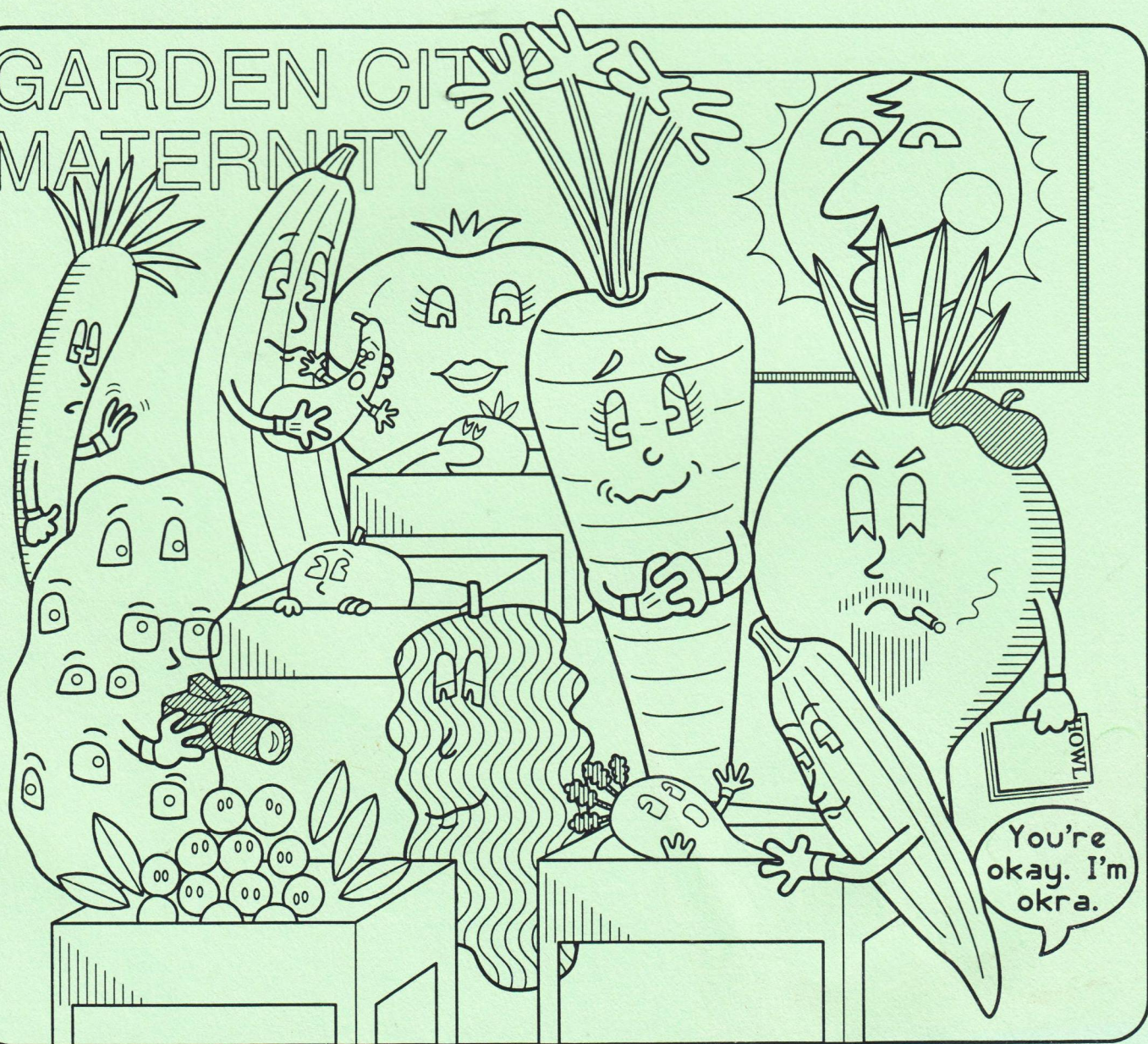
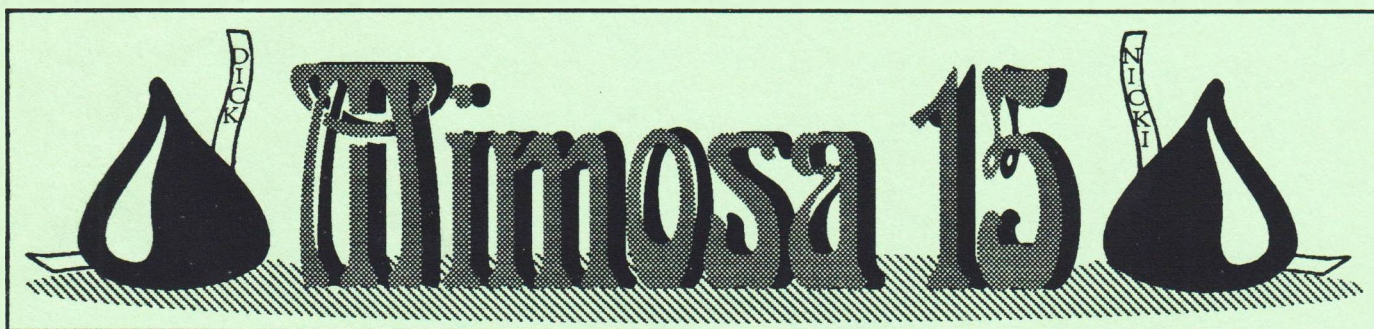


GARDEN CITY  
MATERNITY







from **Dick and Nicki Lynch**, P.O. Box 1350, Germantown, Maryland 20875, U.S.A.  
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This fifteenth issue of *Mimosa* was published in April 1994, and is available for the really inexpensive price of two dollars (U.S. currency or equivalent). Please note, however, that we'd much rather receive your fanzine in trade, instead (dollar bills aren't very fannish). Or better yet, send us a first-person article 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. We also welcome Letters of Comment; for the frugal, a letter or e-mail of comment on this issue (addressed to both of us, please) will bring you a copy of *M16* later this year. This entire issue is ©1994 by Dick and Nicki Lynch, with individual rights reverting back to contributors after this one-time use. All opinions and versions of events expressed by contributors are their own.

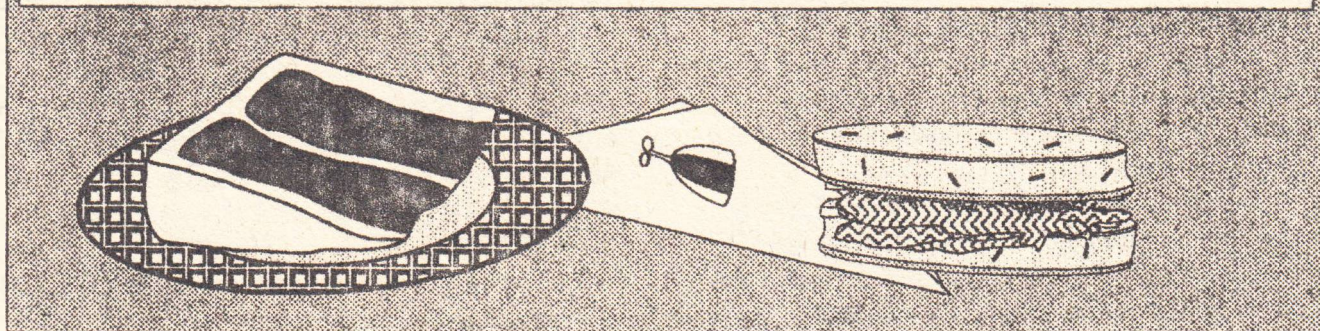
☐ If this box is checked, we really need to receive a letter of comment or e-mail of comment from you to keep you on our mailing list for next issue.

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# A Portrait of the Fan Editor as a Child (Part 1)

Opening Comments by Nicki Lynch



Welcome to our special 'food and drink' theme issue of *Mimosa*. While Dick and I have featured themes in previous issues, in a very subtle manner, this is the first time we had a theme in advance and solicited contributions directly. As you can see, the result is our largest issue ever. It was also our most difficult to put together, which may make us think twice before attempting something like this again.

One of the hardest things about this issue was coming up with food stories of our own. I didn't really have any food 'adventures' while growing up. But I do have some pretty strong memories of food and meal-times from my childhood, and I'll share some of them with you.

In our family, food was sacrosanct; one did not play with or waste food. We never had food fights or threw away perfectly good food. Nothing was wasted. I suppose much of this attitude came from the era my mother grew up in — the Depression. She grew up in a small town where everyone had enough land to have a cow, a few chickens, and a garden.

My father died when I was five, so my mother, sister and I moved in with my grandparents and back into the saving ways of small town folk. We knew we had to make do or go without. Unlike the throw-away economy we have today, everything was

saved and used again, no matter how long it took to find a use for it.

While growing up at my grandparents, I learned quite a bit about how food was produced. Grandma had chickens and would occasionally kill one to eat. She also had a large garden that we helped out in, planting the various crops in the spring (according to the moon), caring for the plants in the summer, and harvesting the vegetables in the fall. During the winter, we ate what had been canned and planned for next year.

Meals were an important part of life in those small town days, especially with a large family. Since most of my aunts and uncles still lived near my grandparents, there was rarely a meal that had only those living in the house there. Relatives and neighbors were always dropping by and sitting in at the meal. One uncle always stopped by for a cup of coffee before work and would bring back anything my grandparents needed from the city where he worked. Since when we first moved in my mother's two younger brothers were still 'at home', meal time could be quite a production. (Holidays were an incredible production that I won't describe here.)

Even though the upstairs of my grandparents' house had been redesigned as an apartment for us, we often had meals with my grandparents. At the time, it didn't seem unusual to have meals that featured several



types of meat (usually chicken, ham, and beef) along with two types of potatoes (boiled and fried) and numerous types of vegetables fresh-from-the-garden (I know because we kids usually picked them). The meal also always included gravy and sliced bread and rolls as well as something to drink and always concluded with dessert — pie with ice cream, cookies, and cake (yes, all three). This was the usual fare at both lunch and supper (or dinner).

Breakfast was a different sort of meal, in that it included much of what was left over from supper, as well as cold or hot cereal (depending on the season) with fruit, toast, and fried eggs and bacon. The best part of breakfast was that we got to eat pie if we wanted it, since my grandmother concluded it wasn't much different from a Danish.

At my grandmother's table, children drank milk. We weren't allowed coffee or tea until we were 16 or so as it was felt such things prohibited growth. We also weren't allowed soda pop until we had our glass of milk first. However, we could have juices, soda pop, or the latest Kool-Ade concoction anytime, as my grandmother kept all of the above as well as a pitcher of water in the refrigerator at all times.

While it may sound like an ideal food situation, it did have its drawbacks.

The 50's were the era of "clean your plate, children in China are starving" and our household was no exception. My sister and I were expected to try a little bit of everything, even if we didn't take more. Since my grandmother liked to try growing different things each year, we tried lots of different vegetables. I don't recall many times that either of us balked at eating vegetables since we usually had a major hand in growing them.

Being finicky was not tolerated. Since there was so much food on the table anyway, it would have been difficult not to find something someone liked. The only thing that removed one from tasting everything at the table was demonstrable food allergies. I guess we were a hardy lot as only one or two

of my cousins turned out to be allergic to one of the major staples of grandma's table — tomatoes.

Tomatoes, and to a lesser extent potatoes, were always on the table at every meal. Usually fresh sliced, they were also in salads and available stewed. I don't recall tomatoes being cooked in a cassarole or other dish very much; most meals were plainly prepared and served. I do recall that when grandma discovered spaghetti, she usually made it with stewed tomatoes and it was almost a soup when served.

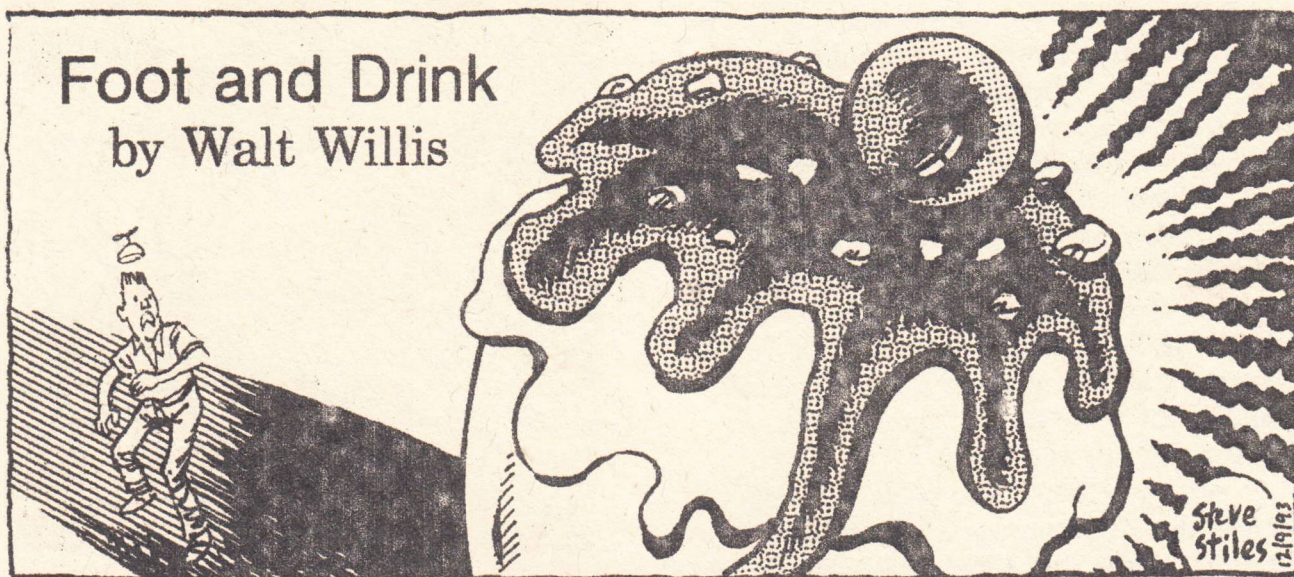
Looking back, I guess we were all a bit overweight, but not excessively so. We children walked to school (a few blocks away) and played outside in most weather. If we weren't playing, we were digging or harvesting in the garden or visiting relatives. It was also an era where adults believed children should help and be active all the time. If someone made the mistake of saying they didn't have anything to do, grandma always had something, whether it was showing her what you were doing in school on the slate board that hung in the kitchen (she had taught in a one room school room before she got married) or being put to work helping out in whatever she was doing.

Usually, she was cooking, so my sister and I learned how to peel potatoes and other general cooking skills. One of our favorite times was in the fall when grandma was making fruitcakes. We collected the butter-nuts from the tree in the front yard and let them mature in the 'summer kitchen' as she called it. Then in the fall, we were allowed to use a hammer and nutpicks to get the nut meats out for the fruitcakes. If we found any shells, there was a lot of finger pointing.

In a way, I suppose growing up with my grandparents prepared me for large meals with a large number of people. I enjoy banquets and going out with large groups of fans. I will eat with just about any fans who asks me and am likely to ask anyone in ear-shot if they'd like to come along. I grew up with the fannish adage, never eat alone — it's no fun. ☆



☞ To start things off in this 'food' theme issue of *Mimosa*, here's an appetizer from Walt Willis. In some of our previous issues, we've referred to Walt's 1952 trip to the United States for the Great Chicago Worldcon, but we haven't mentioned that Chicon II was just one stop in a much larger coast-to-coast fan fund trip that was eventually chronicled in the magnificent trip report, "The Harp Stateside." Following the 1952 Chicon, Walt went west to Los Angeles as the guest of Forry Ackerman, and while in L.A., he met up with many of the fan groups active at that time. Here's an excerpt reprinted from THS, about that Los Angeles stopover.



Friends, I should like to warn you all here and now about the hot nut fudge sundae served in The Melody Lane, Los Angeles. It's a wonder that the LASFS, the Insurgents, and the Outlanders do not parade before this restaurant in shifts, or some other striking garment, bearing placards inscribed 'Beware the Hot Nut Fudge Sundae!!' The fact that this was no ordinary hot nut fudge sundae, but a hot nut fudge sundae of transcendental malevolence, was brought home to me when I realized it was making me feel ill even before I saw it. The miasmic aura of the thing (say, this is pretty highclass writing, isn't it? First transcendental malevolence and now miasmic aura) extruded round me from the catacombs of The Melody Lane where it was even now being awakened to its hideous pseudo-life. Cold shivers ran up and down my back as I realised it was crawling to me from the vaults. By the time it reached me I knew the best I could hope for was that I could get home to South Sherbourne Drive before I was physically sick in

the presence of the elite of West Coast fandom. The sheer horror of that thought, of being ever afterwards known in Los Angeles fan circles as the guy who was sick in The Melody Lane made me summon up my last reserves. Calling on Roscoe for aid, I struggled desperately against the hypnotic lure of that hot nut fudge sundae. Ghod knows what would have happened if I had succumbed and actually tasted the thing, but I finally overcame it. Driving a sharp spoon through its heart, I staggered out into the night. It had been a grim fight but I had won. I should be known in Los Angeles as nothing worse than a guy who bought hot nut fudge sundaes just to look at. (They might think I belonged to a Sundae Observance Society.)

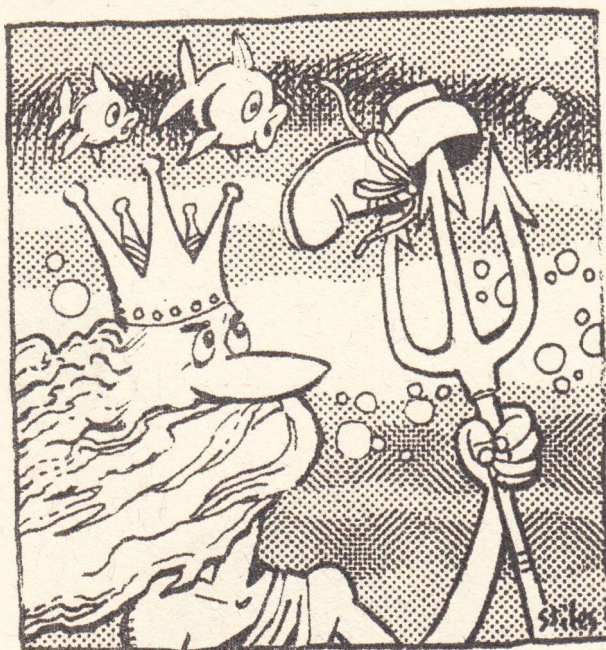
Next morning we set out for the Pacific Ocean. This ranked up with the Insurgents on my private list of the sights of the West Coast, and since as far as I knew it had never carried on a vendetta against Forry, I expressed a wish to see it. I had quite a



clear picture of what it would be like. There would be this spectacular cliff road and beside it a beautiful golden strand, deserted except for an occasional beautiful film star committing suicide or playing immersion heaters with Burt Lancaster. You can imagine my surprise then, when after a drive of about half an hour — I'd always thought Los Angeles was on the coast — we pulled up at a sort of funfair. Hot dog stands, ice cream vendors, shooting galleries, the lot. One of the sideshows turned out to be the Pacific Ocean. It had a concession of a few square yards of rather dirty sand, and looked depressingly like the Atlantic. I valiantly tried to feel like stout Cortez, silent upon a hot dog stand in Darien (I am now equally valiantly trying not to attempt a joke about a Peke) and sat down at the water's edge to take off my shoes and socks.

It was my intention to wade out a short distance, thinking appropriately solemn thoughts — such that I had now reached the furthestmost point in my journey westwards and this was the turning point — and feeling as poetic as I could in bare feet with my trousers rolled up, I stalked rapidly into the Pacific Ocean. Only to slow down abruptly with an aching sense of injustice. It was COLD. My Ghod, the Pacific was cold! It was intolerable. However, I suppressed my indignation and continued on to where the water got deep. I paused, savouring the solemnity of the occasion. Here I was in the Pacific Ocean... My romantic reflections were shattered by a shout from Forry. I looked round. He pointed. I looked down. There, sailing past in line ahead at a good fifteen knots, were my only pair of shoes in 7,000 miles. With a strangled cry I leaped after them, letting go my rolled-up trouser legs, which immediately fell down into the water. I overtook my shoes halfway to Hawaii and struggled back to dry land. I regret to have to tell you that Forrest J Ackerman, a fine man in many ways, failed to show the quiet sympathy which would have been ap-

propriate at this tragic moment. He was rolling on the sand, *laughing*. And as I trudged up to him, he said, "A slow boot to China."



I wrung out my trousers, put on my shoes and squelched back to the hot dog stand for a chocolate malt to restore my faith in life. Feeling hungry after the afternoon's surf sports, I also ordered a hamburger. Then I took my shoes off again and began to drip quietly on the floor. I realised the hamburger man was speaking to me.

"What?" I said.

"With?" asked the man.

"With," I said. Whatever it was, it was evidently free and I wasn't going to pass it up.

"With onions?" asked the man.

"With everything," I said recklessly.

Forry looked at me.

"*Everything*?" asked the man, with an air of incredulous hope.

"Everything," I said. I was beginning to have vague premonitions, but since I didn't know what he was going to put in, I didn't know what to tell him to leave out.

A wild gleam came into the fellow's eye, and he momentarily disappeared in a blur of motion. He was leaping about his booth like



a mad thing, collecting samples of every organic substance within a radius of ten feet and piling them onto the foundation stone of my hamburger. I stared aghast. Obviously this man had dedicated his life to thinking up things which could be incorporated in a hamburger. I could see him waking in the middle of the night and noting down the name of some edible Peruvian root he had overlooked. But then as the years went by, his simple faith in his mission in life must have been disturbed: was it, he must have asked himself during the long frustrating years of preparing commonplace six-ply hamburgers, was it all worthwhile? Would his genius ever be recognized? And then, at last, I had come along, his soul mate, the Perfect Customer, the Man Who Wanted Everything. This was his destiny, the culmination of his career.

The hamburger rose to the sky like an edible Tower of Babel, an awesome monument to the ambition and ingenuity of Man. And still it grew, tier after tier, higher and higher. Until finally the human whirlwind subsided and looked about distractedly at his depleted shelves. I kicked my shoes out of his reach. After a few more moments of --- meditation, he sighed and delicately added the roof to the hamburger, like a great artist signing his masterpiece. He stepped back and gazed at it, tears of pride in his eyes.

Cowering in the shade of the edifice, I looked helplessly at Forry. He pretended he wasn't with me, and went to make a phone call. Looking round the hamburger, I could see the fierce eyes of its creator on me. I nibbled guiltily at the fringes of the thing for a while, and then desperately lifted it in both hands and began to gnaw at it. A shower of mustard, onions, beetroot, pickles, lettuce, and countless other foodstuffs began to descend over me and the immediate neighbourhood. I hoped Forry was warning the Fortean Society.

After some time, I had absorbed, either internally or externally, enough of The Ham-



burger to give me courage to make a break for it. I stole guiltily away, resolving to make a will leaving the remains of it to the United Nations Famine Relief Fund.

In the evening, Forry took me out for a last drive. I saw Hollywood Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard and everything, including Grauman's Chinese Theater where they have the impressions in cement of such anatomical characteristics as Joe E. Brown's mouth and Durante's nose. I noted that for some reason, Jane Russell was represented by her feet.

I know I didn't see much of California, but what I saw was a bit disappointing. I'd been thinking of it as a green and golden paradise, and hadn't realised it was largely reclaimed desert. The surrounding hills were unexpectedly barren and ugly, and the houses among them looked from the distance like matchboxes scattered among uncompleted excavations. Los Angeles had some fine streets and buildings, but seemed too diffuse to have an integrated personality, and the most lasting impression I took away with me was a cafe sign advertising 'The Original Rain On The Roof'. The notion of simulating the sound of rain as a seasonal attraction seemed to me quite startling. ✧







money, but it won't get you a copy of this fmz. Rather, it'll go to further the campaign a few of us Bay Area fans are starting. This is to build a ladder made out of empty bheer cans (filled with bottle caps & pasted together with a glue made from a mixture of the Nectar of the Ghods and ground glass from bourbon bottles [Jack Daniels #7, of course]). Being as the various World Powers are ruthlessly vying to be the first to reach the moon, we can not risk publicity of our efforts, so all of this is being done in secret, beneath the eyes of Authority. By keeping the Real Motive a secret, we find that we can operate for the most part out in the open, even with Vested Authority unwittingly aiding us in the Cause.

Perhaps those of you who have corresponded with Dean A. Grennell or have read one of his splendid publications have come upon references to him making regular sojourns down to a local garbage dump to shoot rats with his .357 Magnum. In reality, unbeknownst to all but a Few, he is actually furthering his stockpile of bheer cans, readying for the Day. If you travel about the country you will note that by every community, be it big or small, lies a garbage dump, with vast mounds of empty bheer cans. They are caches, strategically placed, all waiting for the Day.

But these caches are but empty bheer cans, [to] remedy this, we here in the Bay Area have made caches of [full] bheer cans that will serve for the Foundation. Whenever one or more of us are gathered, we pool together our small change and go and buy a couple six packs or a case or two. If we are more flush, we purchase several cases and have a Bheer Bhust. After each of these sessions, we carefully preserve each and every can and

fill it with bottle caps, making sure that no Coke or other soft drink cap is allowed to contaminate the others. These are carefully hidden in or around our homes. I have a rare picture taken by Boob Stewart of one of these caches. I hope to include it in either this or a future one, to give you an indication of how our work is proceeding along.

As increased state taxes have raised the price of bheer, we have encountered some difficulty in being able to buy as much of the Sacred Nectar as we would desire to further the Cause, so if any of you send me a sum, be it large or small, you will be assured of having your Name inscribed on one of the Foundation cans by one of the Can Openers that opened a million bheer cans ...

The text breaks off at this point as the page ends. To judge from the quality of repro, Dave still had a bit to go before he was able to get decent repro from that duper. Within a year or so he was able to acquire a better typer that could cut stencils and more legible spirit masters and a hand-fed spirit duper from Sears & Roebuck, besides learning how to better use his mimeo to do more than put out crudzines. Such as the early issues of *Innuendo*, but that comes later.

With copies of whatever pages he was able to run off on his duper he went down to visit friends in San Francisco. If he had the money he'd take a Greyhound bus or, which is more likely, he'd hitchhike to downtown SF and take a bus or jitney out Mission Street to Richland and walk over to Arlington to see if Bob Stewart was home. If he wasn't then he'd walk on down thru St. Mary's Park where Bob might be hanging out and then head across Alemany Blvd. and up Cambridge to Terry Carr's place.

Though strewn with typos and twisted syntax, the writing, possibly reflecting thoughts that were going on in the heads of



the other fans, struck a resonating chord and it was from this humble beginning that the fable of the Tower to the Moon from Bheer Cans began.

In a way it is ironic, since by that time they had begun to prefer foreign beers which were only to be had in bottles. Not that any of them actually drank that much. The 'cache' of empty beer cans was a photo taken by Bob Stewart (at that time nicknamed 'Boob' because he titled his zine *Boo!* to differentiate him from the two Bob Stewarts from Texas who were then beginning to become active fans at the time). The photo showed a bunch of cans piled in a shed in the backyard of Bob's place that were left there by his older brother and his friends after one of their beer busts. (Bob's brother and his friends weren't fans, but hard core mouldy fig jazz musicians who preferred King Oliver style ensembles to the endless string of solos of 'Dixieland' jazz in rendering the tunes they played. If it was 20 or so years later they'd probably would have weird hair-dos and be playing punk rock.)

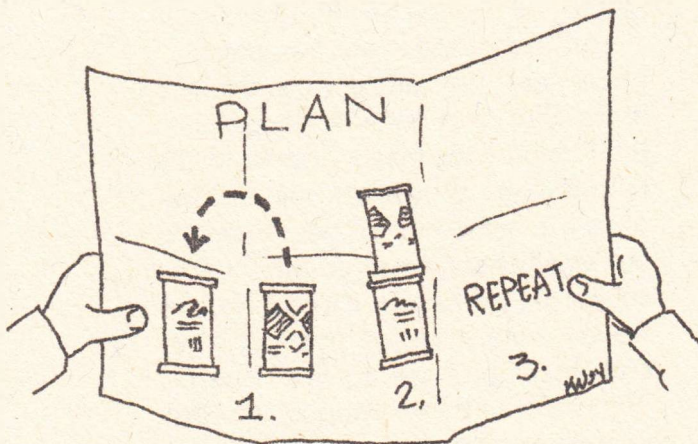
They drank because their parents and peers did, along with most of society around them. It was a socially convivial thing to do when gathered together at one or another's house or at a meeting of the Golden Gate Futurian Society. Especially at the GGFS meetings because all of them were teenagers. Pete Graham, while one of the active fanzine fans of the group, did not drink alcoholic beverages at that time. While a few jokes might have been made about this from time to time, he was still part of the gang and welcomed at any of the get-togethers whenever he could make it down from Fairfax in Marin County. Dave's memory is vague on this detail, but his recollection is that none of them ever drank that much, that a couple of cans or bottles was all it took to satisfy them for an evening.

It didn't take long for the 'ladder' to be transformed into a tower and the myth was embroidered and elaborated at parties and from time to time in fanzines. A tower is

grander and evokes mythic images (even without reading Joseph Campbell) that come from the distant past such as the Tower of Babel that was to reach up to the heavens. By the time Terry Carr and Ron Ellick were putting out *Fanac* in Berkeley from 1958 on it had become a running fannish gag.

