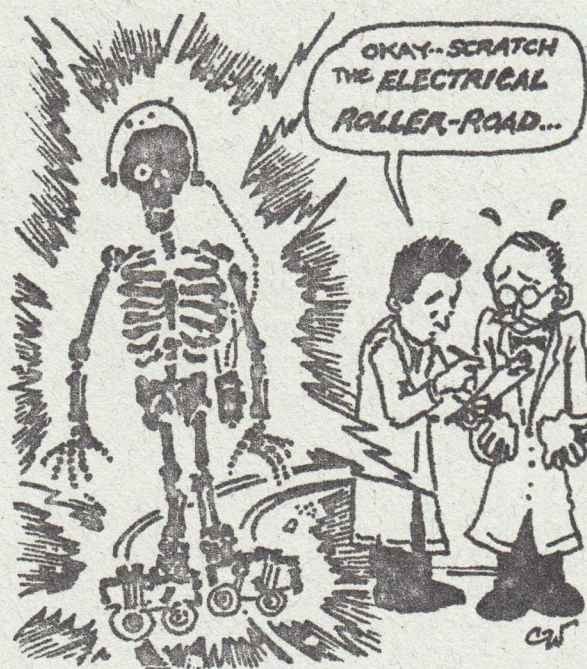
One device which foreshadowed today's Tachygraph, was a gadget 'of German manufacture.' Fastened to your car, it would immediately show if your chauffeur was taking illicit joy rides in your absence.

Even salvaging sunken ships was not beyond Hugo's inventiveness. This was to be done by constructing a giant floating refrigerator, moving it into place, then sinking it down to surround the wreck. Turn on the juice, freeze the derelict into a block of ice, and LO! Since ice floats on water, up would come the giant ice-cube bringing the wreck to the surface. Ah, the wonders of science.

By the thirties, *Modern Mechanix* and *Mechanics Illustrated* were more sophisticated versions in the science and technology field. Covers still supplied the stimulus to buying them with such weird ideas as, "Uncle Sam's Flying Tank." We were also told to expect such wonders as... "A Mid-Ocean Aerodrome," "Hydrofoil Liners To Cross Atlantic At 100mph!", and "A Flying Car In

Your Garage." Inside the mag, brief articles would waffle about the past history of such ideas (in fiction). Then came the usual phrase, "a German inventor has proposed..." I suspect whoever he proposed to must have turned him down.

Other fascinating articles would tell you how to build a hunting cabin in your back yard, turn an oil tank into a sunken swimming pool, or make a saxophone out of an old bicycle. Such ideas were way outside the experience and lifestyle of a 12-year-old. One tempting perennial was a soap-box car powered by an old washing machine motor. Washing machines hadn't penetrated to Sheffield in those days, let alone old ones. Our washing was done in a galvanized iron tub with the aid of a wooden plunger, scrubbing board and blue-bag. Hot water had to be heated over the kitchen fire.



If washing machines were unheard of, then "How To Service Your Refrigerator" dealt with artifacts from another planet. We kept our food cold on a stone slab down in the unlit cellar, alongside the sticks and coal. Despite such drawbacks, the magazines had enough interest to keep me coming back for more.

I read such tasty news items as, "British Police Try Out Speed King's Invention." This told of Sir Malcolm Campbell's plan to enable police cars to catch escaping bandits by means of a long steel pole fitted to the front of the police car. On the end was a grapnel. The police driver had to catch up to the bandit, his partner would manoeuvre the grapnel on to its back bumper, whereupon gentle braking would bring both vehicles to a halt. I don't know where the pole was stored when not in use, or what happened if the pursued vehicle braked suddenly. I fancy a lariat or king-sized butterfly net might work equally well...

Other wacky inventions were dreamed up by people who must have had Rube Goldberg in their family tree. One gadget resembled an overwide and elastic-less catapult. This held your corn-on-the-cob for easy eating. Another character designed a personal air-conditioning system for people walking around on hot days. Small bellows were built into the soles of his shoes. From there, rubber pipes led up inside his clothes to finish in his hat. The simple act of walking circulated cool air inside clothes and head-gear. Even crazier was the hat resembling a Mexican sombrero. If rain started, the pulling of a rip-cord would release a rain-proof shroud from inside its brim. Under development was a fireproof version to protect anyone daft enough to be caught in an inferno. For those who went around falling off ships, bridges, or into rivers, there was an inflatable rubber undervest.

"Lathe Hints and Tips" illustrated weird devices designed to help readers wreak mayhem on innocent chunks of metal. I had never seen a lathe, router, drill-press, or other such esoteric machinery, but according to the magazines, 'my shop' was not complete without them. In my innocence I wondered what they were on about. The only shops I knew were the local ones selling beer by the jugful as well as cheese, food, paraffin, and firewood. Years later I learned that 'shop' meant 'workshop.' One lives and learns.

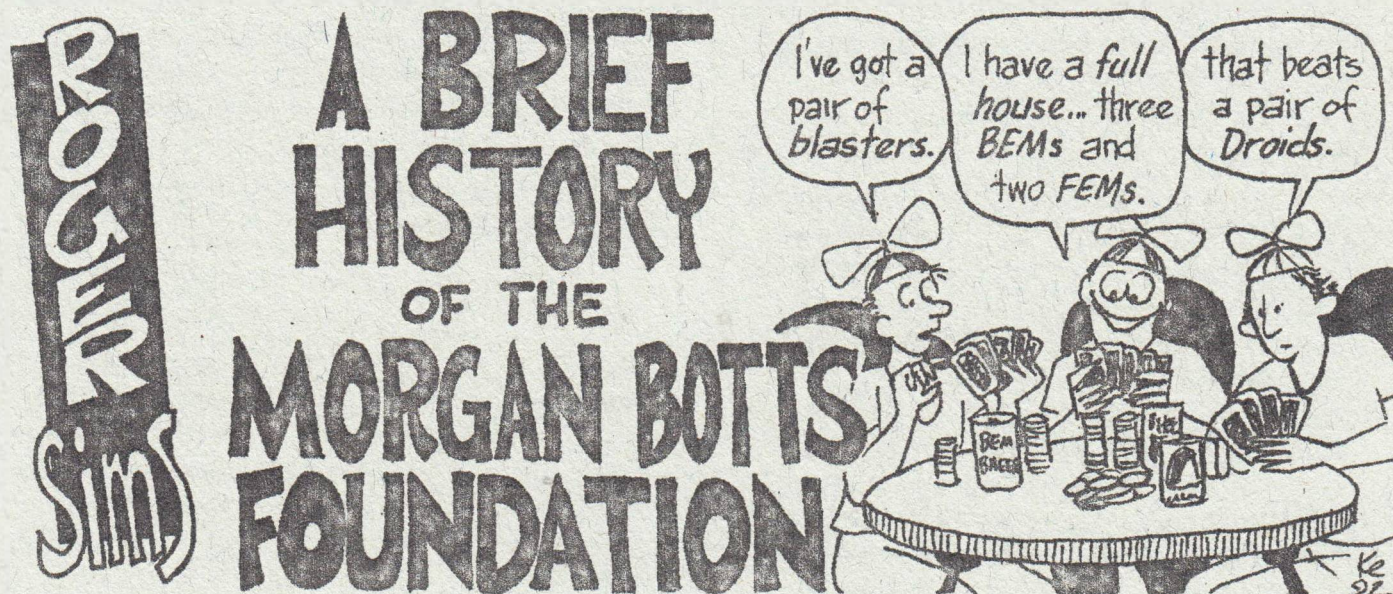
Despite such cultural barriers, I drooled over the magazines and taking my inspiration from the D.I.Y. projects, I made weirdly shaped 'ashtrays' with lethally sharp edges, by cutting bits of tinfoil from old cans. Then there was my crossbow, scaled down in size (and considerably down in power) from the plans for a full-size deer-hunting version. Unlike Britain, in the USA citizens are allowed to hunt, shoot, fish, or pop off lethal weaponry in all directions. My crossbow shot a six-inch balsa quarrel at least two feet. Not exactly suited to hunting wild caribou or even the cat next door, but I had made it myself.

The magazines taught all sorts of strange things: re-wire your auto, re-time its ignition, or re-line its brakes. Not much use on my push-bike, I'm afraid. It was also considered *de rigueur* to convert your basement into a combined swimming pool, and recreation area, but it never explained what to do with the coal and firewood. I might have made a canoe out of the birchbark, but I couldn't identify a birch even if I was whacked by one. On top of that, the local River Don oozed its turgid way between pollution-emitting breweries and steelworks, and wasn't a good location for hunting trips.

"Mount Your Own Trophies" had promise, but I decided that our next-door neighbor would have been less than delighted to see her little 'Tiddles' staring out from atop our sideboard. "Silverplate Your Model Aircraft" looked promising until I discovered one needed a piece of silver larger than the item to be plated. "Decorate Your House With Junk" was a complete non-starter; I'd been doing that for years.

Nevertheless, I loved those magazines. They gave me a lifelong love of gadgetry, gimmicks, D.I.Y. and the finding out of what makes things work. I still read the occasional issues of their descendants, but nowadays the gosh wow hydrofoils, moon rockets and mid-ocean platforms have all gone. In their place are reams of paper extolling Detroit's latest gas-guzzlers. A pity, but nostalgia isn't what it used to be. ♦♦

∞ It's back to the 1950s, now, for a bit of history. That influential decade was cluttered with small fan clubs that appeared, flourished for a short time, then disappeared leaving little trace behind. One of the more obscure ones was a Detroit-area organization called The Morgan Botts Foundation, which is described in the forthcoming new edition of Harry Warner, Jr.'s 1950s fanhistory *A Wealth of Fable* as being named for a legendary fan fiction hero, and being dedicated to beer drinking and poker. Here is more about it.



Once upon a time, back in the 1940s, there was a science fiction fan named Art Rapp. As many fans did back then, he decided to become a fanzine editor, and started publishing *Spacewarp*, which became one of the best-known fanzines of that fan era. After a while, Art decided that fan fiction was easier to write than fan fact. And so into this world entered the legendary Morgan Botts, hero extraordinaire of fan fiction, and the man who single-handedly (and without the spilling of even one drop of beer) changed the shape of Detroit Fandom.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

Morgan Botts was everything that a fan of his day wanted to become. (Read: What Art wanted to be.) He was a grizzled old beer-swilling fan who looked back upon the hobby from a future which seemed unimaginably distant. In 1959, Morgan Botts became only the second fictional fan (that we know of) ever to become a member of a world science fiction convention.

All together, there were twenty-nine Morgan Botts stories that were published, mostly in *Spacewarp*. All are known to exist in one form or another except number 13 (according to Art, this one may have appeared in *TNFF* or some Canadian fanzine in 1948), and possibly number 29 which is buried someplace in Art's filing system. The first story appeared in July 1947 and the last sometime after July 1959. The titles are at least as interesting as the stories: "The Man Who Murdered Fandom", "Whiffingham's Revenge", "Anniversary", "The Barber Enigma", "How To Write STF", "Case of the Schizophrenic Promag", "Please, You -- Quiet!", "Vindication", "Once In A Long, Long, While", "The Lost Chord", "Time and the Torcon", "Botts By His Bootstraps", "... But Zeno, Don't We?", "Lunatic Fringe", "Probability .28", "Mastermind", "Crisis", "Deadly Peril", "Machiavelli", "Solubility", "The Ultimate APA", "Alcoholics Unanimous", "Zap!", "Crusade", "Judgement", "Betrayal", "Warning", "Security", and "Coup de Grace."

It was at a meeting of the Detroit Science Fiction League (DSFL) sometime in 1952 that George Young, then president of the DSFL, asked the question that led to the formation of the Morgan Botts Foundation. As I remember it, it was a very serious constructive question. (George was known for his serious constructive questions.) This is what it might have been: "We have not had an election of officers for almost three months, I think that we should have one now."

I think that this would be a good place to explain that George, for some unknown reason, scheduled the DSFL meetings on the same night as meetings of the Boy Scout troop for which he was the Scoutmaster. And for some other unknown reason, he asked DSFL members to arrive at the club meeting about five minutes after the end of the Boy Scout meeting. This meant that George had those five minutes to cover the 25 miles between the two places. Ordinarily, this would be no mean feat for George, because he has always been known for his lead foot. However this was always a problem the nights of DSFL meetings, because he could never convince the bus drivers that he was late and they should drive faster.

Anyway, thirty-five minutes later we had finally convinced George that we didn't need an election for at least six months. He then asked for reports from the treasurer and the secretary, and upon hearing none, in exasperation said, "Why can't we have more serious constructive meetings -- ones in which we really do something that is *important*?"

At his point Howard DeVore who had been around fans longer than all the rest of us, stood up and exclaimed, "That's it! No more, I here now and for ever make it known to all fans in attendance that the Morgan Botts Foundation is now a reality and that the"

Here George interrupted: "What has that got to do with the question?"

"Everything and nothing," replied Howard. "But the point is that I will not be a party to anymore of this." And with that he departed the meeting.

Several weeks passed. The phone rang in the home of Roger Sims. "Hello?"

"This is Howard. I'm having a meeting of The Morgan Botts Foundation at my house Saturday night. We'll have beer and poker, small stakes nickel-dime, that sort of thing. Interested?"

"But," I said, "that's the night of the next DSFL meeting."

"Precisely," Howard answered. Thus the Morgan Botts Foundation came to be.

About two years later, George finally began to notice that recent meetings of the DSFL were not as well attended as the ones before Howard made his pronouncement. So he decided to go to Howard's house on the night of the DSFL meeting instead of staying home (which was where he had told DSFL members that the meeting would take place) to see if he could find out why no one was attending his DSFL meetings anymore. Arriving in accordance with his accustomed timeliness, he found that several fans were sleeping off their beer and the rest were enjoying an excellent game of poker. (If I remember correctly, that was the night that Bob Tucker was present. He'll probably always remember that night as the one in which his five jacks lost to my five queens.)

Well, George was and still is to this day a beer drinking poker-playing person. So as he surveyed the scene, he noticed an empty seat. Taking it, he exclaimed "Well, I guess that this is better than some old dry meeting of the DSFL! Someone get me a beer."

Thus, George Young became not only the reason that the Morgan Botts Foundation started but in the end, the reason that it ceased. Because with that simple act, the Foundation and the DSFL became one and the same again.

Here is the first Morgan Botts story. It first saw the light of day in *BEMBOOK*, July 1947. The reader will notice that in the story that fanspeak has changed since this story was written. In 1947, the word 'bheer' had yet to make an appearance. Also, 'mag' and 'promag' were in use rather than today's 'zine' and 'prozine'. I'll leave the term 'stfan' to the reader's interpretation. It would also be helpful to read that story as if it were written sometime in the 1970s. Good Luck! ♦♦

THE MAN WHO MURDERED FANDOM

"I see you're a fan," mumbled the disreputable character, settling himself furtively into the chair on the other side of the greasy, marble-topped table.

Annoyed at the interruption, I raised my head from the new issue of *Ghoulish Science Stories*, where I'd been trying to find my letter in the readers' column. My self-invited companion was leering nastily at the scantily-clad fem being chased across the cover by a livid purple BEM, while he absently poured my stein of beer down his parched throat. Obviously he was one of the pests who haunt these less reputable taverns, cadging drinks they cannot buy for themselves. Ordinarily I would have told him to get the hell away from my table, but a certain familiarity in his appearance checked the words on my tongue. Where had I seen him before?

I ordered a couple more beers and we discussed the decline in the quality of stf, as exemplified by GSS. He had read all the classics, and knew much fascinating lore of fandom and the authors of yesteryear. I began to wonder what part he had taken in the annals of stf and what had caused him to sink to the level of degradation in which he now existed.

After six beers apiece and a bitter argument over the most efficient drive for interstellar travel, we finally reached the proper stage for confidences. The bum leaned forward

until his unshaven face was close to mine, and began his strange tale...

"Yes, I was once prominent in the fantasy field. You say I look familiar to you. Were you at the Michicon in '47?"

"Of course!" I answered indignantly. "That was back in the year the so-called Golden Era of fandom began, and the Michicon, held amid the splendors of Detroit, broke all records for attendance. Why?"

"Perhaps that was where you saw me," he said. "Remember the discussion about the future of stf?"

Suddenly I knew who he was! Morgan Botts, the stfan-inventor, who had set the Michicon in an uproar by his eloquent and unorthodox theories in regard to promag publishing!

Botts had maintained that the futuristic tales in promags should be accompanied by an equally modern physical appearance of the publications themselves. Microfilm the promags, he suggested, or use sensitized aluminum-foil pages to print the tales on by a photographic process. Use the three-dimensional illustration method which the U.S. Navy used as far back as 1947. He had even more sensational ideas, Botts told the Michicon delegates, which he would reveal when the time was ripe.

"You nearly broke up the convention," I told him reminiscently. "Fandom immediately split into two factions, the Traditionalists who claimed that changing the stf mag format would take all the fun out of fandom, and the Radicals who hailed you as a prophet of new and glorious heights of fantasy."

"Yes, those were the days," Botts sighed reminiscently, brushing a furtive tear from one bleary eye. "Remember when fist fights broke out between the two groups and the Detroit police had to raid the convention hall and restore order?"

"More fun; more people hurt," I agreed. "But go on with the story. I remember that

several of the promag publishers were interested in your theory and it seems to me you were finally made editor of a new mag."

"You have a good memory," Botts replied, hiccupping slightly. "Yes, I took the helm of *Stupendous Ecstasy Tales*, and turned it into a best seller overnight. Each issue I tried out a new innovation, and made a careful note of those which the fans liked.

"Well do I remember the day when, quaking with horror at my own boldness, I OK'd the cover for the issue of March 1950," he continued.

I recalled instantly the ish to which he referred. It had stirred fandom to the depths. Imagine -- a blue sky on the cover!

"You were famous," I breathed, "The world was at your feet. How, then, did you come to -- this?" My pitying gaze took in his shabby clothes the cracked and mud-caked leather of his shoes, the horny calluses on his palms, signs of years of manual labor.

"I have only myself t'blame," Botts sobbed, blowing the foam from a brimming stein into my face. "After I had determined the ideal for which other promags were striving, but were always too timid to attain; after I had tested, feature by feature, all possible improvements, I began work on a super issue of *Stupendous Ecstasy Tales*. It was to be the promag that had everything! Trimmed edges -- extra staples so the pages wouldn't come loose! Every illustration by Finlay! Those were only a few of the attractions. Gad, what a mag it was, that *SET* for August 1952!"

"Yes, I've heard of that issue," I said. "Unfortunately, I was employed at the time as a Fuller Brush man in the wilds of Tibet, and was unable to buy a copy. I've been trying ever since to get hold on one, but all fandom seems to be joined in a strange conspiracy of silence regarding it. Tell me -- what happened?"

"I outdid myself," Botts wailed, the tears flowing freely down his stubbled cheeks and tinkling musically into his beer. "It was a perfect stf mag. The circulation broke all records. Only a few unfortunates, like yourself, missed reading it. And in that lay my downfall."

"What do you mean?" I asked, breathless.

"You see," he concluded, "with that answer to a stfan's prayer in his files, who would buy any other mag? We sold only thirty copies of the next month's *SET*, to new fans, ones who had not read the super issue.

"Naturally, I was fired. That was bad enough, but I was also ostracized by every other promag publisher and editor, not to mention the writers. Had it not been for the restraining influence and cool counsel of Hank Kuttner, some of the hotheads like Padgett and Kelvin Kent would have lynched me from the nearest lamp post.

"I had utterly destroyed fandom, and it had to be built up again from the very beginning. That is why a real old-time fan like yourself is so rarely seen these days."

Sobbing brokenly, he shambled through the swinging doors and was swallowed up in the vastness of the night. ♦♦

Yessir! *SET* was printed on metallic foil... every copy folded into your very own space ship!



∞ As we mentioned earlier, the 1950s was really an influential decade on fandom. Fanzines became less serious in content. As a result, fan humorists such as Bob Bloch, Walt Willis, Bob Shaw, and John Berry became celebrities in fandom. Since we think that, above all, a fanzine should be entertaining to read, you've probably noticed that we publish a lot of articles by fan humorists. One of the best of them in present-day fandom, in our opinion, is Sharon Farber, who currently resides in our old stomping ground of Chattanooga. Here is the latest installment of her "Tales of Adventure and Medical Life" series.



This is the tale of how I healed the blind, the deaf, and the hale all in one blow.

When the emergency call caught up with me I was in clinic and my senior medical student, if I recall correctly, was making paper airplanes from prescription blanks. "Hey," I told him. "Got a stat consult for you to see."

He unfolding an airplane and got a pen ready to take notes, ready but apprehensive. I knew he could handle it; he was a competent and invaluable student. Why, only last week, he'd managed to corner the clinic mouse and catch it in a styrofoam cup.

"ENT (ear, nose and throat or otolaryngology. It's much simpler to say ENT) at Jewish Hospital. They've got a woman

in her 20's, blind, epileptic. Must be one of those genetic syndromes. Anyway, she's in with an ear infection and now she's started losing her hearing."

"Uh oh," he muttered.

It sounded awful, a real emergency for once, as opposed to our usual stat consult: "We've got a guy here with syncope, he's been completely worked up, we want to send him home this morning, but want a neuro consult first."

The poor girl, struggling through life unable to see, having seizures, and now she was going to be deaf too, totally cut off from life. Not to mention that the way an ear infection would make you bilaterally deaf was by causing meningitis, which can of course lead to brain damage and death as well. No, this was a true emergency and

my student snatched up his black bag and sprinted for the door.