While Dave Rike might have been the first to refer to the Tower in print that doesn't mean that the idea was entirely original with him. It might have been at one party or another that one of the gang would idle away his time while listening to endless fannish talk of the others by attempting to stack up some empty bheer cans. (If they're drunk by a fannish sort then they become bheer instead of beer cans.) All cans at that time were made of steel instead of extruded aluminum and might have stacked easier. "Hey, Bob, what're trying to do there?" "Oh, I dunno, jes' thinking that if I had enough cans I could build a tower that'd reach up to the moon." "Oh yeah, well you buy the bheer and I'll drink it for ya." Something like that. Dave doesn't remember any attempt to set up a Tower but that doesn't mean it didn't happen. Terry probably would have remembered, but, unfortunately, he is no longer with us. Bob Stewart and Pete Graham are currently out of the fannish loop but if someone is ever able to get in touch with them then possibly they can ask them what they recall.

Anyway, it is from such humble origins that a fannish legend was born... ✧

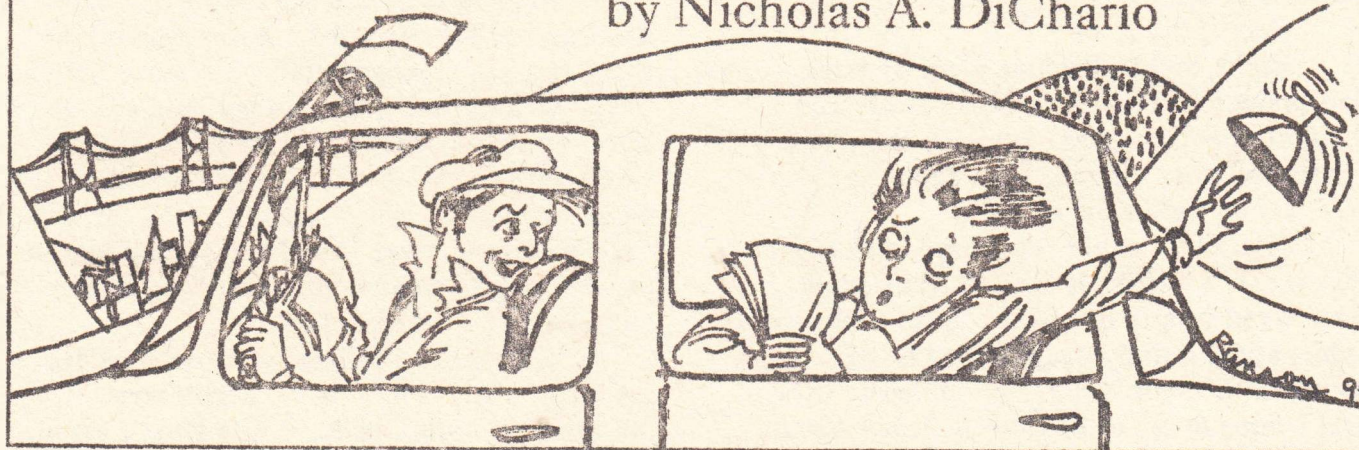




☞ Time to move forward, now, from the San Francisco Bay area of the 1950s to San Francisco of the 1990s and a vignette from ConFrancisco, the 1993 Worldcon. From first-hand experience, we can tell you that San Francisco is a marvelous city for dinner expeditions. The convention itself presented us the opportunity to meet, for the first time, lots of people we had previously run across only in print, including the writer of the following article.

## BREATHING WATER

by Nicholas A. DiChario



I am an inexperienced fan. A novice. In fact, my first convention was MagiCon, the 50th Worldcon, and I attended that one not so much as a professional or a fan, but someone flirting with both. (I was there when *Mimosa* lost then won the Hugo. What a show!)

I made friends with a few writers at MagiCon. I met Mike Resnick for the first time (who had bought a bunch of my short stories for his original anthologies), and he was kind enough to take me under his rather large wing and introduce me around. Mike loves the fans and conventions — he's been attending worldcons regularly for thirty years. But what the hell did I know? I'd never seen a hucksters room. I'd never heard of filking. (Fan awards? Do they really give those?) Fan terminology was like a foreign language to me. (What exactly is fanac, anyway?)

One year later, my short story "The Winterberry" was nominated for a Hugo Award and I was on the John W. Campbell ballot for Best New Writer. The flirting stage had passed, and I was about to plunge into the fan/convention scene with both feet.

I don't mind telling you that I was terrified. Panels and readings and an awards ceremony — I'd never been nominated for anything before. And I was going to have to stand up in front of real people and pretend I was in control. (It's much easier when you're sitting in front of a computer, and you actually *are* in control.)

Anyway, just when I was feeling like I was breathing water, and I was positive I would burst from the tension, a San Francisco cab driver came to the rescue.

"Hey, are you in town for that science fiction convention?" he asked me, launching into traffic, zero-to-seventy-five in no more time than it takes to snap a neck.

"Yeah, as a matter of fact I am."

"I was thinking about checking that out."

He cut over two lanes without looking and stomped harder on the gas, apparently to make a turn. I clutched the window crank to keep from sliding across the seat. I was barely able to read a passing sign: SAN FRANCISCO, THE INDUSTRIAL CITY. I never knew that about San Fran.

"Oh, are you a fan?" I asked him.



"I love Connie Willis. I heard she's up for some kind of award. I hope she wins."

I decided not to take this personally. (I was up against Connie in the short story category, but there was no way he could have known that, and besides, I was positive he was talking about the novel. Who wasn't?)

"What was the name of that book she wrote?" he said.

"*Doomsday Book*."

"Right, right. Intense piece of work. You know I'm a big fan of historicals and I thought she did a great job with the plague. I gotta tell you, though, I thought the futuristic scenes were slow as hell."

Slow, yes, I could see where such a concept would be difficult for this gentleman. He weaved in and out of traffic as if he had radar; and I quietly prayed that he did. *I have to ride a cable car*, I mumbled to myself. *And I have to eat at the North Beach Restaurant*. These were my two secret wishes for San Francisco. I came all the way from Rochester, New York, and I refused to leave San Fran without riding at least one cable car. (I'd grown up with Michael Douglas and Karl Malden on *The Streets of San Francisco*, after all.) A friend of mine had told me about the North Beach Restaurant, and said I'd find the finest Italian cuisine in the city there. So before I had stepped into the 747 at Rochester International Airport, I said to myself, *Cable car and North Beach Restaurant — These two things I must do!* They seemed somehow more obtainable than the Hugo and the Campbell (and as it turned out, they were). Why these personal Grails came to me at this moment in the cab, I do not know, except that maybe I was afraid I might not make it to the hotel alive, and I was reminding myself that if I did I'd better fulfill the promises I'd made.

We cruised up and down the city's hilly, narrow lanes, and whizzed past Chinatown, moving away from Fisherman's Wharf. I should probably tell you that I've never been much of a traveler. My first Big Trip away from home was my excursion to Orlando, Florida, for MagiCon, so I was not only new

to conventions and fandom, but I was a bug-eyed traveler, too. I was beginning to wonder what the hell I was getting myself into. Is this really the life for me? — Hopping on a plane and shooting across the country? It was much easier when (as my family *still* likes to say from time to time) writing was my hobby.

And then it struck me that I was three thousand miles away from home, talking to this complete stranger about a science fiction novel we had both read. I may be a convention novice, but suddenly I realized what a worldcon was all about, or was supposed to be all about, and what fandom stood for, too: People from all over the globe getting together who may have absolutely nothing in common...except science fiction.

Oh, I realize I'm bordering on melodrama here — a writer's worst nightmare! — but sentimentality aside, it was true, I could feel it, and I began to relax right there in the cab, with this maniac behind the wheel. I remembered something Mike Resnick had told me a year ago. "A con is like a family reunion." For the first time, I understood what he meant. We all had common ancestors. I carried that thought with me during ConFrancisco, as if it were a tangible thing, a talisman I could take out of my pocket and squeeze whenever I felt like I was breathing water. As it turned out, I met dozens of wonderful fans, people who shook my hand and congratulated me and told me how much they enjoyed my story. Wow, you have no idea how warm that made me feel, and I thank you all!

I met Dick and Nicki Lynch in the Canadian Suite after the Hugo ceremony. That's how this article came about. I remembered what Dick had said during his acceptance speech, inviting anyone who was unfamiliar with fanzines to check them out, and I told Dick and Nicki that I would love to contribute something to *Mimosa*. We cut a deal right then and there.

Anyway, my conversation with the cabby carried on all the way to the Marriott. I told him I was up for a couple of awards, and he



wished me luck. (I didn't tell him I was up against Connie.) He dropped me off in one piece, said he'd probably not make the convention, and asked me to tell "Miss Willis" — if I got the chance — how much he liked her book, and not mention anything about the slow, futuristic stuff.

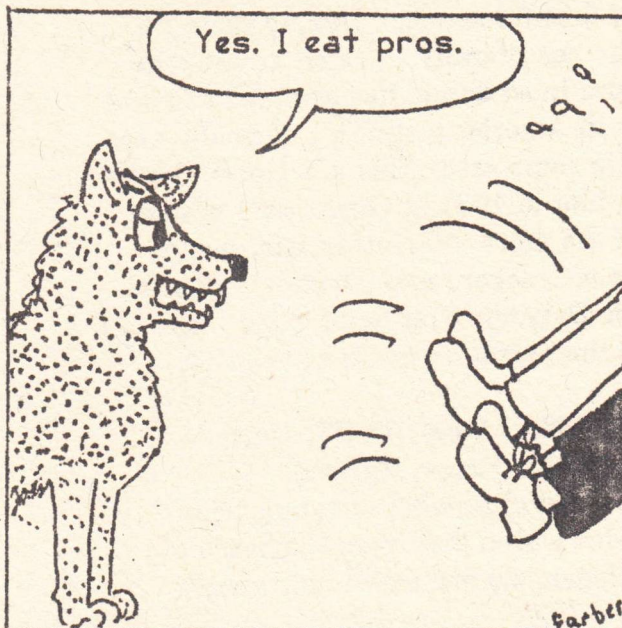
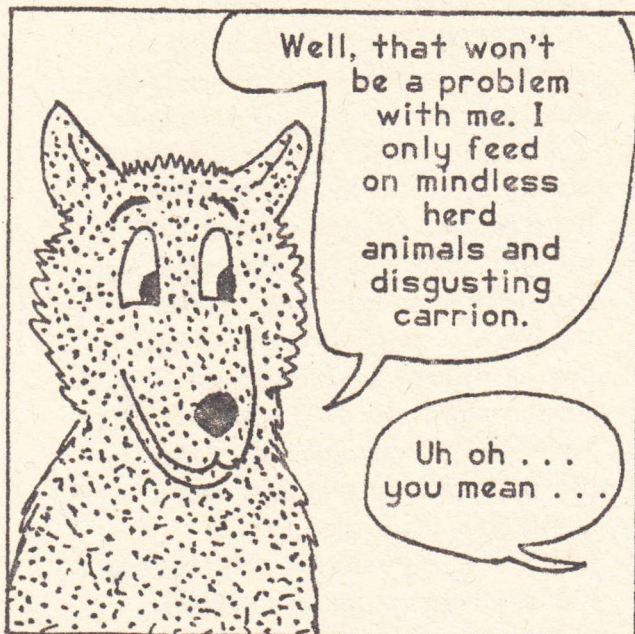
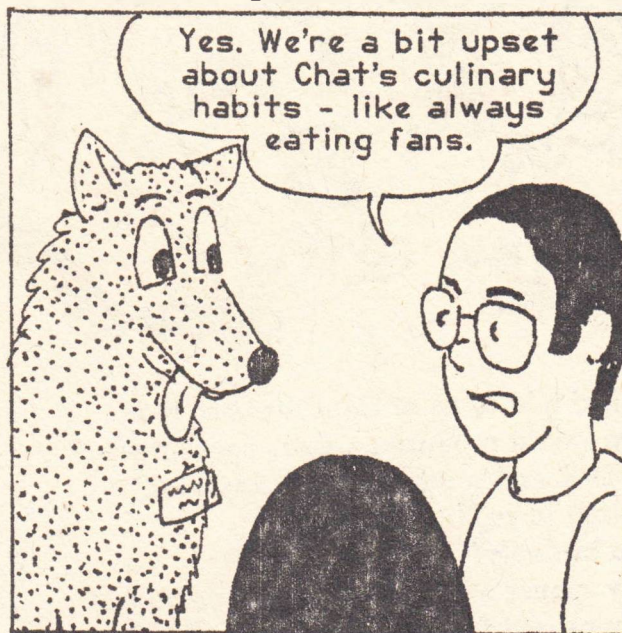
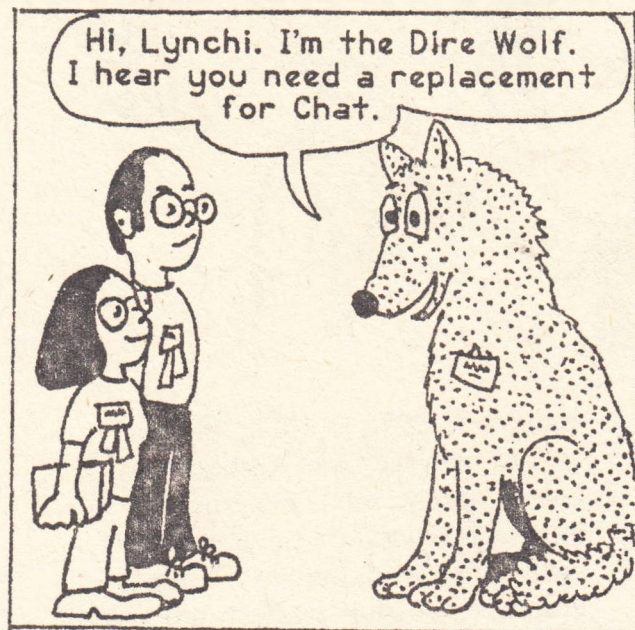
If you're out there, Mr. Cab Driver, I did get the chance to tell Connie how much you enjoyed her novel and she was actually quite

touched. And I did not mention the slow futuristic stuff.

Although the Hugo and Campbell Awards eluded me, I rode a cable car (hung off the side of one, in fact) and I made it to the North Beach Restaurant where I enjoyed one of the finest pieces of grilled swordfish I've ever tasted. And, of course, best of all, I met more fans. ✧

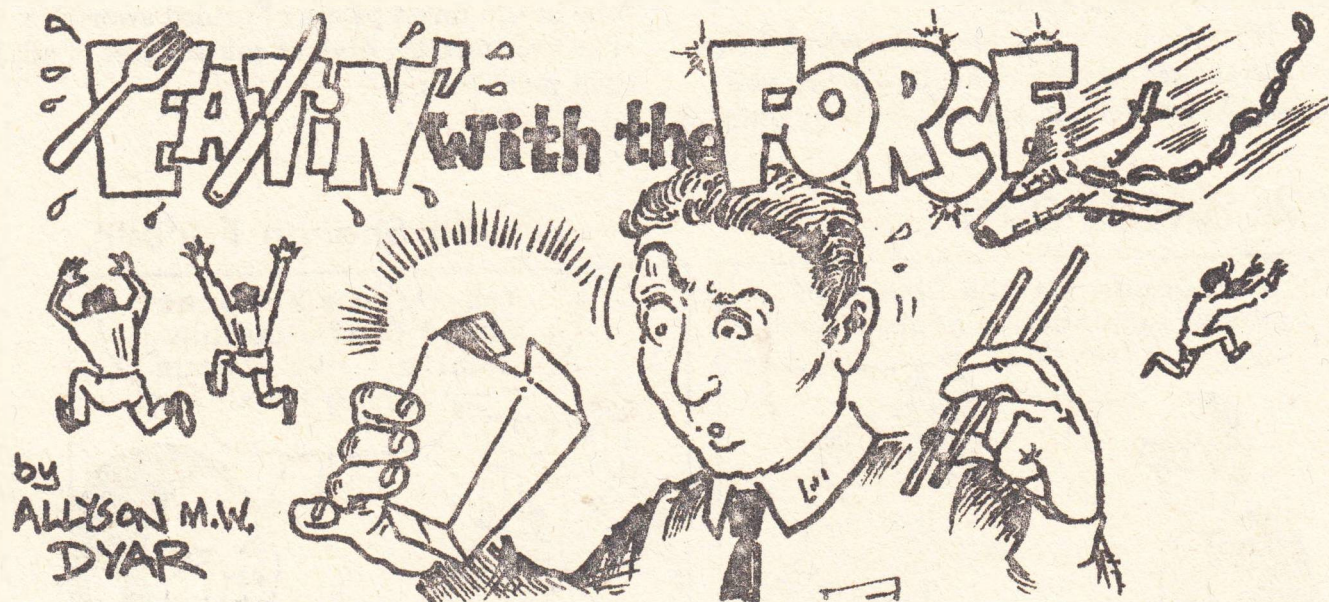
## LA BREA CON . . .

by Sharon Farber





☞ Speaking of ConFrancisco, we should mention that worldcons do not only present you the opportunity to meet people you've previously only known in print. They also provide maybe the only yearly occasion to see old friends again. Winning our second Hugo at ConFrancisco was indeed pleasant; it was a bright moment in our Worldcon trip. But what we value even more was reunions we had with many friends and acquaintances, including the writer of the following article.



by  
ALYSON M.W.  
DYAR

Nicki told to us at ConFrancisco that *Mimosa* would produce an issue concentrating on food and would we have anything interesting to say?

Do birds fly?

My spouse and partner for 12 years just recently retired from the Air Force after 20 years of faithful service. During those 20 years, he has literally traveled around the world and in so doing, has sampled cuisines that we in America just don't normally experience (in some cases, this is a Good Thing). I joined him in 1981 in Guam, so I missed some of the more interesting fair such as 'Alpo on a Cracker', and 'Pasties'. The following is Dafydd's first-hand experiences; I'll take up the narrative again at the end.

**David Neal Dyar, TSGT, United States Air Force, Retired:**

My first experience with truly alien cuisine was in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, my first active-duty assign-

ment, from 1973 to 1976. Sandwiched between Lake Michigan and Lake Superior, it has more in common with Wisconsin, to which it connects to the west, than to Michigan proper, to which it connects not at all. Settled mostly by Finnish immigrants in the 1880s, the 'U.P.' is home to numerous saunas and a turnover-like meat pie called a *pasty* (PAH-stee). The easiest way to tell a newcomer to the U.P. (besides the fact that they have no idea what the initials 'U.P.' mean) is their obvious confusion over the many signs exhorting 'pasties' -- the plural of *pasty*, not, as is most often assumed, the ornaments of striptease dancers (PAY-stee). *Pasties* are strictly a local delicacy, being bland and almost tasteless, with a consistency like boiled leather wrapped in stale dough. Fortunately, sub/hoagie/hero/grinder sandwich



shops also abound to supply much-needed sustenance. The trick is to get them home before they freeze.

My next assignment was in Turkey, from 1976 to 1978. The Turks like to think of themselves as being vastly different from the Greeks, whom they despise, but their cuisine is actually quite similar. Almost everything is soaked in olive oil, which has a devastating effect on regularity in those unaccustomed to such plenty, resulting in a condition commonly known as the Turkey Trots. Since the Turks owned and operated the NATO bases in their country, there was no escape from their culinary method. Turkish sanitary facilities are little more than ceramic sewers, so it was a good idea to build up one's immunity before attempting off-base dining establishments.

The main constituent of Turkish food is goat and lamb. Beef is almost unknown outside of Istanbul and even there it's imported. While we had beef patties for hamburgers on-base, it was topped with a local goat's-milk cheese whose distinctive flavor earned them the nickname 'lamb-burger'. These were actually quite good, once you got used to the olive oil in which they were fried. There was also a local 'pizza' made with pita bread, ground beef (?) and goat cheese which has been likened to 'Alpo on a cracker'.

Several local foods earned a large American following, the best of which was a roast lamb dish called Doner kebab. This was basically a haunch of lamb turned on a spit and basted with (you guessed it) olive oil and sesame seeds and sliced off in slabs as it cooked. Served on a bed of lettuce and pita bread, it was the all-time

favorite local dish. There was also a fruit drink called meysu which came in three flavors: cherry, orange and grape. This was also quite popular but had to be filtered carefully because it was laced with wormwood.

I spent a year in Greenland from 1979 to 1980, but everything I ate there was imported from either America or Denmark. There was some very good cheese called Maribo, with a consistency like Gouda but a flavor and color closer to Swiss, some of the richest and sweetest butter I've ever tasted (which was also a favorite with the Arctic raven) and Danish pastries that were served daily with breakfast. The only reason we did not fatten up to blimpish proportions is that the temperature averaged 20-below for most of the year and you could burn off a thousand calories just walking from the dining hall to the dormitory. If you carried any food with you, you could expend another thousand calories beating off the ravens (wingspan up to six feet!) that would swoop down on you. A common trick played upon new arrivals was to drop a few of foil-wrapped pats of Danish butter in the pockets of their parkas during lunch.

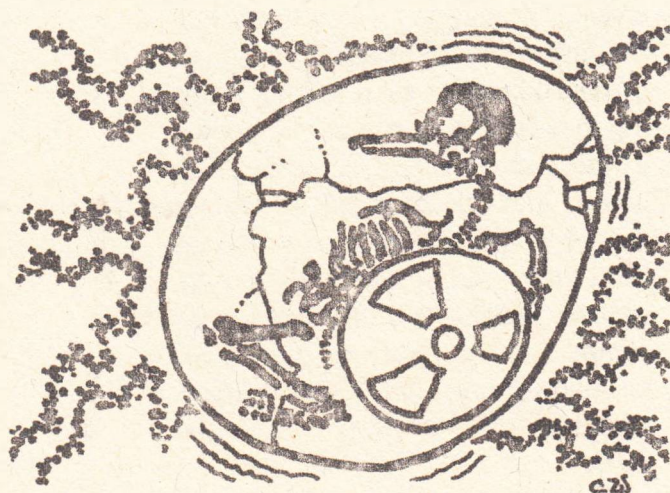




I was in the Philippines from 1980 to 1981. Pancit Canton, a variation on chow mein, and shu pao, a steamed rice dough stuffed with teriyaki pork or beef and a hard-boiled egg, were particular favorites also found later on Guam, but you could find almost anything in the Philippines. Within walking distance of the main gate were the Kobe Japanese steak house, Peking House Chinese restaurant, Muy Thai restaurant and Didi's Pizza Parlor. One had to be careful ordering a pizza 'with everything' as that request would be taken quite literally, resulting in a pyramid of toppings of dubious origin. The streets were lined with vendors selling everything from raw sugar cane to Mongolian barbecue (a sort of Asian smorgasbord) to barbecued beef, chicken and pork on a stick. The latter was quite an adventure for two reasons. First, each stand had its own unique blend of barbecue sauce, ranging in intensity from mild to deadly, whose potency could only be ascertained by trial and error. Second, while there were chickens and caribou (a kind of ox) aplenty, I don't recall ever seeing a pig anywhere in the Philippines, raising some serious questions as to what constituted 'pork' in these dishes. Given the Filipino taste for canine and feline entrees, it was probably best to avoid pork altogether or order it with extra sauce. The sugar cane was also a good investment, as it proved an excellent antidote to even the most powerful barbecue sauce.

One Filipino 'delicacy' doubted as an initiation for newbie Marines and a general test of manhood for both genders. Balut (Ba-LOOT) is a duck egg allowed to develop to the embryonic

stage and then fermented in the shell. The result is best classified as a biological weapon. I have no idea how it tastes, but the rotten-egg smell will gag a maggot at twenty paces -- and that's before the shell is cracked open. Since taste and smell are co-dependent, that was more than enough for me.



Guam, where we resided from 1981 to 1983, is a polyglot with almost no native culture left. Filipino and Japanese cuisine are to be found all over the island. One of the few remaining vestiges of Chamorro culture is the 'fiesta' -- actually more of a luau -- and the 'boonie pepper', a cross between the jalapeno and kung pao peppers. The boonie pepper is so potent that the oil from its skin that sticks to your fingers will blind you if it comes in contact with your eyes. The effect is similar to the controversial 'pepper spray' self-defense aerosols. It was on Guam that we were introduced to the chicken burger, a breaded chicken patty served on a sesame seed bun with shredded lettuce and the usual hamburger toppings. The Guamanian chicken burger was somehow lighter and more flavorful than the chicken patties



available Stateside, but I don't know if it was a local breeding recipe or the way they deep-fried it that accounted for the result. 🍷

Montgomery AL, where we lived from 1986 to 1990, should be considered a foreign-duty assignment because the food is vastly different from anything we had previously encountered. What are grits and why do they come in so many varieties? Southerners expect them at breakfast and don't seem to understand requests to omit them. Their only discernible virtue is that you can use them to scour the plate after breakfast. On the other hand, only in the South is iced tea served either sweetened or unsweetened. This proved especially attractive because the sweetened tea was a saturated solution of sugar and ordering it unsweetened allowed us to sweeten it to our individual tastes. At least we had the option.

This isn't to say that the food was all bad in Montgomery. The BEST barbecue we ever had is still at Country Barbecue. I mourn each day I munch a rib because Country had the BEST ribs and sauce these lips ever smacked. Our last meal in Montgomery before going on to Iceland was at Country Barbecue.

Iceland was the last stop on Dafydd's journey of what would be 20 years in the Air Force. What an interesting place (NOT!). As with Turkey, all perishable items are purchased on the local economy, so we ate Icelandic eggs and yogurt whilst we drank Icelandic milk. They use different cultures in their yogurt which I found to be intolerable despite my love of yogurt. Their sour cream wasn't the thick, delicious white globs we've grown to love here in America, but rather thin, runny and disgusting. I didn't sample any of their milk and cheese as I have an allergy to same. If the yogurt and sour cream was any indication, I imagine it was foul.

Icelandic 'pickled' foods were also unusual, because the Icelanders pickle with sour milk instead of brine. One of the local delicacies was a pickled shark and pickled herring was a close second. Every winter they would celebrate 'Thorrrablot', a banquet of Icelandic delicacies such as the aforementioned pickled fish and sheep's brains. As you can imagine, we and our stomachs opted not to attend.



With the number of sheep on Iceland outnumbering the native population of 250,000 by a good 10 to 1, I expected to find more lamb available. Lamb was expensive and I never purchased any of it even at the base commissary. I just couldn't fathom spending \$2.50 PER lamb chop (that was fatty to boot). Lamb, I subsequently discovered was still considered a delicacy that was served on special occasions such as Easter. We did eat smoked lamb on a trip around the Snaefellness Glacier (prominent in the Verne book *Journey to the Center of the Earth*) which was exquisite though fatty.

The main problem with travel is that, while you encounter items that defy classification as food, you also come to love items that you can't find on your return home. You don't have to travel all that far either — restaurants have built their reputations on a unique recipe for this or that and once you've gotten hooked on a particular recipe nothing else will do. If ever there was a definitive application of the IDIC principle, it would have to be food. ✨



☞ Keeping with this issue's 'food' theme, here's the fifth in David Thayer's series of Vietnam War memoirs — this time about military life and the food that goes along with it. It's an understatement to just say that Army food is 'bad'. David tells us that Army food was so bad, that at times he wasn't sure it wasn't a greater threat to life than enemy soldiers.



Army chow is hell.

C-Rations were the quintessential food of the grunts in the jungles of Vietnam. We received them in cases of 24 boxed meals. Individual olive-drab cans had labels such as 'Spaghetti and Meatballs', 'Ham and Eggs', and 'Ham and Lima Beans'; Pork Chop Hill and Hamburger Hill, infamous ground battles, had more appetizing-sounding names to me. The preparation processes needed to give the food long can life altered the flavor: the spaghetti and meatballs had a strange metallic taste, while the ham and eggs reminded me of dried pus. The ham and lima beans just left a bitter taste in my mouth.

Having to eat C-Rations just to survive made me simmer with anger, a dangerous emotion for someone living constantly with a rifle and hundreds of rounds of ammo. I wrote letters home demanding the family send me civilian food. The only photograph I have of myself in the field shows me pouring ketchup on a C-Rations meal to cover up its taste.

To distribute the meals fairly, my squad broke up into groups of four and rotated who had first choice out of the cases. I tried for

light items like chicken noodle soup, pound cake, and peaches. Peanut butter and jelly from C-Ration cans were palatable when mixed and spread on the otherwise dust-dry crackers. The heavy nature of C-Rations convinced me that the bastards who created them intended them for consumption in regions with harsh winters, such as Korea and Europe. Having learned about C-Ration fruitcake in basic training, I never ate one in Vietnam. It seemed to lie forever like a rock in the bottom of my stomach. I threw more than one can of it off the side of a jungle mountain, hoping to hit an enemy soldier in the head and kill him with the sheer weight of it. The candy bars in the C-Rations provided a better sugar rush, but the paraffin in them (which helped them keep their shape in storage) made them taste like chocolate candles.

In every case of C-Rations there were several finger-sized can openers, but using one of them required patience, dexterity, and perseverance. Blue heat tabs were supposed to come in each case as well, but out of the scores of cases I opened, I saw only one or two tabs. Instead, we substituted C-4 plastic



explosive, sometimes gutting Claymore mines for the stuff. It burned hot and fast, and gave off toxic fumes, but the inconveniences were minor considering that cold C-Rations were virtually inedible.

On one mission in the late summer of 1970, my platoon drew bunker-line duty at a round hilltop firebase. When we landed by helicopter, I cheered at the sight of a mess hall. The thought of someone else cooking something that wasn't C-Rations for me seemed almost like home, but the building proved empty and unstaffed. The brass had decided that the troops were not worth the hassle of flying in provisions, and they converted the building into an oversized storage shed. I watched as firebase personnel stacked cases of C-Rations inside.

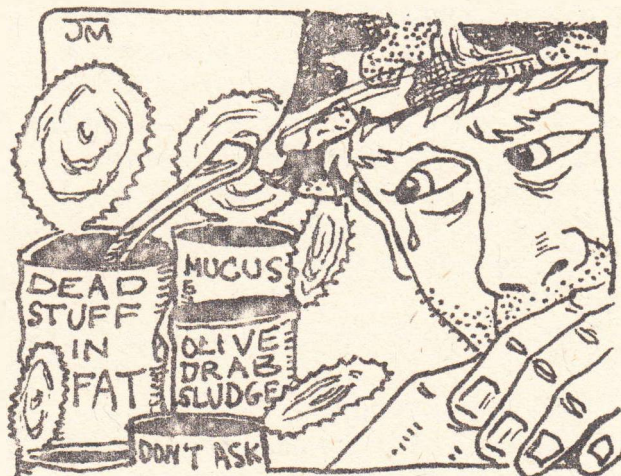
"Hey, Dietz," I asked my buddy. "Want some extra rations of peaches, pound cake, and chicken noodle soup?"

He eyed me suspiciously. After dark, I led him on a raid to the mess hall, which was only a few steps from our position on the perimeter. I little feared anyone would spot us — all other eyes in the firebase were either closed, or searching the surrounding concertina wire for enemy sappers. We easily pried the lock off the back door and once inside, we took two cases of C-Rations off the large stack and carried them to the back of the building. With the help of a flashlight, we identified the cans we wanted, and stuffed them into the pockets of our fatigues. We hid the rifled cases in the trash bin behind the mess hall, and in five minutes, we were back in our position on the perimeter again. With the treasured meals safely in our packs, we watched troops the next day load the other cases into helicopters for resupply of the rest of our company humping in the jungle. Over the next few days, Dietz and I gorged on our extra rations, and never heard a word about stolen food.

One morning in the field, I started heating a can of spaghetti and meatballs. After humping the M60 machine gun down a mountainside the evening before, I was hungry enough to eat anything. A sniper inter-

rupted me; diving for my weapon, I knocked over my hot meal. The gunfire ended quickly, and as the jungle swallowed the enemy back up, I felt a burning on my thigh. Sitting up, I saw a moist dark red spot on my fatigues. My buddies thought I had been hit, but I knew it was only spaghetti sauce. The rest of the meal lay in the dirt, but I felt little regret at its loss. Adrenaline made me momentarily forget my hunger.

I didn't scorn C-Rations all the time, however. On one trek through the jungle, low clouds kept helicopters from resupplying us for several days. At a campsite halfway up a mountain, I consumed the contents of my last can. Only one enterprising private seemed to have any food left, and he offered me a can of peaches for five dollars. I and my stomach grumbled. The thought of paying him for something the Army had given him free pained me more than my hunger, not that I had five dollars to give him anyway. Mercifully, the helicopters dropped in the next day.



In the field, I drank water by the gallon. It was the only liquid which tasted good warm. I tried flavoring it with packets of Kool-Aid from home, mixing it in my canteen. But water was too precious to wash out the canteen after the Kool-Aid was gone, and the residual sugar left in the bottom promoted the growth of mold — impossible to purge once it had started — which gave the water a revolting musty taste.



Packets of instant coffee, sugar, and creamer came in every box of C-Rations but drinking hot coffee in the jungle seemed counterproductive. Other non-drinkers poured the sugar directly into their mouths for its food value. I prized my teeth too much to so blatantly assault them, but C-Rations offered no other ways to consume the sugar, and I hated giving it away. Finally, I made some coffee and discovered that flavored with the sugar and creamer, I liked the taste — my fear that drinking it would overheat my body proved groundless.

In the late fall, my infantry company operated in and around a village near the city of An Khe in the Central Highlands. We made friends with women, children, and old men of the village and the soldiers of the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) stationed there, giving them C-Rations that none of the GIs wanted to eat. We never saw any civilian men of military age, at least not during the day.

One day, a buddy received Jiffy Pop popcorn from home. We urged him to immediately pop it and give us all a taste. Someone generously handed him a chunk of C-4, and we huddled around it as he held the wire handle and shook the aluminum pan over the roaring flame. We cheered as the kernels inside started popping, expanding the cover, but halfway up, the popping stopped.

"You're cooking it too fast," someone complained.

"It's Jiffy Pop," I said. "It's supposed to be fast."

"The flame's too hot."

The cook moved the pan away from the flame. A couple more kernels popped.

"Take it off," I said. "It's starting to burn."

"It's not all popped," the owner complained.

Finally, he placed the pan on the ground and gingerly peeled back the hot foil. Steam and smoke puffed out. A dozen hands reached in around him for the blackened popcorn until only burned unpopped kernels remained in the bottom of the pan.

"Twelve thousand miles and weeks to get here," our benefactor despondently said, "and I burn it up."

"That's war," a buddy consoled him. "At least we got a taste."

My buddies and I normally avoided all local cuisine for fear of catching something. One day I watched one of the local women of the village fry what looked like egg rolls. Sick of eating nothing but Army food for months, I was ready to take a risk for a change. Pointing at them, I asked her what they were. Not understanding my English, she gestured at C-Rations I'd taken out of my backpack for breakfast.



I picked up a can of spaghetti and meatballs. After a brief exchange of hand gestures, pidgin English, and bastardized French (the colonial tongue of the country), we affected a trade. Without a thought of the danger, I quickly chomped the native dish, and found that it's chicken and vegetable ingredients tasted good. My buddies shook their heads, predicting the shits, but I remained healthy. I thought about trading for more the next day, but then a package from home arrived.

Mom had sent me, among other treats, a container of premixed chocolate cake frosting. My mouth watered, but I did not immediately open and devour it; I wanted to savor the anticipation, so I hid the frosting in my backpack. My squad drew ambush duty that



night, so at dusk, we placed our backpacks on the dirt floor of a small mud-walled thatch-roofed building behind the village chief's house. Burdened with only our weapons — M-16 rifles, M-79 grenade launchers, and one M60 machine gun — we walked single-file out of the village and into the surrounding brushland.

Returning for breakfast the next morning after an uneventful night of dreaming about chocolate, I was enraged to discover that my frosting was missing. I stormed out of the building, and demanded of the villagers to know who'd stolen it. The crowd of women and children loitering outside pleaded ignorance and innocence. In my anger, I chambered a round in my rifle and leveled it at them, trying to scare them into returning my chocolate. They drew back, and my buddies made no move to intervene. I knew Vietnamese civilians had died for less, but not at my hands. My anger started to clear. Looking into the faces of women and children I treated as friends for weeks, I turned the muzzle of my rifle skyward.

"One way or another," I vowed, "whoever stole my food is going to pay."

I was able to convince the entire platoon to stop giving unwanted C-Rations to the Vietnamese. In front of them, we opened the cans and tossed them into our campfires. One child, trying to make friends with me again, told me that one of the ARVNs had threatened to slit my throat while I slept at night. I caught the soldier's eye the next day, and, pointing my rifle in his direction, smiled. He stayed out of sight after that.

Everywhere we went, underfed kids with outstretched hands assailed me and my buddies with cries for food. My unit consisted mostly of California hispanics, Southern blacks, and poor whites, but to the Vietnamese we were rich Americans — anyone who ate three square meals a day was rich to them. On one long convoy, my squad was traveling in a deuce-and-a-half truck. When the first truck in the convoy passed hooches along the paved highway, children ran out.

"Look at the bastards," a black buddy

commented. "Begging food every damn chance they get."

"Give them something," I told him, struggling to eat peaches amid the road grit and diesel fumes.

"You give them something."

Finishing the last morsel in the can, I leaned over the side of the truck at the approach of the next group of hooches. I timed the release of the empty can perfectly, and it hit the ground rolling, flashing past the ubiquitous gaggle of kids. They chased after it, and everybody in the truck sat up to watch. An older kid caught up with the can, and we all laughed at his look of disappointment and anger.

"Serves them right," I muttered.

Others repeated the game at subsequent hooches. We stopped only when we tired of gulping food to provide empty cans.

My time in the field finally came to an end. In her last package to me, my Mom included a can of tamales. Back home, I'd never cared much for Mexican food, but now my mouth watered at the mere sight of the large can. During a brief stop on the convoy from the Central Highlands to the coast, I tore off the colorful label and opened the can, and placed it over a burning chunk of C-4 to heat. The thick grease didn't faze me; when the tamales began to bubble, I showed my ignorance of Mexican cuisine by sticking a spoon in to stir, and disemboweled a couple of tamales before realizing they were wrapped in paper. I kept heating the can until fear of burning the tamales stopped me. Separating food from paper, I relished every bite of the unevenly-heated meal, directly from the can, corn meal, stringy meat, and all.

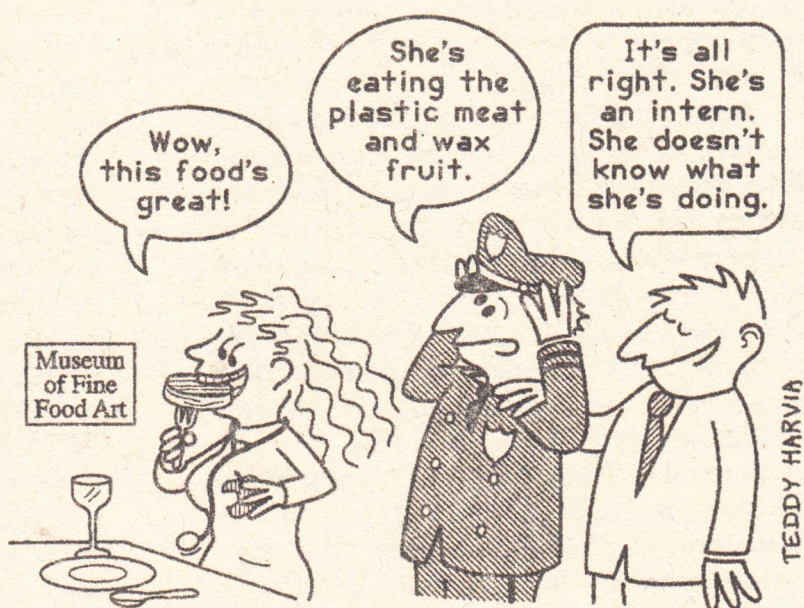
Dreams of chocolate have long ago faded from my memory. I still feel regret at the way I treated the Vietnamese civilians, but I don't regret not having to eat food from olive-drab-colored cans. Twenty years of civilian food since my war experience has only reinforced my distaste for C-Rations. I'll go to war before I ever take another bite of Army food. ☼



Continuing with the topic of bad food, we move from Army food to Hospital food in the latest installment of Sharon Farber's 'Medical Life' series. This article marks the fifth year of this series, which began back when we lived in Tennessee. We don't cross paths with her very often anymore, which made the meals we shared with her in San Francisco high moments of our Worldcon trip.

# Tales of Adventure & Medical Life, Part X

by Sharon Farber



The worst food, even worse than army food, can be found in hospitals.

During my internship year I attended the banquet at the World Fantasy Convention. I was given a salad with iceberg lettuce that was neither wilted nor drowning in Thousand Island dressing; a piece of meat that recognizably originated in a cow and might be chewed with ease; vegetables boiled for less than an hour and devoid of salt and bacon. I dug in with gusto. Then I looked up and noticed, to my embarrassment, that everyone else at the table was picking at their food and wearing expressions of disgust. The best meal I had eaten in the last four months was, for these writers and editors, the worst.

Not all hospital food is equivalent; there is a hierarchy of dreadfulness. The cafeteria food at the University was pretty similar to cafeteria food everywhere, though I must admit that in California I was never offered sweet and sour turkey. Also, the food in St. Louis was an uneasy mixture of Midwest

bland (meat and potatoes, no flavor please) and Southern cooking (fried, anything green boiled with bacon, and the weird bits of the pig).

The food in the employee cafe was always less healthy and more attractive than the patient meals. Of course, there's just something intrinsically unappealing about food on plastic TV dinner trays, and much worse in hospitals than airplanes. Perhaps this is because on rounds one saw the dregs of meals — cold and clotted entrees, mixed together unappetizingly, or spilled on gowns or vomited up on your shoes. Examining the patient, one regularly finds bits of scrambled eggs trapped in bodily fluids or embedded in stool on the sheets. Sometimes, one arrives while, during meals, when one is starving, the food still smells good, and the patient is chewing open-mouthed and drooling.

So when the nurse would call, "Hey doc, the guy in 14 died and we've got an extra tray — want it?" I would hastily say, "No thanks."



Instead, with missed meals, I might raid the patient snack area. Smell (which is most of taste) is the intense evocative sensation, heading right into your temporal lobe without detouring through the diencephalon, making those memories more evocative than those of sight or sound. Thus the taste of cranberry juice or graham crackers makes me immediately nostalgic for sleepless, mealless nights at Barnes, and vanilla wafers remind me of the shrieking babies in pediatrics.

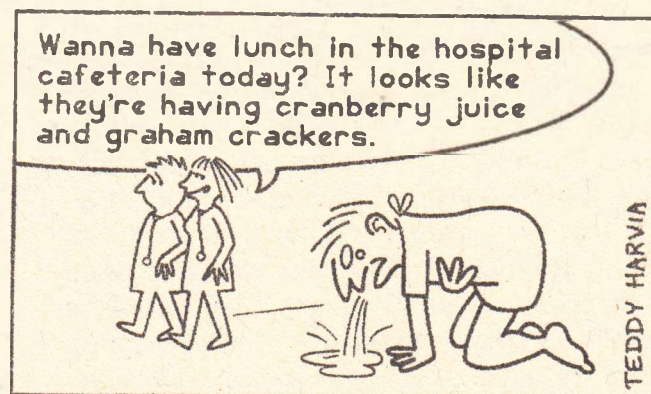
Some students stole cans of Ensure, the high calorie milkshake-like food supplement. They claimed it was actually pretty good, though since we frequently encountered it in vomitus and other toxic spills, it was an acquired taste. The regular flavors were chocolate and vanilla, though City Hospital seemed to have been given a bargain on the discounted flavors — and not even the most persuasive nurse could convince a starving patient to drink a coffee or black walnut shake.

When I was a student, another team was investigating a young man whose urine was a frothy pure white; initially they thought it an unusual form of pyuria (pus in the urine) but it eventually turned out that he had a fistula allowing chyle (the fat content of digested food) to enter the kidneys. Anyway, I recommended we name the condition 'Ensuria'. People became quite angry with me. Not because of the bad pun, but because they could no longer face a can of vanilla Ensure.

The food in certain hospitals was so bad that even patients who had been starving on the streets regularly refused to eat. The green bologna at the VA was especially famous — and if a veteran of the army refused to eat something, you knew it was bad.

At County Hospital, staff meals cost a quarter, and we felt we were being ripped off. The cafeteria was not open nights; midnight snacks were stored in a refrigerator. A hospital security guard stood there to make sure you left your 25¢ meal ticket.

The food at City was the ultimate in unappealing and inedible. Adding insult to



injury, you had to work hard to obtain it. The cafeteria was open only briefly for lunch. To get breakfast or dinner, you had to call hours in advance and order the appropriate number of trays. This meant waking at 5 (in the rare event you were asleep), but this bit of scut work was never relegated to the students. They weren't considered responsible enough for this most crucial act of the day.

You couldn't get your breakfast until 8, which at other hospitals was rounding time. At City, we'd all sit and watch the off call team eat; it was only polite. You'd order extra breakfasts for anyone desperate, and save the doughnuts and cereal for emergencies. These went into a drawer in the conference room, along with an illegal collection of feeding tubes (which invariably went bad Friday at 4:35 when Central Supply closed for the weekend), butterfly needles and small-gauge IVs (virtually unobtainable and very necessary), and extra vacutainers and tourniquets (brought down from the University by each new team).

A proper resident spent part of each day scrounging for these bits of equipment, without which you could not keep patients going, and which the hospital administration felt were unnecessary. For instance, they gave us plenty of intravenous catheters — yeah, two inch long 14-gauge, something you'd use to get a blood donation from a healthy muscular football player, not something you'd dream of trying to insert in a frail, older patient who'd been hospitalized two weeks



and didn't have a good vein left. And since we were technically no longer an ICU, despite having all these patients on ventilators, our allotted blood gas kits lasted about a day and a half.

Whenever the emergency room abused me, I'd retaliate by sticking a couple of 20-gauges in my pocket. Then I'd return, like some primitive hunter-gatherer, and hand out goodies to the interns. I left City Hospital for my next rotation, at Childrens, where butterflies were ubiquitous and all needles tiny. After a couple days there, I realized that I'd been unconsciously filling my pockets with IV catheters.

We lived in the fear that the gynecology residents, with whom we shared our floor, might locate our precious doughnut and needle stash. They would have no compunctions against ripping us off, we knew — we were the same folks, after all, who kept our lab such a mess that I once looked through the microscope at a sample of spinal fluid and saw sperm.

Hard as it was to obtain breakfast, dinner was chancier. We were usually in the emergency room, and barely able to run to the kitchen at the last minute — only to find that the gynecology team had stolen our trays.

Even when the food was there, it was mostly inedible — I remember a long discussion as to whether bits of liquid cheese on cubes of white bread was Welsh Rarebit or culinary desperation. We joked about sending the occasional bits of meat to pathology for identification — though we were afraid that we might be returning them to their starting point.

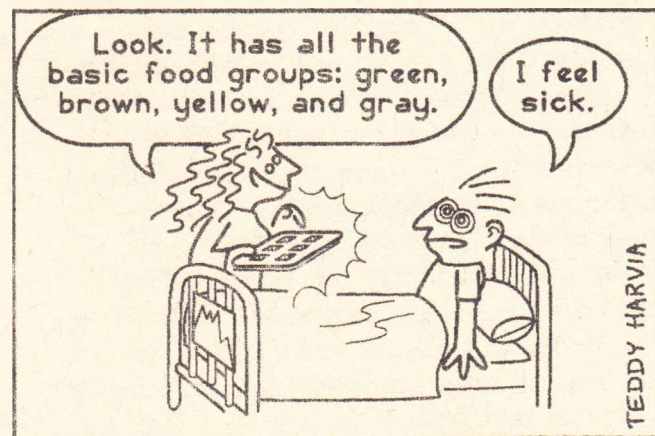
If you missed dinner, you were on your own. The neighborhood was too dangerous for pizza delivery, and only a large or foolhardy medical student would volunteer to run out for burgers. That left the munchie machines, and in the rare event you had any change they were probably empty.

Late one night, I ventured into the basement hunting for the mythical full munchie

machines. Everything turned out to be empty except the Coke machine, and while I was there a security guard wandered by. She said, "I was just out on the street and heard screaming," and proceeded to tell me a long and incomprehensible story, the gist of which (I think) was that some girl was raping some boy in the bushes, which I found hard to believe as there was very little greenery around the hospital. I make it a habit to be polite to people who carry guns and tell weird stories, and I subsequently avoided that area of the basement as much as possible.

#

The most disgusting hospital food has to be the pureed glop for people with problems swallowing. You have to specify pureed — the soft diet may deliver bacon and white bread. I always feel hypocritical when I stand above a tray with its little plastic rectangles of green stuff, brown stuff, yellow stuff and gray stuff, and urge the patient to eat up. If only the food wasn't so bright!



One day at City Hospital, my chief resident said, "There's a guy on the medicine floor who I think has bulbar myasthenia. I'm due in clinic — I want you to do a Tensilon test."

Myasthenia is a disease where antibodies attack the acetylcholine receptor, in essence blocking the muscle's 'on' switch. In the Tensilon test, you inject something that



increases the acetylcholine available, and if the person really has myasthenia, he'll be much better until the shot wears off, in about ten minutes. (Then you can treat with a long-acting pill form of the medicine.)

I read carefully how to do a Tensilon test — it was my first time — then went upstairs. The patient was a tall, skinny black man with droopy eyes and a voice so slurred that his speech was unintelligible. He sat staring disconsolately at a tray of pastel purees.

I introduced myself, and explained that I was going to inject him with something that would make him better. Then I picked up a needle full of saline — the book recommended starting with a placebo, because some people fake weakness and improvement. Of course, I later realized that, when you have something objective like ptosis (droopy eyes) or dysarthria (slurred speech) you don't need to bother with the placebo.

"This will make you feel a lot better," I said encouragingly, and injected the saline. Not surprisingly, it didn't. He looked angry, then began to mumble something I couldn't understand.

I gave him the Tensilon next. He was still mumbling, and suddenly his speech became clear. "...God damn idiot doctors..."

He stopped his diatribe, realizing that his voice was back to normal. He flexed his arms. He stood. For the first time in weeks, he was able to walk. He strode up and down

the room, saying, "Praise the Lord!"

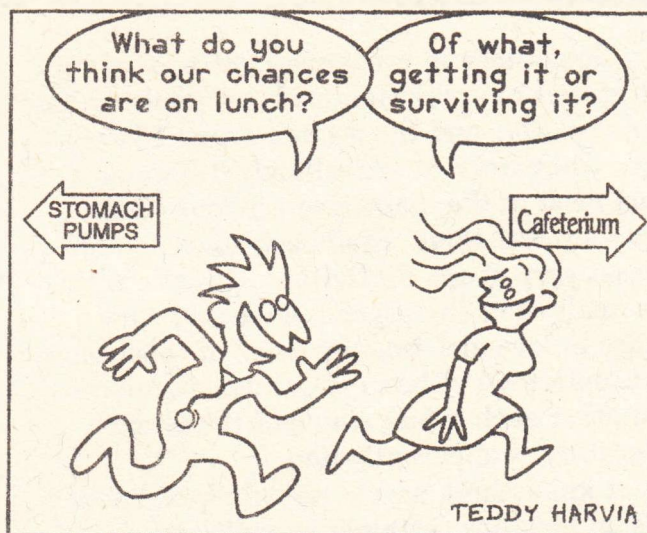
I felt like Oral Roberts.

He walked back to the bed and looked down at us. I thought he was going to thank us. Instead, he pointed to the tray of puree.

"This is the worst food I have ever seen in my life!" he began, and proceeded to tell us everything that was wrong with the food, the nurses, the hospital... All the pent-up frustration that he'd been unable to express emerged, with us as the target.

We felt intense relief when, several minutes later, the Tensilon wore off and his speech was once more low and unintelligible.

We wished him *bon appetit*, and got the hell out of there, hoping the cafeteria was still open for lunch... ☼



## Artist Credits

Sheryl Birkhead — pages 2, 3, 42, 67, 68, 73

Sheryl Birkhead & Bill Rotsler — page 72

Kurt Erichsen — pages 46, 48, 49

Sharon Farber — page 13

Brad Foster — pages 66, 71

Alexis Gilliland — page 60

Teddy Harvia — back cover, pages 22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 61

Teddy Harvia & Sharon Farber — front cover

Teddy Harvia & Bill Rotsler — page 63

Joe Mayhew — pages 18, 19, 20

Linda Michaels — page 40

Peggy Ranson — pages 11, 43, 44, 45

Stu Shiffman — pages 56, 58, 59

Dan Steffan — pages 50, 53, 55

Diana Stein — pages 26, 28, 37, 38, 39

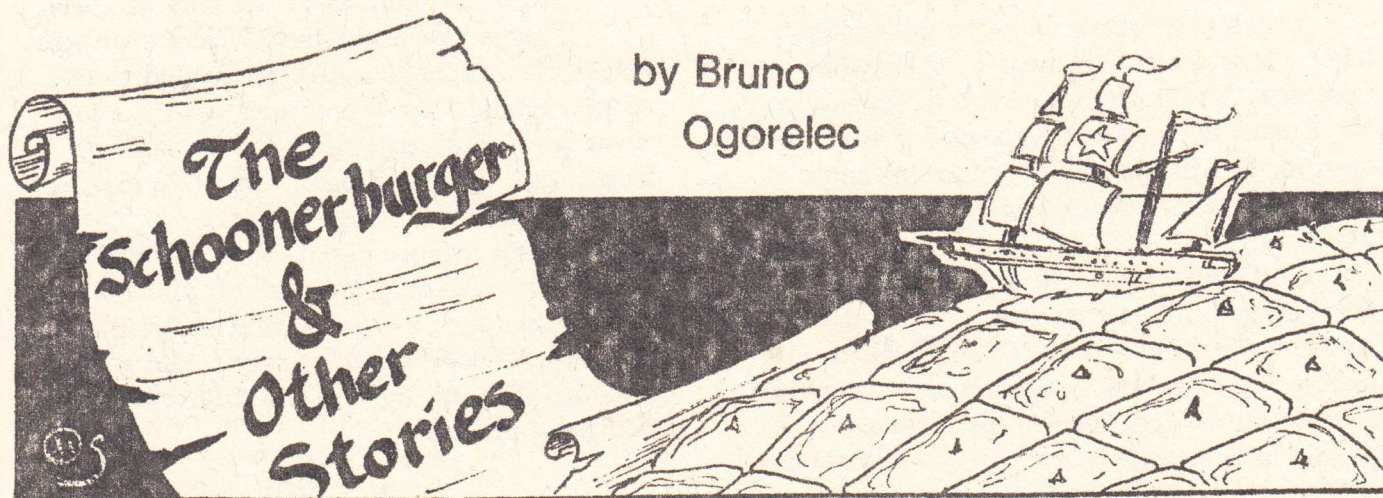
Steve Stiles — pages 5, 6, 7

Charlie Williams — pages 14, 15, 16, 17

Kip Williams — pages 8, 10



∞ The next article takes us from the California Pacific coast all the way to Croatia, in more ways than one. The writer, Bruno Ogorelec, has appeared here twice before, with two stories about human nature: "Great Jumping Grandmothers, A Tale of Female Emancipation" in M16, and the equally entertaining "Operation Dessert Storm" in M11. This third article by Bruno deals once again with human nature, and the resourcefulness needed to survive in a changing world.



Sometimes in my teens I got hooked on the stories of John Steinbeck, particularly his *Cannery Row* and the sequel, *Sweet Thursday*. They were so refreshingly different from most of the mainstream fiction that came my way then. Steinbeck spun a great, honest yarn there, declining to wrestle with the analysis of the psyche, forsaking such topics as love and jealousy, tugs of conscience and undertows of betrayal, moral quandaries and other such topics *sine qua* the Great Literature is apparently *non*.

I knew these psychological phenomena existed but they certainly weren't easy to detect in my neighborhood. From my teenage perspective, the people around me seemed to harbor no such precious sentiments. They were good, common, straightforward folk trying to make ends meet and maybe have some fun in the process. *Cannery Row*-type people. Despite the enormous difference between Carmel, California, in the late thirties, and Zagreb, Yugoslavia, in the early sixties, even the wackier Steinbeck stories could very well have happened in my late Grandma's backyard. People are no different flesh the world over, to paraphrase Zenna Henderson.

In the first paragraph of *Sweet Thursday*, the author tells us of the events that took place between the end of *Cannery Row* and the beginning of the sequel. One of the most startling changes was the departure to the South Seas of the Chinese grocer, Lee Chong. No one had suspected that deep within a seemingly complacent Chinaman's soul there lurked a free spirit, a closet adventurer. "One day," says Steinbeck, "Lee Chong sold out and bought a schooner."

Now, in the edition which I had read, a translation into Croatian, there was an unfortunate typo in that very sentence. 'Schooner' in Croatian is 'Škuna'. What was printed, however, was 'šunka' which means 'ham'. Lee Chong, according to the book, sold the family business, and with the proceeds he bought a ham.

Ah, ham! My heart went to Mr. Lee, the lucky bastard. Down the street from our house was a delicatessen and I would often kibitz the fat lady at the salami counter as she carefully sliced ham with a long thin knife and lay the slices onto the scales with apothecary precision. Most people would buy it very sparingly. My folks — like most of our neighbors — ate it only on special occa-



sions, of which the Easter family breakfast used to be the best.

After the eldest aunt brought it back from the blessing at the parish church, some ham would be neatly arranged on our biggest serving plate, sprinkled with grated horse-radish, and garnished with parsley and slices of hard-boiled egg. It had always seemed to me as a kid that big benevolent yellow eyes were studying me from behind a parsley bush. I wasn't studying them, however, but the ham. So was everyone else present, all of us doing a simple calculation in our heads: the number of ham slices divided by the number of people at the table equals how many slices one can safely eat without incurring the wrath of the Head of the Family. Yeah, I understood Lee Chong's motives, all right.

After a number of years, re-reading *Sweet Thursday* in the original and checking back with the translation, I found out about the typo and had a hearty laugh over the ridiculousness of taking it literally. By that time, it was easy to laugh, of course. Ham had long ceased to be a rare treat; in fact, I discovered I didn't like it all that much any more. Even so, now that I am rich in ham terms (i.e., able to purchase far more ham than I can consume) I still salivate on its cue, like any good Pavlovian.