After clinic the attending neurologist and I traipsed over to Jewish Hospital, several blocks away, and let the student present the case to us. It was even worse than ENT had described -- she was not only blind, epileptic and soon to be deaf or dead, but she was also paralyzed on one side, and allergic to half the drugs in the PDR.

We entered the room. The patient was an overweight bleached blond with an unconcerned expression. She was reading a book in Braille, and a white cane leaned against the bed.

"It's me again," said the student, and introduced us. They he began to question her, and further describe her history, as the attending and I watched. And began to furrow our brows. And began to exchange glances.

Because the patient was not blind.

The way her vision flickered about from doctor to doctor...She was pretending to be blind, and not doing a very good job of it either.

I stepped forward, interrupting the case presentation. "How many fingers?"

"I can't see anything," she replied.

So I pulled out my OKN strip. Optokinetic nystagmus takes advantage of reflexive following and refixating on a series of moving stripes. I think of a way a person's eyes rhythmically flick side to side as she watches telephone poles pass the car window. If OKNs are present, it means the eyes and the parietal and occipital lobes of the brain are functioning. It's a way you can test vision in kids and other uncooperative sorts.

She had some OKNs, but not great. She obviously was unfocusing her eyes,

deliberately non-fixating. (A friend of mind had a brain damaged young male patient who wouldn't look at the OKN strip. So he then pasted tiny *Playboy* nudes onto a long piece of paper, and got excellent eye movements.)



"Ahh," said my attending, more sophisticated than I, a mere resident.

He took the bedside mirror, held it at arm's length before her, and began moving it closer. A mirror has an infinite plane of focus, so matter how deliberately you avoid looking at it, your eyes will find some target. If the target is moving, your eyes will then involuntarily converge and accommodate. (Accommodations refers to the way pupils get smaller as you focus upon a near object. The famous Argyle-Robertson pupils of neurosyphilis are said to be like a prostitute -- they accommodate but don't react.)

"Mmm," said the attending, observing the predictable results.

"Uh hunh," I agreed.

The medical student, realizing what was going on, wore an expression that alternated between stupefaction and worry. Stupefied as he realized that if she wasn't blind, she probably wasn't epileptic, paralyzed, or deaf either. (She wasn't.) Worried because she'd duped him, and he thought we'd think he was an idiot, rather than just inexperienced.

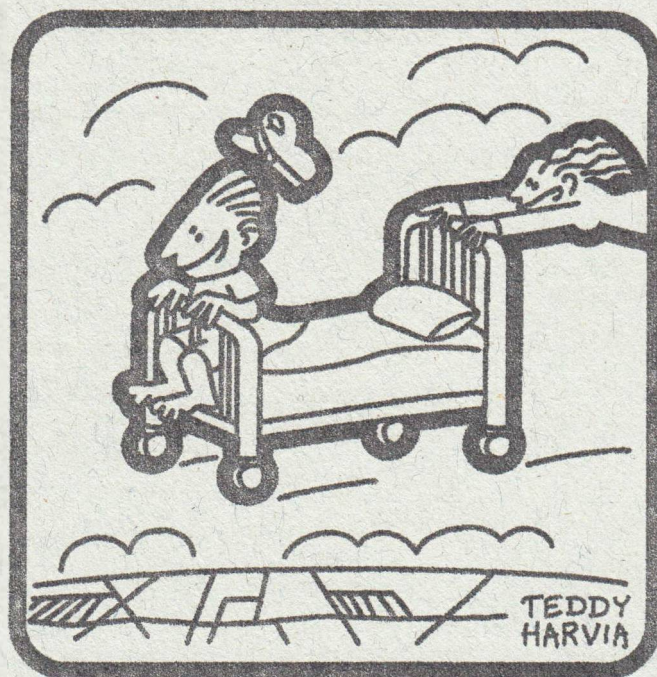
Medical training is designed to make you paranoid. Let's say medical students were toddlers. The first time the kid pulls up, takes a step, and falls down, the attending physician or supervision residents wouldn't say, "Oh, poor thing, did um hurt umself? Let's try again." They'd say, "You fool! You fell! Don't you know how to walk? Your ignorance could have killed someone! You're hopeless -- I hope you weren't planning to attend day care at Mass General."

For some reason, the attending and I decided to send the patient to neuro-ophthalmology clinic. Partly it was that she seemed to be getting a lot of charitable benefits for being blind (Braille school, the white cane, god knows what else) and this annoyed our tax-paying souls; more, it was that I thought she might amuse my friend the neuro-op fellow.

There are, after all, few amusing things in the practice of neurology. It's pretty hard to derive laughs from the sufferings of the demented, the disabled, the depressed. (Though every once in a while a confused patient will say something hilarious and I'll break up; very unprofessional. Like the gentleman with lymphoma all over his brain, who had great comic timing so that his friend and family thought he was just joking around more than usual until he ran into another car and came to medical attention. "Who's the president?" I asked. He stared at me, utterly amazed I didn't know. "Irving Berlin!" he replied.

(Then he told me he was in an airplane. "Now look, sir," I said, beginning to point out that other occupants of the neurosurgery ICU. "See that guy in bed with the intravenous fluids? And all those nurses? Do you still think this is an airplane?"

("Huh. Well," he answered, shaking his head disparagingly at my ignorance. "This isn't any ordinary airline." We put up a sign -- *The NICU: Not Just an Ordinary Airline.*)



One of the few pleasures, then, in a depressing specialty, is to watch someone pretend, say, to be paralyzed, and be able to trick him into demonstrating normal strength. (Though a friend of mine tried to avoid the draft during Vietnam -- and I think it was a perfectly appropriate to attempt this my any means possible -- by faking carpal tunnel syndrome. He soon found out that his condition is properly diagnosed by an uncomfortable nerve conduction test, and he disliked neurologists for the next decade, until making an exception in my case.)

The neuro-op fellow gave me a blow-by-blow account of our patients's clinic visit. He filled the examining room with stray stools and tables, and this supposedly blind woman threaded her way through the obstacles, walking to the chair. When his med student checked her reflexes, he casually held up his hammer and said, "Hold this for me a minute, okay?" and she reached out and took it.

Okay, so it's not all that challenging when the patient is highly unintelligent.

After the fellow and his student wasted a lot of time and had a lot of fun doing all the highly sophisticated tests that a subspecialist has at his disposal, they presented her to the neuro-optomology attending. We'd thought he'd enjoy the case too, and maybe demonstrate some new and even more subtle ways to fake out a faker.

Evidently, though, he was in a bad mood that day. He scowled, walked into the examining room, didn't even say hello. He just picked up a copy of *Time*, flipped it open at random, and waved the page before her face. As with the OKN strip, her eyes made tiny involuntary movements as she momentarily focused on the print.

"20/40," the attending snapped, tossed the magazine over his shoulder, and stalked out of the room.

The medical legal situation is such that, even though we knew the lady was faking the deafness, my attending felt I

should do a spinal tap to rule out any possibility of meningitis. One of the problems with patients who fake things, after all, is that sometimes they actually get sick, and you can totally miss the real illness underneath all the nonsense.

I wasn't happy about doing a lumbar puncture, as the patient was overweight, which makes an LP very difficult. (The test is done by feeling the backbone, kind of difficult if you're liberally padded.) Also, I was tired. I let the patient know that it wasn't really necessary and it would be painful, but rather than refuse the test, she announced her decision to leave the hospital that day -- but only after the spinal tap! This was going to ruin the little that was left of a very bad day for me.

"Fine," I sighed, calling the nurse and requesting an LP tray. "And now," I said, pulling a syringe of salt-water from my pocket, "I have here a medicine that will cure your blindness."

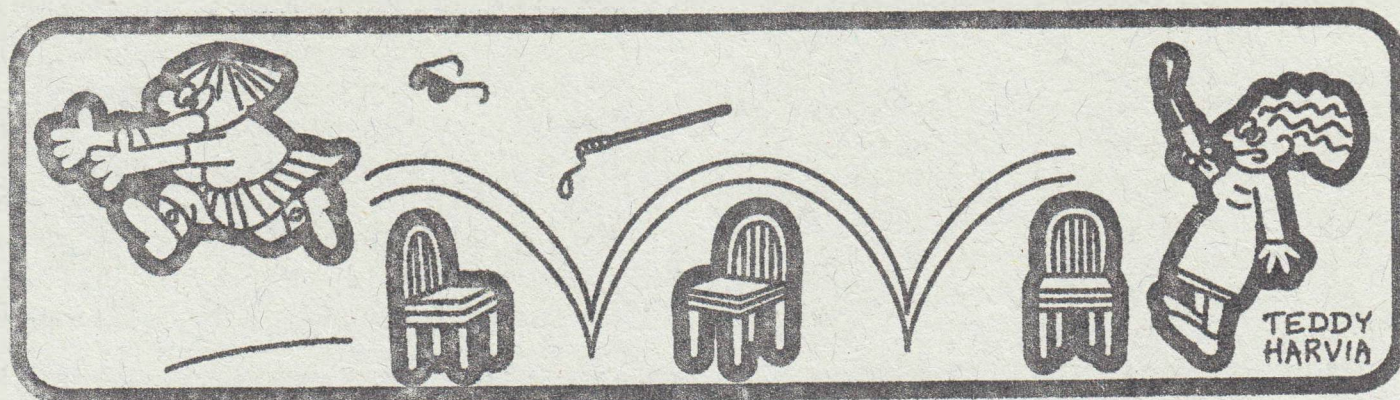
"What?" she cried, suddenly very upset. "No! You can't so that!"

I jumped forward and shot the salt water into her IV line. "Too late, I have. You're cured."

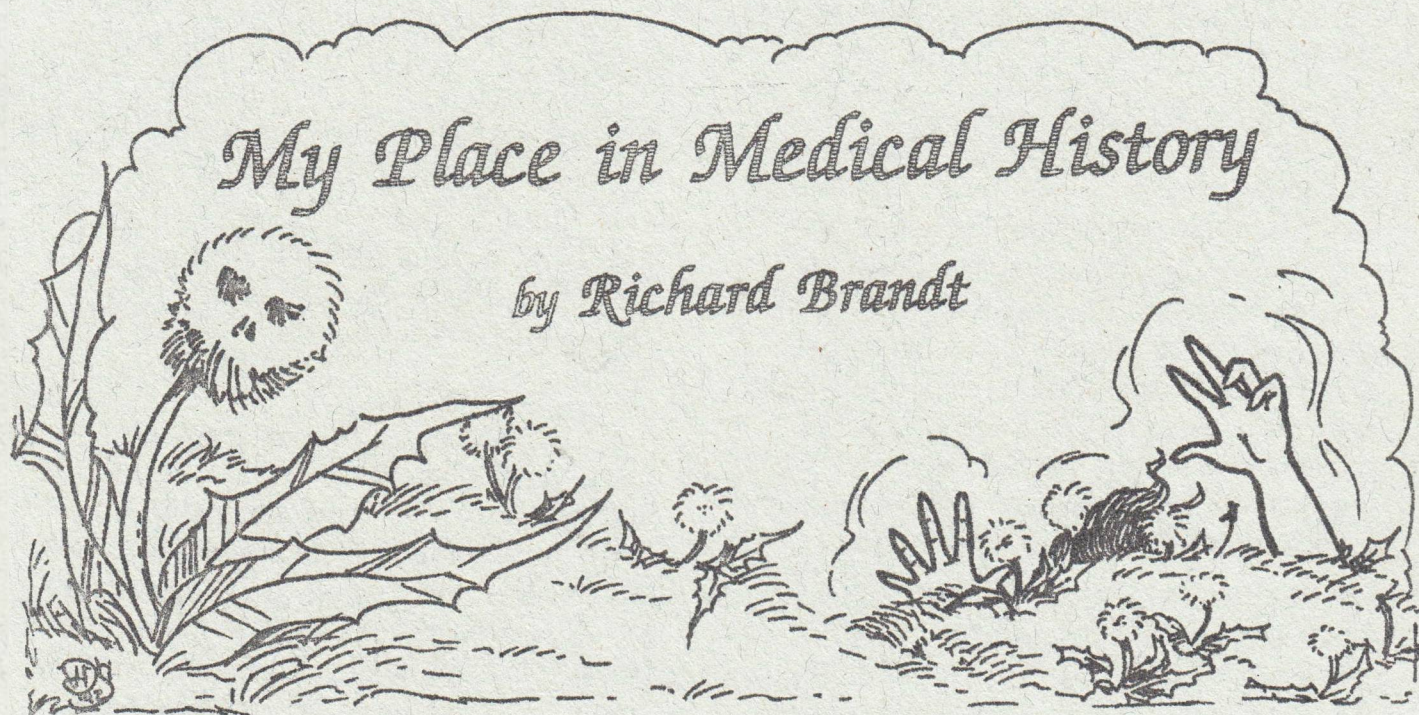
She wailed in despair.

Revenge can be sweet. ♦♦

Next: Who are these people faking illness, and why do they think they can get away with it? ♦♦



☞ On to El Paso, Texas, and another anecdotal medical story, this time from Richard Brandt. You've probably noticed by now that many of the articles in this issue are linked with influences of 1950s and other previous-era fandoms on today's fandom. One of the most obvious influences is humor. Richard is another of present-day fandom's best fan humorists, but as far as we can determine, the only connection Richard has with the 1950s is that he was born then...



It was a hot July morning in 1983. My then-wife Monica was out of town attending a conference of newspaper editors, and her plane wasn't due in until very late in the afternoon. I decided to go out in the yard and uproot some of the intruders cluttering our desert landscaping.

The more weeds I yanked, the more I became aware of a vague tingling sensation in my palms and fingertips. I began to scrutinize my fingers closely, looking for any telltale discoloration; I couldn't quite decide whether I was seeing or imagining some dark patches, but I was starting to feel some concern. (If I had read any Stephen Donaldson back then, I might have been really worried.)

I grew a little queasy as the day wore on, but around five o'clock I popped a few Pepto-Bismol tablets and drove to the airport to pick up Monica.

That night I was uproariously ill. My temperature soared and I couldn't hold down anything. Monica made an appointment with our family doctor first thing in the morning. He was a little puzzled by my symptoms, but gave me an anti-nausea shot and said to call him if I didn't improve.

After a few hours back home, I was genuflecting once more at the great porcelain altar. The doctor told us to meet him at the hospital emergency room.

Doc ran a few tests, but was puzzled by my combination of syndromes; the nausea lacked the accompanying irregularity that usually indicates flu or food poisoning. They put me to bed, started pumping in glucose and anti-nausea medication, and scheduled a GI man to see me first thing in the morning.

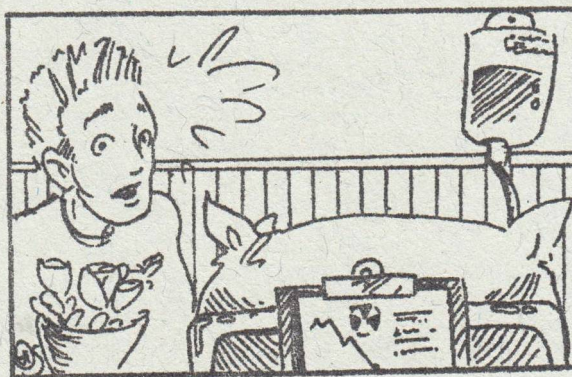
That night, like the days and nights that followed, I spent drifting in and out of a drugged stupor. Every now and then I'd awaken, see a piece of some bizarre late-night movie playing above my head, and slip back into unconsciousness. My roommate, a Spanish-speaking gentleman who afforded little opportunity for conversation, kept switching the television to a Juarez station; we compromised once and watched some movie with Sterling Hayden fending off the Mexican hordes at the Alamo.

My fever raged on; one time after the nurse removed a thermometer from my mouth, she exclaimed, "Oh, a hundred and two point nine" with considerable interest, but I never heard any more on the subject. I don't know if the staff had a few harsh words with her or what. Doc was afraid to give me any full-spectrum antibiotics, which have a wide range of side effects, until he got a handle on what it was I had.

The GI man gave me a series of humiliating and uncomfortable tests, involving a video camera venturing into regions that have never known the light of day. (I never dreamed my television career would come to this.) He found nothing bearing on my condition, so Doc decided that next morning I'd see the best infectious diseases doctor in town.

A few friends dropped in for a visit that evening; as luck would have it, they arrived at the only time during those five days that the anti-nausea medication

stopped working, I'm afraid I wasn't very sociable, but they seemed to understand. (As they told me later, "Richard, you looked ghastly.")



The infectious diseases man, Dr. Sczeyko (like the watch), came in the next day, asked me some questions about my symptoms, notes how my hands had swollen considerably beyond their normal size, and departed without sharing his conclusions. The first inkling I had was when my family doctor came in and asked me what brand of tampons I'd been using.

Seems I had fallen prey to Toxic Shock Syndrome. All it takes, it turns out, is a simple staph or strep infection. In my case, the bacteria had proliferated in the seasonally muggy El Paso summer, some had mutated from Type A bacteria to the more sinister Type B, the little malcreants started pumping toxins into my bloodstream, and voila! another miracle of modern medicine.

Sczeyko hadn't ever seen a case quite like mine, but he'd heard of them. It seems the inexorable link between Toxic Shock and tampons in the American consciousness is purely a local phenomenon. In Britain, the first outbreak to gain public notice was linked to a product used largely by men, so it's escaped the connotations

which led me to endure such extensive ribbing in the following months. As one of my workmates said, "I told you to switch to pads." (Prizewinning entry from *Omni's* Best Unsubstantiated Rumor contest: "Mae West died of toxic shock.")

In any case, Sczeyko (like the watch) started pumping antibiotics into me, my condition improved, and gradually they were able to remove the IV from one very tired arm ("Worn out from all that chewing," said Monica), and put me onto something resembling real food.

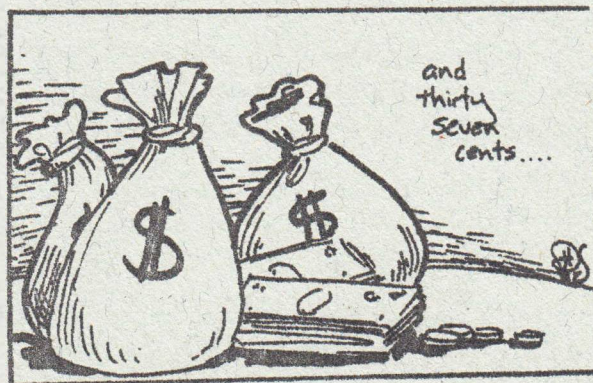
I was discharged from the hospital after five days, dropped by the office to pick up my paycheck and hear everyone tell me how awful I looked, and went home to rest up for a couple of days.

As my hands shrank closer to their normal girth, the skin began to peel; not so much as if I'd had a sunburn, more as if an enormous blister had covered the entire hand. I dropped by Sczeyko's office for a follow-up visit. He was ecstatic.

"This confirms my diagnosis!" he cried exuberantly, and brought in his associates, and his nurse, and his receptionist, so he could show me off. I guess he wanted them to know what this looked like in case they ever ran into it again, of else he figured this would be their only opportunity. Sczeyko told me I'd probably wind up as a footnote in a medical journal somewhere. In the meantime, he doled out extra hand lotion.

When the bills came due for my hospital stay and the services of three lucratively employed physicians, it developed that my two insurers -- one being my private plan, the other my wife's group plan on which I was a dependent -- would not coordinate payments. Rather, each would pay

me full benefits. I came out something like three thousand dollars in the black.



It was the most money I ever made lying on my back.

Only recently have I started realizing how close I was to the brink, and how fortunate I was to receive the level of medical care I did. At other times of my life, without medical coverage, I could easily have wound up in some county hospital, with an overworked staff physician who'd scratch his head over my condition, and chalk it up in the end to another of life's little mysteries.

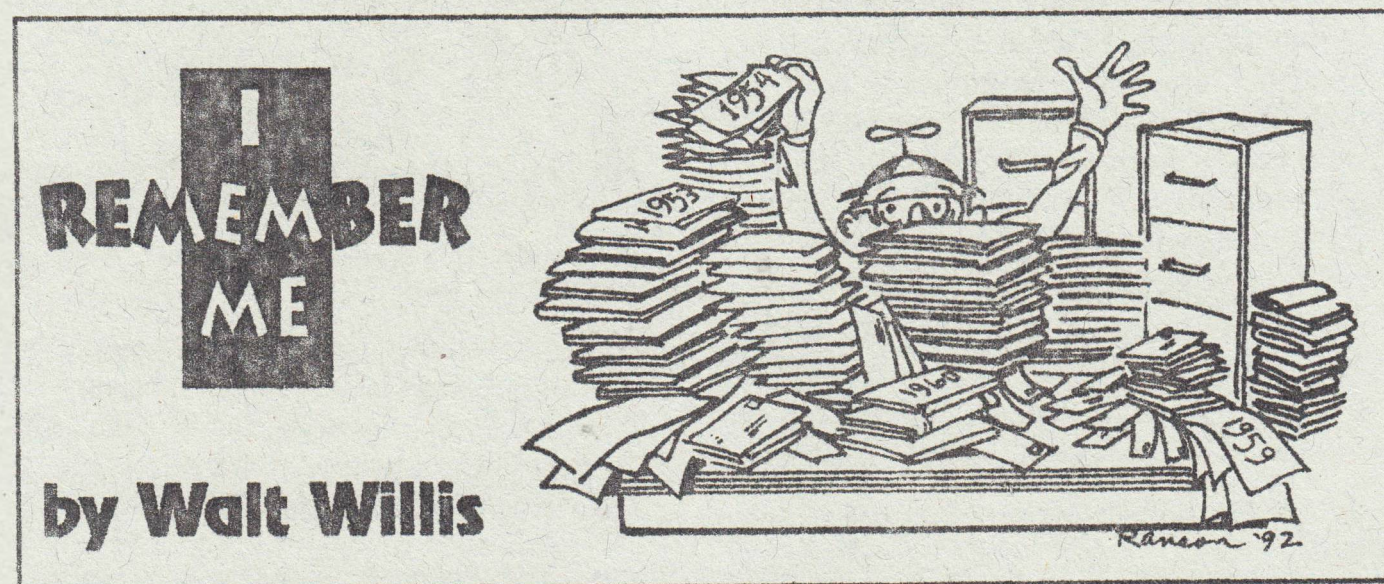
Still, at the time all I could see (beside a financial windfall) was a new riddle sure to stump all my friends. "You'll never guess what I was in the hospital for," I'd say, cackling with glee. No one even came close.