Robert Heinlein once said, "I've been rich and I've been poor, and rich is better." Damned right, I say. My brief brush with poverty and the cravings it often implies has certainly made me wish I were rich. Thanks to my easygoing nature, and the fact that the period of poverty didn't last long enough to scar me indelibly, the wish never really became a burning desire. I could never work up the real drive, and thus none of my ploys to get rich ever worked. In the getting-rich business I have remained a dilettante, always holding back at the crucial moment. Perhaps I feared I would again, as with ham, discover I did not like it all that much any more?

Still, I studied the various possibilities quite diligently. Socialism in decline might not have been a very promising environment,

but to him who searches — even halfheartedly — the opportunities do come, even at the most inopportune of times. To the bold and imaginative (and I used to flatter myself that I belonged to that sort) what creates hardship on one hand can offer new possibilities on the other.

Take inflation, for instance. In the late eighties this country was hit by inflation topping the 1,000 percent mark. Prices changed overnight, sometimes even between the morning and afternoon shifts. People on the whole suffered, but the streetwise types soon devised little tricks that seemed to turn the tide their way. Cultivating the price news sources, canny purchase timing, hoarding, and similar tactics apparently brought sizeable windfalls. Not to me, alas.

You could often see people suddenly rush out of a crowded office in the middle of a working day, leaving it quite deserted, all rules to the contrary. Everyone would come back within half an hour or so, lugging shopping bags filled with, say, terrycloth towels and bathrobes. That meant that the news of an imminent rise in the price of terrycloth had been announced over the grapevine. Sure enough, next morning terrycloth would be up dizzily, perhaps some 200 percent. Coffee cups would be up 250 percent.

Within days, the price of anything might climb so much that a resale to your neighborhood, even at a heavy discount, could bring a significant profit. After you sold your coffee cups, you could purchase a few packs of dishwasher detergent at discount from your neighbor, who obviously listened to a different branch of the grapevine. He, in turn, probably had to search around for sensibly-priced terrycloth towels.

It looked rather silly to me, the apparent gains notwithstanding. I'd rather prance around my bathroom naked, I decided stubbornly, than run around town in an unseemly manner, chasing bargain bathrobes. "Too much bother with dubious ultimate effect!" I declared to my wife. She ignored the depth and soundness of my reasoning, and thought I was just plain lazy. While her theory does



fit the known facts remarkably well, I still think there must be a better explanation.

At any rate, I was accustomed to seeing people schlepping around large packages of an amazing variety of consumer products, but there was a case that really had me baffled. Unfortunately, the mystery cleared far too late for me to reap any benefit thereof. As usual.

One day, at a textile store downtown, there appeared a good supply of Yugoslav flags. The demand for federal flags has been stagnant for a decade, the very idea of Yugoslav federation having fallen into relative disrepute, and the flags occupied the warehouse shelves to little effect. The store manager felt it was high time to have a clearance sale. As old stock, the flags were on the books at long-forgotten, ridiculously low price and this fact was suitably advertised, but still the interest for old glories remained moribund.

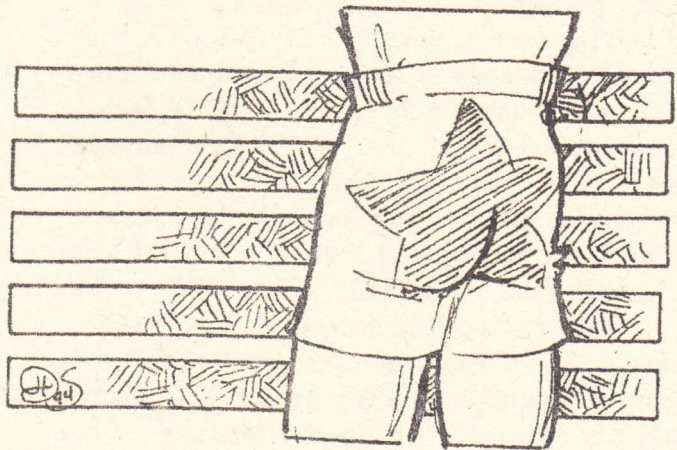
Some inventive seamsters and -stresses explored the possibility of fashioning the newly emancipated national flags out of the unpopular federal cloth. There was, however, a problem with the big red star in the center. It would leave an unsightly five-pointed gash if removed. None of the national symbols would quite cover the bolshevik pentastar, spreadeagled over the bunting "...like a red toad," in the memorable, if malevolent, words of a prominent Serbian dissident. The days thus passed with flag sales lethargic.

At the beginning of the school year, all of a sudden there was a rush on flags that cleared the shelves in less than a week. As usual, the parents crowded at the book and stationery stores to supply their kids with the tools of learning, but for some reason, quite a few would also visit the cloth store and purchase a flag to go with the notebooks. My daughter was still in kindergarten then, and I was out of touch with the logistics of education. Try as I might, I couldn't fathom this sudden craving for the symbols of yesterday. An unexpected resurgence of federalism? No, there were no other symptoms one would expect to accompany such a shift in

the national mood.

I learned of the reason a week or so after all the flags had been sold. There was a small, gleefully crowing note in a local paper explaining the circumstances. As is often the case with mysteries, the explanation was delightfully simple.

Every pupil in the primary and secondary school has to have gym dress for the physical education classes. The boy's outfit consists of a white T-shirt and either blue or red boxer shorts, the color choice depending on the school. The Yugoslav flag was a blue-white-red tricolor, serving thus as an excellent source of silken cloth for either variant. A new ready-to-wear gym set in the store cost as much as four flags, while a single flag would keep a boy in shorts from kindergarten to college. You only needed the basic sewing skills, which most mothers seem to possess in this country.



Thus are the mighty fallen and the opportunities missed, I nodded sagely and — I must admit — a little wistfully upon that revelation. Still, it cheered me up a bit to learn that mothers had apparently lost none of their resourcefulness when it came to providing for their young. It bode well for the uncertain future. For them, if not necessarily for me.

And so, instead of cornering the market in cheap flags and making a killing, I remained... well, not poor but certainly not rich, either. Fortunately, I was very well educated, and if there's one thing education



is good for, it's rationalization. I thought to myself, well, the point of being rich or poor is mostly in your relative position, not absolute. Nobody really *needs* the accoutrements of wealth to live well. When everybody is poor or middling, you are, psychologically speaking, just as well off as when everybody is rich. Stick with the poor and middling, and you'll be OK. Avoid Davos and Beverly Hills. Shouldn't be too difficult, right?

Also, the austere life is more likely to be rewarding, they say. Modest circumstances make greater demands on — and offer greater scope to — ingenuity. Hmmm. Perhaps. I'll reserve my judgement for the time being.

My father has a nice tale to tell which would support this view, and I have tried to draw a lesson from it appropriate to my own case. It concerns a shoemaker in Dad's neighborhood immediately after the war. Anyone who has lived through a war (or has at least read *Catch 22*) knows that it can skew the distribution of all necessities something awful. There's always a shortage of salt, for some reason. Where cooking oil is needed there is none, but there's an abundance of, say, axle grease. A few miles down the road, axle grease can't be had for a king's ransom, but they do have a good supply of beanpoles — not much help for your cart with squeaking axles which tend to catch fire on the downhill run.

Anyway, there's this shoemaker who gets a word that a big pile of shoes is lying around in an abandoned warehouse, and no one seems to be interested in them. That sounded rather suspicious — after all, the entire postwar Europe was gripped by a severe footwear shortage — but he went to the spot anyway to check things out. Lo and behold! The shoes *were* there, hundreds of them, in good quality leather and of sound design. The reason nobody wanted them was, however, painfully obvious. They were all 'left'. He had a few hundred left shoes on his hands, as it were. They must have been left there from a pre-war leather goods fair or exhibition; the shoe exhibits were traditionally presented this way to discourage the visitors from pilfering.

He darted around excitedly, wrung his hands for a while, perplexed, and then ran home to arrange some form of transport. Left or not, he knew the shoes must have been good for something. By the time he was nearing his shop with a cart full of shoes (the axles no doubt squeaking horribly), he had already hit upon an idea. He would make the 'right' shoes out of the 'left' ones!

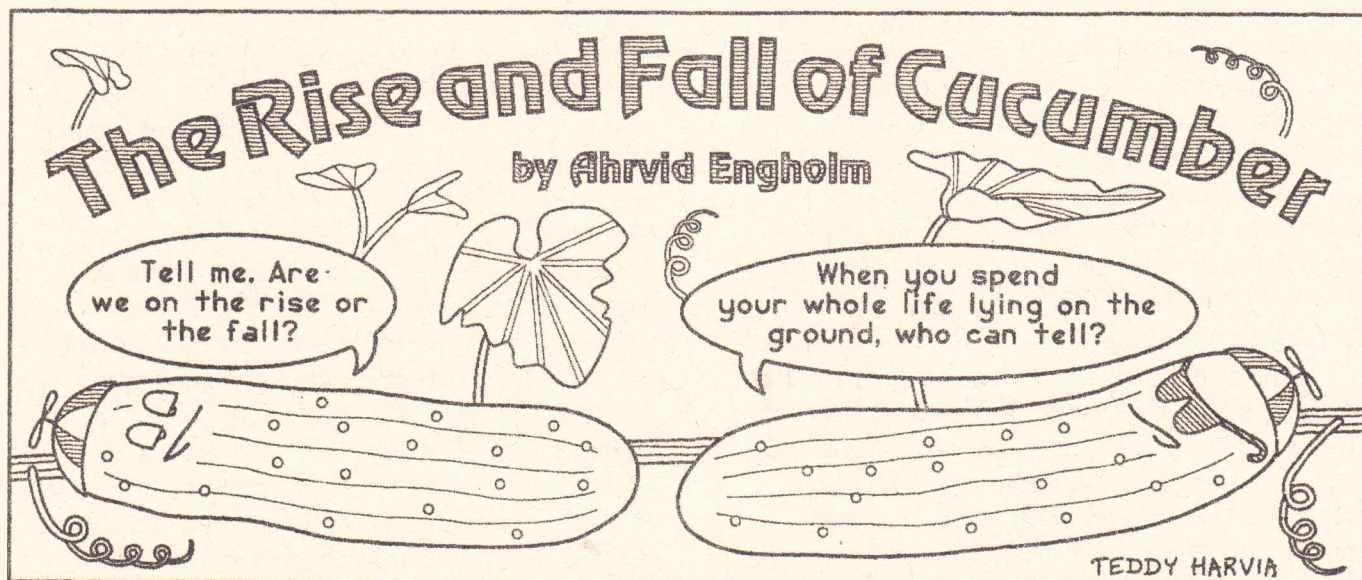
And he did, too. It hadn't been very easy, but eventually he worked out a pretty neat method. Two shoes of the same type would be selected from the pile, one a size bigger than the other. The bigger shoe would then be taken apart. Its sole would be judiciously whittled down until its curvature became the mirror image of its left counterpart. The upper needed a nip here and a tuck there, a rub with a spirit-soaked rag to soften it, and a night's persuasion on the right-hand shoe mold to give it the final shape. When reunited, the parts formed a proper, honest-to-God right shoe duly matching the left one. Our shoemaker had a good pair of shoes to sell to his footwear-hungry neighbors.

They thronged at his shop, admiring his craft, trying the shoes for fit and buying them quite eagerly. Most things being scarce and allotted by ration coupons, small trade of this sort was done chiefly by barter. To get a pair of shoes you'd bring along salt, or cooking oil, beanpoles, etc. Whatever you happened to have. No one probably remembered to bring axle grease; there and then the neighborhood was so much pleased with the shoemaker's invention that even his squeaking must have been music to their ears.

And now, the inevitable moral. Rather obvious, don't you think? Compare this merry, if modest, tableau to the world of wealth. Would the neighbors on Fifth Avenue gladly tolerate the ear-grating squeak of the axles on Mr. Gucci's Rolls? I doubt it. If his axles caught fire down Rodeo Drive, would the elegant shoppers rush to his help with pails of water in their hands? Hardly. They would watch and snicker. Serves the bugger right, they'd say. Shoulda greased them axles long ago! ☼



☞ We remain in Europe for another visit to Swedish fandom. Last issue, The writer of the following article described some of the hoaxes perpetrated on Swedish fandom over the years. This time, he tells us about some of the Amateur Press Associations that have been active in Sweden, in particular, (and in keeping with our 'food' theme) a secret APA called Cucumber...



Anyone interested in Swedish fandom will soon hear of secret fanzine publishing. The fans in this northern country, so close to the Galactic Circle...sorry: Arctic Circle, have often engaged in secret Amateur Press Associations or APAs. In Swedish the word APA also means 'monkey' or 'ape'. Maybe APA-members feel a need to be monkey-like. Judge for yourself as we unfold the untold story of the secret Cucumber.

The first Swedish APA was not secret. SAPA was active a few years during the mid-60s, with Official Editors like John-Henri Holmberg and Leif Andersson. (Leif was known from TV as a teenage astronomy wiz, when he won the *10 000 Crowns Quiz* in the early '60s. He later became a professional astronomer, died in the US in 1979 and got a crater on the Moon named in his memory. The way for a fan to pass away, I'd say.) It was followed by UPPSAPA and SWAPA, that didn't last. In 1978 the most successful Swedish APA was founded: SFF. The letters are short for Sveriges Fanzine Förening — Sweden's Fanzine Association. It was the existence of SFF that inspired a group of fans to start a new APA in 1979:

Gurka.

'Gurka' means 'cucumber'. It's unclear why this name was chosen. Maybe because it can be mentioned with others present, without giving any hints of what it is. It also sounds a bit funny. I will from now on write 'Cucumber', instead of 'Gurka', so that you will think it is funny too.

Cucumber was different. It was secret.

The original members were: Anders Bellis, Roger Sjölander and me of Stockholm, Ingemar Carlsson of Scania, Mika Tenhovaara of Hallsta, and Lars Larsson and Jonas Söderblad of Nybro. The famous Nybro-fandom later launched the national Star Wars club. They once published a story with Star Wars characters engaged in something hinted upon as sex. Lucasfilms went mad on the other side of the globe and engaged their lawyers to 'protect their trademarks'. (No, 'sex' is not a trademark of Lucasfilms.)

Why a secret APA? I and Bellis already did a weekly newszine, *The Wheel's Adventures* (WA), but had also tried small print-run carbon zines. It felt nice to write to a closed circle. My secret hobby is to write constitutions so I wrote one for Cucumber. Members



of the new, young fan generation were hand-picked and invited.

Cucumber was supposed to "dominate and control" Swedish fandom. WA was in heavy opposition to the board of the Scandinavian SF Association, a dusty sercon gang which we felt didn't understand the needs of the young fanzine fans. In a secret APA we could plot against that board, and as our power grew we would surely take over the whole of Swedish fandom!

Bellis was Official Editor (we called it Mailing Editor) of the first mailing in mid-September 1979 of an impressive 45 pages.

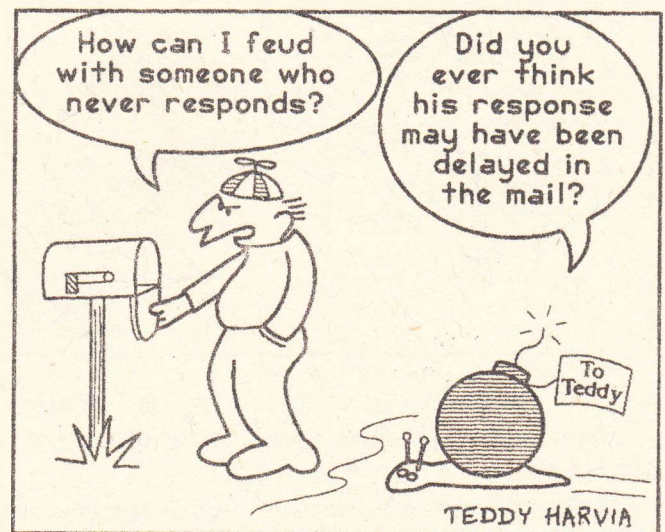
Cucumber came every week with a minac of three pages. Contributions were stapled together and always carbon copied, usually on thin air mail paper. My fanzine was called *Fanner*, and later I started *Fanner's Crochet Supplement*. Bellis would publish *Hoax*, often supplemented with borrowed titles of fannish fame, like *Innuendo*, *Hyphen*, *Horizons*, *Lighthouse*, etc. Jonas published *Z-Stile*, while his friend Lars did *Fan*, later replaced with *Rubbish*. Roger would do *TIFF's Zine* (TIFF being short for "The Incredible Flying Fan-Reporter"). Mika used various titles, often from tracks by Led Zepelin.

The very detailed constitution, two single spaced pages long, said that Cucumber must be totally hush-hush and anyone spilling a word would lose membership. It detailed deadlines, the weekly rotation of OE-ship, how new members could be invited, leave from the minac for illness or travels, etc. Contributions had to include an extra copy for the official librarian, Roger, who kept an archive for future fannish history. If you wanted to quit you had to give three week's notice. This was never obeyed. Ingemar Carlsson took an early opportunity to ignore it, and maybe he had the right to: the constitution wasn't formally accepted until mailing 31, though it was considered valid by consensus from the start.

Mailing comments were a big part of the contents, as well as discussions about motions for Cucumber projects or constitutional

changes. Cucumber was democratic and motions were discussed and voted upon in the mailings by all members. It also had a poll of its zines, called the 'Fanalytical Laboratory'.

Another reason for a secret APA was to spread rumours and DNQ:ed material. And Bellis immediately started: he told us that he would dig up information about a fan who had gafiated, whom he didn't like. His Cucumber-zine *Hoax* had lots of hoaxed material, e.g., a made-up LoC from Harry Warner, Jr.: "For an old and tired fan like me it feels ghodd that somebody is picking up the old faannish tradition of publishing edited (most fanzines aren't these days) fanzines with truly faannish contents. I've seldom been as astounded as I was when I realized that these traditions were kept alive in Sweden more than anywhere else." Ah, sweet dreams! He would also quote the international press-reviews of his secret zine: "Amazing!" — *Saturday Evening Post*; "Astounding!" — *Newsday Weekly*; "Fantastic!" — *Standard New Yorker*; "Analog!" — *Herald Tribune*.



Ingemar Carlsson — never really up to our enthusiastic standards — reported from Seacon 79 that our stickers with 'Torsten is a cucumber!' (a parody of 'Yngvi is a louse!') "wasn't too appreciated by certain members of Herman" (the committee bidding for a Scandinavian worldcon in 1983). Cucumber



had thus already stepped out on the international scene!

In my first contribution, I discussed the constitution in great length, outlined the secret plans of creating a hoax femmefan and printed the rules of the great fannish game of Stora Mossen: participants shall one after another name stations in the Stockholm underground system. The one who says 'Stora Mossen' first, wins.

"Let me give an example of a good game, and a bad game:

Anders Bellis: 'Stora Mossen.'

Ahrvid Engholm: 'Shit, you won.'

That was the bad game. Stora Mossen must be played with style. Never be sure of a premature victory. You must build up a strategy and through skillful planning trap the other player, and when he's on the brink of collapsing you can shout in triumph: STORA MOSSEN!"



An example of a tactically brilliant Stora Mossen game was given, and variations were discussed.

We cultivated a strange 'inside' humour. Lars Larsson became known as 'Lars von Laserbeam', because of his interest in *Star Wars*, and soon he became 'Dr. Raygun', a mystic future super-scientist wearing 'hyper-intravenous glasses'. Jonas and Lars were neighbours and Lars often came to visit him as he was typing a Cucumber-zine. Thus the famous quote: "I have to finish now, because

Lars von Laserbeam just entered the room."

A fictitious fan-group started to appear: Wi Wittra (approx. 'We Witty'). They wrote stupid LoCs, often quoted in Cucumber. Stories about the space hero Raymond X Brelligan appeared, later famous for the English language fanzine *Raymond X Brelligan Versus the Cosmic Space Planet* which even got a review in *Amazing's* fan-column (May, 1980) which wondered what "gnuggade sin käckä rokokorumpa i morgongröten" meant. ("Rubbed your dashing rococo ass in the morning porridge.")

We wrote lots of linos, funny quotes between two lines, like:

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Help! I'm a prisoner in the lino factory!  
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Mailings could have dozens of them, usually awfully bad.

My first mailing was No. 3 of 42 pages. In the official organ, this time called *Der Gurbischer Beobachter & Cucumberistic Herald*, I announced that Ingemar had quit: "To leave Cucumber is not only a sign of a lost mind, but also of serious mental defects. Since you can get a free week due to illness (also mental) I've, as this week's editor, decided to give him one week off to get well and change his decision." He of course didn't regain his senses.

I also discussed plans for a fannish manuscript bureau and a coup against the Scandinavian SF Association. Its yearly business meeting was coming up, never visited by more than 10-15 people. We thought we easily could get proxies for more than that. Our newszine WA had already started to distribute proxy forms.

When the meeting finally came it had 40 attendees, and the board had collected about a dozen proxies for themselves. Though we had 20 proxies we were a minority. The board had noticed our plans, and launched their own proxy campaign in panic. The 1979 business meeting still is the biggest in the history of the Association. Cucumber could indeed get things and fans rotating if it tried to.



In mailing No. 5, Cucumber again tried to show its muscles. Let's call the Dirty Old Pro 'DOP': "In the Seacon-report in WA, I mentioned that DOP lived with his secretary in a suite. DOP says it isn't true: she was at Seacon with her boyfriend. He wants us to correct it in WA. Our info is from Michel Petersen, who lived in a room just above DOP, but facts are still that DOP went around holding hands with her during Seacon. It's no coincidence that she always goes to cons with him, and to Club Cosmos' 25th anniversary party. But if our info is incorrect, we can of course correct it — if DOP AT THE SAME TIME CORRECTS HIS VICIOUS LIES. In a report from Seacon DOP says: 'And then there were a couple of Swedish fans who lived a so called Fannish Life, which meant they didn't wash themselves, slept in a cellar and constantly went around with bottles in their hands.' We will present an ultimatum: we won't publish a correction unless this also is corrected. And by the way, it wasn't a cellar, it was the basement of Hotel Metropol, we washed our hands every day and..." Our requested correction wasn't published, so in retaliation we didn't publish anything. DOP claimed his wife threatened with divorce, but we washed our hands.



Mailing 7, edited by Mika, reached a new record with 56 pages, most by Mika himself. He became a very active carbon

fanzine publisher because of Cucumber, and the style he developed later came to good use in his eminent *Alhash*, still published, reaching over 200 issues. I investigated Swedish fanzine activity 1954-1979, after spending many hours going through a fanzine-listing calculating totals for each year. I concluded that Sweden was in its 'Ninth Fandom', waiting for the Tenth. This view became generally accepted after WA re-printed the findings.

Mailing editors often competed to make the thickest mailing. In mailing 8, Bellis managed to get 59 pages, including rocket poster and slices of cucumber glued to the cover. Wolf von Witting joined as new member. He never wrote much of substance but he had lots of drawings of beanies. He lived in Stockholm but was active in German fandom by mail, head of the mighty Sigma Terra Corps Perry Rhodan Fan Supporter Club. My and Bellis' zines usually competed for the 'The Fanalytical Laboratory' top scores and I argued that the poll must have two decimal points to be fair.

I also suggested that we should write an intentionally bad round-robin sf novel and submit it to Sam J Lundwall just to get it rejected. The point of the suggestion was to inflict pain on Lundwall — the pain of reading it all. I introduced a play-by-mail game I had invented for Cucumber: 'The Battle of the Milky Way'. People soon lost interest in it; the real galactic battle was yet to come.

My mailing 9 was as usual a new record with 65 pages. Mika had presented lots of criticism under the headline "BELLIS AND ENGHOLM LIES!!!" (he didn't like some news WA wrote about his Hallsta fan-group). I rejected it in 19 detailed sections. Official motions nine to twenty-one were discussed in this mailing. More than 45 official motions were raised during the life of Cucumber. They were constant sources of arguments.

Mailing 9 also has the official history of FBF and TDFF, which I still consider rather funny. Before Cucumber these two mighty organizations struggled for power in Stockholm-fandom, led by Bellis and me. Here



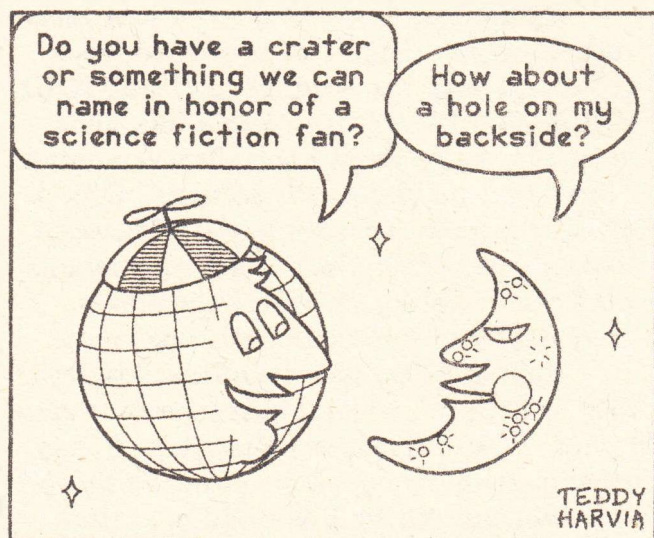
both parties wrote the official history of the struggle.

In mailing 10, the '11th of December Movement' started. At Seacon, an American fan, Fred Patten, argued that World-fandom began the 11th of December 1929, with the first meeting of The Scienceers. The 11th of December Movement was a letter campaign to increase fanzine activity.

Mailing 13 was a new record of 82 pages. Lots of internal quarrel between me and Mika, but also a curl of hair from the Hallsta-femfem Karin.

In mailing 15, Wolf got tired and quit. We soon learned that he did it to start a German language secret APA, inspired by Cucumber: CAPA (Carbon APA). CAPA is said to have been alive for many, many years. Wolf would later return to Cucumber a couple of times. Two others, Henry Linder and Henrik Gunnarsson, had also been offered Cucumber memberships, but had rejected it.

In mailing 15, I reported from a concert with Sala-fandom's rock band (in free translation) 'Muddy Superman and the Heterosexual Close Combat Command', spiced with the popular myth of Chip Delany. It is believed that the secret passion of this famous writer is to drive Stockholm underground trains. He'd sometimes take a vacation and come here for this. Every time we saw a train with black driver, we were convinced it was Samuel R. Delany.



In mailing 16, I reopened the feud with Mika — he refrained from contributing and I felt pissed off. I also wrote an rather long informal history about the New York fan group The Futurians after having read the books about them.

In mailing 17, I had to regret the outburst — Mika's contribution had only been delayed in the mail. (Though he had sent it to late, too.) It didn't add to internal harmony. In mailing 18, Mika reported about Hallsta-fandom's fannish 8-mm film, I reprinted two of the Futurian wall-fanzines (found in damon knight's book), Bellis began reprinting a Irish Fandom history by John Berry. Roger would also often reprint foreign fannish material.

In mailing 19 the feud started again. Hallsta-fandom hadn't sent a number of their fanzines to me and Bellis. In Sweden we call this a 'fanzine blockade' and it leads to instant retaliation! A fanzine blockade must be met with a blockade of your own, so I devised an intricate plan: If Mika didn't send me the zines, I couldn't send him any of mine — including the Cucumber zines. I would formally leave Cucumber and start a Shadow-Cucumber, that would be traded for the Cucumber zines (excluding Mika's). There would be no copies of Shadow-Cucumber for him unless he stopped the fanzine blockade. I secured the necessary trade agreements and sat down to wait.

In mailing 20, the situation hadn't changed so I put the plan into operation. In a long letter I demanded that Mika should be excluded from Cucumber, meanwhile I'd publish only through Shadow-Cucumber. Mailing 1 of 16 pages appeared alongside the ordinary Cucumber mailing of 30 pages.

Mailing 21 (misnumbered 22) of a mere 14 pages was accompanied by a Shadow-Cucumber of 25. Mailing 22 was to be edited by Mika. No one got it. He was furious and simply skipped it. We now had a couple of weeks of no Cucumber-mailings, but Shadow-Cucumber appeared with mailings 3 and 4 with a total of 26 pages and contributions by Lars and a revived Wolf. In mailing 4, I



presented a proposal for a Shadow Cucumber constitution, but it was now redundant: the members had agreed to exclude Mika. They were angry that mailing 22 never appeared, and I announced my return to Cucumber. Cucumber 23 and the last Shadow-Cucumber, No. 5, were stapled together.

Shortly something new to annoy us appeared: some femmefans started a female-only-group in Stockholm, and they refused to trade their fanzine. We started to plan different ways of assault on those neofannish feminists.

But Cucumber was on the downslide. All mailings from 24 to 50 were thin (10-20 pages), uninspired and often late. I think the only worthwhile zine in it was my *Crochet*. I began to distribute it both inside and outside Cucumber, without mentioning the APA in the zine. I carbon-copied it in 15 copies in one go, with forefingers as sledgehammers.

I debated the nature of humour. I published poems, and the nature of poetry was discussed. There was a fierce debate about the nature of girls, where the subject of love was thoroughly investigated on a highly theoretical level. I detailed my plans for a local sf club in my Stockholm suburb.

In mailing 31 there was indignation around the first Nasacon (January 1980). Some Stockholm fans never bothered to show up, and we felt they were traitors to fandom. We identified and listed the traitors in Cucumber and started a letter campaign against them. We announced a special club on their behalf, 'The Union of Fakefans', administered by us but with these people as automatic members without possibility to resign. They were so lazy that we would start their club for them.

In mailing 33 you could read about 'Courtney's Boat Trip' held after a 'Fan Week', i.e., an open house for a week where everyone could come by and do some fanning. Bellis hosted the Fan Week and I the boat trip with my family's small outboard motorboat.

Mailing 34 reported from the Stockholm Tolkien Society's carnival. We didn't like the

Tolkien Society, since we thought they were immature, introverted, did strange things, and used strange language. And they didn't like us, for some reason. We made our own alternative parody carnival, that would take place at the same time, at the same spot: "I dressed up as JRR Hobbit, with a kitchen pot of aluminium as helmet, a big black plastic bag over my body, colourful bands on my legs as decoration, armed with a mighty plastic toygun. Bellis dressed up as Gandalf, with a huge cardboard box as helmet, a plastic bag as chain mail, long underwear as trousers, armed with a long kitchen knife. As the book Gandalf had found in Moria's Mines he carried a Modern English Grammar." Our alternative carnival was stopped by the police. We protested and said they had invited everyone in fancy dresses to join.

In mailing 35, we were shocked to learn that the former member Ingemar Carlsson had told Erik Andersson about Cucumber. Erik edited the top fanzine *Der Leuchtturm* and planned a big disclosure article, but not until No. 6 due in August 1980, several months in the future. We had time to act. Plans began to form.

In mailing 39, we learned that Mika Tenhovaara had started to leak too. He of course had no reason to feel loyalty, but he had spread it in personal letters rather than in a major fanzine announcements. He didn't reach the fannish mainstream the way *Der Leuchtturm* would.

In mailing 42, the *Der Leuchtturm* scoop was out. Only I and Bellis had been named as members, and Erik had written it as a section in a parody issue of WA. The disclosure wasn't done in a very credible way. Who would believe in a false issue of anything?

I wrote: "I will myself take measures in the form of writing a false Erik Andersson-article in next *Fanarchistic Writings*, which in a subtle way will spread the impression that the Cucumber-news in *Der Leuchtturm* is false. The article will be called 'A reply to the Falsehood'. Everyone will obviously see that it is false as soon as they begin to read.



And they will assume that the thing in *Der Leuchtturm* was false also." All members would certify that Cucumber had just been a hoax to fool Ingemar and Erik.

In mailing 44, problems of delayed mailings were met by a motion to make Cucumber biweekly. The motion didn't pass, but mailings became even less than biweekly. I detailed the Cucumber-is-a-hoax-plan: "I and Anders and Roger one evening last year proposed a super hoax. We contacted a couple of others (under pressure we'll admit it was Nybro-fandom) and revealed the scheme for them. We wrote a future history for the organization, what would happen with it, a few words about what was in each mailing, planned which mailings we'd really write, who we would fool, plans for splits in the organization (like Shadow-Cucumber). We fooled a number of people to believe the hoax was real, by producing singular mailings that looked realistic, and then we let them sweat blood to produce zines for future mailings. That part of the hoax was especially funny. The story would be spread in personal letters, labelled 'super-DNQ' (so that people would be interested in publishing them)." We would also spread false and greatly exaggerated info about Cucumber to confuse. We made a list of around 20 'people that with 100% certainty know about Cucumber'.

Then this happened: Bellis sold his old typewriter to Sala-fandom's David Nessel — with the carbon ribbon still in place. David rewound the ribbon and read what he had written, including Cucumber material. David called us in triumph and told about his findings. Despite drawbacks like this most people didn't believe in Cucumber, or maybe they didn't care. We could go on.

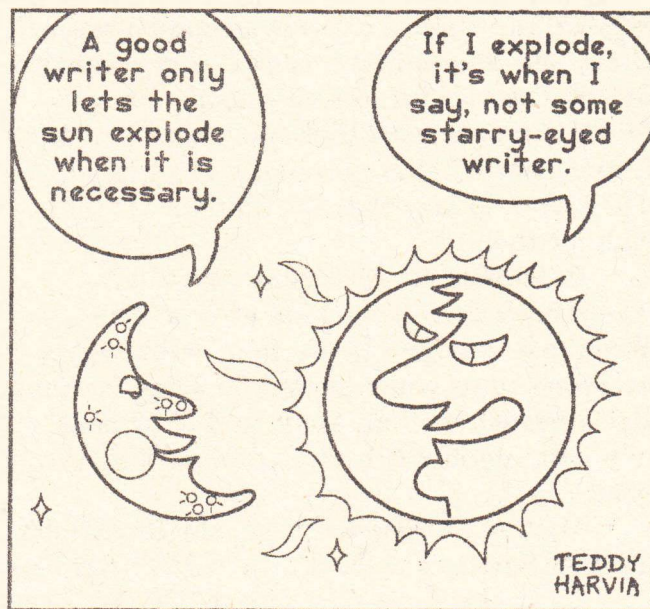
The APA's death was instead caused by inactivity and downfall of WA. Mailing 49 came in November, several weeks late, and in December the WA editorship was quickly disintegrating. (A subject for another article?) In early January, I published the last WA, No. 89, and revealed Cucumber myself. Bellis managed to produce the 50th Anniversary mailing where he noted that Cucumber

now was revealed beyond any reasonable doubt, and I was expelled. But there were no more mailings to be expelled from.

In about 50 mailings (49 without No. 22, or 53 including the separate Shadow-Cucumbers) five to seven people managed to produce 1200 pages in about 16 months. It had immense influence over Swedish fandom. It was the first secret APA, and it became the 'in thing' to repeat the feat. More than half a dozen secret APAs were started during the 80's: DET, SF-APA, Krull-APA, the Cult, Neofan-APA, MF-APA, SKAPA and probably others. They even repeated the internal feuding and struggle for power, as true carbon-copies of Cucumber.

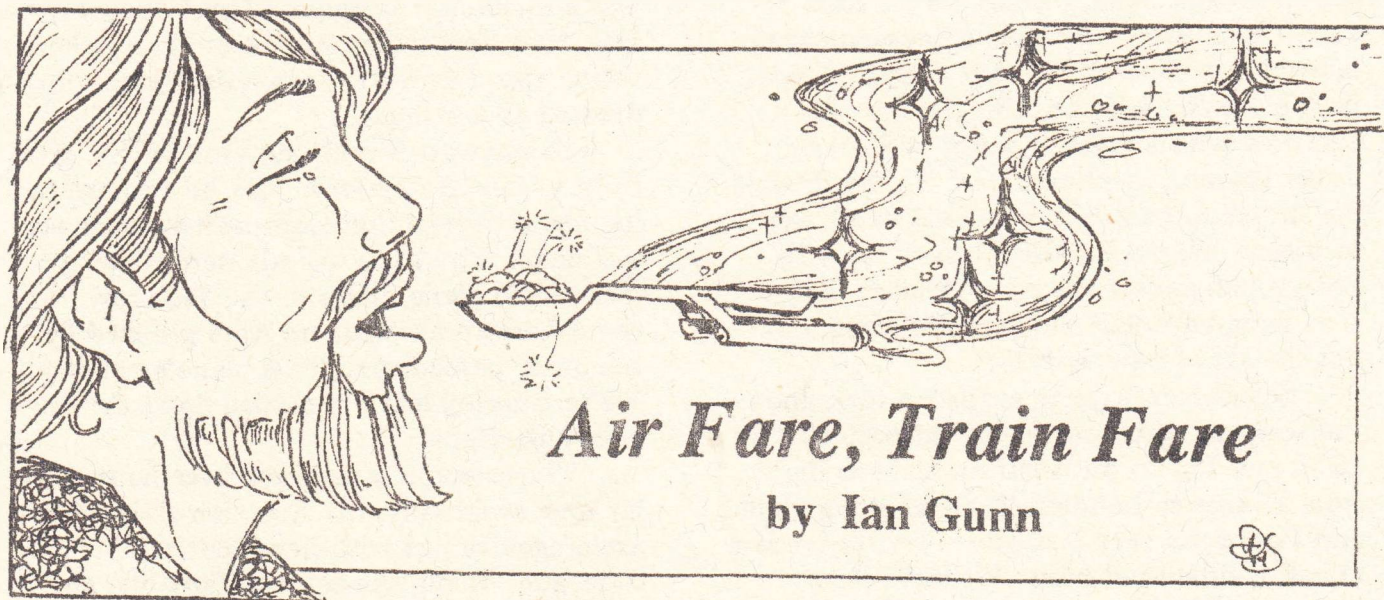
Mika was especially active and ran DET for 46 mailings. David Nessel produced the parody SMOF-APA, intended "to take absolute control over the whole of Sala-Fandom."

In my last Crochet I reprinted an article about writing, just accepted by Sam J Lundwall's *Jules Verne Magazine*: "A good writer only lets the sun explode when it is necessary." One might say that good faneds only let their publishing explode when it is necessary. The gang around Cucumber let their activities explode, and after the fall of the first secret APA giant forces were unleashed over a fandom that too late realized what had hit it. ☼





∞ From Sweden, we have to travel almost halfway around the world to Australia and the writer of the next article. The topic, coincidentally enough, is *about* travel, wherein we learn about such things as Bonsai Pineapple, How to Tell When You're Sitting Next to a Texan, and The Difference Between Australians and Canoes.



Airline food has a pretty bad reputation. These days, however, airlines are doing their best to live down the bad press their offerings have had over the years, and are coming up with a more appetising variety of edibles.

Sure, it's not like Mother used to make. In my case, however, that's an advantage. I wouldn't say my mother is a *bad* cook, just unadventurous. She was brought up in the English method of food preparation; if you can't fry it, boil it until it goes transparent. Then serve it on a cold plate with no spices more exotic than salt. Yum. My reluctance to eat up my greens comes from an ingrained childhood belief that all vegetables taste exactly alike. My love of spicy Asian and Mexican dishes is a direct reaction to this.

Airline food, however, has more of an air of mystery about it. You never know what you'll get. Sometimes it can be quite unusual.

The first thing you notice is the size. Everything is served on a dinky little tray with teeny compartments. You're eating within a very enclosed space, anyway, elbows tucked in, head bumping on the seat in front of you, little knives and forks going at it like

a kiddie's tea party. The portions themselves are not exactly hearty. The rolls are minute. Little pats of butter and tiny cheese slices. Small main course, small dessert. Even the ingredients are titchy. One time, out of Honolulu, I was served a dish with a garnish of pineapple slices (this is compulsory in Hawaii, along with the traditional garish shirts). I kid you not, that pineapple slice was no bigger than an inch and a half across. Bonsai pineapple. Now I'd be willing to bet that you could search every grocery store from here to Waikiki and you'd never find a pineapple that tiny. It could never occur in nature. It must have been some top secret, bioengineered mutant pineapple bred exclusively for the airline.

With such small portions, though, they do manage to squeeze in quite a variety of courses. I once flew from Tokyo to Melbourne, and, naturally, the caterers had to provide something to suit both Western and Oriental palates. In one compartment was three small, exquisitely presented pieces of sushi, lightly chilled and delicious. In the compartment next to it was a piping hot serving of lasagna.



Sometimes a special request gets confused. Between L.A. and Vancouver, after weird foods and hours of sitting in a cramped seat from Australia, I asked for an Alka Seltzer. The steward returned fifteen minutes later with a chocolate coated cherry. I said, no, I'd really prefer an Alka Seltzer. He returned with a glass of water with fizzy tablet therein. And ice cubes. I had to wait for the ice to melt before I could drink the medicine. North Americans have ice with everything, apparently. I concluded that they have mastered the art of *freezing*, but not the art of *refrigeration*.

Sometimes strange surprises lurk upon those trays. Allow me to set the scene. It's 1977, and I'm on an Austrian airlines flight from Vienna to London. I'm travelling alone and I'm in the very last row. Next to me is a tallish middle-aged man. Wrinkled face tanned by prairie sun and wind. Big, chunky rings on each finger; gold, onyx, turquoise. Cream suit with intricate piping about the lapels. Enormous stetson. Hand-tooled boots. Plaid shirt with bolo tie. Massive, patriotic belt buckle. Texan drawl.

And I think to myself, "He's American."



Yeah, I know, a totally unfounded conclusion to jump to. I mean, I *know* Americans don't dress like that. I've met them. They tend more towards sportshirts and slacks rather than trying to look like they're on their way to a square dance.

But, hey, some people go crazy when they're overseas. Australians in Crocodile Dundee hats. Canadians with huge red-and-white maple leaf insignia all over their clothing. New Zealanders with kiwis everywhere. (Mind you, I've never seen a Japanese tourist dressed as a samurai.)

So anyway, I'm sitting next to this extra from a Gene Autry serial and he's complaining about everything: European airports are too small. You have to walk across the tarmac to the plane. He's in the back row. All the American newspapers were grabbed by the other passengers. This plane's too small. We're running late... I settled down for an enjoyable flight.

The cowpoke's moaning became so regular that eventually, the Austrian stewardess exchanged cabins with her American-born colleague. Being the same nationality, she could get away with smilingly asking him, "If you hate travelling so much, why on Earth don't you stay home?" We exchanged a wink.

The Texan muttered quietly under his breath, but mostly kept quiet for the rest of the trip...

...Until the meal arrived. It was a varied selection of morsels. One item looked like chocolate cake wrapped in cellophane. I saved it for dessert, and was surprised to discover that it was actually black bread, quite dry and heavy, and I'd run out of butter.

Oh, well. You can't win them all. I washed it down with coffee and chalked it up as another cultural experience.

I glanced over at the Texan. He had made the same mistake. A feeling of sadistic glee came over me as he carefully unwrapped his 'chocolate cake' and popped it in his mouth.

"Bleah!" he exploded, "Dry bread!"

I smiled knowingly. "Nice, isn't it?" I grinned.

That's what I like about air travel. Not only is the food an adventure, but the other passengers can be quite entertaining, too.

Trains, however, really *do* serve atro-



cious food. Usually something prepackaged like potato chips, or vaguely meat-like and microwaveable. Rumour has it that British Rail buffet car crews throw a party every time one of their pork pies has a birthday. The prices are overcharged, but where else are you going to go? The service is lousy, too; you have to get it yourself. A good chance to stretch the legs, but walking the length of a bouncy train while carrying two steaming cups of coffee back to your seat is no mean feat.

One exception is the New Zealand railways service between Dunedin and Christchurch where they come round with Devonshire Teas. You get to munch scrumptious scones with fresh cream and strawberry jam as the scenery goes by.

In 1986, I spent a very boring birthday travelling between New York and Toronto by train. Knowing it was to be my last day in the U.S. of A., I'd been scrimping with the last of my American currency, rather than cash a traveller's cheque and end up with an excess of unusable funds. I was down to loose change when hunger got the better of me and I headed for the snack bar.

Working out that I could just afford a coffee and a slice of cake, I handed over my precious pieces of metal. Among them were about fifteen one-cent coins. "Hey!" said the guy behind the bar, "I'm not taking that!"

"I'm sorry," I said, "It's all the money I've got."

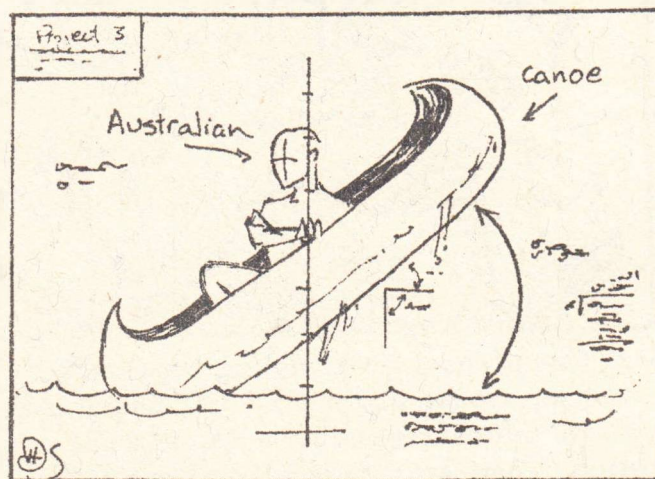
"I aint taking pennies."

I pointed out that this was perfectly legal tender. Made by his government. Coin of the realm. I had the right price; surely denomination didn't make a difference. I could pay in Canadian money if he preferred. No? We debated the subject for some time.

Eventually he snarled, "Gimme the rest. I'll take the difference outta my tips!"

Revelation! So that was it! He was hinting that the reason he was angry was because I, dumb tourist, had insulted him by not being able to tip. Now, I never could get the hang of tipping. It's not an Australian custom. They say the difference between

Australians and canoes is that canoes tip. It's not that we're mean, it's just that our waiters get a fairly good wage. Sure, you can leave them a gratuity if they've earned it, or let the taxi driver keep the change. But they don't *expect* it. I tried my best in America, working out percentages and adding a bit on top. Such a confusing system. But this guy was just selling stuff from behind a counter. Do you tip shopkeepers? Do you tip fast food staff?



"You get tips?"

He indicated a bowl on the counter.

"Well," I said, picking up my food, "I've enjoyed my stay in America. I've seen some wonderful sights, visited some amazing places and met some lovely people. But you've just shown me that there's a major gulf between your culture and mine."

"Yeah?" he sneered, "And what's that?"

"Where I come from, a person who's as rude to his customers as you are would never get tips."

His eyes bulged and he started to shake.

Entertainment is where you find it. It's a rare sight to see an angry New Yorker who is lost for words. If I had had any money on me, the facial contortions alone would have been worth more than the price of the food. If only my camera had been within reach — his face went through some of the most beautiful and spectacular colour changes that I have ever seen.

I do love to travel. It's the people you meet... ☆



☞ We remain in Australia for this next article, which once again deals with travel and cultural differences that you encounter amid fandom. The author of this article is no stranger to travel, and in fact is a candidate in the current Down Under Fan Fund election.



One of the more intriguing aspects of travelling around and mixing with fans is the cultural differences you come across while eating. There are differences in items of fare like iced coffee, which in Australia consists of a small amount of hot black coffee to which sugar, milk, and ice cream have been added in a tall glass. In the US, iced coffee turns out to be a glass filled with crushed ice over which unsweetened black coffee has been poured. Another beverage difference was that dry ginger ale in the US appeared to be what I knew of as ginger beer. The brown glass packaging meant I couldn't differentiate by color before purchasing. Fast food outlets are also different in the US than they are here in Australia — I had never seen TVs in fast food outlets before.

Besides all these obvious differences, just as memorable are the odd behaviour and antics people display at 'settle the bill' time. A typical Australian procedure is that everyone puts in what they think will cover their portion, sometimes after requesting a copy of the menu to check. This is generally rounded up to the next convenient figure, such as \$10, \$15 or whatever notes they happen to have on them that can be easily changed from the growing pile in the middle of the

table. The net result is usually a surplus which covers sundry table items, such as corkage, with fiddly change going as the tip.

A current example of this occurs at informal gatherings at K&Ms in Myers Arcade, Melbourne, on Friday nights. Complications can arise by people ordering two things, but at different tables, during seat hopping conversations, and consequently owing on two separate bills. However most of regulars there are reasonably honest and lack of payment is probably due to forgetfulness rather than duplicity. This system can even result in a sizeable refund if the waiter is not good at arithmetic! Clive Newall reminisces about the good old days at the Cafe Paradisio in Lygon Street, Carlton, where his social club usually benefited \$8-12 per meal. Any K&Ms surplus is usually collected by Cath Ortlieb and donated to Friends of the Zoo. A case of 'FOTZ gaining the total's black'.

By contrast, while dining out with a group of American fans at Conspiracy in 1987, it was literally out with the calculators at the meal's end. Each bill item was ticked off for each person, individual totals were calculated and the appropriate tip added to them. Some pound coins were also sent to the cashier for changing before settling indi-



vidual accounts with the pile in the centre of the table. I don't think the Americans were more parsimonious than other fans: it just seemed to be more a national eating out trait. Dining at an upmarket hamburger place in New York with a group of local fen later in my trip resulted in a similar occurrence. I checked the price of what I had had on the menu, added tip plus tax, then rounded the lot up to the next dollar, from \$7.30 to \$8 I think. The person totalling the payment pile made a point of returning 30¢ to me as I had 'overpaid'. Perhaps an explanation lies in the inherent tax and tipping systems in operation overseas. In Australia, what it says on the menu is what we pay, with an added tip if the service impressed us. Overseas state tax (in the US) and tips, expected to be at least 10%, have to be added on afterwards, so it pays to check so you don't end up tipping twice.

I suppose one predominant theme about eating with fans is time, or rather the lack of it. Not that I mind this; while growing up on the farm, family meals usually took all of about 15 minutes actual eating time (I don't think my father ever ate at a restaurant where the meal took over an hour to be served and eaten while I was with him). Hosting the local Nova Mob SF discussion meetings once a month has led to trying a few nearby restaurants around Richmond. There was the Indian place, with a good chef and reasonable service. But when that chef left, and the time taken for a meal got so drawn out it was impossible to start at 6 pm and even finish main course by the meeting commencement time of 8 pm, we gave it up. I used to head off to open up, and hoped the others would arrive before the speaker got too annoyed. Of course if the speaker also happened to be dining, some of the attendees might have to cool their heels for a while on my front door. One night we overstayed and it poured rain while we were finishing desert. Mark Linneman was not impressed with his wet feet gained while porch waiting.

We tried a Greek restaurant next, but a lukewarm food and limited menu choices

soon ended that. The Greek place was the Laikon, which was actually a trendy dining icon of the 70s. Now the Laikon has unfortunately fallen on low times. It came up in conversation at the recent ANZAPACon II, where I think it was Merv Binns who claimed they tried to take Jack Vance there during Tschai'con, but it was closed. It was cleaned out and vacant as of December 1993.

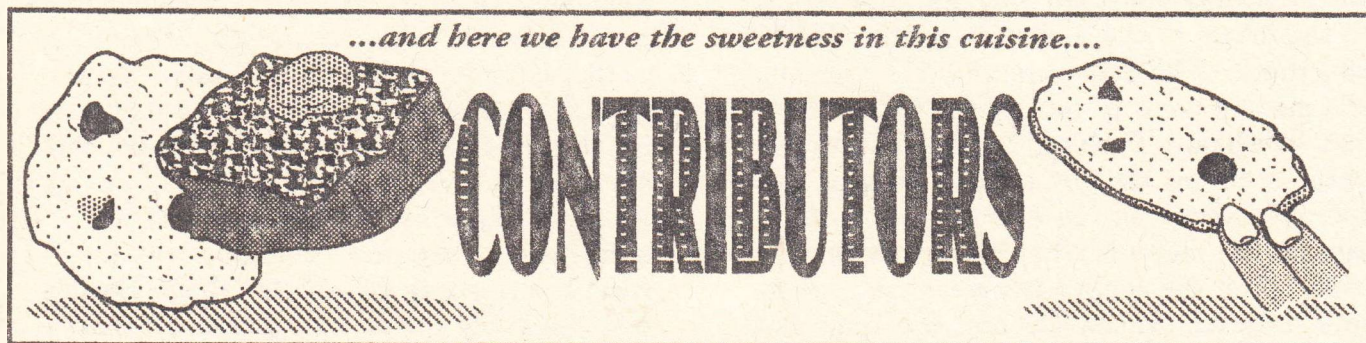
Currently (well, for the last 18 months) a Thai restaurant has worked fine. Seated by 6 pm, we've usually ordered by 6.10, and could have three courses and coffee over by 7 pm if we wanted to. Usually it's about 7.40 when we adjourn. The meals have been pretty consistent, and I can generally pick what the regulars will order. Bruce Barnes will inevitably go for tofu, Donna Heenan likes the cashew chicken, and Elaine Cochrane, after experimenting with lots of things, settles for prawn salad or spicy noodles and vegetables. I tend to order plum beef or pork. The desserts are a bit unusual in that pecan pie, date pudding, and chocolate mousse cake don't strike me as particularly Thai. The current chef considers himself an artist and the side walls are covered by his paintings and mottos. For our Christmas break-up we'll be going to a Chinese smorgasbord yum-cha in the city. This offers quite a few advantages over the usual yum-cha arrangement. You can eat the individual dishes in whatever order you prefer, not the random one they may arrive in. Vegetarians or people with eating preferences, such as gluten-free, can start straight away and not have to wait until a suitable dish arrives. You can also have as much of a particular favorite dish as you like.

Other moral dilemmas can also occur when eating out. Upon checking the bill you find that your main course hasn't been listed. Does this mean there is such a thing as a free lunch? Also, should you spread your good fortune by paying \$1 each, say, to your fellow diners? Or do you just put in to cover for the rest of your meal, and guiltily wonder if the waiter will have the cost somehow deducted from their wages? Not only that,



what happens if you know someone is about to leave and hasn't paid? Is hassling them in public worth it, or do you cover them and try to extort the amount later in private? And just how rude is leaving early so you can get home to watch that TV program you forgot to set the VCR for?

Anyway, eating out with fans is an experience in large group dynamics. Given that fannish preference for cheap meals means crowded, noisy, and cluttered surroundings, it's no wonder that they are mainly hectic events. Gafiation may actually be the search for a quiet intimate meal. ☼



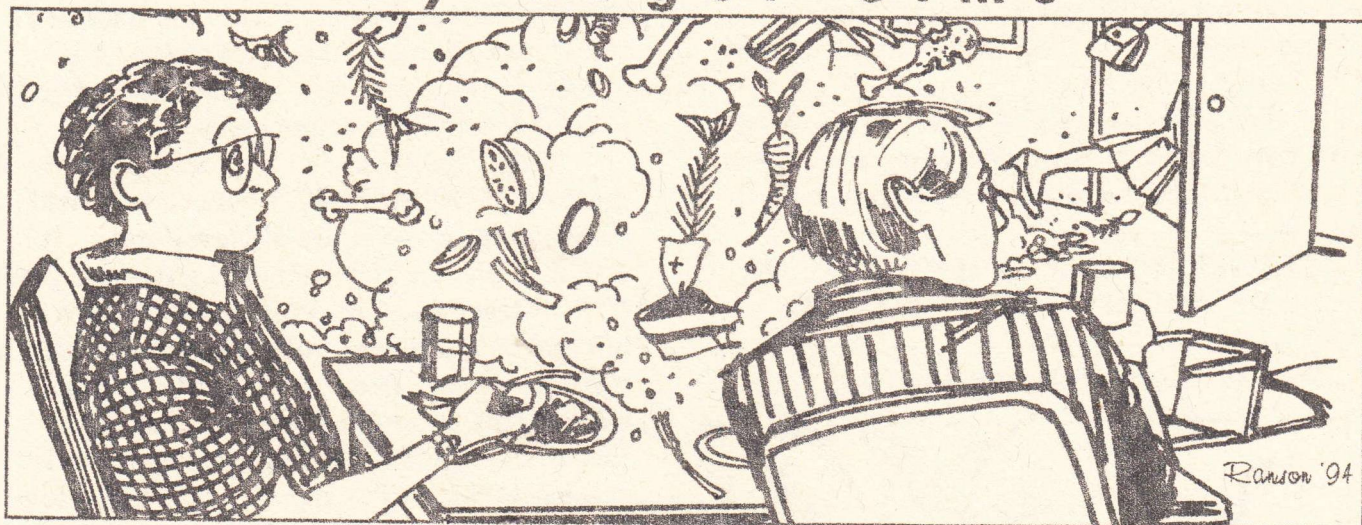
Sheryl Birkhead, 23629 Woodfield Road, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20882  
 Nick DiChario, P.O. Box 41189, Rochester, New York 14604  
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 Sharon Farber, 1000 Panorama Drive, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37421  
 Brad Foster, P.O. Box 165246, Irving, Texas 75016  
 Alexis Gilliland, 4030 8th Street South, Arlington, Virginia 22204  
 Ian Gunn, P.O. Box 567, Blackburn, Victoria 3130, Australia  
 Teddy Harvia, 710 Regency Drive, Hurst, Texas 76054  
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☞ It's time now to do a bit of traveling in time, starting with a visit to New York City fandom of the late 1950s. The writer of the following article is becoming a familiar (and welcome) presence here; his previous articles for *Mimosa* have described Second Fandom, the great Nolacon Room 770 party, and the Morgan Botts Foundation. This time he describes an early example of a fan dinner expedition.

# The Politics of Dinner

by Roger Sims



Upon opening my newly arrived copy of *Mimosa* 14, a stray sheet fluttered to the floor. "What is this?" I said to myself. "Are the Lynches guilty of improper stapling?" Then I examined the paper and at once realized that they had used this as a ploy to make sure that the receiver would read this most important part of the zine. "Well," I continued, "if that's what you want! But I'll read the good part first!"

So as I understand it, what is desired is an article about food that does not describe how two fans going to dinner gathered 98 fans like a magnet gathers iron filings as they walk from the consuite to the restaurant.

Hmm... I guess that lets out a recapitulation of my very first fanzine article, the one I wrote for Lee Hoffman's *Quandry* concerning the Nolacon I banquet. Anyway, that was some forty-odd years ago, and my memo-

ry is somewhat dim in regards to the facts. However, I do believe that it had something to do with a fly that was either drowning or had drowned in the salad dressing, and a table discussion as to the proper method to use when one wants to change the consistency of the jelled consommé.

But there are other things I could write about... There was the time my roommate, Ian Macauley, cooked spaghetti for supper. Not knowing how to tell if it was done, he asked me to look at it. As I started to, he told me that it had been cooking for only 45 minutes. Also, some time later, he invited two young ladies that he worked with to sample my cooking ability. When they both finished the last morsel of food on their plates, as well as all of the serving plates, they looked around but found nothing more to eat. Then, in what looked like a single motion, they laid down their forks, bolted to



the door and slammed it shut as the last of their words reached our ears: "Thanks. Goodbye..."