At Constellation that year, I presented this poser to Allen Beatty. He scrutinized me critically, and guessed: "Dermabrasion?"

That shut me up. ♦♦



☞ We mentioned last time in *Mimosa* 11 that 1992 is the 40th anniversary of Walt Willis's epic first visit to the United States. That trip was financed by one of the first fan funds, and influenced the origination of the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund several years later. Walt's 1952 trip has been singled out as one of the key events of the 1950s, in that it demonstrated science fiction fandom to be international in scope rather than the exclusive property of North Americans. Walt will be back again this year, as Fan Guest of Honor at the Orlando Worldcon. And in this issue, he continues his look back at the years of the 1950s.



Apparently 1954 started off, in style, with a letter from Robert Bloch.

Can't think of a nicer way of starting the new year than by dropping you a line.

Actually, I have only two alternatives -- getting started on a new novel or filling out my income tax. Both are unthinkable...though I fear I'll be getting round to them as soon as I've finished this note. Doing the novel is perhaps easier than the income tax: both are works of fiction, but I hope to get paid for one whereas I have to pay for the other. As you know, I am doing suspense stuff and the characters are mainly aberrated. The job I have in mind concerns an exhibitionist. This guy is so exhibitionistic that every time he goes to bed with a girl he puts a glass eye in her navel. (So help me, I'm gonna put it in the book, you'll see!)

What's all this about Chuck turning pro? I was delighted to hear about a sale, and hope he gets the bug. The more fans turn to pro writing, the less time they'll have for fanning, and that will leave the entire fan field open to us old pros to desecrate. Maybe there will be some small semblance of renaissance in 1954...but I'm afraid many newcomers haven't yet learned the secret of fanactivity which is simply this: you have to meet or correspond with people like you. It's a very personal thing, this fan business. Those who attend Cons and enjoy themselves generally are enthusiastic about the field. Those who attend and don't find congenial companions usually snipe. Those who find friendships in or thru fandom remain, as a rule; often people quit as a result of disillusionment of a very personal nature. (Cf Laney, et al.) Seems to me that the expansion of the field has tended to make it more diffi-

cult for newcomers to make firm friends; their interest, therefore, is superficial or limited to their liking of the reading matter. And in time, interest lags. It's one thing to like the stories of George O. Smith and quite another to know that gentleman and see him demonstrate the Law of Diminishing Returns, bottle in hand. But why should I tell you this? You, of all people!

I see here a faint, almost illegible carbon, which may be a reply to this.

Funny you should come off with that comment on fans just at the moment. It's a thing I've been thinking about ever since I read that article of Tucker's about the fans who have visited him; the one that was on the lines of Laney's "My Ghod They Might Come to My House." God, I thought if Tucker is going to get disenchanted with fans it would be the end. Theretofore I had been consoling myself with the thought that Forry Ackerman and he, who had met more fans than anyone in the world, still thought they were worth continuing to mingle with. I still thought so myself, but there'd been so many attacks on fans as a group I was wondering if maybe my own amiable view of my fellow men was leading me astray. So I was interested in your opinion. I don't think they're just like people though. It seems to me the greatest difference between fans and people is that fans are much less average. The morons are more moronic, the drips drippier, and the nice people nicer than they are in the great wide world.

Tell me, is fan activity a sort of secret vice with you? I mean, is it an insidious temptation to which you succumb when you should be writing for money? I know that when I'm

having to write something, I resort to almost any kind of subterfuge to get out of it -- clean the typer, tidy the room. Do odd jobs about the house. I hate creative writing. I never, or very seldom, have 'inspiration'. I just have to force myself to sit at the typer and type. And yet, sometimes when I'm asleep or half awake, whole articles, stories, novels, plays, movies flash through my brain, each one perfectly complete. Whole sf serials swarming with complex action and characterisation spread out before me and I lie there and admire them with a sort of reverent awe. I'm sure they're there all right -- occasionally I have remembered phrases and situations and used them, but at the thought of sitting down and actually writing them, I get a cold desperate feeling inside. Do you think dianetics or Hadacol might help? I was wondering if you felt the same way about your pro stuff and if fanac was your equivalent of getting away from it all? It is with Vince Clarke, I know. Every now and then he writes pro stuff. But of course all that happens is that he comes into fandom again and starts a few more of his Projects... He gives them all names, like Operation Shamrookie (that's one that did come off, though he's never got round to writing it up -- that issue of *SFN* has been part mimeoed for over a year). You would like Vince. What he needs is someone who can take over his projects and finish them, as I do with Bob Shaw's. It's a pity that Chuck Harris doesn't live nearer to him. You'll like Chuck too: I guess you do already. He's one of the finest people I've ever come across in my life. A brilliant writer, too, but his form of escape from writing for publication is writing letters. I think Chuck's letters are

the best body of writing in fandom, and I only wish it were possible to publish the whole lot of them. That selection in *Pamphrey* {{ ed. note: Walt's fanzine for FAPA, the Fantasy Amateur Press Association }} was a mere fragment of the stuff I saw when I was looking through his files. He and Vince carry on a mock war off and on, on the lines of that duper correspondence I quoted. My favourite phrase ... well, you may have gathered that Vince is getting a little thin on top? Every time the word 'hair' crops up in a letter from Chuck it is followed in parenthesis by '(sorry)'. I was also tickled to notice that I am referred to in their correspondence as "Ghod." Apparently this started when Chuck was trying to get Vince to produce the *Fen Crittur Comical Book* while I was away in America in 1952, and his frequent references to my instructions gave Vince the opening to accuse him of worshipping me.

I quoted this letter partly to give me an opportunity to explain why there was no letter from Chuck quoted in the last installment of "I Remember Me." It was simply because I was going through the general correspondence file, and Chuck of course has a file all to himself which was not available to me at the time. It is in a bookcase in a brick hut at the end of our garden, and hemmed in by a mass of stuff left over from the remodeling of our kitchen last year which I haven't recovered enough strength to shift yet. If I manage it for the next installment, that is likely to be all Harris. Meanwhile, here is a letter in reply to one from Ashworth's Amorphous Abstracts, makers of coloured steam, suggesting a tie-up with the Fort Mudge Steam Calliope Company {{ ed. note: of Lee Hoffman }}. I don't seem to have the original letter from Mal Ashworth, but my reply may interest those few who remember this part of the Sixth Fandom mythology.

Your Reference: Yr. lr. (undated) (No reference number)

Our Ref: Tch Tch

Dear Mr. Ashworth,

I am directed by Mr. Willis to inform you that the firm of Hoffmanothing Incorporated of which he was the agent was wound up in 1953 -- the spring of that year -- Miss Hoffman having caught a colt, and succumbed to ga-fia...

With regard to the FORT MUDGE STEAM CALLIOPE COMPANY... I am to inform you that this COMPANY continues in fool ruining order in front of Mr. Willis and as soon as he noticed it, he expressed interest in your invention. He feels that while the FORT MUDGE STEAM CALLIOPE represents the epitome of perfection to music-lovers everywhere, it is the duty of a concern as progressive as the FORT MUDGE STEAM CALLIOPE COMPANY to further any invention which may lead to the development of the steam calliope as an artform. I should be glad if you would accordingly forward samples of red, white, and blue steam for use during the playing of the National Anthem...

But here, dated 6th February, 1954, is a letter from Bill Temple, with more contemporary relevance to us...

Thanks for *Hyphen*, which gave me a welcome lift of spirit in these dull, cold winter days.

I'm glad most people enjoyed the Beacon Report as much as I did. But I'm not surprised to find D. R. Smith among the rare exceptions. Even before the war, in the days of *Novae Terrae* and *Tales of Wonder*, he was adept at throwing buckets of cold water over people as a reward for their hard work and self-denial in attempts to entertain him. I'm afraid he's a type.

Sam Youd is of it. But there are signs lately that they may both eventually grow out of it, if very belatedly. It's only a matter of growing up.

In her recent book, *Pleasure*, Doris Langley Moore mentions the type: "Disparagement is a relief to minds that are ill at ease -- a relief they may grasp at eagerly... but like any other drug, when it wears off it leaves the addict at the mercy of his bitterness. The fundamental unhappiness of destructive people is usually transparent enough, and often very much to be pitied.

"People who are for some reason socially uneasy often think it is a mark of superiority to be hard to please. The young just emerging from adolescence are almost always hypercritical, especially on subjects where they have only recently acquired knowledge, and the uneducated do not like to show when they are impressed, in case they should commit the *faux pas* of overvaluing, which is thought to subtract more from our prestige than undervaluing. Unfortunately, any pose that is long sustained is pretty sure to become second nature..."

-- To Be Continued --

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Terry Jeeves, 6 Redscar Drive, Newby, Scarborough YO12 5RQ, United Kingdom
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Linda Michaels, 1356 Niagara Avenue, Niagara Falls, New York 14305-2746
Peggy Ranson, 1420 Valmont, New Orleans, Louisiana 70115
Bill Rotsler, 17909 Lull Street, Reseda, California 91335
Stu Shiffman, 8618 Linden Avenue North, Seattle, Washington 98103
Roger Sims, 34 Creekwood Square, Cincinnati, Ohio 45246
Diana Stein, 1325 Key West, Troy, Michigan 48083
Steve Stiles, 8631 Lucerne Road, Randallstown, Maryland 21133
David Thayer, P.O. Box 905, Euless, Texas 76039
Phil Tortorici, P.O. Box 057487, West Palm Beach, Florida 33405
B. Ware, 1233 Surry Place, Cleburne, Texas 76031
Ted White, 1014 North Tuckahoe Street, Falls Church, Virginia 22046
Charlie Williams, 1200 Woodcrest Drive, Knoxville, Tennessee 37918
Walt Willis, 32 Warren Road, Donaghadee BT21 OPD, Northern Ireland

☞ At this point we hasten to mention that back in the 1950s, Walt Willis was by no means the only internationally-known non-North American fan. There were many other British fans who became equally well-known on this side of the Atlantic. One of them was (and still is, for that matter) Vincent Clarke, who was influential in his own right -- he helped found the British Science Fiction Association, and was the winner of the very first Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund election (only to lose his job at the last minute and not make the trip to North America, but that's another story). Vincent has always been known for his amusing, anecdotal fan writings, of which the following is a good example...

SEEN ANY GOOD STAMPS PHILATELY?

by A. Vincent Clarke with
a (large) assist from
Chuch Harris



When I was a youngster, a hundred years ago or more, I used to collect postage stamps. In some ways this taught a sense of humility because Great Britain stuck grimly to a succession of stamps showing the head of the current monarch. If you wanted the real hard stuff you had to get it from the French Colonies, who featured bright exotic tigers, or a remote Russian republic which issued a *diamond-shaped* stamp. Even the U.S., with various Presidential heads, had more variety than we did.

Deep thinkers, swapping duplicates in the school yard, talked bitterly of this. In a battle between stiff-necked tradition and sets of triangulars, we knew which side we'd be on. Those remote countries which

issued beautiful commemorative sets merely to obtain cash from philatelists were hopelessly envied.

Came the day when I saw my first *Amazing Stories*. The stamp album went to the back of the drawer. Then, I had my first fanzine, and knew what I wanted to be when (and if) I grew up.

Years rolled by, as they do. World War II came and went, and I gradually realised when I cast an authoritative glance at the tiny cellophane packets in cornflake boxes that although Outer Mongolia and the Yemen had marvelous pictures of rockets on their stamps and another unlikely country (Panama?) featured Disney characters, Great Britain was getting in on the act. Special sets at Christmas, then two or

three during the year, then -- the flood barriers collapsed, and we're now in a position when there's roughly one special set of commemorative stamps every month.



So when in September '91 I went to the post office and bought stamps for letters to go to Chuch Harris and Walt Willis, I didn't do more than blink when an exotic new variety was offered. It looked like a bit of map, and in fact the words ORD-NANCE SURVEY indicated it was a tribute to the Government cartographic department. Later, I found out that 'Ham Street' was in fact a village in my own county of Kent. So I stuck stamps on the respective envelopes -- and then hesitated. I hazily remembered...

In the '50s, there was a busy exchange of letters between Walt Willis, Chuch Harris, and others. We all had typewriters, which was just as well, as our respective handwriting styles ranged from bad to awful. Walt, who was a Civil Servant, had a madly racing style, little distinguishable from ordinary straight lines, while Chuch was little better. And sometime, about 35 years ago, there was an anguished critical cry of...

"Who's been sending me maps?"

... from a recipient of fan handwriting, which made the 'Eavesdroppings' back page quotes in *Hyphen*. Napoleon had uttered these words (in French) to Marshal Ney, but this particular exchange was between Walt and Chuch, and afterwards Walt actually obtained some old maps and wrote hurried (well, I suppose they were hurried) letters to his friends on the blank backs.

Standing there in the Post Office, I remembered this, and in a fit of sentimental reminiscence, scrawled on the face of the envelope to Chuch "I'm sending you a map" or words to that effect, and sent it off, briefly hoping that he hadn't forgotten that episode of the '50s. I needn't have worried:

May Ghod curse you, A. Vincent Clarke. May your stencils tear in the very worst places and your staplers jam up for all eternity. May your lettering guides warp and the dreaded Giant Wormwood eat thru everything in your collection. May your heirloom teabag grow wizened and transparent, and your frozen chicken grow wings and fly away. ((He usually gets tea and a chicken dinner when he calls.))

You foul fiend. You light-fingered kleptomaniac of words and phrases. You stand there, like an innocent virginal nun with alopecia and...Mighod! Whuffo? you dare to say, Whuffo???

I will tell you, horrible old A. Vincent Riposte-Stealer. Cast your mind back -- don't bother to open the door, it will slip easily thru the key-hole -- for 34½ years. It is 8am on March 18th, 1957. The pocktman has just delivered to Chez Chuchy.

There is a letter from Ghod which, in my generosity, I share with you.

And the Lord Ghod spake unto Chuchy and he sayeth jocularly, "Who has been sending me maps?" And he sayeth this to his good friend Chuchy alone, not to starveling dogs desperate for stolen crumbs from the tables of The Immortals. Indeed this is a holy comment on the calligraphy of his humble servant and esquire whose blunt pencil rightly trembles, shakes, and squiggles when writing to the Ghodhead. It is a holy message from the sanctus sanctorum, from the guru to his postulant.

And Lo! the mills of Ghod grind slowly, and for 34½ years I wait patiently on the sidelines for the perfect topper, the riposte extraordinaire, the clincher, the opening salvo on the next Eavesdroppings.

And last Tuesday all my prayers were answered. HM the Q issued map stamps. Tiny fragments snipped

from the Ordnance Survey maps showing Ham Street in all its glory. (About 7 miles south of Ashford, turn right for Appledore and Rye.)

And you, unspeakable filth, were outside the Post Office waiting for the doors to open to buy two map stamps...one for me, one for Himself. You stole the topper I'd been hoarding for 34½ years awaiting these map stamps. You nicked my tag line, flaunted it right back at me and -- knowing you I am quite sure of this so don't bother us with false denials. Everybody knows you are so full of it even your eyes are brown -- and then, lickety spit, scribbled out another envelope for Walter Himself.

And I hope now that you are thoroughly ashamed of yourself.

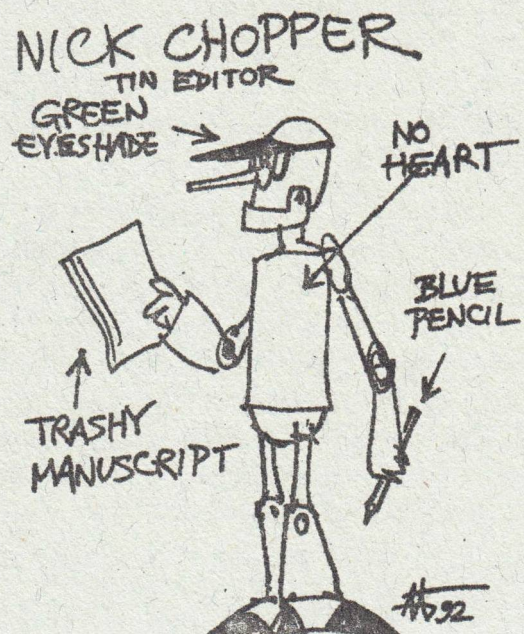
But I doubt it.

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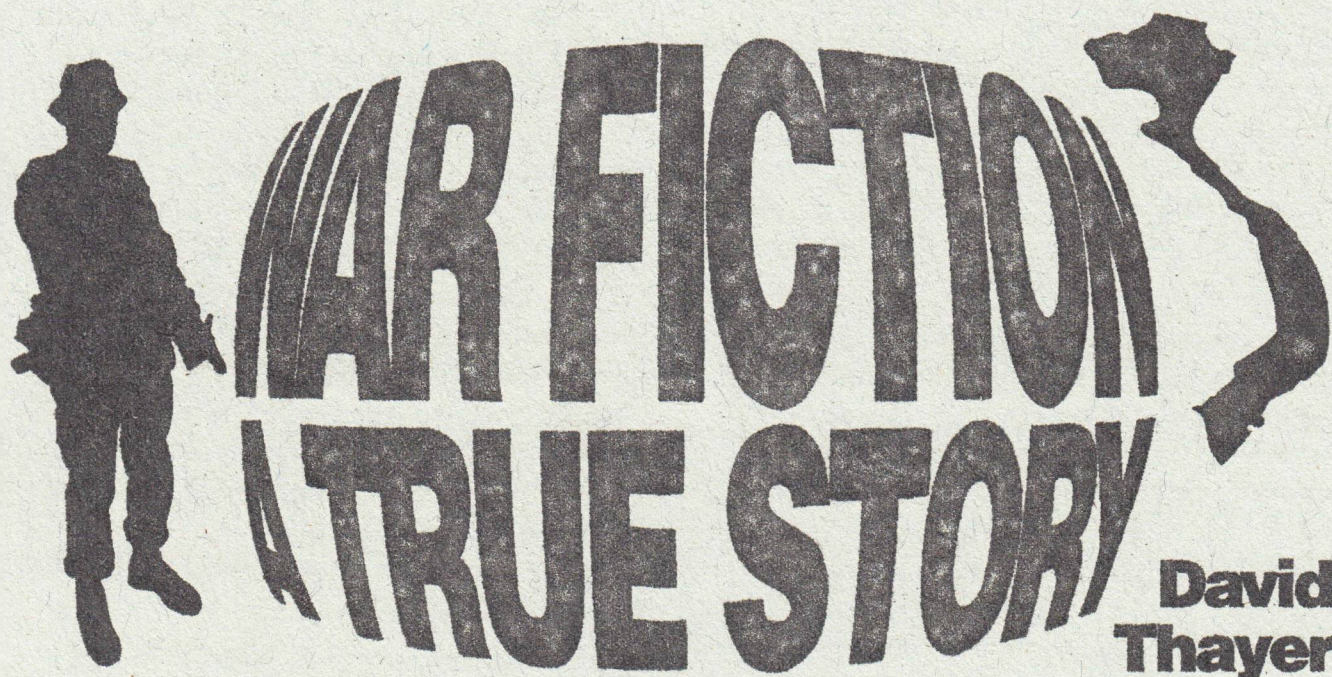
Chuch was, of course, wrong about my eyes -- they're blue. ♦♦

Artist Credits

Sheryl Birkhead - pages 2; 3; 8; 9
Kurt Erichsen - pages 19; 22
Brad Foster - page 62
Alexis Gilliland - page 36; 55
Teddy Harvia - pages 23; 24; 25; 26; 71
Joe Mayhew - pages 10; 15
Linda Michaels - page 53
Peggy Ranson - pages 30; 34; 46; 47; 51; 52
Bill Rotsler & Steve Stiles - pages 45; 60; 65
Stu Shiffman - front & back covers; page 61
Diana Stein - pages 27; 28; 29; 70
Steve Stiles - page 42
Phil Tortorici - page 57
B. Ware - Pages 37; 39; 40; 41
Charlie Williams - pages 16; 17



☛ We've done many things to encourage people to write for *Mimosa*, including everything from excessive amounts of shameless flattery to outright bribery. Once in a while, however, things come our way almost by accident. Take the following article, for example -- it's a continuation of a series that began last issue, as a result of Nicki naively asking the writer if he'd ever been outside the United States before. Sometimes it's better just to be lucky.



WAR FICTION

A TRUE STORY

David Thayer

Hot wind in the summer of 1970 stirred the dust on the hilltop overlooking the South China Sea. Dirt and sweat stained my fatigues from weeks in the field. The company commander assigned my platoon to sit and wait while others patrolled up and down the slopes strewn with jagged volcanic rock. I looked for something to fight the boredom.

Some soldiers passed around a months-old copy of *Playboy*. Looking at the photographs on the stained and wrinkled pages only increased my dissatisfaction. Despite what some claim, few red-blooded American boys actually read the magazine. The airbrushed fantasy of what we were struggling to return to left me uncomfortable.