Maybe, Resnick and the elusive napkin; no, too short...

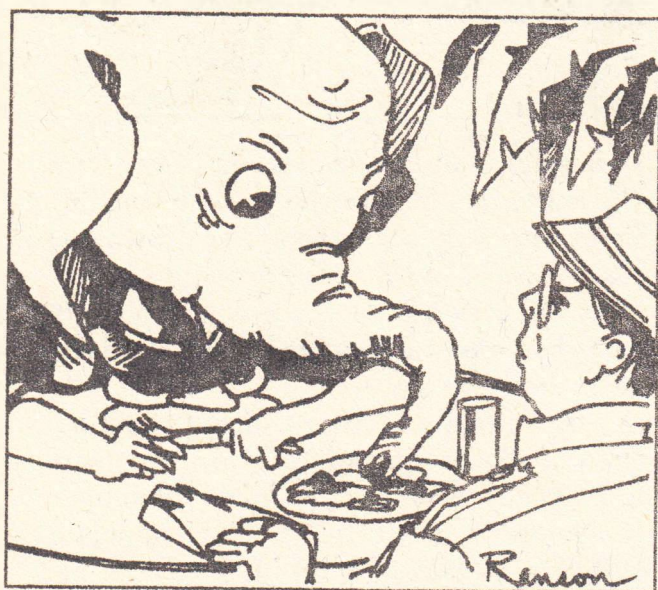
-----  
PLEASE REMOVE THE ELEPHANT  
FROM MY TABLE. HE'S EATING MY  
-----

Then there was the time that the Deli counter person hit me in the chin with a twice-baked Jewish rye crust that was aimed at Harlan Ellison.

And there was the time in Africa when we were forced to remove ourselves from the breakfast table because an elephant had...

-----  
BREAKFAST AND HE MAY START ON  
ME WHEN ALL OF IT IS GONE!  
-----

...decided to occupy the same space.



Hm... How about the time in Australia when John Millard took the meal chit and divided it down to the closest tenth of a cent for each of the six of us who were traveling together?

Or maybe the story of when George cooked breakfast and Roger got the broken eggs. (No, that would not do — he likes broken eggs.)

...So what to write about?

Then it hit me. So, after seeking medical help for a mild concussion and several contusions which were in need of stitches, I finally find my self at the keyboard ready to begin yet another effort for *Mimosa*.

Back in the old days of my fannish career, circa 1957, I lived in New York, during the period where New York fandom was splintered into many fan clubs. These were ESFA (Eastern Science Fiction Association), the Hydra Club, and the Lunarians. I belonged to the Lunarians but attended meetings of some of the other clubs.

Well... the truth is I attended only one meeting of ESFA, which I believe was held somewhere in the wilds of New Jersey. It was in a place which seemed light years from 107th Street and 8th Avenue where I lived, but was actually was only two subways and a bus ride away. There were a lot of people there, some of whom I knew. Most of the formal part of the meeting was a panel discussion of which I remember nothing. However, a member of the audience stood up and asked to say something. Before stating his point (which I no longer remember), he gave his name, whereupon we all applauded. He was Cyril Kornbluth.

Even though I didn't attend too many fan club meetings, I did attend several meetings of the Libertarian League, because on the first Saturday of each month they gave a most salutary dinner. By the time I became involved with the group, a number of the original members had gafiated. (I believe most of these were Spaniards who had fought with the forces who were against Franco in the Spanish Civil War, as members of the Jefferson and Lincoln Brigades.) So what I really attended were dinners sponsored by four of the Fanarchists\* and the remains of the Libertarian League. One of them was Big Bill Donaho, he of the famed monk costume at the 1959 worldcon, and who (it has been reported) once stopped fights by sitting on the two combatants. At



this time, he and several of his friends were living in a loft in the Village which they had christened the 'Dive'. The dwellers of the Dive held periodic happenings. At one of these outings we (Ian and myself) learned about the 'dinners' and decided that the price was right, and hoped that the food would be eatable.

So the first Saturday of whatever month was next found us at the hall in great anticipation of good food, good wine, and good talk. Only a few of the original members attended, but enough of them remained to make the meeting afterwards interesting, even if I didn't understand what they were talking about. It was like they were talking English, but it sounded like Spanish.

The dinners were ably cooked by Big Bill Donaho, with Dan Curran as the chief server and bottle washer. The menu was the same each month: chicken Paella, chunks of lettuce, olive oil, hot sauce, vinegar, lemon juice, coffee, cream, sugar, and red wine. There was no dessert. The Paella was mostly rice, with enough chicken to make it interesting, and it was seasoned with saffron, onions, both green and red peppers, pimento, salt and black pepper. It has been reported that the cook, wanting to make it more authentic, once even added squid. But only once. Bill talked the angry crowd out of the



lynching by promising never again to fool with their well-loved recipe. (The actual recipe has been lost somewhere between 1959 and the date of this writing\*\*. But for anyone interested, according to Larousse *Gastronomique*, the classic paella contains in addition some of the following: pork, ham, beefsteak, peas, kidney beans, artichoke hearts, cod, hake, lobster, shrimp, mussels, squid, and garlic sausages. But then what would you expect from a dish that is named for the pan that it is cooked in.)

Oh, yes, a rumor at the time had it that the FBI had a hidden camera across the street, aimed at the door to photograph everybody who entered the hall! But it would seem that I may be the only one to remember this rumor. What we may have here is a fannish hoax. That is, someone having fun by saying something that is so far from the truth that it makes both the hearer and the speaker into something other than what they really are.

About the time of the 1958 Worldcon, I got into a terrible fight with my immediate supervisor and was fired. This meant that I could take as much time as I wanted to travel to and from the con. But that's another story. Also, at the convention, Detroit was awarded the 1959 Worldcon, and so by not having a job and wanting to be involved in running the '59 Worldcon, I bid fond farewell to the New York fannish scene (and Donoho's excellent dinners) and returned to my fannish roots.

But that, again, is another story... ✧

\* A NYC-area fan organization. Members included Pat and Dick Ellington, Dave Mason, Katherine MacLean, Art Saha, Trina Robbins, Chuck Freudenthal, Don Bratton, and Marty Jukovsky.

\*\* A comment from my Mother as to the amount of the ingredients comes to mind at this point, "enough for a family"; and to the question how long should the dish in question cook always replied, "So it should not burn."



☞ The New York City area is also center stage for this next visit to fandom past. Dave Kyle's latest article for us is bracketed around the 1930s, but takes us far and wide as he continues his personal journey through fandom's past days.

# TALES OF BHEER & RAVEN'S CAKE

BY DAVE KYLE

ILLUSTRATED BY KURT ERICHSEN



Food is as much a part of fantasy and science fiction as it is in the real world. Alice was urged to 'Eat Me!' and 'Drink Me!', and H.G. Wells told of *The Food of the Gods*. The most famous sf double entendre of all time is the story "To Serve Man." Ruth Kyle published her *Fandom's Cookbook* in 1959 for friends, and years later Anne McCaffrey wrote her sf cookbook for the world.

When I was young, in 1939 and three years into my personal fannish journey beyond the typewriter, future Nebula winner Dick Wilson and I stood up at the counter of Nedick's on 42nd Street, Manhattan, and slaked our hunger and thirst, each with a hot dog and root beer. Those two items were purchased for the price of one nickel. Five cents for his, five cents for mine! I would never have believed then, despite my extravagant sf visions of the future, that one day the few pennies would become many bucks. One day we would be prominent participants in fancy worldcon banquets. However, the exposition of such epicurean epics — worldcon banquets, the food and drink of organized fandom — is not to be told here in this, my more personal view.

My first encounter with food and fandom was in 1936, when I went to New York City out of high school and entered the world of the infamous International Scientific Association (ISA) fan group, in which Don Wollheim, Fred Pohl, Dick Wilson, and Harry 'Dirk Wylie' Dockweiler became my close teenage friends. I had found the personal world of fandom beyond the typewriter and the reader's pages of the magazines. For the first time in my life, I was eating and drinking regularly away from home and my parents. I discovered the fast food places of the Depression Era: automats, cafeterias, and Nedick's counter service. And Dirk, the would-be Hemingway clone, introduced me to the hip flask and the insouciance of the wearing of the cigarette.

Don and his cohort Johnny Michal ate humble food like the rest of us, but Don didn't drink spirits, whereas Johnny (later in harness with Cyril Kornbluth) most certainly did at appropriate times. Come to think of it, Don was, in this and other ways, a sort of conservative (!) east coast Forry Ackerman.

After an ISA meeting out there in the Borough of Queens, there was a ritual involv-



ing ice cream gluttony by the way of a concoction we called 'The Science Fiction Sundae'. I was initiated into the routine. Fred Pohl explains the phenomenon thusly: "You see, what we science fiction fans mostly wanted to do with each other's company was to talk about science fiction, and about the world. ... We formed the habit of The Meeting After the Meeting. ... [We would] walk in a body to the nearest station of the El. On the way, we would stop off at a soda fountain. ... It supplied us with ice cream sodas..."

Another favorite hangout for those Meetings After the Meeting or other socializing moments was the Horn and Hardart Automat on 42nd Street. We would linger for hours over a few cents worth of food. I'm not sure, but I think we occasionally had some tomato soup concocted from the free catsup and the hot water taps. I am sure, though, that I occasionally amused my companions by eating the flower in the vase on the table with some pretense at shaking a dash of salt and pepper on it while pretending that I relished it, to emphasize my low finances and acknowledge those days of The Great Depression.

In my experience-filled year in the Big City, to which I would return in other years, I had sampled the rudiments of fannish food and drink. The future held for me the wild — well, not so wild — parties of my convention days. The very first convention, in Philadelphia in 1936, was held in a bar that was closed for business. None of us from New York or Philadelphia had any thought of alcoholic beverages then. Times would change.

Some of my past *Mimosa* articles have mentioned food, like Arthur Clarke's cheese and wine bachelor party {{ed. note: "Golden Ages, Silver Screens" in M13}}, and that 1940 trip to Chicago {{ed. note: "Chicon Ho!" in M8}} when we chose to buy a bag of groceries instead of a couple of tickets to the banquet — which later prompted Californian Elmer Perdue to treat us to 'one decent meal' as our car limped back to New York.

Going out to restaurants or fast food

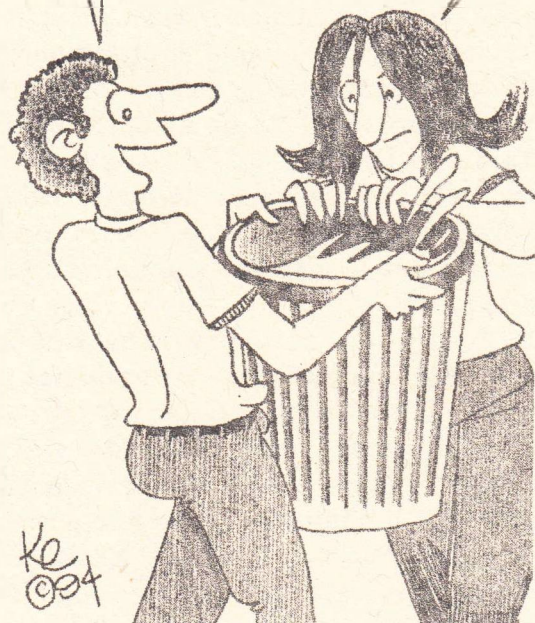
places at conventions is obviously a necessity, and you often unexpectedly meet friends there. Isaac Asimov confessed that after he tricked Ruth Landis (my future spouse) away from me on the Saturday night at the 1955 Clevention, he "...and Randall Garrett and Forrest Ackerman ... kept squiring her here and there ... [eventually finding] an all-night diner [where they] sat up all night with Ruth ... talking all sorts of gibberish and loving it." Long talks into the night accompanied by food and drink have always been commonplace but don't often get mentioned in autobiographies.

Possibly the most propitious time for combining food and good fellowship at conventions is breakfast time (at least for my advanced years). Then, the wilder element is still abed recuperating from the all-night parties. The hangover crowd and sleep-deprived are almost non-existent in the dining room or breakfast cafe, but old-timers and the sedate seem to be leisurely fueling up for the day ahead. Some of my most pleasant encounters have been then. In New Orleans, at the 1988 Worldcon, if I hadn't wandered out to the waterfront for rolls and coffee, I would have missed George Price. And I would have missed his reminiscence of a forgotten time when we had our picture published in the *New York Daily News* just after the war. We were in uniform helping Jimmy Taurasi (who was wearing his FanVet cap) prepare packages of sf magazines "...for our boys, somewhere over there." I had forgotten that. Then there was my visit with Ray and Diane Harryhausen (who were eating undisturbed, except by me) to recall the old days. I remember the special meals for con guests before and after the main weekend. Most memorable, because it was so shocking, was the morning I met Ben Bova in the lobby and we breakfasted together. I told him it was my first chance in years to socialize with him. (I had introduced him to the science fiction world in 1956.) "Why so?" he asked. "Because you were always surrounded with people," I explained, "as the prominent editor of *Omni* and I didn't want to intrude."



Blog for the 1990s ....  
No alcohol, sugar free,  
caffeine free...

At least there's no  
danger of addiction.



He regretted my reluctance, then came the shock: "When I left *Omni*, they left me," he said. Fair weather friends, sad to say, are to be found in science fiction circles, prevalent among 'professionals'. That didn't seem to be so in the good old days, when most (if not all) pros were genuine fans, unsegregated and not aloof.

Free snacks and some drinks appeared with the advent of hospitality set-ups for the early conventions. As con-goers became more affluent, food and drink refreshments began to spread with the increase in hotel room bookings, leading to small gatherings of friends and private parties. At my Newyorcon (the 1956 Worldcon), I arranged a welcome party subsidized by the publishers, at which everyone got at least two free alcoholic drinks.

This leads to a discussion of drinking at conventions. The patron saint of science fiction, St. Fantony, brought forth the 'waters for the trufen' in merrie olde Englande and this century's British fans concocted

'blog', that legendary fannish drink. It was as potent as could be devised for 'The Test' to determine such trufen. *Fandom's Cookbook*, Ruth's booklet, has three recipes for blog, as submitted by Bill Donoho.

Alcoholic spirits flowed generously on both sides of the Atlantic. The youth and affability of those drawn to the early years of cons created an atmosphere very much like something to be found on college campuses. Drinking hard liquor became the smart thing to do, and drunkenness was all too common. I think the drinking problem developed post-war when more money was around and booze flowed freely. No bidding party or hospitality room was worth attention if whiskey and beer weren't available.

The best drinking party I ever enjoyed took place at the Detention, the 1959 Detroit Worldcon. The invitation read: '10pm Cass Room, Bheer Party. Bring your Bheer Credits. Meet your favorite authors. Light Bheer, Dark Bheer, Rhoot Bheer. The Detention Committee is host — if you can still read this, go find a party.' After the masquerade — which unlike today's affairs was simple, brief, and over with before eleven o'clock — pitchers of beer were placed on tables. Ruth began a bridge game with Detention co-chairmen Roger Sims and Fred Prophet, and (probably) Carolyn Hickman while I kibitzed. About eleven o'clock, a panel began in the next room, which may well have been the longest-running worldcon panel of all time. It went on hour after hour into the night...and so did the card game. Various persons would wander in from the panel and report its progress to the bheer drinking players, then wander back. The panel members were in a perpetual state of flux. Several times I rotated in and out as a panel member or spectator, catching Ruth's score and trying to slake my unquenchable thirst. The pitchers of beer seemed unending. It was the best dark beer — dark bheer, that is — I have ever drunk (and I speak as a veteran resident of England). That night is memorable — ask *anyone* who was there!

In addition to convention-sponsored



hospitality, fans have always had the knack of finding free food and drinks at gatherings where other events have been simultaneously held in the con hotel. Private, non-sf room parties have often been crashed. In 1952, at Chicon II, a wedding reception upstairs from the worldcon area seemed fair game to some fans. Lloyd Arthur Eshbach (Fantasy Press) and I (Gnome Press) looked in, but Lloyd was intimidated by the scene and left. However, two other fan/pros, Bill Hamling (*Amazing Stories*) and Mel Korshak (Shasta Publishers), also sub-committee chairmen for Chicon, amazed and embarrassed me with their chutzpah. When their presence was challenged, they brazened it out, lingering to sample the food and drink, while I silently slipped away. Bill, in fact, acted self-righteously belligerent and Mel later "...had several delightful waltzes with the bride." (Lloyd has reported this incident in greater detail in his fascinating book, *Over My Shoulder*.)

My strongest, most dramatic memories of all about food and drink, however, were of my days as a struggling artist when starvation seemed to hover over us. 'Us' was Dick Wilson and me, when in 1939-40, we lived in a tiny apartment on the upper east side of New York that was called Ravens' Roost. We often subsisted on the kindness of families, friends, and fans. Dirk Wylie regularly raided his mother's larder in the wilds of Queen's Village, far from the end of the subway line. My mother would send us packages of food along with concerned notes from my old home town of Monticello a hundred miles away. Mrs. Wilson would occasionally send us some home-cooked supplies, and Jack Gillespie would show up frequently with cartons of chocolate-covered Goobers "...which had fallen off the back of the truck..." that his father drove. We bought oatmeal and potatoes — plenty of potatoes. For weeks we would have a varied menu of fried potatoes... or boiled potatoes... or mashed potatoes... or baked potatoes, with oatmeal every third time to break the monotony.

We also had our cake — our emergency ration. We had made it one day out of flour and slightly sour milk, with some melted red and green candies for sweetening. We baked it for a long time in a deep pan. When the top was a dark golden crust, we pried it out of the pan with great effort. It was as solid as a rock, and the chips of red and green crystals studding its surface gave it a jewel-like quality.

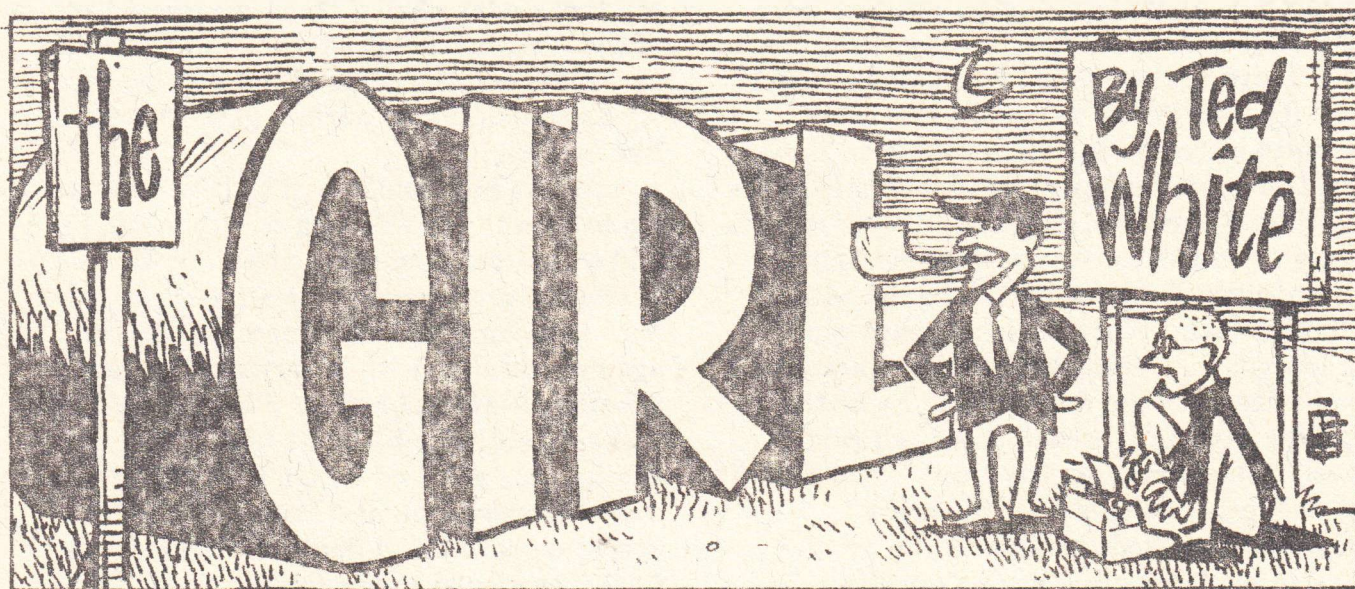
It was impossible to cut. It was impossible to break. We attacked it with a dull knife and a hammer, and when the thing stubbornly refused to surrender, we altered our thinking. It became our permanent protection against starvation while serving as a very effective, heavy door stop. This unusual cake was a marvel which, for its beauty and practicality, was admired by all. Other Ravens came to replace me and Dick, and they became its guardian. I don't know whatever finally happened to our fabulous possibly-edible door stop. Damon Knight, struggling at the Roost toward his future success, should have known, but he has never told me.

Maybe he ate it... ☼





☞ Here's one last story about past New York City fandom, this time set in the early 1960s. Ted White's previous article for us, a few issues ago, was a remembrance of one incident in his continuing friendship with one of fandom's most colorful personalities, Harlan Ellison. Ted's new article (which also features Ellison) is once again about friendships, and the things fans do to remain friends.



Before I begin this story, I want to comment on the responses to my last story, "The Bet." {{☞ ed. note: in *Mimosa* 12 }} One reader said, "What was most disturbing was that for the price of a piece of cake White forgave Ellison. He should have called the police." Another reader said it was "a classic feud story," while yet another said, "I don't see the point of digging up an old grudge to take Harlan down a notch." And one reader asks, "How did Ted manage to remain friends with the guy after that?"

Others wondered if the story was exaggerated: "...if it was embellished truth, I don't want to know!" ... "...assuming Ted White's story is true, that's pretty amazing." ... "My first reaction upon finishing 'The Bet' was, 'I don't believe this — he *couldn't* have — they *didn't*!' My brain is still sputtering."

Clearly, I have not successfully communicated with some of you. First, that story, like this one, is true to my memories of the events, although the actual dialogue was obviously recreated since no one tape-record-

ed it at the time. I have not exaggerated or embellished for effect, nor is that my style.

More important is the context of the time and my friendship with Harlan. The simple fact is that even when I was not happy with something Harlan had done, I looked up to him. I was in awe of him when I first met him, and it took many years for that to fully wear off. When Harlan moved back to New York City in 1960, our friendship became much stronger than it had been previously, simply because we were so much in each other's company. Harlan stayed in my apartment for a month or two before finding an apartment of his own only three doors down the street. We were often in and out of each other's apartments, we went places together (ranging from Hydra Club meetings to jazz clubs), and we had as well those quiet moments late at night or early in the day when our defenses were down and we could share intimate thoughts. We had a lot of fun together. To save 15¢ in subway fare, we jumped on the backs of trucks and rode them uptown. We spent one afternoon planning a



final issue of Harlan's *Dimensions* — drawing up a mock table of contents with every BNF on it, each assigned a piece with a provocative title (most of them Harlan's, of course — ghod, he had a quick wit!). There is no doubt in my mind that I was basically Harlan's sidekick of the time: he led and I followed. But you must understand that I *liked* Harlan and I admired him intensely. The memory of him writing "Daniel White For The Greater Good" in the midst of a party in my living room is one I will always cherish, not only because Harlan could be such a macho, exhibitionistic writer, but because under such circumstances he could write such a *good* story.

He was like an older brother to me, with all the aspects implied by such a relationship. We were buddies, and we were rivals. We were friends. And that, of course, is why I accepted his peace offering and his apology. We were friends. Friends can get mad at each other; they just don't *stay* mad. "The Bet" was not written "to take Harlan down a notch," nor out of any grudge. Nor has there ever been a feud between us. We have disagreed about things over the years, but we have also agreed on many more things. I will always think of Harlan as a friend, no matter how distant we may become.

There was a time when our lives intertwined and there are some good stories from that time. One of them would take more space than this fanzine has in which to be told — it covers a five-year span and climaxes with Harlan's *Memos From Purgatory*, the first edition of which he dedicated to me. The others are briefer, and easier to tell. Here is one such.

#

When I moved to New York City in 1959, it was a dauntingly big place and I felt intimidated by it at first. So I looked for friends. Having friends takes the coldness out of new environs. As a fan, I knew a number of fans in New York City, but those I knew best — the Ellingtons, Bill Donoho,

Larry & Noreen Shaw — were at the same time moving *out* of NYC. Bill and the Ellingtons moved west to the Bay area, then in the process of becoming a new fannish Mecca. The Shaws moved west to Staten Island — technically still New York City, but a long ferry and train ride from Manhattan. So I turned to people like Larry Ivie, whom I first knew through EC comics fandom, and to the newer, younger group of fans, still in their mid-teens, like Les Gerber and Andy Reiss.

Les and Andy had made their first appearances as fans at the 1956 NyCon — when they were only 12 or 13. I can't say I *met* them there exactly, but I did notice these two little kids who wore 'Sunday best' suits, carried briefcases, and wore nylon stockings over their heads, proclaiming to one and all in loud voices that they were agents of the Goon Defective Agency. Brats.

Three or four years later, one of them — Andy Reiss — had become taller and very skinny, while the other remained somewhat shorter and chubbier. The latter, Les Gerber, was the more active and energetic of the two, but they were still troublemakers of sorts. They broke up a Central Park meeting of the Metrofen (a short-lived club made up largely of fans their age) by starting a pitched battle with dirt clods, for example. Both were interested in fanzines, although they had yet to produce anything of significance. Les was in the apa SAPS, doing a SAPSzine. Andy was an artist and did cartoons for Les.

They were at first just acquaintances, but in the course of the next year they became my friends, often dropping in on me at my Village apartment when they were in the area. Inevitably, I started using Andy's cartoons in my fanzine, *Void*. He first illustrated a piece I'd written, "A Day With Calvin Thomas Beck," which itself became much talked-about. Subsequently, Andy showed me a series of surrealist cartoons he was doing, which he called, collectively, "Dig." I was impressed. Conceptually, these cartoons



were not just tossed-off 'fanart'. They had a seriously surreal quality, a very sophisticated approach to the whole idea of humor. Not bad for a 16-year-old.

Of course, Andy was not your typical 16-year-old, even for a native of New York City. His family were Jewish liberals, in the artistic wing. Andy had uncles whose works hung in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art. His mother had, before marrying, been a dancer in Harlem. His father, a printer, was a card-carrying member of the CPUSA — a real Communist. Andy grew up in Brooklyn, and was the first person I ever met who smoked marijuana (he never offered me any, and I'd not try it myself until almost ten years after meeting him).

(Les Gerber, who does not figure in this story, had a somewhat different background. Although his family was also Jewish, and into the arts — the family had its own string quartet, and famed cellist Janos Starker was Les's cousin — they were more conventional, more conservative; Les's father was a vice-principal at a high school.)

Andy had a girl friend, whom he'd met in high school. Her name was Donna. She was incredibly petite. She stood less than five feet tall, and was very well proportioned. Her face was pretty, and in overall summation most people would call her 'cute' or even 'very cute'. There was just one thing about her appearance that was a little odd (but less so in that era, during which Eisenhower was still president and cars still had big tailfins, and women wore all manner of figure-enhancing or figure-concealing items of apparel)... her butt was one single curve, lacking any indication of cleavage.

In a moment of requisite privacy, I asked her about that. As an ass-man, I had of course noticed this unusual feature of her apparent anatomy, and I had correctly guessed that she was wearing some sort of heavy-duty girdle. Since she was so tiny, and without any obvious *need* for the confine-

ment of a girdle, I wondered why she wore it. She told me that a few years earlier, she had been "horribly fat," and had begun wearing a girdle then. Now, although she hardly needed it, she had grown used to it, and felt more comfortable wearing one. I thought then that this did not bode well for Andy. When a young woman wears what amounts to armor over that part of her body, it might well indicate a protective attitude, one which would fend off certain advances. It also didn't say much for her maturity — she was 15 or 16 when I met her — in any relationship she might have with Andy.

It was inevitable that sooner or later Donna would meet Harlan. By then Harlan had his own apartment just down the block from mine, and with both Harlan and Andy popping in and out of my apartment at all hours, they'd met early on. And one day, when Andy had brought Donna with him for a visit, Harlan dropped in and met her.

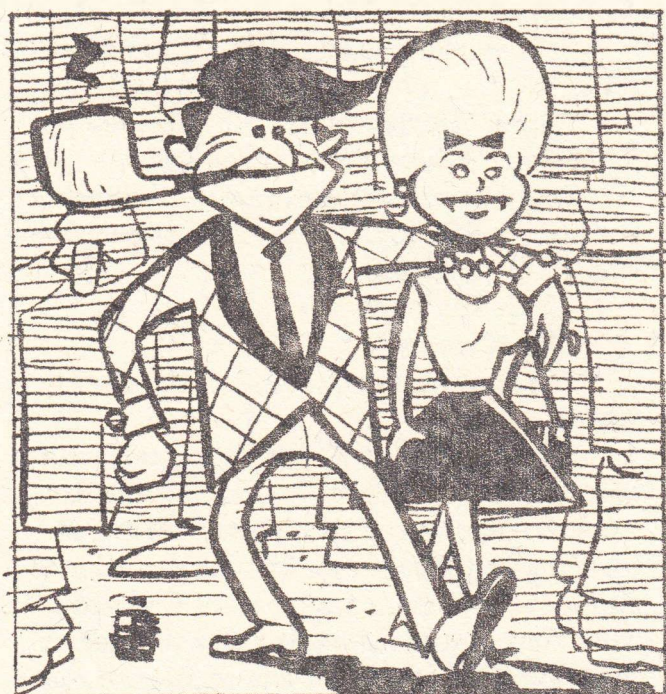
At this point, I was (as, in fact, I still am) five years older than Andy, and about five years younger than Harlan. So Harlan was in his mid-twenties, and about ten years older than Donna. The gap was not great, although one might have said, in the terminology of the times, that while Harlan was a man, Donna was still a girl — a schoolgirl, in fact.

But Harlan had a different perspective. He has argued the point (in print) with Asimov — as to whether he is 5'2" or 5'4" — but no one denies that Harlan is, relatively, short. Most of the women with whom Harlan had been involved — including his first wife, whom he had divorced only shortly before this — were taller than Harlan. I doubt this was a matter of great concern to Harlan, but surely it must have delighted him to encounter such an attractive young woman who was *in scale* with him, so to speak. Harlan and Donna made a very good-looking couple standing next to each other, a fact which certainly was not lost on him.

And thus it was that the summer of



1960 saw the breakup of Andy and Donna, and the getting together of Harlan and Donna. I don't know how serious Harlan was about Donna, but I suspect that he wasn't very much so. Perhaps it was her age and immaturity that stood in the way of a real relationship between them; I think Harlan mostly just liked going places with her and being seen with her. But this is conjecture on my part; Harlan was never one to kiss and tell, and consequently I have no idea if in fact he ever *did* kiss her.



But if Harlan's attitude toward Donna was, basically, casual, Andy's was not. Andy was devastated — as only a 16-year-old boy can be. Andy looked up to and admired Harlan, and he was at the least infatuated with Donna, so he couldn't really get mad at either one of them. So he took his hurt and frustration and despair out on himself; he became seriously depressed.

His mother called me up. "Ted, Andy hasn't been home for half a week. He won't eat and he won't sleep, and he just insists on hanging out on the street. If he shows up at your place, could you try to help him?"

I said I would. I liked Andy's mom, and I admired her for having the courage and the plain sensibleness to understand the situation and to call me as she had. Most moms would not have handled it so well, and probably made it much worse — perhaps by reporting their son to the authorities.

Andy did turn up at the end of a week of fasting and sleeplessness. He was skinny as a rail. I have only once seen anyone up close (not on TV) who was that thin and emaciated (and she died a few months later of anorexia). When he took off his tee-shirt and turned his back to me, I could see the skin clinging to the back of his ribcage, his shoulder bones, and his spine, with horrible concavities between them.

He wandered into my kitchen and picked up a large kitchen knife. Fingering it, he began to talk about killing himself. "I've done everything else," he mumbled. "I've destroyed my paintings." (Indeed, all but one of his youthful paintings — which I still possess to this day — were slashed and destroyed during that week.)

"Hey," I told him. "You can't kill yourself with that knife."

"Why not?" he asked, a little sullenly.

"Because it would make a terrible mess, blood everywhere. You know I can't stand the sight of blood, and I'll be damned if I'll have to clean it up after you. So, if you want to kill yourself, you'll have to be more considerate and do it more neatly. Okay?"

"Got any suggestions?" he asked, too depressed to be really sarcastic.

"Sure," I said, thinking quickly. "Drugs. Take an overdose of drugs."

"Oh, sure," Andy said. "Like what kind of drugs?"

As it happened, my wife Sylvia had been working as a receptionist for a Park Avenue doctor, and in the course of her job had been dealing with representatives of various pharmaceutical companies who dropped in frequently to leave free samples of their latest drugs, most of them mood-altering drugs like



tranquilizers (then still less than five years on the market), amphetamines, psychic energizers, and the like. They came with full literature, listing the indications and contraindications, side-effects, etc., of each drug. I was in those days (my friends may snicker) a puritan about drugs, and I had little interest in any of those Sylvia had, but I had a pretty good idea (I'd read the literature) about *what* she had — and I figured that if I picked the right drug and could get Andy to take it, I could get him out of this deep funk.

But of course I couldn't *tell* him that. He would resist it.

So I told him, "You remember all those stories about aspirin and Coke — how if you take them together supposedly it'd kill you?"

"Aww, that's not true," Andy said. "You know that."

"Sure, I know that. But the idea was, the combination of caffeine from the Coke and the drug in aspirin would be too much for you, right? So my idea is, we give you some of Sylvia's speed and we mix it with Pepsi and it kills you. Wanna try it?"

"Okay," Andy shrugged. "Sure. Why not?"

So I went in the bedroom and dug the box out from under the bed, and found an appropriate pill. I no longer recall what it was, but it wasn't speed — an amphetamine. It was probably an anti-depressant of some sort, and I handed it to Andy with a glass of Pepsi. (I don't drink Coke.) Andy gave me a slightly quizzical look, and took the pill, washing it down with the Pepsi.

"I know that's not gonna kill me," he told me. "I know you, Ted White." But he went along with it anyway, and within minutes he'd crashed. He sprawled on our living room couch and slept for the next eighteen hours. Modest noises and our small cat playing around and on him did not awaken him before his time. I called his mother and told her he was all right and sleeping it off. She was glad to hear it.

Andy awoke the following evening. He

sat up, told me he felt much better, and said he was ravenously hungry. And at that point, Harlan showed up.

"How ya feeling, Andy?" Harlan asked. "Anything I can do for you, get for you?" Harlan had heard about the consequences of Donna's breakup with Andy. In fact, he'd dropped in earlier, while Andy was still sleeping, and had been brought up to date on the situation. He was in a conscious-stricken mood, and, consequently, eager to make things up to Andy if he could (without giving up Donna).

"Hi, Harlan," Andy said. "I'm really hungry."

"Sure," Harlan said. "I'll take you out for dinner. Where you want to go?"

Andy named a restaurant on Flatbush Avenue, in Brooklyn — one that stayed open late. Harlan agreed.

"And, Harlan?"

"What, Andy?"

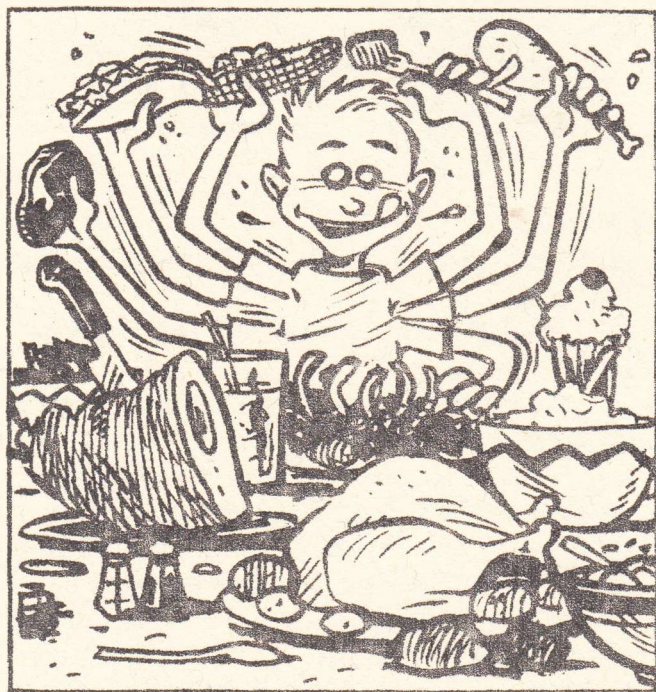
"Can we go in your car? With the top down?"

"Sure, Andy. We'll go in my car, with the top down." Harlan had an Austin-Healy, a spirited sports car he'd gotten from Bill Hamling in Chicago. In fact, he'd used it to pull a small U-Haul trailer from Chicago to New York, a disastrous decision that led to the trailer fishtailing on one of the toll roads and flipping the car over — the trailer, loaded, weighed a lot more than the tiny sports car. One of Harlan's first tasks upon getting to New York City was to use my phone to threaten legal action if U-Haul didn't pay for all the damage — not only to the car, but to Harlan's possessions in the trailer. It took chutzpah to pull that one off — to convince U-Haul that it was *their* responsibility and that they should never have rented the trailer or hooked it up to Harlan's little car (in the face of Harlan's *demand*, at the time, that they rent him the trailer and hook it up) — but Harlan *did* pull it off, and had had the car fixed.

So Harlan, Sylvia, Andy, and I all



crowded into his two-seater, Andy riding in back, sitting up on the lowered top, virtually on the top of the trunk of the car, like a celebrity in a ticker-tape parade. And thus we drove over the Brooklyn Bridge and up Flatbush Avenue to the restaurant. There Harlan treated Andy to a fine meal, and Andy downed an enormous amount of food. His stomach may have shrunk, but he ate as if to make up for that week of starvation in one sitting. He took full advantage of Harlan's generosity.



And there it pretty much ended. Harlan didn't see as much of Donna (it was about then that he met Jim Warren's assistant, who subsequently would become the second Mrs. Ellison), but Donna didn't get back together with Andy, either. Andy pretty well picked up the pieces of his life and went on with it. (The last I heard, he was an instructor at the Brooklyn Museum, and his talent as an artist was still developing. I have on the wall of my dining room a portrait he did of me in 1964; a ten-minute sketch in oils for a more detailed portrait he intended to do later but never got around to.)

I ran into Donna once, many years later. It was late in the seventies, at a Balticon. She was there with Norman Spinrad. She was no longer a girl, and no longer wore that silly girdle. Her name was Dona (only one 'n', and pronounced with a long 'o'), and she was a television producer; she rattled off an impressive list of credits which for some reason I had trouble believing. She was delighted to see me again and made her delight explicit in an invitation to join her in her room. But I chickened out; Norman and I had been getting along reasonably well by then and I saw no reason to introduce a fresh cause for strife. Besides, she scared me a little... ✧

#### Postscript:

After I had written the above story, I showed it to my friend, co-editor, and illustrator, Dan Steffan. After he'd read it, I asked him what he thought of it.

"Oh, I liked it," he said, "but I wondered why you didn't say anything about her death."

"Her death?" I echoed. "She died? I hadn't heard that. When did it happen? And how?"

"I'm not sure," Dan said. "I heard about it from Harlan Ellison, I think. Or maybe Norman. I met her at that same con you saw her at, and I think I heard about her death just a couple of years later."

"How did it happen?" I asked.

"Cancer, I think. Something horrible. I really don't know."

"Wow," I said. "That changes everything. I wonder if I should rewrite the piece, or at least the ending. I mean, it's kinda cold, now that I look at it."

"Why do that?" Dan asked. "You wrote it the way you felt it. Leave it alone."

"I'll have to write *something*, though," I said. "I mean, now that you've told me she's dead..."

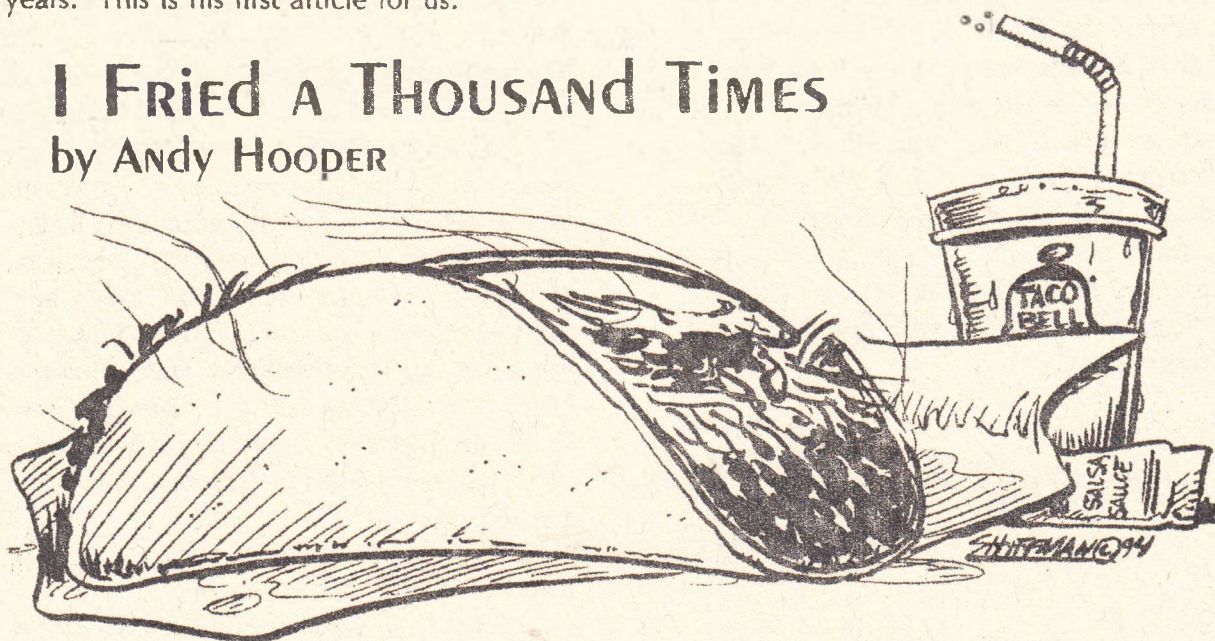
"This Postscript ought to do it," he said, and I decided he was right. ✧



☞ It's time to end this issue, but before we do, it's back to the present for a cautionary tale for all of us prospective authors. The writer of the following has been a nominee for the Best Fan Writer the past two years. This is his first article for us.

# I FRIED A THOUSAND TIMES

by Andy Hooper



My mistake was this: I made the error that all writers and editors warn against, and I quit my day job. At the end of 1990, I was restive. I wanted to write professionally, and I was itching to apply myself to it full time. And so I left my comfortable job at the hobby store, where I had been entertainingly, if not gainfully, employed for almost six years, and sat down to write.

Six months and no submissions later, our cash reserve was depleted. My wife and I sat down to plot our financial course, and it was clear that I had to get another job. Carrie is well-paid in her capacity as a programmer, and we might well have been able to get by. But worldcon was coming, and our mutual passion for Cajun take-out was a difficult addiction to break. And it certainly didn't seem fair that she went off to work each day while I sat around, not writing.

I made a number of applications. Things were pretty tough right then, and there were a lot of people doing graduate studies in Madison who wanted to work at Kinko's copies on the side. There might have been some other possibilities if I held out longer, but essentially, my only choice was to take a job in food service, which I had

not done since the year I had graduated from high school.

And the food I ended up servicing was at Taco Bell.

Now, you may well turn up your nose at Taco Bell, but you have no idea how much worse it is than you imagine. Taco Bell is part of the vast Pepsi-Cola restaurant empire, which also includes Pizza Hut and Kentucky Fried Chicken, and this network has been designed to get as much as possible out of each facet of the fast-food buying population. Pizza Hut is meant to cater to the middle and upper-middle class family, an inexpensive way to feed a family, but still receive sit-down service. Kentucky Fried Chicken is focused on the lower-middle class, a long-standing American institution, and a cheap way to get a lot of food fast, with at least the impression of wholesomeness. And then there is Taco Bell, food so cheap that the under-class can afford to fill up there — grease, salt and carbohydrates for under two dollars.

How can Taco Bell provide this service for so little? They save money in a lot of areas. One is employee wages; Taco Bell has the lowest starting wages of any major fast-



food chain. And since employees last less than 60 days on the average, very seldom do employees have to be paid anything more than starting wages. In addition, there are a lot of corners they can cut in the production and presentation of the food, but we'll consider more of that later.

My first concern was that other money-saving measure, wages. When I applied for the job, the manager told me that the only shifts he had available for line service were from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. In addition, the hourly wage offered for those positions was pitifully low. When I blanched at this information, Dan (the manager) was quick to point out that he had another job that I might consider, one that was somewhat more challenging, and which paid a higher wage. The position was that of morning fry monkey.

The fry monkey was the guy who came in at six in the morning, fired up the deep fat fryer, and cooked all of the taco shells, nacho chips, salad bowls, tostada shells, Mexican pizza crusts, and cinnamon twists that the restaurant would go through in an entire day. There were some other maintenance and cleaning responsibilities attached to the job as well, but they were secondary to turning out a sufficient volume of 'product' in a timely fashion. The job was hot, repetitive, and messy, but the benefits included working at your own pace, and not having to communicate with the rest of the workers under most conditions. There was also the higher wage to consider, which was more than I had made in the hobby store after six years. I accepted the job, and went home to shave my beard for the first time since 1986.

It rapidly became clear why it had been difficult to find someone to do the job. Every other day, the fryer had to be drained, and the oil filtered. Then the fryer had to be scrubbed with hot water and solvent, flushed repeatedly, and the oil returned to the machine. Every two weeks, the oil was dumped, and new oil melted from a fifty-pound block of shortening.

After cleaning, the oil was brought to something like 370 degrees Fahrenheit, and I began the frying. I was instructed in this

procedure by a senior employee named Chuck. Chuck had been working at Taco Bell for over three years, an unheard-of duration. Had he been a professional soldier, instead of just a reservist in the Guard, he would surely have been a lifer.

Chuck's first object lesson was that the oil was dangerously hot. I started to tell him that I had dealt with a deep fryer at another Mexican restaurant some ten years before, but before I could finish, he said, "Look, I'll show you." He picked up the steel nacho basket that had been in the hot oil some 45 seconds before and pressed one of its bars against the underside of his left forearm. When he took it away, there was a line of dead-white flesh where it had touched him, and this would later turn into an angry red scar.

"That's very impressive, Mr. Liddy," I said. He didn't get the joke. We moved on to the taco shell racks.

Chuck had performed my job for over six months, so he had very definite ideas about how it should be done. The racks had to be loaded by hand in a certain fashion, dropped into the hot oil for a certain period, removed and drained, and shaken in the same fashion every time. There was a particularly difficult trick to tilting the hot shells out of the rack so that they could be stacked and not broken, and I was hopelessly slow to pick this up. But Chuck's meticulous nature was matched by his stolidity, and when I smashed a whole rack of shells, he would simply take another and show me the proper way to tip them out.

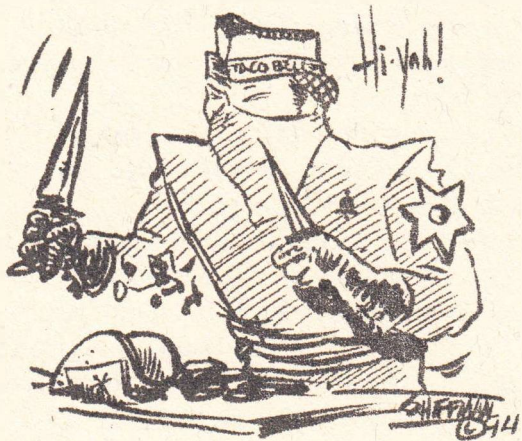
The most challenging part of the job physically was learning to work with my right hand encased in a thick rubber glove. The demands of production were such that there was no question of waiting for the shells to cool enough to handle them bare-handed. In fact, going from fryer to warming cabinet to line, the shell was never supposed to fall below 120 degrees. So in order to handle them safely, I had to wear a very heavy insulated glove. After a few months, I got good enough that I could button my shirt while wearing the gloves. I have quite an



appreciation of how hard it is for astronauts to perform delicate operations during space-walks!

Beyond the physical demands of being a fry monkey, there were also challenges in adjusting to the social milieu of Taco Bell. The low wages, lack of benefits, and punishing demand for speed and efficiency in line servers create an incredible rate of turnover in the staff. Those who lasted for more than a month acquired a kind of hard-bitten cynicism, and the ability to perform tasks as prescribed, while still holding the entire process in extreme contempt. New employees came on line, failed to meet this standard, and were fired or quit in disgust. After a while, those of us who had been there more than a month began to regard them as a rifle company in a combat zone would replacements. Best not to learn their names; they'll be dead soon enough.

The people who did last for any period of time were pretty strong personalities. Amanda and Tony were teen lovers who used to regularly slash each other with razor blades as a part of foreplay. Steve shared a house with them, and in his role of assistant manager, used to regularly get so disgusted with the night crew that he would send them all home and did the cleaning himself. Often, we would find him mopping up from the previous night when we came in for the morning. He eventually quit to move to New Orleans and attend Ninja school.



And then there were employees remarkable for their level of dysfunction. A girl named Jennica was fired after she came in

an hour-and-a-half late and claimed it was because she had to wrap a birthday present. Jim was a dish washer who suffered from grand mal seizures, but insisted we ignore them; twice a day I would hear a thump from the sink area, and look over to see Jim's feet protruding around the corner, twitching and knocking against the tile. The other employees just stepped over him.

As I became more adept at frying, it took me less and less time to do the daily allotment. Dan set me to doing other things that had to be done for set-up. This was when I began to grasp just how unpleasant the food served at Taco Bell really is. The condiments, fresh vegetables and cheeses, weren't so bad. They were delivered by local produce and dairy jobbers. But the things we got from Pepsi food service made army rations look good. The ground beef and chicken arrived frozen in large plastic bags, and were plunged into boiling water for half an hour before serving. The chicken had a viscous beige sauce poured over it before it was served, which was especially repellent.

Beans came dried, and were also steeped in boiling water to make them palatable. Nacho sauce came out of a huge can, and often sat for many hours in the warmer before being served. All meat and bean products were too expensive to discard if not served by the end of the evening, so if excessive amounts were made, we would add them to fresh product an unknown number of days later. But by far the worst component was the pico de gallo sauce, used on fajitas. Squeezed from a pouch and thinned with water, I would not have been surprised to learn it was embalming fluid mixed with slivered gherkins.

And despite our knowledge of just how ghastly the food was, we ate the stuff! It was free; we could have a meal every time we worked a four hour shift or more. Given what we were paid, it was inevitable that we be selective about what we remembered once we passed to the other side of the counter.

Everybody had different ways of dealing with the stress and humiliation of the job. Tony liked to play hardcore tapes at thunder-



ous levels during the prep shift. Chuck used to hold dripping bags of garbage over the windshields of the manager's cars. I began putting little satiric posters on the bulletin board in the break room, entitled 'The Fry Monkey Informational Series'. These included things like 'Jobs even worse than yours', 'Ten ways to accessorize with flour tortillas', and 'Taco Bell Zen Koans'.



One thing that united all the workers was our contempt for the general manager of the Madison-area stores, Mark. We chronically fell below the level of rush-hour production that corporate standards called for, and Mark's response was to stand in the kitchen and shower abuse on the line crew. When we heard that the company was going to sell the stores, and Mark would be replaced, we rejoiced.

We were singing a different tune shortly thereafter, when it was revealed that the franchises had been sold back to the Taco Bell corporation. Taco Bell is currently in the third year of a five-year plan to eventually outstrip McDonalds in number of wholly-owned restaurants in the continental United States. One way they are doing this is by re-acquiring the franchises they sold ten years ago, and bringing them back into the corporate system. So we all came to work one day and found that many things had changed. Our radio had been spirited away, never to return, and the dining room muzak was now piped into the kitchen as well. We were no

longer allowed to eat in the dining room in uniform. Weights of all food items, a key to maximizing profit, were monitored fanatically. And because the long-standing employees were infected with non-corporate procedures, a new manager arrived to ease us out of the schedule.

This was pretty easy in my case, since, for several years, corporate procedure had been to use pre-fried products; I was perhaps the last manual fry monkey at any Taco Bell in the upper midwest. I had been superseded by a delivery truck. And before I could decide if I would make the step to line crew, it turned out we were infected with something else.

I was at home struggling with another unsuccessful short story, when my dad called. "So," he said, "have you had you shot yet?" He had been watching television, and saw a story on how a patient in University Hospital with hepatitis had been traced to our store. It turned out that the new manager brought in to reorganize us had brought some little friends with him as well. It got even more bizarre; he turned out to be wanted by police in Florida for robbery and check fraud, and he slipped from sight in short order.

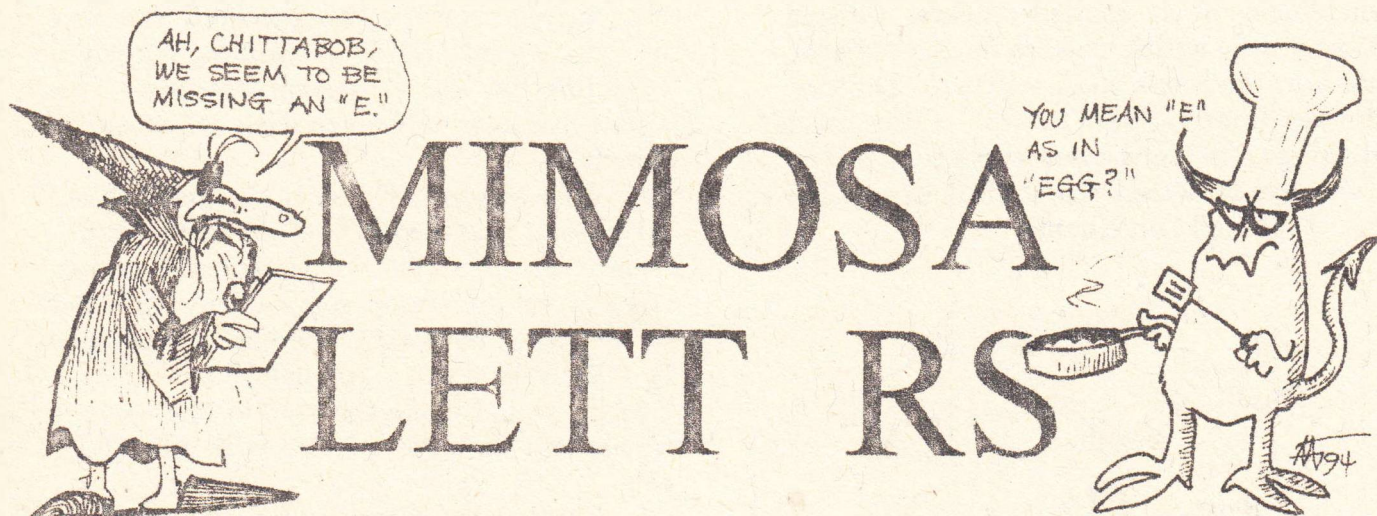
We all trooped over to the health service and had Gamma Globulin shots. I never heard of any other illness traced back to us, but understandably, business suffered. Two thousand dollars worth of refrigerated product was discarded, and so was most of the crew.

By then it felt like a blessing. I had lasted long past the point when most employees either became management or flame out. Every now and then, I fondly recall the trance-like state I would enter while frying, and bring myself out of it by considering how close I came to staying on as a manager. When the idea of that mindless work seems attractive, I recall my favorite Taco Bell Koan:

The Manager asked Amanda, "Why do you wear combat boots and a ring in your nose; why do you dye your hair black? Don't you want to become part of management?"

And Amanda replied, "Kill me." ☼





☞ Thanks once again to everyone who sent up a letter (or e-mail) of comment. Receiving your letters of comment really does motivate us to do more issues. Please be assured, too, that all comments on the articles in *Mimosa* (whether or not they see print in the Letters Column) will find their way back to our contributors, which provides additional motivation to *them* as well.

The article that gained the most number of comments was Nicki's closing comments about alternative fanzines in the Washington, D.C. area, and the local newspaper article that described them. First up, though, are some comments on Dick's opening essay on the wonders of Internet, and Dave Kyle's look back at the Science Fiction League...

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

Many thanks for *Mimosa* 14. I suspect that it's a bit of a milestone that a zine as fannish as yours is on the net, but I would hate it if fanzines were only to be one more island in the sea of data. The fanzines I like most are the ones that surprise me and tell me something I didn't know. I'd think that alt.fandom would be very limiting, and wouldn't have room for articles on beer or religion or old films, or topics that would

appear on other nodes. Moreover, no one has solved the problem of storing electronic fanzines. Of course you can download files, but reading a stack of printouts doesn't have the same pleasure that leafing through Twil-tone does. And of course there's no room on the net for illos by Stiles, Rotsler, or Gilliland.

{{☞ Actually, although a few fanzines (such as Dave Langford's *Ansible*) now are available in 'electronic' form, *Mimosa* is not one of them, for precisely the reasons you list. The only real tie between *Mimosa* and the Net is that we welcome e-mail letters of comment. }}

David Kyle's piece on "The Science Fiction League" was interesting, but leaves more questions about the League than it answers. If David Kyle is still a member of the SFL, does that mean it still exists? Can I join? Can I start a chapter? Can I become a Doctor of Science Fiction? (Patrick McGuire is the only fan I know with a doctorate in sf, but even he had to convince his advisors that his dissertation on Russian sf was actually political science.) And does Kyle know if which of the two surviving SFL chapters — the Los Angeles Science Fiction Society and the Philadelphia Science Fiction Society — is the older? I know the dispute between PSFS



and LASFS about the age of their two clubs has been going on for decades and will probably never be resolved, but you'd think by now some neutral fanhistorian would have settled the question, and with all this expertise, Kyle would be a very suitable Solomon on this issue.

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

This was another fine issue, although some of the material shares the old *Mimosa* problem of not striking fire with comment hooks no matter how well written and how entertaining it is. I did react to the editorials, though. No matter how enticing you make it seem, I dare not even think about trying Usenet. I can't keep up with the stuff that arrives *without* benefit of computers and telephone lines. By the time I read them and write a page about each, I'll be back to the old height of the stack of unLoCced fanzines. I gather from Nicki's editorial { { "The \*Zine\* Scene" } } that you escaped a possible terrible fate in the form of newspaper publicity, which makes me happy. Of course, the article's claim that 'alternative press' publications became popular in 1982 is nonsense.