I gravitated toward my sergeant, a devout Mormon from Utah, tall, slender,

tanned from months in country. I asked if he had anything to read and he handed me a paperback Western. In it two hell-raising cowboys clash with the authorities in a small Texas town. In the end they ride off happily, their six-shooters blazing.

I finished the book in little more than a day under the blazing sun. I wondered who'd sent it to Vietnam thinking it would make a G.I.'s tour of duty easier. Crawling out of my pup tent, I returned it to my sergeant to see if he had any more suitable escape literature. He had only another Western, and he was still reading that himself.

"Where'd you get them?" I asked. "They have anything else?"

"The BX," Sgt. Pierson said. "They had plenty of other stuff."

A week later we returned to Camp Randolph near An Khe in the Central Highlands for a brief rest. I hurriedly showered, put on clean fatigues, and headed for the base exchange (BX).

While my more materialistic buddies ogled the electronic equipment, I looked for reading material. In the back of the BX, I discovered rotating metal bookracks. The REMF's (Rear Echelon Mother Fuckers, support troops who outnumbered us grunts 10 to 1) had nearly stripped them bare, as if by defoliant.

Overcoming dyslexia as a child, I became a voracious reader by my teens. Keying off a list of the supposed hundred best works in world literature given me by a not completely objective English teacher, I read such classics as *Don Quixote*, *Vanity Fair*, *Crime and Punishment*. Much in them was beyond my years to understand, in itself a valuable vicarious experience.

But here were no classics. Among the few remaining books, one with a blood-red cover caught my eye. It was a dictionary, *The New Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary*, employing attention-grabbing color in what I now seeing as common practice among reference books to compete with entertainments. I was momentarily disappointed. I wanted lively fiction to counterbalance the drab prospects of my drab surroundings. But in the absence of fiction, I thought a dictionary would at least keep my situation from reducing my word skills to mere functional literacy.

Clutching it, I continued to search the racks. I spotted one with the painting of a strange aircraft on a pink cover. Having read some science fiction in high school, I quickly realized what it was. Why the others had passed it over, I don't know. In the absence of great literature, I took it, *The World's Best Science Fiction 1970*,

edited by Donald A. Wollheim and Terry Carr.

Back at the barracks across base, I opened the pages of the science fiction anthology. Inside I found stories by authors whose names sounded vaguely familiar but whose works I'd never before read. I started in the evening light, continuing until the mountain shadows became too deep. There was a blackout within the camp to avoid giving the enemy easy targets, and the lights in the barracks stayed off.

Floodlights surrounded the camp, facing outward, illuminating the grassy no-man's land beyond the barbwire with an eerie brightness, like that in a deserted shopping center parking lot. Light enough to read wasted on the enemy. I sulked in darkness until sunrise the next day. Word of our next mission came down, ending our brief, uneasy peace.

I wondered where to put the books. The thigh pockets in my jungle fatigues were easily large enough, but a few days of sweat and rain turned paper into worthless pulp. Stories of the Bible in a soldier's pocket stopping a bullet and saving his life were to me religious wishful thinking.

"How you keep things dry in the field?" I asked Sgt. Pierson.

"Ammo can," he said.

The ammo cans resembled the pails in which elementary school kids carried their lunches, only slightly larger and heavier. In each came a 200-round belt of machinegun ammunition. Although designed to the ammo dry, the can quickly became excess weight to a grunt humping through the jungle.

I claimed one from the scrap pile. In it I placed my wallet (already showing signs of jungle rot), stationery, pen, pencil, money, and books. Only later, when our

machinegun repeatedly jammed on the new guy carrying it because of rusted links and corroded brass did I doubt the wisdom of exposing the ammo to the elements.



THE PEN IS MIGHTIER THAN
THE SWORD, BUT MACHINE
GUNS NEED BULLETS.

Over the next week, when time and sunlight allowed, I read "When Legends Die" by Robert Silverberg, a story about idlers in the far distance future resurrecting heroes of the past for their own amusement; "Death by Ecstasy" by Larry Niven, about a man pleased to death; "The Haploid Heart" by James Tiptree, Jr., about an extreme generation gap in an alien society; "A Boy and his Dog" by Harlan Ellison, about divergent societies in a postholocaust world; and "Nine Lives" by Ursula K. LeGuin, about nine clones who all die after an accident kills one.

Beside the title of each in the table of contents, I placed a pencil checkmark after I finished it. Disconcertingly, they all seemed to speak to my condition but offer no answers. Stark interior illustrations by Jack Gaughan only added to the effect. I stopped after those six. The other stories

somehow seemed either superfluous or irrelevant.

I offered to lend the anthology out to get something else to read. Someone handed me *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C. S. Lewis. I was ready for some light reading, even a juvenile book. I enjoyed the story of children escaping the horrors of war into the realm of talking animals, ignoring the nonsensical message of a royal elite coming to save the world. No flesh and blood Aslan was coming to save me or my buddies. In the tropical heat of Vietnam, the eternal winter of Narnia sounded inviting.

I carried the book safe in my ammo card as the entire infantry company in a torrential rainstorm crossed a broad valley toward a new position. We shivered in the 80-degree heat, soaked to the skin. The point man in the lead squad cautiously entered a large clearing and approached a huge tree near its center. A few wasps buzzed him and he swung at them. The entire nest, hidden in the branches above, responded. The man and those immediately behind him ran wildly to escape.

The rains stopped as the company regrouped. With the point man too much in pain to concentrate on continuing to break trail, the company commander looked for someone else to lead. A baby-faced 17-year-old full-blood Cherokee brave quickly and eagerly volunteered. His mother had signed the papers to allow him to join up.

The Captain, seeing no other volunteers, reluctantly agreed. A hundred yards farther along the steep slopes of the valley wall began. The young Indian hacked a path through thick cane with a machete. The rest of us, carrying weapons and 70-pound packs, struggled just to keep our feet. The sun came out, heating the air and making the humidity in it oppressive.

Suddenly someone yelled, "Medic!"

"He's stepped on a booby trap," Tom Dietz, the only other blond, blue-eyed grunt in the company, speculated behind me as the medic crawled forward. The thought of punji stacks, bamboo stacks sharpened to a point and covered with human excrement, came to my mind. I had seen them along a well-worn trail between villages on an earlier mission, placed to impale unwary soldiers diving for cover in an ambush. But here we were making our own trail.

"What happened?" we asked the smiling medic 5 minutes later as he slipped past us back down the mountainside.

"He tripped and whacked himself in the shin with the machete."

We mused that the only danger to the point man was himself. We started moving again but only advanced a few more feet before again stopping.

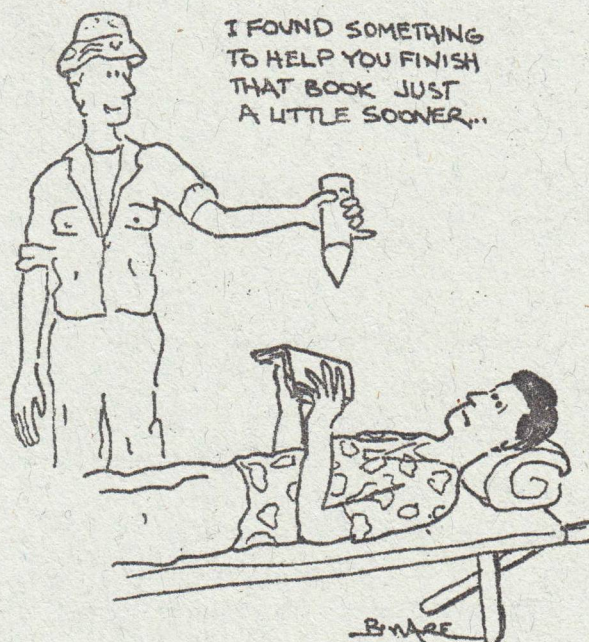
"Medic!" The overeager man had whacked himself in the other shin. Dejectedly he limped past us, white gauze showing through cuts in the fabric of both pants legs.

Back at Camp Randolph, the Indian, passing my cot still limping, saw the book on my cot with its fanciful illustration of a lion and children on the cover and surprised me by asking about it. Somehow I'd thought him more intent on proving brave than literate. Even after I pointed out to him that the book was a children's story, he said he wanted it. I never found a chance later to ask what he thought of it.

In the fall we slowly passed the days digging foxholes around a village near Camp Randolph. Between patrol, I saw on the air mattress in the foxhole of a G.I. in another squad *The War Against the Rull* by A. E. Van Vogt. The picture of a man in a clean space-age uniform with a high-

tech rifle astride a giant, savage beast of burden appealed to me. I envied him, mud caking my own boots and rifle from playing soldier.

I asked if I could have the book after he finished. He told me he'd promised it to his squad leader, Sgt. Kerry. Kerry and I had barely been civil toward each other ever since I'd refused to share with him the catsup my mother had sent me from home. A single bottle of catsup doesn't go very far in covering up the taste of C-Rations and I had myself and the buddies in my own squad to think of first.



The next day someone found an unexploded mortar round outside our perimeter. To alleviate the danger of it accidentally going off and wounding anyone, the mortar crew packed C4 plastic explosive around it and detonated it. The brass tip of the round flew into the air and came down on the air mattress on which the day before I'd seen the science fiction novel. The projectile pierced the mattress with a perfectly cut hole, leaving it a useless slab of rubber. I grimly chuckled to the soldier. Had he not sought cover elsewhere, the

projectile would have made a much uglier hole in him. If I couldn't have the book, at least I could have some entertainment at the expense of those to blame.

In December my division received orders to go home and with it anyone who had at least 9 months in country. I had only 6. Most of my buddies stayed behind, too. We received orders to report to the 101st Airborne Division, stationed in the northernmost part of South Vietnam. Books became the last thing on my mind. After 2 weeks in transit and reorientation, 60 of us were waiting in Phu Bai (Vietnamese for City of the Dead), an Army base built on a cemetery, for the trucks to take us to the heliport to airlift us to the field. A staff sergeant in crisp, clean fatigues walked up.

"Anyone here can type?" he asked. "I need two clerk-typists."

Only Tom Dietz and I saw the question as a chance to escape more hazardous duty. Those around us were all black, Hispanic, or whites with little formal education. Dietz and I, after all, had been to college. We overcame the fear of volunteering and raised our hands. The sergeant took us to a long building constructed of corrugated tin panels. In a small room inside he had us sit down at wooden tables behind manual typewriters.

"I'm giving you a 5-minute typing test," he said. "Take as long as you want."

Fifteen minutes later, when I had my typing speed on paper up to 45 words per minute, I turned my test in. I passed. Saved from returning to the field, I joined the REMF's I'd learned to despise. Tom Dietz joined, too.

The sergeant assigned me a bunk in dry hooch with electric lights. I asked my new hoochmates what they did to pass the

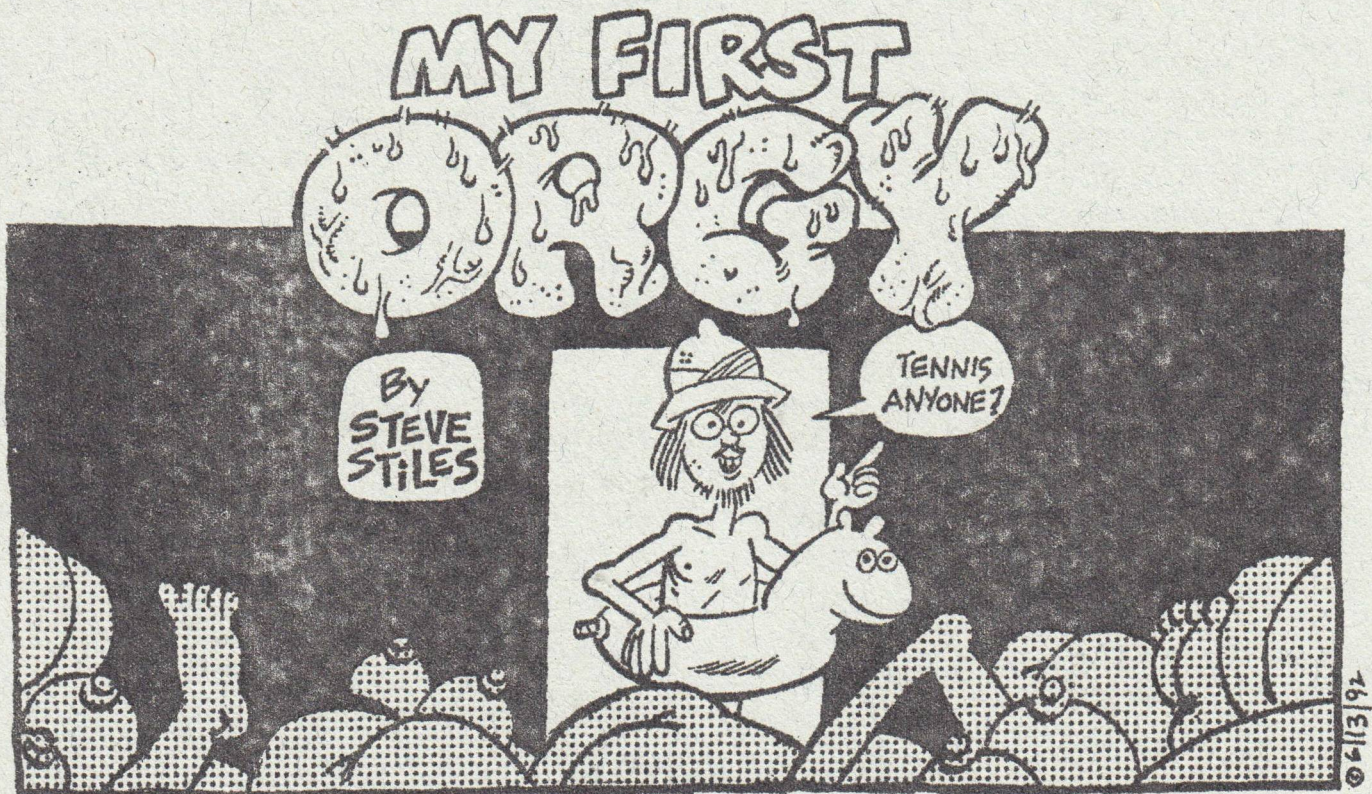
time and they showed me the company library. I discovered why the soldiers in the field had such little selection in reading material. The REMF's hoarded the best for themselves. I saw shelves and shelves of paperbacks. Remembering the anthology, I took every science fiction book I could find, novels by Isaac Asimov, Robert Heinlein, Clifford Simak. Having served my time as a grunt, I felt no guilt. I felt only distaste for the REMF's who'd been nothing else.

Twenty years later, I've never reread the stories in the science fiction anthology. I rarely reference the pocket dictionary anymore. They occupy space in my bookshelf, wedged between other more presentable paperbacks. Their covers, on which I had first judged them, are faded and stained, tattered and torn. The spine of the anthology is bent, broken by other readers, but all the pages remain attached. The books kept my imagination alive and passed the time, when time was the enemy.

Their sentimental value to me far exceeds their cover price. ♦♦



☞ Quite often when we're planning an issue of *Mimosa*, we receive pleasantly anecdotal and entertaining articles and essays that are also somewhat personal and autobiographical in nature. David Thayer's Vietnam remembrances is a case in point, as is the following article, which was brought on by a fan panel we appeared on during last year's Philcon convention.



Before I get to the actual orgy part, I'd like to provide a little background material and explain that the impetus for this article came about when my wife Elaine and I attended 1991's Philcon and caught Linda Bushyager's panel on Amusing Incidents in fandom. This is not when and where the actual orgy happened, I hasten to mention; no, that was many years ago when I was younger and unwed, in the era before AIDS, in the more benevolent era of syphilis, herpes, gonorrhea, rectal warts, yeast infections, and crabs. Of course, all that is still with us, only now we have to be careful.

As for Linda's panel, for some reason or other, most of the humorous anecdotes revolved around either food or sex. (And why not? At least one of those topics can be pretty funny.) Eventually somebody mentioned an event that involved both food *and* sex; naturally I refer to the famous Disclave sto-

ry, the Bathtub Full of Lime Jello Event. There are so many differing versions of this story going around that if I believed them all, you were all there... so why even mention it? But you weren't all there, and in reality there were just three sluts of differing sexes slithering around in this particular children's dessert.

But, if there were others present, and some of them were hucksters, what happened to the jello *afterwards*? Two bucks a baggie isn't unreasonable...

After the panel, we got together with a crowd of fans, including Linda and the Lynches, for an absolutely abysmal attempt at 'Chinese' cuisine -- it was one of those places where you don't want to finish your fried dumplings and you desperately yearn for some ketchup. Maybe the 'meal' was a reminder, but it brought to mind my own

experience with both food and sex, my first orgy. So right away, you know you don't have anything to envy...

It happened in the early '70s, about two breakups with women who had been very important in my life; about a year after my divorce, and four months after the dissolution of a perfect union between two bodies and two minds, a time of warm sensitivity, blissful sensuality, sharing, and lava lamps. This sensitive time only ended when Rene split with that damned porno film maker. Well, at least the divorce had been a big relief! Even so, there was a time when I mourned for the lost potential of the ideal of our marriage rather than the grim reality itself; there was the feeling that there was something I overlooked, something more I could've done. Like maybe submit. But as for the woman who had "replaced" my wife, I had been absolutely smitten with her to the extent of once even buying a pair of Earth Shoes. My morale had soared only later to do a sandpaper belly-flop in an arc describing the perfect bell curve from hell. Subsequently, I felt a distance from other people and my relationships with women in the following months tended to be casual to the extent of just boinking and never, ever, had a thing to do with pornographic movies -- not even for pointers.

I remember the breakup moment. I had been selling off part of my comics collection at one of Phil Seuling's comics cons in New York, trying to raise money for dental bills not covered by my insurance. I was stationed in the huckster room with a few boxes of fairly ordinary comics on the table in front of me, and a box of the truly valuable "stock" by my feet. This included the very first comic with a Spiderman story, *Amazing Fantasy* #15, which is worth over a thousand dollars today. And there I sat until the moment that my loved one made an unexpected appearance. "Uh, Steve, we, uh, have to talk," she began nervously. "I love you too, my precious darling!" I interjected, beaming with yearning affection at the woman who was at

the very center of my entire pitiful existence, even excluding art, money, and comic books -- her sweet cute little body seemingly enveloped in a rosy, throbbing glow of metaphysical estrogen. (Whew!)

"*I want you to know that we'll always be friends,*" she began again. Sometime after that I was enveloped in another kind of haze, more like a daze, or thick black sludge, and the next thing I knew, I was watching my friend's back recede through the exit. I never saw her again.

I never saw *Amazing Fantasy* #15 again either, because during the stuporous few moments that this little poignant and heart-breaking trauma was taking place, some soulless pig's bladder, realizing that this was his Big Chance, had crawled under the table and stole it. Over time, the feeling of "How could she do this to me?" was superseded by "Jeez, I'd sure like to beat on the thieving bastard with a baseball bat!" Maybe for that reason I should feel grateful to the swine. But I don't.

The one consolation is that the state of his consciousness was his own best punishment. Oh yeah.

You know, just as a long aside, some comics fans are truly low scum -- and perhaps the Swine Index is higher than some comparable group in "our" fandom. It feels funny stating that, particularly in light of the fact that I am now a comic book illustrator and writer, making my living entertaining these people. When I was a young comics fan, my collecting urge sprang from an appreciation of the quality of a particular artist, writer, or comic, as well as the usual anal completist impulse. But for some of today's comics collectors, that interest extends to the monetary value of a particular "product" and has nothing to do with its *true* value. Anyway, I attended my next, and last, Seuling convention for the sole purpose of seeing an old friend and comics pro, Joe Staton. It was going to be a brief meeting because I had

other things to do that day, but since I hadn't seen Joe for many months, I felt it was worth the effort. It took some time to find him and when I did, it turned out that Joe was scheduled to be on a panel in twenty minutes, a panel which I wouldn't be able to attend. We had just barely gotten beyond saying hello when some young fan butted in with an aggressive "Are *you* anybody?" I started to explain that in the Lord's eye we are *all* somebody, but the words were hardly out of my mouth when he noticed Joe's namebadge and, elbowing the nonentity aside, began to suck up to Joe for some free artwork. He was Joe's Biggest Fan, he said, and he felt Honored to be in His Presence. His life would be complete, he said, if only Joe would be kind and generous enough to bestow upon him an autographed drawing of Joe's character E-Man, his very favorite comic book character of all time. He went on and on in this vein and, needless to say, as the clock ticked away, I was hardly able to get a word in edgewise. Finally, Joe produced the drawing just in time to leave for his panel. The kid scuttled away, and Joe and I said our goodbyes. I spent fifteen minutes in the art show and then headed for the elevator. As I rode down, I noticed two other young fans -- one of them was excitedly displaying a drawing to the other; "Wow, look at this!" he beamed, "Some guy just sold me an autographed original and it only cost me twenty-five bucks!"

It was Joe's E-Man drawing.

Oh well. Back to the main topic, sex. There I was, feeling emotionally detached and not ready for any solid relationships -- stewing in my own juices, in fact. And then, one Saturday night, the phone rang. It was a woman I shall call "Nancy," a con fan living with her lover, "Sluggo." I didn't know Nancy and Sluggo that well; we were in different fan clubs and Sluggo was so involved in con and club politics that it tended to exclude anything (like fanzines) beyond his obsessions. Besides, Sluggo, although a neutral in

our marital breakup, had provided my wife with a place to stay after our split (she had rewarded him by providing me with a lot of hot gossip about his personal life). I didn't hold it against Sluggo, but there was a bit of awkwardness between us. And now here was Nancy inviting me to a small party at their place. I was bored, it was an opportunity to demonstrate that there were no grudges, and so I accepted. Nancy went on to say that the party was going to be on the following night, a Sunday. That was awkward; a long commute was involved and I had to get up early for work on Monday. Nancy suggested that I crash at their place and then leave for work the next morning. That made sense, so I agreed.

Then Nancy explained that five people from Canada would be attending; two men and three women. They were anxious to have an equal number of the sexes present because the main purpose of the party was to engage in communal copulation. There would be swapping as the evening went on. And how did I feel about that?

Uhhh... I didn't know how I felt about that; up until then I had never even entertained the possibility of participating in an orgy. I thought that only happened to other people, mostly in sweaty paperbacks, or in California. And if Nancy had brought the subject up at the beginning of the conversation, I would've probably weaseled out of it. I was never one for group sports, always the last chosen in baseball. Perhaps the last chosen in an orgy. In a long pause, I considered the cons and pros of group fucking with strangers.

The Cons:

- (1) I'm shy. I didn't even know these people.
- (2) I didn't even know these people; suppose they were physically repulsive?
- (3) Suppose I was physically repulsive?

- (4) I wasn't sure if orgies were Politically Correct. As King of the Feminists, I have to be aware of these things at all times.
- (5) I'm shy. Suppose I couldn't get it up? That would be embarrassing!
- (6) Nancy and Sluggo had a tiny bedroom in a tiny apartment. They were lousy housekeepers and it had probably been ages since the rug had been cleaned.

The Pros:

- (1) As an Artist, it was my Artistic Duty to explore all aspects of the Human Condition. (This was years before the NEA and Jesse Helms.)
- (2) It might be *fun*!

The pros had it.

The Night of the Orgy

The night of the orgy arrived and so did the people from Canada. The unknown was ready but I wasn't; my hands were sweating and icy. We were all a little nervous, unsure of ourselves and how to proceed. I was happy to note that none of us could be properly described as repulsive, with the possible exception of Sluggo. In fact, the one unpaired woman in our group was rather attractive. And I noticed that the living room floor was as cramped and dust-bunny ridden as I had expected. If the orgy was going to be simultaneous, as orgies are supposed to be, then our activities might have to be choreographed, a regular Busby Berkley number; "Okay, now on the count of three, we all roll to the left -- people on top mind the table legs!"

But it might be fun. Even table legs can have their uses.

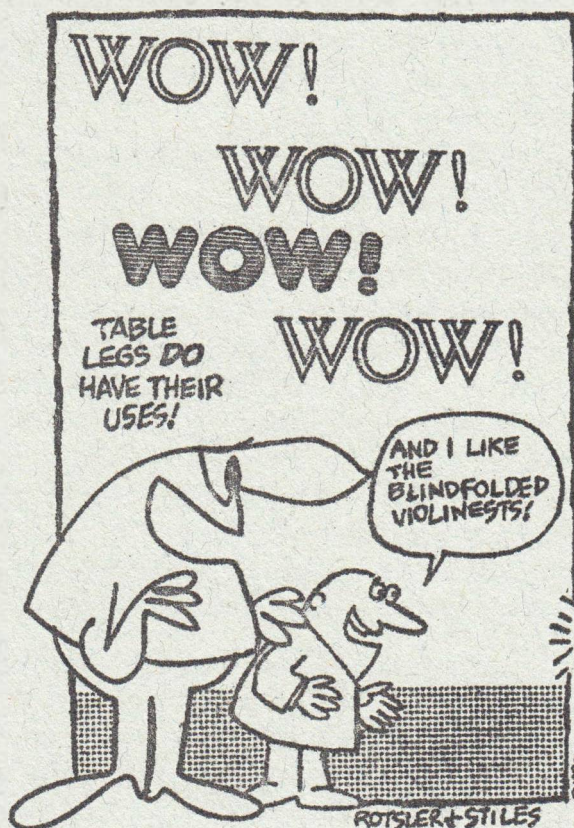
We were still a bit nervous. To break the ice it was decided that we all have dinner together at a local restaurant around the corner. And when we got there, seven of us ordered oysters -- nudge, nudge, wink, wink.

But I didn't like seafood then, and had a steak. Conversation flowed, and it all began to feel more relaxed. The unattached woman, Jane, looked cuter and cuter, and we began to hit it off. I began looking forward to our adventure back at the apartment. I began to feel that this would truly be a night to remember...

It was. Shortly after getting back, one of the men paled and then dashed for Nancy's bathroom. Unpleasant sounds reached us. Before long, six other people became violently ill. I felt fine, but then I didn't have ptomaine poisoning. It was the oysters, of course.

Dawn saw me still in the local emergency room, surrounded by greenishly-tinged people, and holding hands with a weeping Jane. Periodically, one or more of our group would make a dash for the restrooms. It was going to be a *long* day at work. So much for radical sexual experimentation!

All in all, I'd say that my first orgy was a definite anticlimax. ♦♦



☞ In this issue, we've tried to present a mini-anthology of stories about how events from our pasts have influenced the way we are today. Something we haven't mentioned yet, and maybe the biggest influence of all, is the persistence of friendship, especially during trying circumstances. The following article is a remembrance of one of those times.



This is a story about how I won -- and lost -- a bet. The bet was with Harlan Ellison, and it was his idea. He was wrong and I was right, and in the end it didn't matter.

The year was 1960. My first wife, Sylvia, and I had moved to New York City in the summer of 1959, finding -- after several weeks of searching -- a pleasant five-room apartment in the west Village, a block away from Sheridan Square on Christopher Street. The apartment was on the fourth floor of a five-floor building that had no elevator -- good for catching a vagrant breeze on a hot summer's day, but lousy for easily coming and going. Those four flights of stairs could get to you after you'd been up and down them a few times.

Harlan moved back to New York City, after a year or two's stay in Chicago, in the spring of 1960. He had been editor on Bill Hamling's *Rogue* magazine, one of the few *Playboy* imitators to make a serious job of

it. (Hamling had been offered a 50% ownership in *Playboy* when Hefner started that magazine, but turned the opportunity down and had been kicking himself ever since. *Rogue*, once a pulpish 35¢ men's-sweat magazine, was transformed in 1959 into a slick competitor to *Playboy*.) As a struggling young writer, I'd been submitting short items to both *Playboy* and *Rogue* (my first sale -- at 50¢ a word! -- was in fact to *Playboy*), and had been getting back rejection notes from Harlan (although he did send me a check for a *five word* sale -- the title for an article *Rogue* used which I'd suggested to him at the 1959 Worldcon -- in the sum of 25¢). So perhaps that is why, when Harlan returned to New York City, he moved in with us until he found a place of his own.

Of course, I'd known Harlan for some years by then. We'd corresponded in the early fifties, and he'd contributed to my fanzines of that era. (I in turn had illustrated a story for his fanzine in 1953 -- and

in retrospect I'm damned grateful neither the story nor my awful illos were ever published; Harlan had a massive file of unpublished material when he gave up putting out fanzines.) We met in 1955 at the first Worldcon I attended, and saw each other on and off in the years which followed, usually at conventions.

I held Harlan in awe in those days. He had enormous energy, and it fueled not only his talents (as a writer, editor, and -- now mostly forgotten -- cartoonist), but his activities. A trip to a restaurant or a store with Harlan was an entertainment, with Harlan the Master of Ceremonies and Star. Harlan decided at the 1955 Cleveland Worldcon to help George Young select and purchase a tie at a nearby men's store, and led half a dozen of us along on a short walk to the store. Along the way we encountered a construction project: men digging a deep hole in the street. Immediately Harlan took charge, issuing directions to the men in the hole and to the growing crowd of bystanders. He was funny, and



he had all of us -- fans, workers, passers-by -- in the palms of his hands. There was applause when he was done and turned to continue to the store. Although he was only a few years older than I, there was a huge gap between us in terms of experience and knowledge and I looked up to him.

By 1960 I was no longer a callow high school kid but the gap remained. Harlan had by then sold dozens of stories and one or two books, served a tumultuous stint in the Army, been married and divorced, and had been working at *Rogue*. And he had no less energy. He seemed to sleep in half the time most people did, and to use the extra time to write new stories. He could write anywhere. In later years he would write stories in store windows and at Worldcons. I watched him write "Daniel White for the Greater Good" (an excellent story) in my living room, in the midst of a party, pausing every two or three pages to announce, "Listen to this!" and then read us what he'd just written. I learned from Harlan how to write finished copy cold, in a single draft.

My own career was just starting to take off at this point. I'd joined the staff of *Metronome* magazine, then the world's oldest (and best) jazz magazine, which had resumed publication in the spring of 1960 after a six-month hiatus, during which a new publisher and production staff had been found. My article on Ornette Coleman -- then a very controversial and misunderstood figure in jazz -- was the cover story in the first new issue of *Metronome*, and earned me a lot of respect in the field when Coleman said (in print) that I was the first to understand what he was doing. This led in turn to my becoming a columnist for Ted Wilson's *Jazz Guide*, getting liner-note assignments, and covering a wide range of jazz concerts and events for *Metronome*, for which I also reviewed books and records.

One major event was the Newport Jazz Festival, still held then in Newport, Rhode Island. Sylvia and I drove up, along with *Metronome*'s associate editor, Bob Perlongo, to find Newport a scene of near-chaos. George Wein (festival manager) refused to honor my *Metronome* credentials despite Perlongo and *Metronome*'s editor,

Bill Coss, vouching for me in person, so Sylvia and I drove a mile away to the Cliff Walk Manor, where an insurgent jazz festival was being held, featuring Charles Mingus, Max Roach, and Ornette Coleman. The streets along the way were full of rowdy college-age kids (some were mooning passersby in the mid-afternoon) and beer cans littered the sidewalks. During the evening's concert at Cliff Walk Manor, our eyes began stinging and we discovered that the police had been using tear gas at the main festival, a mile away, in what turned out to be a riot by kids outside the festival walls. We left after the concert, driving up to Boston to stay with our friends at the Ivory Birdbath in Cambridge. I called Harlan (who was then still living in our apartment) to tell him what had happened.

"Geeze, Ted," Harlan exclaimed. "That's a great story. Why don't you write it up for *Rogue*? I'll call Frank Robinson and set it up for you."

This led directly to my first major sale to *Rogue*, "Riot At Newport." It wasn't, as I wrote it, a very good piece. But Harlan rewrote the lead, and Frank edited it into acceptability. (I've said it before and I'd like to say it again: Frank Robinson is the best editor I've ever had. He turned my dross into gold, and always claimed: "It was all in your piece, Ted; I just rearranged a few things." I learned a great deal just by studying the changes he made, and my subsequent sales to *Rogue* appeared pretty much as written.)

That summer Harlan found his own apartment -- three doors up the street, in a building with an elevator. And he met a woman, Linda Solomon, who also lived in the same building. Linda would go on to a career of her own in writing and editing, but that was mostly ahead of her in 1960.

Linda had a small but well-selected record collection, containing a goodly amount of jazz. One of the records she had

was a premium offered by Tom Wilson. Now, Tom is worth an article in his own right. He started up a very important small jazz label while he was still in college -- earning an MBA at Harvard. The record company, Transition, was essentially his thesis project, but it also released the first albums by people like Sun Ra and Cecil Taylor, and all Transition lps are collectors' items now, going for hundreds of dollars apiece.

In late 1959, Tom, with a partner, began doing jazz radio programming in New York City. They leased six hours an evening -- six pm to midnight -- on a local FM station, and presented some of the big names among jazz critics, like Nat Hentoff, in one-hour shows, every week-night. I listened to it regularly and subscribed to the program guide, *Jazz Guide*. The first issue of *Jazz Guide* came out the same week as the first revived issue of *Metro-nome*, and Tom liked my work in *Metro-nome* so much that he called me up and invited me to write for *Jazz Guide*, which is how I met and got to know him. (I also subsequently introduced Harlan to him, and Harlan became another columnist for *Jazz Guide*.)

The radio thing did not last -- Tom and his partner had a falling out -- and Tom dropped radio to get into publishing (he started up a magazine designed to be sold at record stores, called *33 Guide*, to which both Harlan and I contributed reviews) and return to record producing, first for United Artists and Savoy, and later for Verve, where he produced the first Mothers of Invention album (adding 'of Invention' to their name).

But while Tom and his partner were promoting their jazz radio programming, they offered albums as premiums to program-guide subscribers. The albums were in blank, white jackets, but the actual lps inside (obtained very cheaply sans covers)

were a jazz sampler issued five or six years earlier on the Period label.

And Linda had one. So did I, but mine had the original Period cover, complete with liner notes and personnel listings for each track, since I'd bought it (for \$1.98) when it first came out. Tom offered me one of the ones he was sending out, but I turned it down; I didn't need another copy, much less one with a blank cover.

I tried to tell Harlan that when he came over one Friday afternoon to rave to me about Linda's copy of the album, which he'd just heard.

"Great stuff, Ted. There's lotsa old historical tracks. There's one with Mildred Baily singing with the John Lewis orchestra!"

"With who?"

"With John Lewis! You know, the pianist in the Modern Jazz Quartet! I know you like him, Ted -- you've got most of his albums!"

In fact his "European Windows" and "Golden Striker" albums were heavy favorites of mine then. "You don't mean John Lewis," I said. "John Lewis never played with Mildred Baily. You're thinking of John Kirby. She sang with *him* on those 1939 tracks."

"No, Ted," Harlan insisted. "John Lewis. It was John Lewis she sang with."

I tried to explain that Lewis' first recordings were done after WW2, with the Dizzy Gillespie Big Band, and that in 1939 he was probably still in school somewhere. Then I hauled out my copy of the Period sampler, to prove my point.

But Harlan was not impressed. "This isn't the same album, Ted," he said, with only a glance at the jacket. "I'm right, I know I'm right, and you know I'm right."

"Aw, come on, Harlan," I said. "You know you're wrong. You got the names wrong, that's all. It was John Kirby. She sang with him for years."

"Oh, yeah? You wanna bet? Huh? You wanna bet on it? Come on, Ted -- you know you're right, so let's bet on it, okay?"

"I don't want to bet on it, Harlan. I'd win, so what's the point?"

But Harlan insisted. Harlan can be very insistent. "I'll tell you what," he said. "I'll bet my entire record collection against one record in your collection, your 10-inch X-label album by the Original Dixieland Jass Band!" This album documents the earliest known 'jazz' recordings, circa 1917, albeit by white musicians. The 10-inch lp was issued in the very early fifties by RCA Victor on its jazz-historical X label, and was by then itself of some historical importance. I consider the music on it of little value (others have other opinions) except as a historical document, but at that time I was trying to build a major jazz collection (in part to make me a more-rounded jazz critic), and the album was important to me for that reason. Harlan's collection, on the other hand, was as big as mine (over one thousand lps), and did not overlap it too much. He had a lot of classical albums I didn't then have, and a lot of the more or less 'hip' popular albums as well. He had one album that I really wanted, because I'd never seen it anywhere else (and still haven't to this day): a Johnny Mathis album arranged by some of the top jazz arrangers of the day, like Gil Evans. It was tempting to think of owning Harlan's collection.

Harlan did not drop the issue until I said, "Okay, Harlan, if you want a bet, you've got a bet." When Sylvia came in, he excitedly repeated the whole story to her, re-emphasizing the bet. One record in my collection, against his entire collection.

Sylvia got excited. "When can we collect?" she asked.

"We can't *settle* the bet," Harlan said, gently correcting her (Harlan liked Sylvia quite a lot), "until Monday, because Linda is away for the weekend. Monday we'll get together and go over to her place and look at her record and settle the bet."

"Is this a *real* bet?" Sylvia asked.

"Yeah, Harlan," I said. "No hanky-panky, now. You don't go over first and alter the label or anything."

"Aw, come on, Ted! Do you think I'd do a thing like that? This is a *serious* bet, man!"

Boyd Raeburn was in town that weekend, and at one point a crowd of us were in a subway car when the story of the bet came up again, Harlan excitedly telling Boyd about it. By now the stakes had escalated again: Harlan was betting not only his entire record collection, but his custom-made record cabinets as well. I watched all this with numb amazement. It was beginning to dawn on me that I was going to win *a lot*.

I'd had vague doubts. Although I *knew* it was John Kirby and not John Lewis -- and I had my own copy of the record to back me up -- Harlan was so dead-set insistent that I couldn't help wondering if, maybe, possibly, there had been a typographical error on the radio-premium copies (maybe the reason they'd sat in a warehouse somewhere for years), or some other explanation that could cost me the bet. After all, it was *Linda's* copy of the album that would decide the bet, and I'd never seen her specific copy.

If Harlan had wanted to drop the bet, if he'd come up to me and said, quietly, "You know, I think I'm wrong -- I don't want to bet on it any more," I'd have let it drop. I was embarrassed by the lopsidedness of the stakes. And winning the bet

would be like taking candy from a baby. It wasn't right.

But on both Saturday and Sunday, Harlan reiterated the bet. It made a good story and he told it well, to a number of people on a number of occasions. And every time he told it within my hearing, I believed a little more that it was really going to happen: I was going to win Harlan's entire record collection and cabinets! I started to feel lust for that collection. I began planning how I'd rearrange my living room to make space for his cabinets, handsome furniture in their own right.

In the back of my own head, I knew this was not good: too close to stealing. I'll winnow out the records I really want and he can keep the rest, I decided, full of magnanimous feelings.

Monday dawned. Harlan phoned. He was at Linda's and I should come on over, he said, his voice gleeful. *He was already at Linda's*. I was filled with foreboding as I went up to her apartment.

Linda greeted me at the door and I went in to find Harlan sprawled in a nearby chair. Without comment, Linda held out the album to me. I slid the record out of its blank jacket and looked at the label. There, neatly typed in the distinctive face of Harlan's Olivetti, was a thin strip of paper taped over the record label that said, 'Mildred Baily with John Lewis & His Orchestra'. I turned the record over; there was a second Mildred Baily cut on the other side. Here, too, was a typed line taped over the actual credit: 'John Lewis Again, Ha ha'.

I looked at Harlan with what I believe was sorrow in my expression. "You promised you wouldn't do this," I said.

"Yeah," he said, crestfallen. "Well, you know." He fished out his keys.

"Here," he said, and handed them to me. "I don't want to watch."

Do you have any idea what's involved in moving 1,000 lbs? They're heavy. You can't lift a stack of much more than fifty albums at a time, especially if you plan to carry it up four flights of stairs. Sylvia had asthma and tried to climb those stairs as infrequently as possible. I couldn't ask her to help carry the records. So I called up Larry Ivie, who was the only other person I could think of then who wasn't tied to a rigid work schedule (he was a struggling artist), and he came to help.

It was summertime in New York City. None of us had air conditioning, except maybe Linda. I don't recall it being a terrifically hot day, but it was warm enough. With Sylvia holding fort in our apartment and Harlan watching forlornly from his, Larry and I began the long and arduous task of carrying stacks of records from Harlan's to my place.

Midway through the task, Sylvia, Larry, and I agreed that once we had everything in our place, we'd tell Harlan he could have it back -- but that he'd have to carry it himself.

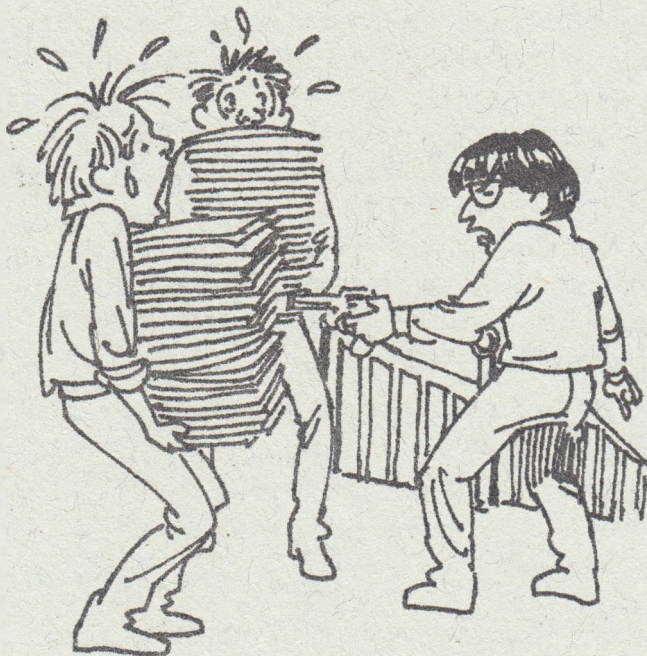
I knew I couldn't keep his collection and cabinets. It was a silly bet. Hell, it was a *stupid* bet, compounded by Harlan taking an advance peek (Linda, it turned out, had gotten back Sunday evening, as Harlan had known she would), and, upon realizing he'd lost the bet he'd foisted upon me, typing up those silly, obvious, taped-over labels. Harlan should be taught a lesson, we agreed -- but he should get his stuff back.

By now, Harlan's records were in stacks covering much of my living room floor, the cabinets soon to follow. I'd pushed furniture to the side to make room.

I'd arrived at the top of the stairs at my floor with another stack of records, Larry Ivie just ahead of me, when I heard quick steps on the stairs behind me. I was still holding the stack of records, about to set them down on the floor, when Harlan burst through the open door behind me.

He was brandishing a gun. It was a small revolver, and I'd seen it once before when he'd shown me his 'lecturing exhibit', of a gun, a switchblade, and brass knucks, which he kept in a box in his closet.

"Okay, Ted," Harlan snarled. "Fun's over. Pick that stuff up and take it back to my apartment -- and I mean now!"



He'd been looking more and more disheartened each time we'd taken another stack of records from his apartment, but I'd never expected this. He had snapped. He'd been watching his prized collection disappear, for all he knew for good, probably kicking himself for ever getting into the whole thing, and at some point his disappointment had turned to anger. Perhaps it

had been addressed initially at himself, but by the time he appeared in my apartment, waving his gun, his anger was directed at us.

"Don't make me shoot you, Ted," he said. "I'll aim at your legs, but if I hit your knees that's very painful." His revolver looked like and probably was a .22, but from a distance of eight to ten feet, it could not only be fairly certain of hitting me, but might do significant damage. And Harlan appeared to be in a state in which he'd not hesitate to shoot. It was the first time in my life a gun had been pointed at me, and to this day the scariest.

I'd never seen Harlan like this, in such a rage. He could easily go over the top, I thought. He'd demonstrated the capability to do so in other situations, ones that didn't involve me or guns.

"We were going to give them all back to you, Harlan," Sylvia said.

"I know you are -- right now!" Harlan responded. "Pick some up," he said to Larry, who had been watching all this with a bemused look on his face.

I was still holding the stack of records I'd just carried up. "Here," I said, thrusting them at Harlan. "You take them."

He dodged back. "No, Ted," he said, "I've got the gun. You carry the records. All of them. Back to my place. Now!"

So Larry and I carried all the records -- over two-thirds of Harlan's collection -- back to Harlan's apartment. Back down all those stairs (and back up again for more). We were covered with sweat, and getting more and more pissed at Harlan, who wasn't being 'taught a lesson' after all, but who was autocratically directing us with a gun. (Harlan waited in my apartment until the last load went out; Linda held fort at

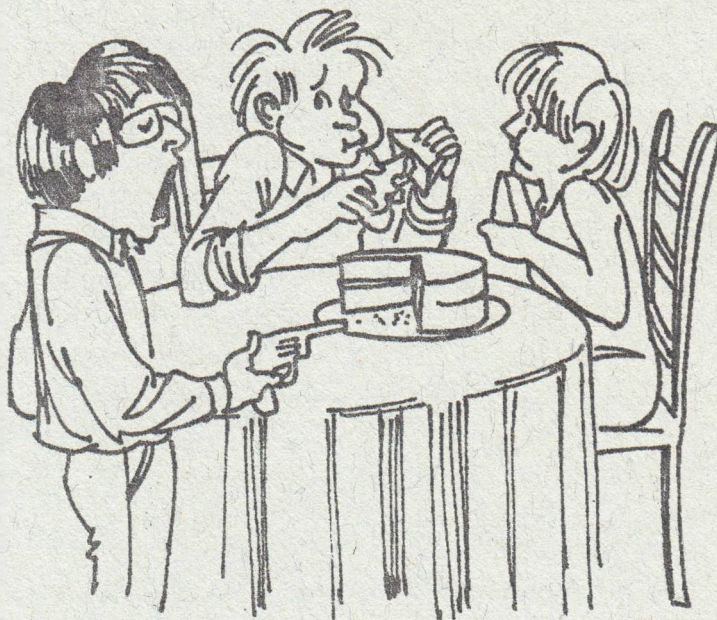
his apartment, giving us sympathetic looks but otherwise staying out of it.)

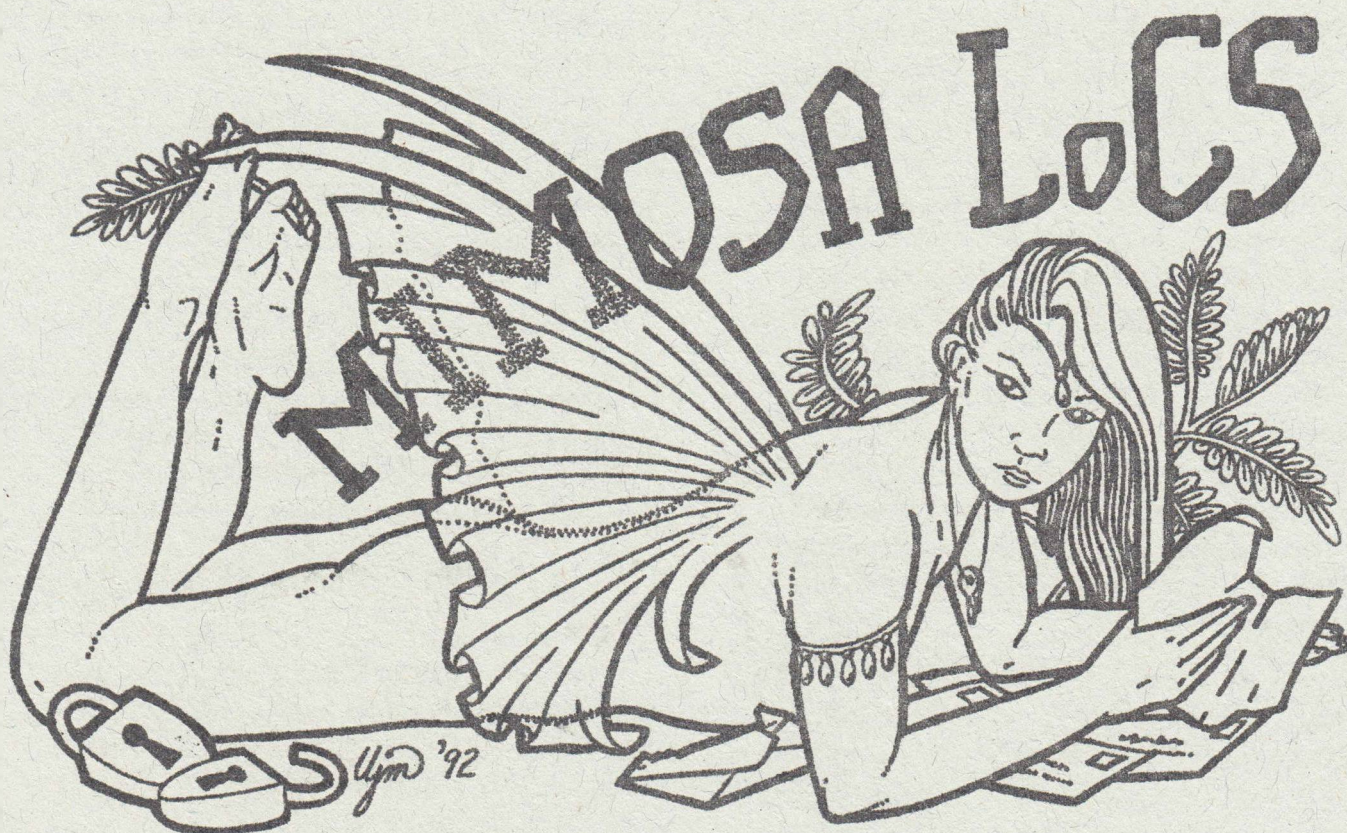
That's pretty much how the bet ended. I'd won, and I'd lost. I'd enjoyed a brief roller-coaster ride of emotions as I'd contemplated and then lusted after Harlan's collection, and I'd put in half a day's physical labor, carrying records back and forth with the unfortunate (to be caught up in this) Larry Ivie. It had been a joke gone sour, all around. Harlan had lost, too. He'd lost a lot of my respect for him -- not for pushing a stupid bet in the first place, but for the way he'd handled it at the end. He should have carried the records back, at the very least.

We fed Larry an early dinner, in gratitude for all he'd done and gone through, and were sitting around feeling depressed and let down when the phone rang.

It was Harlan. He was apologetic. The gun, he said, had been unloaded. I'd never been in any real danger. He was sorry and he wanted to make it up to us. Come on over, he said. He'd bought a cake to share with us as a peace offering.

It was a good cake. ➡





☞ Lots of interesting mail came our way on *Mimosa* 11, but before we get to it, we want to clear up a misconception concerning the *A Wealth of Fable* project. Please note: we are not the book's publisher; copies of the book can be ordered (for \$25 each) from: SCIFI Press, P.O. Box 8442, Van Nuys, California 91409. Part of the confusion may have been the relatively high profile Dick assumed as editor for the new edition, but the project was conceived and financed by the Southern California Institute for Fan Interests. Any and all comments (and congratulations) should go to SCIFI, as well as the book's author, Harry Warner, Jr.

Another thing we want to mention is that we've unfortunately had to reconsider our earlier decision to stand for the 1993 Down Under Fan Fund. We are disappointed to come to this conclusion, especially since we've gotten considerable support from many people, in both North America and Australia. It's entirely a mat-

ter of not enough available personal leave time in 1993 for a four-week trip, if we had won. But we're not giving up the idea of visiting Australia -- there will be other opportunities and DUFF elections in the future.

Finally, we once again ask you to notice that our postal box number did change late last year -- it's now P.O. Box 1350. We're still getting mail and fanzines addressed to our previous postal box number. The U.S. Postal Service will eventually decide to return to sender as undeliverable all mail addressed to our previous postal box, so please -- make sure our postal box number is correct in your address list!

Meanwhile, the ravages of inflation continue to affect the ever-increasing length of our letters column. Thanks to everyone who commented on the issue, and to those who sent fanzines in trade. First up are comments about Dave Kyle's remembrances of "The Most Noble and Illustrious Order of St. Fantony"...

Lloyd Penney, 412-4 Lisa Street,
Brampton, Ontario L6T 4B6, Canada

The Order of St. Fantony has been on the edge of my earshot for several Worldcons now, but I felt that exclusivity would keep it from my attention -- until now. Exclusive perhaps, but a reward for the legions before me who have fanned and left their mark. I suspect that should Glasgow win the 1995 Worldcon, a fabulous reunion of the Knights upon their home turf would take place.

In your letters column, Martin Morse Wooster's letter about fanbooks answers a few questions for me. I wish the remainders of these print runs could be purchased and sold through a central dealer, perhaps someone like Bob Madle. I remember picking up Fred Pohl's *The Way the Future Was* on remainder at a bookstore in downtown Toronto for three or four bucks. A copy of John Robert Colombo's *Years of Light* (about Canadian fan publisher Leslie Croutch) went for \$2.99. I bought my copy of *All Our Yesterdays* at Noreascon 3 for \$12, and that's about all I've been able to find. That's why I look forward to *A Wealth of Fable* when it's available.

{{☞ Keep your eyes open, because many of the fan history-related books that have been mentioned here are still available. For instance, the remaindered copies of Terry Carr's *Fandom Harvest* are available from Jerry Kaufman in Seattle. We picked up a copy at Corflu, and wouldn't be surprised to find it at Worldcon. }}

Also, in my letter of comment, I said that when I got into fandom, no one was vocal about fanzines. That wasn't quite true -- a few people were somewhat vocal about them, like Jim Allen, Taral, Cathy Crockett, and Alan Rosenthal, but they were so distanced from the new group of which I was a part that they never bothered to dirty themselves with our presence. However, a short excursion through Mike Wallis' fanzine collection, combined with Marc Ortlieb sending me early issues of *Q36*, piqued my interest.

Eventually, Cathy and Alan sent me issues of *Carefully Sedated*, but my early attempts at locating zines Mike loaned me, plus the generosity of fanzines from folks like Scott Dennis, Michael Hailstone, Garth Spencer, Lan, Marc Ortlieb, Charlotte Proctor, and Jean Weber, got me moving. Local influence was nearly nil.

{{☞ Getting into fanzines has become difficult, as they are no longer part of the definition of a fan. Fans today don't seem organized into clubs, but into committees to run conventions. We feel lucky to be in an area where there is still a traditional club with a clubzine. }}

Finally, a comment that I'm sure many readers have made so far -- the fan artists have written many of the articles here. Craig Hilton, Ian Gunn, David Thayer, and Sheryl Birkhead step outside of their usual roles. Perhaps the usual fan writers will be illustrating the articles nextish?

George Flynn, P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142

I knew Dave Kyle's list of St. Fantony ceremonies was incomplete, since I recalled seeing one at Noreascon 1 in 1971 (it was the 'entertainment' during the Masquerade intermission). So I dug *way* down into my files of old newszines, and came up with the following: at the Noreascon 1 ceremony, Bob Pavlat was initiated as a member, and at Heicon the year before, a special ceremony initiated Molly Auler, Mario Bosnyak, Bill Burns, Manfred Kage, Axel Melhardt, and Don Wollheim. (Sources: *Locus* 95 and *Locus* 62 respectively; I didn't try checking reports on any other conventions.)

Martin Morse Wooster's item about Fred Chappell was interesting. On a possibly similar note, a couple of weeks ago the *Boston Sunday Globe* had a lead book review with the following author bio: "Michael Gorra teaches English at Smith College and

is the author of *The English Novel at Mid-Century*." Anyone know if this could be the Mike Gorra who was a faned?

Martin writes that "...many larger cons are actively discouraging fans under the age of 18 from attending the con without a parent in attendance." I don't know what's happening elsewhere, but Boskone adopted that policy for only one year (we lost our hotel largely because of teenage rowdiness, and had to downsize drastically in a hurry); some people never got the word that it was temporary, though. But certainly at Boskone and some other cons there's been a reorientation of programming that has the effect of making the cons less attractive to many teenagers, without the need for an explicit policy barring them. And the cultural generation gap is wide enough that it's hard to avoid this.

As for Harry Warner's comment that clubzines are usually edited by older fans, I suspect that's mostly demographics rather than discrimination: the younger fans aren't around, or aren't interested. (But I can think of exceptions, where the younger fans didn't know enough not to volunteer...)

{{☞ As we mentioned above, there don't seem to be many SF clubs or clubzines anymore, at least that are very visible to outsiders. Many younger fans may also be "on the nets" and inaccessible to those of us without access. Some people feel that talking on-line may replace fanzines and apas, since those forms of communication are too slow. }}



Ken Cheslin, 10 Coney Green, Stourbridge, West Midlands DY8 1LA, England

I've often wondered what happened to St. Fantony; it used to be a lot of fun, and as they used to hold open house at cons, it served as a useful intro to fandom for many a neo. A pity it died out, but maybe the times/fandom changed too much. I remember how flattered I felt at the '65 Worldcon because Dave Kyle took such an interest in me. Then I discovered that he had been deputised to keep an eye on me, to make sure I turned up for the Ceremonie...

Darroll Pardoe, 36 Hamilton Street, Hoole, Chester CH2 3JQ, England

I found Dave Kyle's article about St. Fantony rather strange, too much of an eulogy. When the St. Fantony ceremonial was revived in the mid-sixties, it came back into a British fandom which had changed considerably in the three or four years it had been away. A lot of new fans had come on the scene in that time (the original Birmingham Group for instance) and they did have a habit of expressing their impatience with the older fans quite vocally from time to time. St. Fantony meant nothing to them.

I always regarded the ceremonial as a bit of harmless fun, but there's no denying that in the mid-sixties, in the fannish circles I was moving in, a lot of negative things were said about St. Fantony, even to the extent of regarding the revival as an attempt by the 'old guard' to keep the younger and newer fans in their place. The Doc Weir award came in for similar criticism for very much the same reason. I think that the broad claims made by the St. Fantony people (and for the Doc Weir award) to recognise merit and hard work among fans were compared with the people who were actually initiated or voted in, and found wanting. Now I'm not saying that there actually was any intention to create some sort of elite group: I'm sure there was-

n't. But it was perceived that way by many.

And, to be honest, the initiation ceremonies I witnessed at conventions were just embarrassing to watch, and the fact that they were promoted as an important part of the convention programme just reinforced the perception that St. Fantasy had an over-inflated idea of its own importance in a fandom that was now much bigger, and greatly changed.

I don't think St. Fantasy was ever the target of quite so much criticism as the Doc Weir award, however. At least the Knights were always an identifiable sub-group, and in the last analysis, who they invited in was up to them. But somehow the idea got about (quite falsely) that the Doc Weir voting was rigged, and since the vote was claimed to be the choice of the whole convention (or such of them as chose to vote) in a particular year, the supposed ballot-stuffing to elect a candidate acceptable to the 'establishment' (whoever they were) was considered particularly heinous.

It was a pity it ever got that way, but certainly, the revival of St. Fantasy in 1965 did generate a lot of 'us and them' feeling.

But it was all so long ago, and does it matter?

Andy Hooper, 4228 Francis Avenue
N. #103, Seattle, Washington 98103

Your experience with Chicon {{☞ "A Tale of Two Conventions" }} seemed pretty much like my own, especially in regards to the bid-party gauntlet we all seemed forced to run. I think the committee of a convention as large as Worldcon has to take some care to supervise the dispersal of the party activities into more than one section of the convention facility. I think there was little the various bidders could have done, given the crush of people trying to get to their parties.

Actually, the crush of people was the real

reason I voted for Winnipeg this past year; in the future, when given a number of choices of venues for Worldcon, I plan to pick the one the least people can get to. This may be an act of class treason on my part, but those who can afford to go will have a much better time.

{{☞ There may be fewer people at the place hardest to get to, but will they be people you want to be with? We were actually pretty surprised at how many of the people we usually hang out with at worldcons are *not* planning to go to Winnipeg. Many of them seem to feel they will have a better time doing something other than attending Convention. In addition, there are a number of people who we see at smaller conventions that just flat out do not attend worldcons at all any more, mainly due to the cost and crowds. It's probably not possible to streamline worldcons to exclude some of the frills they have acquired in the past few decades, but that's what is making them so unwieldy and costly to organize. }}

If Dave Kyle continues on with his columns for you, someone ought to eventually collect and publish them on their own. I don't like to be morbid or belabor the obvious, but we have fewer and fewer fans of his experience every year, and whatever we can do to preserve their accounts of our early history will be priceless to generations of faneds like us to come: It may seem like we are a little-loved and arcane study-group to many of today's fan, but it is safe to assume that there will be other cranks like us in the future. They will be an unhappy lot if we squander the opportunities that they are not going to have...

{{☞ A Dave Kyle autobiography seems like a natural addition to published fanhistorica, and we hope to see one someday. As for preserving the past, that's one of the reasons we publish this fanzine. In spite of the growing number of books about the history of science fiction fandom, there's

still a lot of events from years past that are only very tenuously preserved in the memories of those who were there. We've published at least one article of fan historical interest in every issue of *Mimosa* and will continue to do so. }}

The traditions and values of the Order of Saint Fantony sound as though they fit well into the genial hedonism which I have often credited as fandom's finest trait. Dressing up in funny outfits and affecting bad accents is something which makes up part of the birthright of every fan; we should not let prejudice or contempt for modern costumers and media-oriented fans deny us that right.

Shelby Vick's piece {{cœ "Thru Darkest Florida With Sample Can" }} is an equally valuable little story; it puts all of his fanac from the 1950s in a different light, thinking of him writing a letter in the front seat of a home-made pick-up truck, then interrupting it long enough to canvas a block with a case of Sanco.

Actually, if you made me designate the theme to this issue, it would be 'road trips', since your opening comments and three of the articles deal with the subject. The Australians seem to be almost as much a road-oriented culture as Americans are. I echo some of Craig Hilton's experience with car hiring in Britain; the ones I've seen always seem to be in a field of long weeds at the edge of town. Five minutes after you drive off, the place is closed and locked, or even boarded up again, and the con men are off on the run.

Ian Gunn's account of his epic journey across the Nullarbor {{cœ "The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Nullarbor Plain" }} had unpleasant resonances with an experience I had some years ago, crossing Indiana and Illinois in a VW van that had the same tendency to develop progressive mechanical failures with each leg of the trip. I might have given some body parts up if only some kind driver with an empty semi-truck had happened by...

OH DARK ONE,
TAKE ME NOW.
FOR I HAVE NO
IMAGINATION.



Mark Blackman, 1745 East 18th Street #4A, Brooklyn, New York 11229

Craig Hilton's experience with "The Fiat Worst Than Death" reminds me of the time 10 years ago when a group of us (including Marc Glasser and Robert Sacks) rented a red Dodge van from a local equivalent of the Lawbreaking Hire Car Service, the truthfully named Rent-a-Wreck, for a drive up to Boskone. (Our reasons were the same -- the used cars were cheap.) In Connecticut, smoke started coming out of our engine. We stared, momentarily wondering if cars really burst into flame and blow up like on *Mannix*. In a rare display of sense (our first and only that day), we pulled over and jumped out. A hose of some sort had melted and was smoldering; fire was a distant, though distinct possibility, we were later told. Rent-a-Wreck is gone now, but it has an heir in an establishment called Rent-a-Dent.

Gregg Calkins, P.O. Box 508, Jackson, California 95642

Even though others have said *M* is difficult to comment upon, I, oldphan than I am, have come up with the ultimate mc. *Mimosa*, with its impeccable mimeography, contributors and Old Fandom slant, is the fanzine

that I would be publishing now were I still publishing! Except, of course, I would use several colors of Twiltone in each issue rather than monochrome...

I haven't been to a con in a loooong time, but I think I have to go to Orlando this year to see Shelby Vick, at least. Truth to tell, I didn't really connect all that much with Lee Hoffman and Willis even though we were on the same time-line, and Walt appeared in *Oops!* for so long. Vick was one of the people I felt like I really knew, though, and I spent most of the 1952 Chicon with him and Joe Green. LeeH was, of course, my fannish idol and I deliberately designed *Oops* to look like *Quandry*, and was tickled pink when I seemed to fill in for her when she stopped publishing. But the fact is that I really wasn't close to Lee and when the Chicon II came along and Walt came over -- I just wasn't included in the gang. I doubt if I spoke to any of them more than half a dozen times, and they always seemed to be bound elsewhere with a lot more important people than I. Not that I really cared, because I've always been somewhat reticent, but I was also having the time of my life with the people I was meeting. I think one of the reasons I've never been to another Worldcon since is that I had so much fun at that one that I didn't dare try and repeat it. Don't get me wrong -- I would have liked to have spent some time with Willis and I did put out a special fund-raising issue of my fanzine just for his trip, but my disappointment at his being monopolized by La Hoffwoman was mitigated by others. I was, frankly, as much in love with Bea Mahaffey as it is possible for a 17-year-old to be -- which is considerable -- and she was gracious enough to put up with me quite a lot of the time. Henry Burwell was free with his time and companionship, and the week I spent with him and his wife in Atlanta after the con is still one of the high spots in my life. And then there was Shelby, my once and future friend, who together with Joe Green was always there.

So, yes, I think I'll make Orlando this

fall. I'm really looking forward to seeing Shelby again. He is responsible for one of the most amazing acts of my life, after all. I was 17 at the time of the Chicon II and my folks were pretty conservative. My mother was the dominant force in the family and she considered science fiction a waste of time, even if she did introduce me to Burroughs, Tarzan, and John Carter of Mars and Carson of Venus. The name of my fanzine was derived from the worst exclamation she could utter, since she would never say a truly bad word, and her two syllables were intended to mean totally worthless drivel...only I, of course, thought it was funny and truly the best name possible for a science fiction fanzine. My parents reluctantly let me go to Chicon II, and looking back on it I'm not sure why but I must have begged a lot. Shortly before the con I had 'founded' the Utah Science Fiction League and fellow fan Jim Webbert went with me, there to find greater fame than I did. The bus we joined in Salt Lake City on its way from Los Angeles to Chicago had Forry and Wendy Ackerman aboard, and we had a wonderful trip across the country thanks to their very gracious hospitality. Forry is one of the true gentlemen of fandom and his comforting presence made me feel like a real fan.

What was amazing is what happened after the con. You have to understand that I was a very *young* 17, not at all what is now called street-wise, and that my mother allowed me to go to the con very, very reluctantly, with strict travel instructions and a specified time of return. You also have to understand that I was a very dutiful son, never having disagreements with my parents over anything. My mother, being exceptionally understanding on this occasion, had given me the highly unusual privilege of being able to invite Shelby Vick to come home and visit me after the con, something that had never happened to me before.

What happened was that Shelby, not being a college student like I was, had a JOB and couldn't just take off at random, with no

advance planning, so in turn he invited me to come to Florida with him instead. Without giving it a thought, I blithely accepted and dropped my folks a postcard (in those days long distance phone calls were considered incredibly expensive and were also fairly uncommon, quite in contrast from today) to that effect the day I left Chicago, saying I would be a little late getting home. You can't imagine the bombshell effect that had on my mother, nor, truth to tell, did I at the time I wrote it, although that seems incredible to me now. The card arrived several days after I should have on my return bus, which my folks greeted with rising alarm, and needless to say my Mother hit the overhead (as we say in the Marine Corps). By the time she dredged through my files and found Vick's address and from there, eventually, his phone number from information (I, of course, would not have had it because long distance telephone calls were quite beyond my ken), I had already climbed in a car with several relative strangers and driven from Chicago to Atlanta, where I spent a truly memorable week with Henry Burwell and his adorable wife, and had spent most of a week in Florida with Shelby and Joe Green getting exceptionally well sunburned. I had absolutely no idea what would have happened to me had not my Mother's astonishing telephone call (Long Distance!) sharply snapped me back into reality ("get home NOW!") and return me to the Real World, but one can only speculate. Alas, I haven't seen Shelby since the trip and I even lost him for many years. I haven't the foggiest notion about Henry Burwell and his lovely wife, and Bea Mahaffey is, Shelby tells me, dead. "No man is an island"...boy, did he ever know what he was talking about. I am, indeed, diminished.

Martin Morse Wooster, P.O. Box
8093, Silver Spring, Maryland 20907

Many thanks for *Mimosa 11*, which was a very pleasant, quiet fanzine full of chat (if not *Chat*), even if some of the fannishness

came from the battlefields of Yugoslavia or the wastelands of the Nullarbor Plain.

I wish Shelby Vick would tell us more about the wire-recorded fanzine reproduced. Do any copies still exist? Can they be transcribed onto tape? Never having seen a wire recording, I have no idea how durable the wire is or whether or not the wire decays, but certainly a fan-archivist who made copies of fifties fans chatting would have an audience for his product.

David Kyle's piece about the Knights of St. Fantony was an entertaining look at an organization whose existence, at least to my generation of fans, has been hazy and nebulous. Certainly the founders would do well to recruit some new members, or at least allow Harry Stubbs to better explain why he wears a large St. Fantony badge at conventions. The Knights of St. Fantony is a noble tradition that shouldn't be allowed to die out through inertia or attrition.

Terry Jeeves, 56 Red Scar Drive,
Scarborough, North Yorkshire
YO12 5RQ, United Kingdom

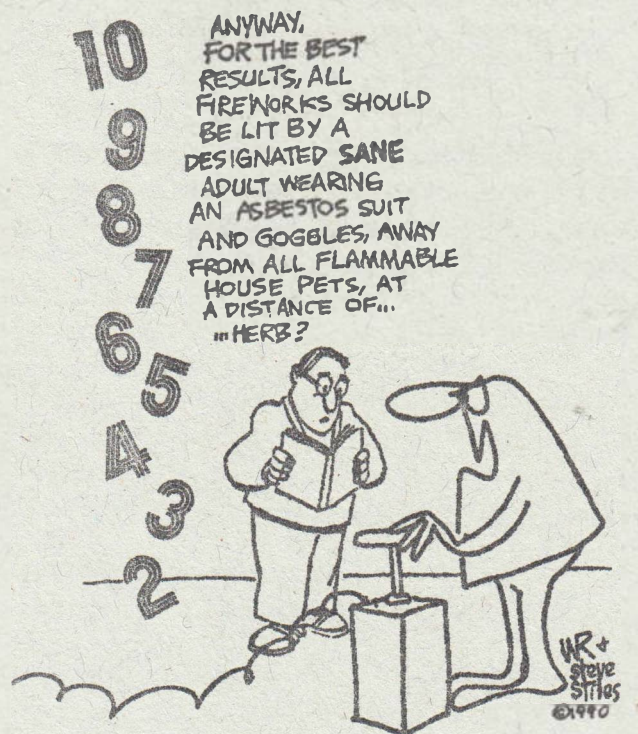
I enjoyed the Tale of Two Conventions, as they avoided the standard turn-off of 'Then we went for a pizza, had a Chinese meal, had a beer, met Bignamefan, saw a film, had a beer...' and so on ad nauseum. Your report stuck to things of interest and humour.

{ { Whenever we write a travel report for a fanzine, we always try to stick to the entertaining portions, which has the advantage of allowing us to keep it to a reasonable length! } }

I also enjoyed Dave Kyle reminiscing about the Knights of St Fantony. I still have copies of the sundry tape-operas made by Liverpool and Cheltenham fen. Very nostalgic and time-binding, even if the quality is not so hot by now.

"Operation Dessert Storm" by Bruno Ogorelec was another gudun, but got me, the

best two items in the issue were that lovely 'Fiat Worse than Death' and the great 'Null-arbor Plain'. Only now do I realise how lucky I was when Mike Banks drove me from Cincinnati to Boston in 1980. No breakdowns, and we were only four hours late reaching Boston.



George "Lan" Laskowski, 55 Valley Way, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48304

I am delighted to see that you are continuing to present the history of fandom through the eyes of various fans. The personal reminiscences are fun to read, and so far you've managed to maintain a high quality of writing. The two articles which involved travel by car were very funny. When Maia and I visited England, we chose to use the public transportation system, and didn't have to adapt our driving skills to British roads. Both reminded me of the title of a presentation that two midwestern fans did several years ago. It was a variation of the Chinese curse -- "May You Drive in Interesting Cars." The adventures of Craig Hilton

and Ian Gunn would fit wonderfully under that title.

Bruno Ogorelec's description of moving into an apartment struck a rather ominous note with me. I recall the first one I shared with someone. The guy was a mechanical moron, which left me to do many repairs which I thought most guys should be able to do. To his credit, though, he was a good cook, though I did question some of his dishes as to actual nutritional value. He loved to make bread, but even the birds ignored some of his offerings. I took that as a sign not to eat his baked goods very often.

As for an increase of sexual activity...well, that did happen, but not as often as I had hoped, mainly because I was in graduate school and concentrating quite a bit on getting my Masters degree. I fared better when I had my own apartment (and after I joined fandom, but that's another story).

Eric Mayer, 279 Collingwood Drive, Rochester, New York 14621-1016

My favorite article was Bruno Ogorelec's "Operation Dessert Storm." It was so deliciously ridiculous. I was reminded of the apartment my then wife and I shared in Brooklyn, back when I was in school. Not that it was quite so wonderfully squalid as Bruno's place...but it was vermin infested. There were, in the first place, the mice. There were a lot of mice -- we used to hear them under the stove, noisily making more mice. They went skittering across the counters and climbed up the sides of the fireplace. One jumped off onto me on one occasion. Then there was the evening Kathy stuck her bare foot down into the couch cushions, her toes momentarily caressing something soft...and furry and -- rodent-like!!!! EEEEEEEEEEEEE!!!!

The roaches were worse. If you have never taken the time to experience the pleasure of waking in your bed with a large roach crawling across your face...don't both-

er. As soon as the lights went out they swarmed up the walls and sometimes lost their grip. As soon as the lights went on, of course, they swarmed for shelter. What I most disliked about them was their apparent intelligence. Sometimes I would observe one sneaking around, say, a chair. The roach would for all the world seem to stop and peer around the edge of the chair leg, antennae wiggling. Then duck back when it saw me looking. Really creepy. I thought they were supposed to wait until after the atomic war to take over. Boy, roaches must be pissed about the end of the Cold War.



Walt Willis, 32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, N. Ireland BT21 0PD

Among the contents this time, I liked best your own reports on the Chicago Worldcon and Ditto -- well written and informative. Dave Kyle was as interesting as possible about the St. Fantony, an activity which I have never seen the point of. Bruno Ogorlec contributes a piece of gothic Balkan horror worthy of a younger Poe. The two motoring pieces were readable, though the Australian one was more deftly constructed.

Shelby takes us back to the more classic type of fannish memoir, the sort which supplies missing pieces of our ever fascinating

fannish jigsaw. I had the pleasure of copying out his reference to Felice Perew, for the benefit of Felice Maxam, who now lives in Richmond, California, and belongs to a small APA of which I'm a member. I wonder if she knew she had brought Shelby and Suzanne Vick together.

In the letters column, in answer to Mike Glicksohn's enquiry about what was I doing with a deserted piano in a forest in Utah, I cannot do better than quote the relevant extract from *The Harp Stateside*, the part which deals with the trip I made in 1952 from Chicago to Los Angeles with Forry and Wendayne Ackerman, Rog Phillips, and Mari Wolf.

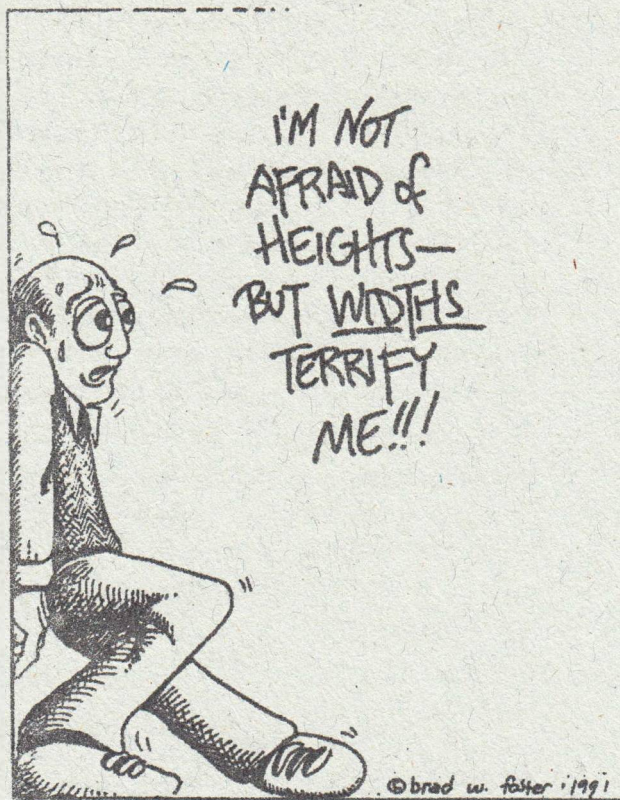
Although we were getting into wooded country, it was still very warm and a mountain stream we were passing affected us like Martians. We stopped the car just past the bridge and we all trooped through the trees to the water. We sat on the bank and dipped our feet in. I took mine out indignantly at once; with all this heat about I'd thought even a mountain stream would be tepid, but it was freezing. I might just as well have been in Ireland. I counted my toes to make sure they were all still there and put my shoes on again. I was startled to see that Mari and Wendayne didn't think it was too cold at all. In fact, they were so determined to bathe that they were prepared to dispense with bathing suits. They held up newspapers and started to undress behind them.

As a gentleman of the old school, I shall not reveal what I saw. I shall only say that seldom have I seen a newspaper give more inadequate coverage to such an interesting event.

After a while, I thought it might be more tactful to retire from the scene and explore the woods. I felt quite daring venturing into the wilds like this unarmed, because there were undoubtedly all sorts of alien perils like snakes and poison ivy,

not to mention bears, pumas, and Red Indians. However, as it turned out, the most dangerous phenomenon I encountered was a piece of barbed wire; and the strangest...well, I had accidentally (that's my story, no matter what Freud says) wandered down to the river again and got an eyeful of some attractive scenery that wasn't in the guidebooks; I was hastily retreating into the primaeval forest when I saw just before me something even more startling – a wild piano!

My eyes fixed on this extraordinary phenomenon, and no doubt still a bit glazed. I hurried forward and ran into a piece of barbed wire stretched between the trees at eye level. Well, my eye level anyway, because I got a barb in my eyeball. After I'd reassured myself I'd still be able to read 3-D comics I continued stalking the wild piano. I ran it to earth on a large stack of concrete, at the side of which was a sort of fireplace. All was now disap-



pointingly clear: this was a place for the native rite called a barbecue; the piano had been put there by human agency, and was not a mutant plant formation like Williamson's spaceship trees in *Dragon's Island*. It was astonishing enough to me, though, that a piano could be left out in the open like this. If they'd done it in Ireland, it would after three days be only fit for growing mushrooms in. But this one was working, because I tried it with my complete repertoire of pianoforte solos. I venture to say that there are few fans who have played the theme from the second movement of Dvorak's New World symphony on one finger with one eye on a piano in a forest in Utah. God, how I've lived!

Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, Michigan 48224

It was nice that Dave Kyle wrote about the Order of St. Fantony, Noble, Illustrious, etc. St.F. is one of many of those things that so distinguish '50s fandom, as so many have pointed out in your letter column: instant rapport, instant trust, and a sense of the vaudeville in that taking on of roles and characters.

David Thayer's remembrance {{☞ "The Horrors of War and Other Morbid Clichés" }} was also poignant. Recently, I saw something by Joe Haldeman about Vietnam veterans and fandom. He said 60,000 vets have taken their lives after the war because they couldn't adjust. Thinking about that reminded me how few fans have ever written about being in Vietnam. It's taken David over 20 years to feel comfortable enough to write about any of it, which says a lot, right there, about how big a trauma it was.

The thought of making a living selling home-made cleaning paste door-to-door like Shelby Vick did is a little frightening. I once tried to be a Fuller Brush salesman one summer. Cleared \$50. For the summer!

Ian Gunn, P.O. Box 567, Blackburn,
Victoria 3130, Australia

I enjoyed David Thayer's bit about nicknames. I've never been in the armed forces, but I had more than my fair share of nicknames -- with a surname like mine, what would you expect? In my time I've been called BangBang, 303, Gunga Din, Tommy, and many more besides. Each circle of friends eventually settles on Gunny, which I don't mind. I guess it's the Australian habit of adding a 'y' to any one-syllable surname: Smithy, Jonesy -- though I've never met a Lynchy.

Dal Coger, 1433 West Crestwood
Drive, Memphis, Tennessee 38119

Thayer's bit on Vietnam takes me back to my early years in the military. I was drafted for WWII in 1943, and did my training in California at Camp Haan, which was outside of Riverside and an hour's bus ride from LA. I spent every free weekend in LA and got to know most of the fans that were around. Many, of course, had been drafted but Forry Ackerman was out at Fort MacArthur and Fran Laney, Jim Kepner, Walt Daugherty, and Morajo (Myrtle Douglas) were there. After about 10 months in golden California -- I praised it so highly in my letters and when I was home on leave, that as soon as the war was over the whole Slan Shack gang from Battle Creek, Michigan packed up and moved to LA -- we were shipped to Florida, and eventually to Texas, then New York, and finally to France and combat. I was, however, in the Field Artillery and not the Infantry. And have the bad hearing to prove it.

Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue,
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

I thought your con report made a splendid start to the latest *Mimosa*. You probably didn't realize during your stop in Cumberland, Maryland, that you were on historic fan territory, in a sense. It was in Cumberland

that Willis Conover, the famous fanzine fan of the 1930s, began the radio career that eventually caused him to gafiate and then become a nationally-known authority on jazz, and conductor of a Voice of America program on the topic for many years.

Dave Kyle's article on the St. Fantony tradition is probably the most important fan history article by him you've run in *Mimosa* in the sense that it conveys the most previously unpublicized information on a topic, and is basically factual rather than an interpretation of past events. I'd known some of the information that Dave conveys here, but only in a fragmentary sense and without certainty about where my knowledge ended and my guessing began.

It was a case of mistaken identity, but I once had a partial reputation at the local hospital as a permanent guest, much like Floyd whom Sharon Farber writes about {{☺ in "Tales of Adventure and Medical Life, Part VI" }}. In the winter of 1960-61, I was laid up in the hospital for a couple of months after a serious fall. I spent a good bit of time in the corridors in a wheelchair after I was allowed to get out of bed part of the day. Three years later, I found myself again in the hospital for several weeks, and once again I cluttered up the corridors with my wheelchair. Old Dr. Shealy, the only physician in the battlefield town of Sharpsburg, stopped at my side toward the end of this second stint in the hospital. "Are you still here?" he asked me in awe-struck tones.

Kristin Thorrud's contribution is the star of the loc section this time. It's uncanny how fandoms in other nations can imitate fandoms in English-speaking lands, even in instances where the fandom in question has had next to no knowledge of the course of events in the United States, England, and Australia. Sercon vs. fiawol, spectacular feuds among former buddies, fans turning into pros, fanzines that rise and fall in a matter of months: the patterns seem to repeat everywhere as if the fan genes create preordained patterns of conduct, just as other

elements in the body cause us to grow noses and suffer from gas on the stomach. Is there anything in *The Origin of Species* that explains this aspect of fandom from nation to nation?

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Calgary, Alberta T2P 2E7, Canada

Concerning Kristin Thorrud's letter, the cyclical rise and fall of SF clubs every five years or so is not restricted to fandom. I've written a history of the aquarium hobby in Canada, and when I plotted all the clubs on a timeline, I immediately noticed that half of all clubs died within five years. Only a few percent survived more than ten years. My observation is that the founders of a club (or revitalizers, if the club is in a slump) last about five years before burning out or gaffiating. Because of their activity and prominence, replacements do not come forward, either due to intimidation (not necessarily intended by the BNFs) or a 'Let George do it' attitude. The BNFs suddenly leave in a group, and the club collapses without leadership. A few years later, a new group of self-starters come along and begin a new cycle.

Hans Persson, Alsättersgatan 4B, S-582 48 Linköping, Sweden

I completely agree with what Kristin Thorrud is saying, that Swedish fandom has entered 'The Big Sleep' with lots of fans going into hibernation. The question is whether we are looking forward to a winter season or an ice age.

The best piece of writing in the issue (in my opinion, anyway) was Bruno Ogorelec's "Operation Dessert Storm," and I must say that I understand and sympathize with his reasons for not doing any fanac. I hope the tanks in his backyard clear out as soon as possible so that we can have more articles from him.

Pat Sims, 34 Creekwood Square, Cincinnati, Ohio 45246

As you know I'm really a fake fan: I don't do fanzines (except to edit Roger's), read very little science fiction (mysteries are my forte), don't write LOC's, but have to admit I read most of the fanzines that Roger gets -- especially *Mimosa*.

I really look forward to Sharon Farber's articles since I can relate so well to them. My Masters in Social Work is from Washington University, St. Louis, and I did an internship at Barnes Hospital as part of my training. I know the places she describes and have great familiarity with emergency rooms and psychiatric services. My first job out of graduate school was with the Mental Health Clinic at Cook County Hospital, Chicago. It was a horrible job (I only lasted 5 months) but an experience no one can forget!

But my favorite story come out of Detroit. Some years back, the Mental Health Center I worked for contracted with a local hospital to provide emergency services after hours. Supervisors had to take turns responding to calls from the hospital ER. When it came my turn I always got calls for some reason -- it was the standing joke of the Center. As usual during my week on call, the beeper went off at 2 AM. The hospital was calling for an okay for a psychiatric hospitalization -- one of our jobs when public money was to be used and they had no one on the premises who could authorize it. The nurse was talking about how the man was complaining of back injuries and I kept trying to determine how this led to a need for psychiatric hospitalization. At some point she said, "never-mind, Dr. Woozis has just arrived and he'll take care of it." The next morning, I dragged my sleepy self into a meeting where one agenda item was how the back-up service was working. I described my early AM confusing call at which point the administrator in charge started to laugh. They had heard about the call and for the first time I was

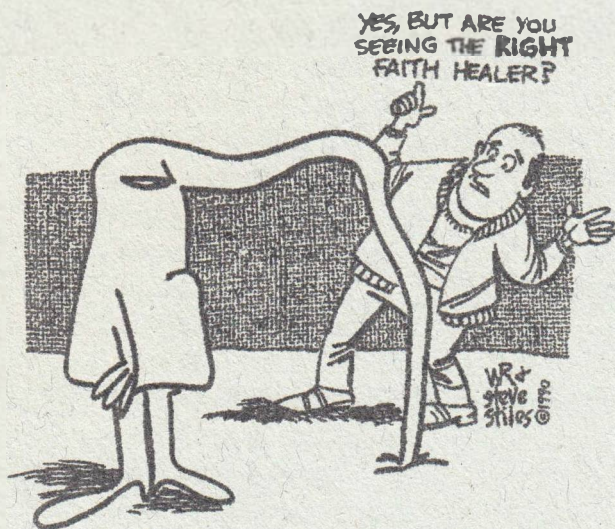
told that the man had come to ER complaining of injuries because, "God had kicked him in the back."

I hope Sharon keeps these articles coming!

Eve Ackerman, 3530 NW 30th Place,
Gainesville, Florida 32605

I'm beginning to think that if it wasn't for *Mimosa* I'd be abysmally ignorant about fandom before the late '70s, the time when I became fannish. I'd seen the Great Ceremony of Saint Fantony at Noreascon Three, but only had a passing understanding of the event until I read Dave Kyle's explanation. For instance, I never knew Fantony's death was a Cheltenham Tragedy.

Sheryl Birkhead writes of 'small animal rotation' {{∞ in "Cry Wolf" }}. Oh, the images that conjures! My spouse says, "Isn't that when the puppy turns around three times before lying down?" My mind picture was an obscene vision of some guy uh, *wearing* a small animal and rotating it. But most people acknowledge I'm a sick puppy. My primary care physician used to be a practicing Vet before he went to people med school. I kinda like that -- Vets tend to be better diagnosticians than MDs, since their patients can't tell them where it hurts.



R Laurraine Tutihasi, 5876 Bowcroft
Street #4, Los Angeles, California
90016-4910

Bruno Ogorelec's "Operation Dessert Storm" had me scurrying to the dictionary looking up the names of insects. I can see why he used the scientific names for the vermin; it's easier to translate.

As usual, I enjoyed Sharon Farber's medical misadventures, although reading them has probably made me even more disrespectful of the medical professional. I already had a healthy disrespect from having doctors in the family.

I also enjoyed Sheryl Birkhead's veterinary account. Maybe she has more. The most memorable account of this type was one that was published in a short-lived magazine called *Wigwag*. I'm reminded of the time I spent last Sunday waiting in line to get a rabies shot for my cat at a pet store. Vets are expensive, and many pet shops in this area now feature monthly pet clinics for various types of vaccinations. Since it wasn't raining, I had the opportunity to meet many interesting dogs. I didn't meet any cats because they were all in carriers.

In the letters column, I have a sort of corollary to Dave Gorecki's point about convention and fanzine fandom. I really have nothing against convention fandom, but my experience has been that you have to work a lot harder in convention fandom to receive the same recognition you can receive in fanzine fandom by just writing locs. It seems impossible to do anything in convention fandom without offending someone. It also seems that you can make more lasting connections through fanzines than through conventions.

{{∞ Your observation that gaining recognition as a convention fan is harder than as a fanzine fan seems pretty accurate to us. With fanzines one may get burned out, but the zines will keep coming in for a while.

With cons, you miss a few and everyone is different when you return! }}

Richard Brandt, 4740 N. Mesa #111,
El Paso, Texas 79912

Bruno Ogorelec reassures me that unregenerate bachelors are the same the world over. When I was in college, I had one roommate whose housekeeping practices were legendary. (We had to explain, gently, that Laundry Day was not an annual federal holiday.) This was the same fellow who, when I was sharing a dorm room with him, tended to stay up all night playing cards, sleep in until three in the afternoon or later, miss classes, and alienate all the department heads in the university. He changed majors a lot. Ended up graduating after eight years with a Bachelor of General Studies, for which he was ideally suited. Anyway, at one point he invited me to join him and two other buddies in sharing a one bedroom, shotgun apartment. This did not necessarily lend itself any less to unexpected guests barging in while you and a date were experimenting with various foods and byproducts, but the rent was cheap. He was, however, still the sort to leave a pot of beans sitting on the kitchen table until a white fuzz grew over the rim.

Of course, to keep a more balanced perspective, my sister had a college roommate who didn't believe in doing laundry or dishes. But that's because she preferred buying new clothes or dishes to washing them. (This was at a dorm known colloquially at Tulane as Tokyo Towers.)

Having Sharon Farber and Thayer/Harvia illustrate each other's similarly morbid articles worked out nicely; as cartoonists, they each have that knack of taking a spin off of what the other has written and illustrating the theme, rather than merely visualizing the literal text. Diana Stein's illustrations for Sheryl Birkhead's piece are pretty good, too. The look of innocent pride in his accomplish-

ment on Wolf's face is one that all dog owners will recognize.

David Thayer, P.O. Box 905, Euless,
Texas 76036

I flipped on my head looking at Steve Stiles' cover art, with its robotics aliens turning the World upside down and the cynic with nary a look observing, "NOW what?" His back cover art, with its robots turned tourists viewing a hermetically sealed Howdy Doody, made me wonder who the dummy was. But I was only half-prepared for others' contributions inside, no fewer than five illustrated articles written by artists.

I nearly burst my radiator at Ian Gunn's cute creature pressed precariously against the front of his speeding car. Sharon Farber graphically captured the pervasive attitude of enlisted me toward the officers in Vietnam placing lieutenant bars on Dopey. Craig Hilton's bespectacled self-portrait behind the wheel beneath thoughts of mayhem made me thankful he's a doctor and not a professional driver. The look of innocence on Diana Stein's canine artfully demonstrated why humans are so susceptible to the mischief perpetrated by our animal companions. (Diana's thinking Thark made me think, too.)

Peggy Ranson in her colophon art continues to entertain with the classic SF motif of dinosaurs and rockets. The digits of Sheryl Birkhead's open hands on the editorial page resemble the stinging tentacles of a sea anemone, appropriate for your biting commentary on fans and conventions (I was the Hugo winner who stuck his rocket in his pocket, but I, not my decorous female companion, uttered the bawdy caption you quoted). There was no mistaking Joe Mayhew's beer-drinking Peter Pan look-alike for the artist himself. Alan Hutchinson's hair-linked sink had me checking my own plumbing for signs of life, I myself being a bachelor like Bruno Ogorelec and desperate for companionship.

I read every word of Shelby Vick's article in vain to learn how I could get the free whistle Kip Williams teasingly put on the label of the cleaning paste can. Kurt Erichsen clearly reflected the real and imagined image of fans in his title illustration for Walt Willis' namedropping memory marathon. Charlie Williams in his caricature inadvertently gives the man undeserved stature, physical, not figurative. But who's going to pay the bill for Julius Schwartz relating the anecdote? Thank you, Alexis Gilliland, for your cartoon theory of plate tectonics. Finally, in his collaboration with Steve Stiles, how does Bill Rotsler get away with creating such expressive characters with so few pen strokes?

 Vincent Clarke, 16 Wendover Way,
 Welling, Kent DA16 2BN, United
 Kingdom

Aside from the general excellence of *Mimosa* 11, I was impressed by the range of artists you'd collected, not only the inimitable Steve Stiles but such new talents (to me, anyway) as Peggy Ranson for the Contents Page heading and Alan Hutchinson for the growling washbasin. Terrific stuff.

Bruno Ogorelec reminded me very much of the English John Berry's stuff in *Hyphen*, *Orion*, and other zines -- some absurd facet of life parlayed by a vivid imagination into fannish art. Well, I suppose that holds for all humour, but it's peculiarly gratifying to read such stuff produced under such awful conditions. Bravo Bruno!

Walt Willis' panorama of '50s names in "I Remember Me" brought out some memories, as was probably intended. One name mentioned was that of Charles Duncombe. Charlie was a b-i-ig tough railway worker from London's tough, Cockney, East End, a laboring man and a Communist who was so patently honest that for years he was Treasurer of any London Circle funds from Conven-

tions, etc. -- for most of the time there was no entrance fee.

Charlie's Communism was of a simple, committed kind that saw the world divided into the Good (Commies) and the To Be Converted (the rest) and he used to get into ferocious arguments with passing intellectuals like Sam Youd (aka John Christopher). One evening Sam was so incensed that he brought a refugee from Poland up to the White Horse, to confront Charlie with evidence that Red rule wasn't working. Charlie listened, then gave his big booming laugh and passed it off -- the refugee must have done *something* unlawful.

Charlie made only one or two appearances in fanzines but he was always around in the '50s. But three or four years ago I was at the Science Fiction Foundation here in London, and Joyce Day (who although mundane, has been the Foundation backbone for many years) pointed to a damp cardboard box shoved under a table. "It's from a Mr. Dunscombe ((sic)), " she said. "His father used to collect *Astounding*, and he found them in the cellar." Inside the box were 60 or so *Astoundings*, dating from the late '40s, some with mildew on them. Poor Charlie.

Incidentally, Charlie was the hero of a squib by Eric Frank Russell, which appeared in *Slant* No. 6 (Winter '51/'52). L. Sprague De Camp was paying a flying visit to the White Horse, and was entertaining visitors with linguistic skills, e.g., by demonstrating how Shakespeare would have talked. Then he met Charlie. EFR reported:

One hundred-percent Cockney fan buttonholes de Camp with this abstruse problem: "Jer rumble th' wullannullay?"

De Camp, making a frantic snatch at his endangered reputation as stfdom's leading linguist: "Huh?"

Fan, frowning: "Jer rumble th' wullannullay?"

De Camp, feeling himself sinking: "Come

again?"

Fan, becoming ireful: "Seasy, en it? JER RUMBLE TH' WULLANNULLAY?"*

De Camp, feebly, as he goes down for the third time: "I'm sure I don't know."

Fan, withdrawing swiftly as one would from a rattlesnake: "Cor blimey!"

(* Did you understand *The World of Null-A*?)

Yes, it really happened like that. I was an onlooker.

As a footnote to Dave Kyle's article on the Order of St. Fantony, there is still a photo-cum-scrap album in the hands of old-time English fan Peter Mabry which was originally owned by the late Bob Richardson, one of the founders of the order. There's many photos of participants in the ceremonies therein, and other memorabilia.

Alan Stewart, P.O. Box 222, World Trade Centre, Melbourne, Victoria 3005, Australia

Walt Willis' recollections and recourse to his correspondence file for 1953 bodes ill for any such future thoughts on my part. I mean, I don't really maintain a complete 1992 correspondence file, let alone ones from earlier years. I tend to keep copies of outgoing correspondence connected with a particular activity, such as con organising, but throw it all out when the event is finished. Even copies of sent letters are only retained until I receive a reply, and arriving correspondence goes into the bin after it becomes dated. This may be a great loss for future Australian fan historians, but at least I don't have to buy another filing cabinet yet.

Like Pamela Boal in your lettercol, I didn't attend an organised fannish meeting until out of my teens, 22 actually, having been reading SF for over 15 years. Part of this was due to growing up on a farm and attending a country high school, but organised fandom and myself never crossed paths while

I was at Uni. Similarly, I never saw an episode of *Star Trek* until I tracked down special cinema screenings in Melbourne after graduating. The country TV stations never ran them during my formative years, at least they didn't after we got a TV in 1972, a great event after electricity in 1966.

I remember we were given the day off when Armstrong stepped onto the moon, because our teacher was interested in it, wanted us all to see it, and our small primary school didn't boast a set. Luckily, our cousins down the road did, so we went visiting that morning. Back at University now, the undergrads and a lot of my fellow postgrads look blank when I mention remembering that July event. I feel old and I'm only 29!

Alan Sullivan, 20 Shirley Road, Stratford, London E15 4HX, England

In "I Remember Me," the Robert Bloch comments on conventions and the duality of Fans (A and B) and 'Professional Detachment' is rather different from the current state of affairs. Nowadays, not only do the Type A fans have a good time, they also write about how outrageous it was, afterwards, with utmost relish. I like to read articles such as this one, because it gives you a perspective, and reminds you just how much fandom has grown and changed.

Steve Jeffery, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2XA, United Kingdom

Well done again to the artists in this issue. Good Steve Stiles cover, neat illos to the articles, especially Teddy Harvia's cartoons, Kurt Erichsen, and Alan Hutchinson (Night of the Vampire Washbasin). Bruno Ogorelec's disgustingly hairy washbasin was also totally gross and very funny. As Group Safety Rep a year or so back, I had to condemn the fridge in the admin block when the contents started to evolve their own little

self-contained microcosm. I'd never seen milk crawl before...

As for your opening comments and comments elsewhere (in *Stet* #4), I suspect I would have been more frustrated than anything by the scale and seeming disorganisation of Worldcon: too much all at once. Ditto 4 sounds more like my sort of con; smaller, relaxed, and more informal. I don't know if there is a UK equivalent to Ditto or Corflu, but I would like to go to something like this.

Mike Glicksohn, 508 Winderemere Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6, Canada

Concerning your opening comments about Chicon, I suppose many of us have created the Worldcon First Fan game for ourselves {{∞ Ed. Note: where we try to guess the name of the first fan we'll recognize at Worldcon }}. I've played it myself some 19 times and you know what? It's astonishing, at least in my case, how often the first fan I recognize is someone I have no desire to speak to! The main reason I stopped attending worldcons about eight years ago was financial, but the reason I didn't miss attending worldcons was exactly the difficulty you described in locating and spending quality time with my friends.

Buck Coulson, 2677W-500N, Hartford City, Indiana 47348

I avoided the Winnipeg party at Chicon, mostly because I had no intention of ever going to a convention in Winnipeg. The party that was the real wall-to-wall crush when I got there was the Baen Books celebration for Lois McMaster Bujold's Hugo. I had to push my way over to the bar, and then push my way away from it. Not too surprisingly, I suppose, the back room where Lois was sitting had the fewest people in it, but Lois looked rather dazed, so I assumed

there had been quite a few people there earlier. Things did clear out after a while, so I could get out of the room. (The only people out of the hundred or so in the suite that I even recognized were Toni Weisskopf, Lois, and Lillian Stewart Carl, who was lending Lois moral support and possibly physical as well.)

David Bratman, 1161 Huntingdon Drive, San Jose, California 95129

In keeping with the great *Mimosa* tradition of commenting on the letter column, I'll add as a kind of oblique footnotes to Martin Morse Wooster's letter in M11 that X. J. Kennedy, the distinguished poet who was a fan in his post-WWII youth, wrote a contribution to Contemporary Authors' Autobiography Series which includes an account of his fannish past. He wonders if any of the fannish institutions he participated in are still around. Someone should write the guy and tell him!

You are to be admired for producing such an entertaining collection on horror stories of everyday life. Each one seems to top all the others. (Sharon Farber's supply is inexhaustible.) Which is worse, I wondered: Craig Hilton's Fiat worst than death or Bruno Ogorelec's apartment? I'm sure I wouldn't want to find out through first-hand experience. They make tremendously interesting reading, though.

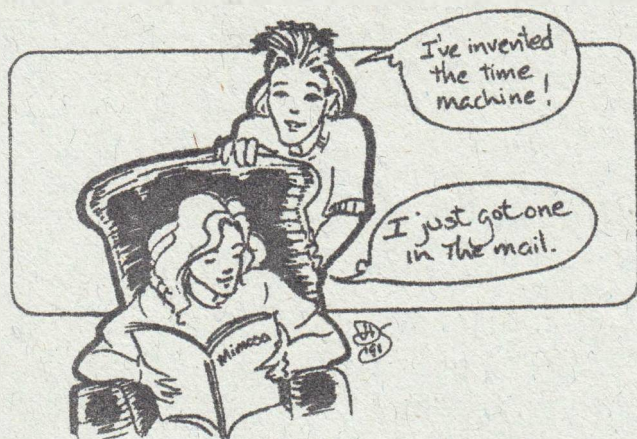
Mark Nelson, Dept. of Mathematics, The University, Leeds, West Riding LS2 9JT, England

I'm not sure that I could write an article suitable for publication in *Mimosa* because the zine makes for such depressing reading. All the articles are crafted and well-written, depressing well-written. And the main effect of reading the zine is to realize what a horrible mundane life I have lived. Having almost

reached the grand age of 24, I feel that life has passed me by. I have no tales of great fannish legend to recount and no amusing anecdotes to recall...

...Of course there was the time on my 23rd birthday when I went with nearly-famous-fan Steve Glover around the pubs of Leeds. But I am sure that Steve would not want me to bring back up stories of him vomiting all over the Streets of Leeds, or more importantly over my trousers and shoes. Those shoes have never been worn since and now reside in a box full of fanzines -- who knows what they might fetch in some fannish auction in years to come?

I enjoyed reading the Fannish tales, which aside from being good reading in their own right serve two important purposes. For the older fen it gives them a chance to recount old lore and for other old fen a chance to comment on it. A small step for the writer but a large step towards that definitive history of fandom. For younger fans it's an opportunity to learn more about fannish traditions and fan history.



Chuch Harris, 32 Lake Crescent, Daventry, Northants NN11 5EB, United Kingdom

Now, I know other people have already said so, but I find *Mimosa* extraordinarily hard to comment on. There's seldom any-

thing I disagree with and I seem to read through each issue in a sort of rosy haze, nodding approval every couple of paragraphs or so.

But not this time. As I was saying to Sheryl a couple of weeks ago, I suspect I am being written out of fandom. Written out? Moi? Well, yes -- you remember how in *Pravda* (you all read *Pravda* of course?) (with a torch under the bedcovers????) when a previously acclaimed politician was relegated to the Shit List, they diligently wrote him out of history. He became a non-person. Any appearance in old photographs was quickly airbrushed out. His books and pamphlets were suddenly out of print, and his name was never mentioned again. The other papers picked it up and in no time at all he was completely forgotten. Search your memory banks...Vladimir Molotov...who he, tovarich? Even his cocktail miraculously metamorphosised into the Boris Bomb.

And it happens all over. Even in fandom. Do you *really* believe Francis T. Laney vanished into obscurity after parting with Burb? Nowadays, nobody ever mentions his 12 year stint as assistant editor to John W. Campbell, Jr. on *ASF*, or his success with *Unknown*, let alone his marriage to Morojo and, subsequently, their eight children (after his vasectomy had been successfully repaired).

You see, he's a non-person, too. And it happens all the time. Lesser fen envy the fame and adulation that they think should rightfully be theirs. The higher you are, the farther you fall.

I know. It is happening to me. Every week I write 20 long fan letters. None of them are ever delivered. I never make the WAHF list in *Mimosa*. *Pulp* loses the superb columns I submit for every issue. Even *Proxyboo* crosses me off their books and mumbles about returning my annual subscription...eventually.

Look; I'll show you what I mean. You read "I Remember Me" in the last *Mimosa*...

all those long lists of people who wrote to Walter Himself in 1953? Fannish legends like Bloch, Temple, Eney, Grennell, Eric Frank Russell, A. Vincent Clarke, Ethel Lindsay, Norman G. Wansborough...giants every one of them. The list is endless. Hundreds and hundreds of glittering correspondents... But nary a mention of kindly Chucky who reached down from his pinnacle to pat the Willis feet (firmly encased in their clay socks) onto the ladder leading to success and fame, who cosseted and protected him, who taught him the essential difference between its and it's. Who wrote to him every day of the week except Sunday (when he wrote twice).

Sharper than a serpent's tooth... and, er, I've just spotted that, right at the end of the piece, it sez... "To Be Continued." All this diatribe wasted! Obviously, this first installment was not more than a mere prologue leading up to the coruscating climax... "The Chucky Phenomenon" in the very next thrilling issue.

Robert Bloch, 2111 Sunset Crest Drive, Los Angeles, California 90046

Mimosa smells as sweet as ever, and #11 certainly brings back a lot of familiar names,

plus many memories. The issue arrived at a propitious time, just as I'm packaging the manuscript of my autobiography and sending it off to the publisher. Needless to say, some of your contributors are mentioned in this account of a sad and misspent life -- but I'm including some clean stuff, too.

WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Harry Andruschak; Pamela Boal; Lester Boutillier; Ned Brooks; Gary Brown; Chester Cuthbert; Richard Dengrove; Cathy Doyle; Sharon Farber; Don Fitch; Brad Foster; Benoit Girard; John Guidry; Rob Hansen; Lynn Hickman; Craig Hilton; Steve Hughes; Alan Hutchinson; Ben Indick; Ruth Judkowitz; Irv Koch; Dave Kyle; Ken Lake; Fred Lerner; Fred Liddle; Guy Lillian III; Ethel Lindsay; Adrienne Losin; LynC; Mark Manning; Norm Metcalf; Bruno Ogorelec; Marc Ortlieb; Karen Pender-Gunn; Curt Phillips; Derek Pickles; David Rowe; Julius Schwartz; Bob Shaw; Noreen Shaw; Roger Sims; Steve Sneyd; Graham Stone; Roy Tackett; Michael Waite; Kate Waterous; Taral Wayne; Roger Weddall; Henry Welch. We also received a taped letter from Eric Bentcliffe, about a month before he died. Fandom will miss him.

CHAT, THE 4TH FANNISH GHOD

By TEDDY HARVIA