Such periodicals have at least a couple centuries' history behind them and 1982 was apparently cited because it was around then that Mike Gunderloy began to publish *Fact-sheet Five* and to incorrectly call them fanzines. I doubt if they exist in nearly the quantity today than back in the 1960s when they were usually known as underground publications. I've been reading a big biography of Thackeray and discovered that he was involved in a number of such ventures in his youth, more than a century and a half ago.

Dave Kyle's article is a very useful complement to the long article about the Science Fiction League published by Robert W. Lowndes a year or two ago. Reading Dave's recollections about the SFL made me regret even more bitterly than ever that I never joined it. Since I was a packrat even in my teens, I probably would still have one of those beautiful lapel buttons and some stationery and other relics of that venture. I can't remember for certain why I didn't join; maybe it was an erroneous belief that all these science fiction fans were middle-aged and elderly people while I was not yet in my teens, or maybe it was the need to cut out a coupon from *Wonder Stories*. Any mutilation of my precious prozines was unthinkable in 1934.

## CHAT, the 4th Fannish Ghod

By TEDDY HARVIA





**Patrick McGuire, 7541-D Weather  
Worn Way, Columbia, Maryland  
21046**

On Nicki's "The \*Zine\* Scene", I missed *The Washington Post's* article listing *Mimosa*, although I have seen other ones about this new wave of non-sf-fannish fanzines. It's not clear, however, if this phenomenon can be taken to refute one supposed cause of the hypothetical greying of sf fanzine fandom. People usually have not asserted that it's harder to publish a fanzine today than before. On the contrary, it's easier (although the expense might be a barrier to the very young fans). The argument is that there are other things to do (conventions, role playing games, and various computer activities such as bulletin boards and games) that are even easier, or have faster gratification. It would be perfectly consistent if sf fans, by tradition logical thinkers and technophiles, might be moving out of fanzines into new frontiers such as these even while punk-rockers, *Brady Bunch* addicts, and the like were just starting to pub their ishes. There could be some irony in closing with Nicki's comments in an issue that opened with Dick's enthusing over his discovery of the Internet. On the other hand, I'm still unaware of any solid evidence that fandom is graying to a greater degree than we would expect from general demographics (i.e., the end of the Baby Boom). Some younger fans show up in all the fanzines I follow regularly.

**Jenny Glover, 16 Aviary Place,  
Leeds LS12 2NP, United  
Kingdom**

I very much enjoyed reading the latest *Mimosa*, until I came to the closing comments on the zine scene. Your point: that these zines are considered radical (though they don't use SF content) is a valid one, but I wondered first whether a tradition always needs to be kept going, and secondly why the younger fans are always volunteered for it. I've just seen issues of two Brit zines and while the editors may perhaps have kept a

youthful attitude, it certainly isn't matched by their chronological ages.

I also think of a fanzine as being something people aim for, rather than something they come to from something else. That's not to say that fanzines are only for people who don't know any better; what I'm trying to say is that the move towards producing a fanzine should be a *positive* one, rather than being enticed away from, say, computer nets or multi-sided dice, in order to fit someone else's ideas of how a fanzine should be produced. It's exciting, therefore, that there was a feature on these local Washington zines and also that there were enough to make it an interesting article.

My own fanzine, very much dormant currently, but showing signs of recovery as my fingers twitch and I come up with ideas, started before I came into fandom. I knew of the existence of fanzines, and even had seen a few, but my concern was to distract someone I knew who was sick, to give her a new hobby, and so I asked her for help. She produced some very bad articles, followed by some not-so-bad ones, followed by some ok-ish ones (or maybe my editorial skills were being honed by then). I produced the fanzine, and the circulation was absolutely minimal (I think the circulation of issue 1 was eight copies). Looking back at it, sure, it's pretty awful. But the intention was not to produce a prize-winning fanzine, but to give this person some goal to aim at. It worked to a certain extent — the person, whom I loved very much, grew out of writing articles and started on a book. She would sit propped up at the kitchen table, her characters whirring about in and out of her head, and soon, while she still took an interest in the fanzine, she and it parted company, which left me free to take an abrupt turn towards Science Fiction.

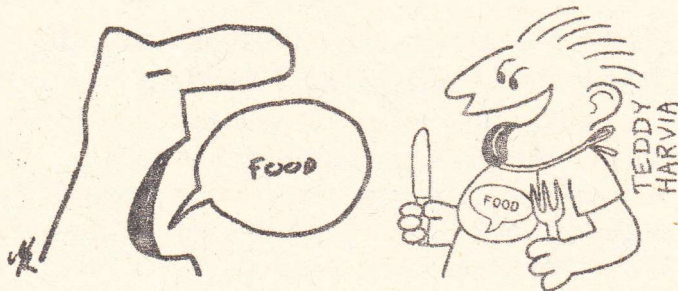
I know it was a pretty bizarre reason for starting a fanzine; the fanzine went into hibernation shortly after she died. I'm wondering if my period of mourning is officially over, now that I feel pangs and urges to start pubbing an ish again...



**Irwin Hirsh, 26 Jessamine Avenue, East Prahran, Victoria 3181, Australia**

Thanks for *Mimosa* 14, which arrived here in good condition a couple of months ago. The covers by Kurt Erichsen are a nice one-two. When I looked at the front cover I thought it was one of the weaker covers you've presented us. My initial feeling was that there was nothing new here, another kids playing with rockets story. Then I looked at the back cover and saw the joke. It was almost as if Erichsen had read my mind and was playing to my experience and biases.

That definition of a zine from *The Washington Post*, which Nicki quotes, is interesting. 'Produced for kicks' I like. There's a thrill about publishing a fanzine, watching it evolve under your direction. And because we do it for no other reason than we want to, we're into fanzine publishing for the kicks. But I'm not sure about the last bit: 'at a loss to the publisher'. With the fanzines I've published I've never felt I was publishing at a loss. By the time I'd made the decision that I want to pub my ish, the matter of money has been passed. It's just a question of how I want to spend my own time and money. I wonder how people who regularly water-ski or spend their weekends bush walking feel: That they are doing so at a loss, or that the activity is money well spent? The idea that fanzine publishing is done at a loss suggest that there is a business of fnz-publishing, when, in fact, I was in the hobby of fnz-publishing. That people choose to spend their money publishing a fanzine is one of the charms of the activity.



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

Dick's "Alt.Clueless" had me drooling at the thought of using my new PC to contact all sorts of interesting people — until I realized that one had to pay a phone bill, and over here that gets pricey.

Mike Glycer's article {{ "A Child's Garden of Rockets" }} related some highly entertaining 'rockets' and one must be thankful that they were all passed off without bloodshed. Kyle was also interesting. I remember the days of the SFL but as a youngster of ten, and I was in no position to find out how to send 15¢ or whatever to such a far off land as America. I did write a letter to *Wonder*, and another to *Astounding*, but those early letters sank without a trace and my first prozine letter didn't appear until 1948.

The front and back covers by Kurt Erichsen were also great and reminded me of a brief stay many years ago with Mike Banks in Milford, Ohio, when we fired off numerous model rockets made by Mike — who later went on to write much SF as well as several books on rocketry.

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

Mike Glycer's piece on Hugo-award misadventure was (sobering) fun, and I should respond by telling about some of the ones I've been involved with. For example, when I was Hugo Administrator in 1980, we had the last official presentation of the Gandalf Award for Grand Master of Fantasy. ('Official' involves a theological argument that I won't go into.) The voting itself was exciting enough: We had a tie for the winner, confirmed by a couple of recounts, until at the last minute a final ballot arrived by sea mail from England and gave it to Ray Bradbury by one vote. So I sent the results off to Lin Carter, who sponsored the award and was responsible for showing up with the plaque.



That was the end of my official responsibility for it, since other people were in charge of the ceremony; but of course I was on hand that night just in case there were any problems with the results. Things went fine until emcee Bob Silverberg called on Lin Carter to present the Gandalf — and it turned out that he wasn't there! (Apparently he didn't come to the con at all.) There followed general consternation, sarcastic cracks by Silverberg, and the horrified realization on my part that I was the only person in the building who knew the result. So I rushed a note to the stage, and a couple of Hugos later Silverberg announced the winner. But I never did hear whether Bradbury got his plaque.

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**Guy Lillian, P.O. Box 53092, New Orleans, Louisiana 70153-3092**

As a Nolacon committee member, I am distraught to discover that Mike Glyer dislikes Ned Dameron's design of the 1988 Hugo Award base. Rather than assault Mike's faultless aesthetics with such an eyesore, I volunteer to take the offending trophy off his hands — or mantle, as it were. I was also a nominee that year in the Fan Writer category, and would have been only too pleased to number the Nolacon Hugo, or indeed any Hugo, among my possessions. No matter what the base, I hope I would regard it with gratitude and, dare I say, graciousness.

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**Mark L. Olson, 10 Shawmut Terrace, Framingham, Massachusetts 01701**

I liked Mike Glyer's article on Hugo ceremonies with one quibble: *He* may remember nothing from Chicon V's 'perfect 100-minute ceremony', but *I* distinctly remember at the time wishing that the elaborate charade introducing that year's rather pedestrian Hugo rocket design had been much, much shorter.

It's a pity that there seems to be so little overlap between the set of adventurous and creative Hugo ceremonies and the set of

successful ones. Some day some Worldcon will do a complex, creative Hugo ceremony with no technical glitches, which starts on time, with no one unable to get seating, that isn't too long, and with no mistakes. And overhead, one by one, the stars will go out.

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

Ah, yes, Rocket Stories. Actually, the base for our Hugo looks very nice, even after 28 years knocking around our house and going through two moves. The rocket, however... We weren't at the con to receive it and it wouldn't have done any good even if we had been, because the rockets weren't ready yet. We got it through the mail, nine months later, and the rocket looked a bit like it had spent all that time knocking around the asteroid belt in the hands of an incompetent pilot. Pitted, in other words. Nobody had blown a hole through the drive section or anything, but it did look like a hard-working ship. Well, the Hugo had started having a primary and final ballot in 1959, and *Yandro* had been on it every year until we won in 1965, and for 3 more years afterwards. So we started calling *Yandro* 'the world's best second-rate fanzine'. Had to quit that after we won, but we decided that a second-rate Hugo for a second-rate fanzine was quite appropriate. We found it was very useful for holding 3-inch rolls of tape in our previous dwelling, but here it's on top of the piano with the other trophies and an inconvenient location for tape. Pity; there never used to be any cries of 'Where the hell's the masking tape?' It was right there in plain sight.

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

Mike Glyer's Hugo article highlighted some of the goofs and oddities that have taken place during the years and is probably as good a proof as any that you will be one of the better-remembered winners yourselves. Since you almost were cheated out of the Hugo during the presentation at the 1992



Worldcon, people will continue to write about the event long afterwards.

Meanwhile, Dave Langford's article about making newszines on location at a convention {{☞ "You Do It With Mirrors" }} was very entertaining, and managed to convince me that I should never get involved in such an undertaking.

As for Ahrvid Engholm's article on Swedish fan hoaxes {{☞ "Vanishing Fans" }}, the last time I saw him he *seemed* to be real, but then on the other hand I can't vouch for the real sender of the article, so I suppose we will have to continue to be uncertain here.

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**Vincent Clarke, 16 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent DA16 2BN, England**

A very good issue, casting light on fan history from the '30s to David Langford's brilliant '93 Helicon report. I was particularly interested to see Ahrvid Engholm's glimpse into Swedish fandom. When I came back into fandom in '81 after a 20-year absence, Walt Willis wrote me a short exegesis of what had been going on, including the fact that the Swedes had taken '50s British fanzines at face value (just as we, in the '50s, had based our Conventions on US zine reports) and had more or less modelled their fandom on what they'd read. Except for some lurid and hardly-believable news items that escaped from Sweden this is all I've heard, and I'd love to read some sort of fan history of that country.

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**Eric Mayer, P.O. Box 17143, Rochester, New York 14617**

How much can one believe an article about Swedish hoaxes?! It seems to me, almost twenty years ago, someone tried to set up a hoax apa. Now that just wouldn't seem to be workable. If you know its going to be a hoax then how can it be successful? Today, hoax fans would have to be rather low key wouldn't they? Any BNF would be expected to show up at conventions pretty quickly, thereby blowing the cover. Any new fan who

popped up and didn't attend cons would probably be considered a hoax, real or not.

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**Dave Rowe, {address withheld by request}**

First, I must object to Guy Lillian referring (in your letters column) to Arthur C. Clark's 2001 novel as a 'rather simplistic von Daniken pastiche'. Especially as the novel was published in 1968 and therefore pre-dates all of von Daniken's 'Garbagetrucks of the Gods' series. In fact you'll find that in or around 1968 von Daniken was languishing in an Austrian jail for fraud!

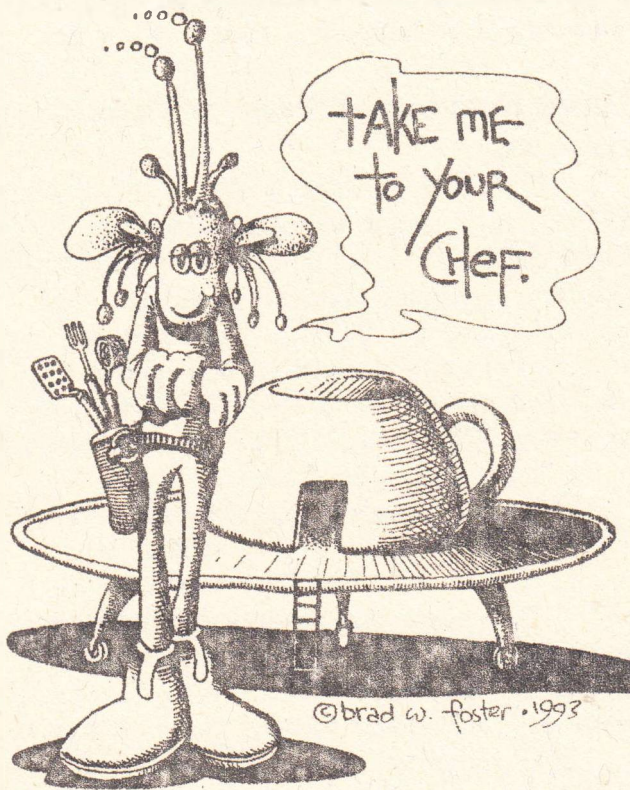
No doubt you've received many LoCs about fan-hoaxes inspired by Ahrvid Engholm's article. (By the way, *is* Ahrvid a hoax? The name looks suspiciously like a bad anagram. Anyway...) Back in the early '70s "Gray Boak's" editorial in his fnz *Cynic* revealed that he was really a hoax created by an USAF pilot Pat Henderson stationed in England, and he had had so much fun with the Gray Boak hoax that he's also created a hoax female schoolteacher working at his base and called her (would you believe) 'Pat Henderson'.

The truth was the whole thing was a hoax-hoax. 'Gray Boak' *was* Gray Boak and 'Pat Henderson' *was* a female schoolteacher based at a USAF site in England.

It was the last of a long line of Pat Henderson jokes which started when her much-heralded appearance at the London Circle's Globe was delayed by Gray's car breaking down. And when it appeared that she was not going to appear, someone started accusing Arthur Cruttenden of actually being Pat.

Gray's editorial was immediately known to be a joke in Britain, but in the States it caused some confusion and at least one New York City SMOF phoned a counterpart in Los Angeles to compare notes. In those pre-fibre-optics days and living in the British Isles where you can't get more than 100 miles away from the coast, being the subject of a trans-continental phone call was mega-egoboo.





**Steve Sneyd, 4 Nowell Place,  
Almondbury, Huddersfield, West  
Yorkshire HD5 8PB, England**

Swedish 'Hoaximus' sounds as though it has an almost Germanic thoroughness... an amusing read, but I was left with strong feelings about the author's apparent total lack of concern for the poor lass who was seduced by the bogus Canadian-ness of the hoaxer. Alright, she was obviously gullible as hell, but surely that kind of sexual gratification by use of deception is not only grounds for prosecution (under Brit law, anyhow) but also a fairly unrefined cruelty. Just because something happens in fandom doesn't, surely, wash it free of all 'normal' interpersonal relations codes?

The two movie articles were fascinating, especially Terry Jeeves' lovely wallow in the past {{∞ "The Movies" }}. Yeah, I remember going in the cheap front row, then trying to sneak uphill away from that mind-boggling spot when the lights went down. I also remember having to avoid sitting under

the balcony edge or you got ice cream or whatever dribbled on you.

**Bill Donoho, 626 58th Street,  
Oakland, California 94609**

Terry Jeeves's mention of movie serials reminds me that I always felt deprived because the small town in Texas I grew up in only had one movie theater. It had serials every Saturday, but they were mostly western things. The only remotely science fiction serial they showed was "In Darkest Africa" with Clyde Beatty; it was mostly a jungle film, but there was a lost city complete with a white goddess and Bat Men. I loved it! I sat through several westerns just to see the latest chapter.

I was nine years old then. That serial was shown again on late night TV a couple of years back. I taped it, but I haven't had the courage to watch it yet...

**Rich Dengrove, 2651 Arlington  
Drive #302, Alexandria, Virginia  
22306**

Ahrvid Engholm's '80s Sweden may be been the last refuge of the science fiction hoax. I haven't heard of any good hoax in science fiction lately. We have lost that part of our youthful vigor — among others. I have asked, and no one can remember the last good hoax. Not even those little green men from the flying saucer could remember. And that was despite the fact that they were wearing fan badges.

Concerning David Thayer's article on war movies {{∞ "I Can't Watch: A Personal Look at War Movies and More" }}, I have this to say: how can you want to go back and re-live the Vietnam War in movies? If I had been through hell, and Vietnam seems like hell, I don't think I'd want to re-live the experience, even vicariously. If *Hamburger Hill* would make me re-live it, I think I would avoid that movie like the Ten Plagues. It doesn't seem like an experience you can get right no matter how much you re-live it. So, there must be something about it I, a



draft rejectee, can never understand.

Nobody can please everyone, especially with movie reviews. And Terry Jeeves didn't satisfy me. I think Korda's *Things to Come* is overrated. It's too pretentious; half the dialogue is done in epigrams, people saying great things while standing there like cigar-store Indians. On the other hand, I think *The Phantom Empire* is radically underrated. It's true that it's better than laughing gas if you're an adult, but as a kid I loved it. It mixed my favorite genres: westerns and science fiction. And, like Terry, I adored those scads and scads of robots.

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### Ken Lake, (Somewhere on Earth)

David Thayer's piece somewhat niggled me: as a schoolboy living through the Blitz, Battle of Britain, etc. (from age 8 to age 14, we never knew if we'd be alive the next morning), I found British WWII films as essential part of coming to terms with life, but US ones pure fantasy (although *Mrs. Miniver*, for all its error, caught the feel of the times superbly — N.B. neither the US Army nor Errol Flynn won the war in Burma).

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### Juanita Coulson, 2677W-500N, Hartford City, Indiana 47348

My movie-going experiences fall somewhere between the real old timers' and David Thayer's. Nobody seems to have mentioned *The Devil Commands* (which Robert Bloch and I once chatted about enthusiastically and at length at a long ago Midwestcon). Or what it was like to be youngish and female when the expert entomologist (female) in *Them* chews out "Stand back, little lady, and let a Man handle this" for his ignorance and asininity and actually makes him back down. Square cube law idiocies about big ants and all aside, that single exchange alone was worth the price of the picture for me and thousands of other young women.



### Tracy Shannon, 3819 Monona Drive #19, Monona, Wisconsin 53714

I thought Dave Langford's "You Do It with Mirrors" in issue 14 was a great con-runner's microcosm: the inadvertent volunteer, the late-arriving equipment that fails to work, dealing with offending (and offensive) people, exhaustion, horror, mass-hysteria, and total collapse. Not to mention immediately being asked to do it all again. Quite a nice little cautionary tale, in all, and he even managed to work in the perennial complainers. While I was working on a Friday at-con newsletter for Wiscon, *The Mad Moose Gazette*, someone wandered in with a fake panel review. Since panel #2 had previously been dropped, their report described it as being entitled 'Iron Ian' and concerning the men's movement in Britain, featuring such panelists as Nigel Rowe. I joyfully published this piece of nonsense...only to have a fan complain to me the next day that panel #2 must have been scheduled far too early on Friday, since she's missed it! She was quite miffed with me (I was head of programming).

All in all, a great issue as usual. I freely admit that I dread the day Sharon Farber gives up either writing or medicine. Not that her articles have much to do with fannish history, but who the heck cares when they are as fascinating and entertaining as these are.

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### Elizabeth Osborne, 415 Landings Boulevard, Inverness, Florida 34450

Sharon Farber's "Tale of Adventure and Medical Life" was great as usual. You want to say to the doctor that you feel bad but also, even if you're *not* faking it, to be believed. That can tend to make patients exaggerate their problems. Like a visit to the car repair shop. As soon as I turn into the service station the strange knocking under the hood stops. Then I have to spend a half hour talking about "this strange sound that the engine makes."



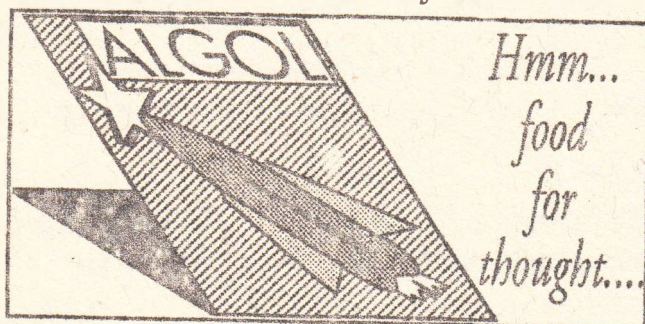
**R Laurraine Tutihasi, 5876 Bowcroft Street #4, Los Angeles, California 90016**

I just finished reading your latest issue. Enjoyed it as usual, especially Sharon Farber's continuing escapades as a medical practitioner.

In the letters column, Buck Coulson may feel comforted by the fact that some libraries have collections of fanzines. I learned this recently in a conversation with Bruce Pelz. He and other fans contribute zines to these collections.

{{ Libraries with science fiction fanzine collections (that we've heard about) include the University of Alabama, Syracuse University, UCLA, and the University of New Brunswick (Saint John campus). }}

I found getting involved in fanzine fandom even easier than Don Franson describes. For me it started with some flyers I picked up at Torcon 2 in 1973. As a result, I subscribed to Andy Porter's zine, which I believe was called *Algol* at that time. I had a letter published in that. People picked up my address from the lettercol, and I started to receive fanzines. As I received fanzines and looked them, more people picked up my address. It continues to this day.



**Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Road, Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7QQ, Scotland**

I do enjoy the Sharon Farber stories and feel that anyone who calls her callous must have very little perception. The detachment needed for doctors also applies to nurses. Getting emotionally involved never helped any patient.

In the letters column, Andrew P. Hoop-

er's mention of anti-fannish feeling among some modern fans touched a chord in me. I once had my TAFF report criticized for being 'too complimentary' to my hosts! Fandom enriched my life, such a pity if this does not happen now.

**David Clark, 2804 Stuart Street, Berkeley, California 94705**

One habit I've developed with *Mimosa* is to always turn to Sharon Farber first. Now, I know that you've had other people comment on how they do this, but it's very unusual for me. The publisher's term for me, if I remember correctly, is 'grazer'. I just start at the start of a magazine and plow my way through to the end. But Farber makes me jump to her article first. I even jumped over the Langford article last time!

Speaking of Langford, I enjoyed his *Tales of Olde Heliograph*. I've been hearing about the *Helicon* newsletter from various sources, along with the occasional unfulfilled promise to show me a copy. (Usually followed by grumbles of "Why can't *your* newsletter be like *that*?") It's also interesting to read of British conventions. After a few years of Baycons, Westercons, Worldcons, and the like, I'm used to the idea of young people acting like fans. Langford's article presents the image that in the U.K., the pros are acting like fans. We may not be ready for this over here.

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

Concerning Dave Langford's article, I remember when our con did newsletters...we actually stopped producing them, though, and just used a huge corkboard. First, no one wanted to work on the newsletter (and we haven't had one now for about five years), and second, people were too busy Collecting The Whole Set to actually read them. "You changed the programme!" "We announced the change in the daily newsletter. You *did* read it, didn't you?" "Ummm...



errr..." I will readily admit that I laughed at Dave Langford's piece until I cried and beyond, and Yvonne got a few chuckles out of it, too. (She's a tough audience, Dave.)

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**Henry Welch, 1525 16th Avenue,  
Grafton, Wisconsin 53024**

Thanks for issue 14. I really enjoyed "You Do It with Mirrors" and I don't think I'll ever be able to tell my son to "go to bed" with a straight face.

{{∞ Hm.... }}

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**Steve Jeffery, 44 White Way, Kid-  
lington, Oxon OX5 2XA, England**

First up with Dave Langford (first of many, we hope). This is hilarious. And well complemented by Steve Stiles' cartoons. The sight of gophers laden with multicolored reams of *Cactus Times* is becoming a high point at major conventions, and after; the Mexican foray of scurrilous and litigious tidbits extending to several post-convention extra-numerary issues (Volume 4, issues  $\pi$  and  $\varphi$ ). Rob Hansen, in *Then* #4, described the Fan Room as a convention within a convention. My one innocent venture into this secret realm found a scene straight out of the *Inferno*, as written by a fan, which Dave captures perfectly. You could cross 50 years of publishing technology (all of it downhill) as you crossed from the overheated desktop publishing, on which Dave was typing furiously while other fans were cheerfully frying eggs on its casing, to Vinø's sparking and smoking e-stencil, to a couple of ink besmeared fen kick-starting an ancient duper into activity. At times, a small demonic figure erupted through this smoky uproar, trailing four-letter invectives. "Abi Frost," Dave explained with an oddly strained smile.

Concerning Mike Glycer's article, I *have* held a Hugo. Not mine, I hasten to add. And the base didn't even fall off. I dunno, I think they're quite impressive. Certainly they could do a lot of damage in the wrong hands, and they seem very useful for keeping the pantry door closed. Awards are what you think of them, and what they mean to the

recipient. I hope you enjoy yours, even if it does stop that last book falling annoying of the edge of the bookshelf.

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**Gary Deindorfer, 447 Bellevue  
Avenue #9-B, Trenton, New Jer-  
sey 08618**

Since I have a cat, Butch, I always get a big charge out of "Chat, the 4th Fannish Ghod." Harvia always amuses, as he does elsewhere in this issue. And speaking of artwork, Joe Mayhew's heading illo for Dave Kyle's article, and the other Mayhew illos for the Kyle offering, are superb.

Shelby Vick's piece {{∞ "Time Was..." }} I perceive to be quaint, like something from Ye Olde Curiosity Shoppe. I don't know why, but Shelby's writings always strike me that way. But they are something I like, a lot.

Maybe I feel more kindly toward the Willis letter-file reminiscences {{∞ "I Remember Me" }} than I have in the past, but they are growing on me. I especially am gashed by the Robert Bloch letter. Bloch is always so witty.

Also, I feel more kindly toward Sharon Farber than I used to. I can see her point that a doctor has to be callous to a certain degree, and that this does not at all mean that said physician is a quack.

David Thayer (whom I hear is a close friend of Teddy Harvia's) saw combat firsthand, in person, and I can understand why this experience spoiled war movies for him. Very well done piece of writing. He writes as well as his friend Teddy draws.

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**Leland Sapiro, Box 958, Big  
Sandy, Texas 75755**

Extra-clever idea on the front and back covers: various artists have shown the *launching* of an unguided missile, but here's the first one to also show its unexpected arrival...

One correction to Ed Meskys's letter {{∞ ed. note: about a police raid of Harlan Ellison's apartment in the early 1960s }}: it was-



n't drugs that the stoolie reported in Harlan Ellison's apartment, but firearms — a supposed violation of New York City's strict Sullivan Law on their unlawful possession. (Harlan exhibited these weapons to audiences in lectures he was giving on New York City street gangs.) As a result, Harlan had to spend a night in NYC's legendary jail, the Tombs — an experience recounted in his book *Memos From Purgatory*.

With respect to Shelby Vick's note on the Establishment attitude toward this sf trash, note the word-order here: the phrase 'trashy sf' would imply the possibility of *non-trashy sf*, which for the Establishment is inconceivable. The classic instance is Charles Hornig's being ejected from a public library (in the '30s) for daring to bring some of these sf trash magazines into the building.

{{☞ Sounds like that might make a good article for a future *Mimosa*! }}

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**Roger Waddington, 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 9ES, England**

Though comparing and contrasting, as in those homework assignments, while not having known here, not even knowing she existed, Howard DeVore's "Nancy with the Laughing Eyes" came much more alive for me, I could see the person she was; and considering the above, that's really uncanny! If anything could be truly described as being true to life, this must surely be in the running.

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

Sometimes when reading *Mimosa*, I stop feeling like an old fan and tired, and it almost seems like I am back in the good old days (which were then, of course, the present) once again. Reading Willis and Vick and Jeeves seems like normal times, and the occasional contributions by Kyle and DeVore (who were already even then old pharts from the past) make it even more contemporary, somehow. The mimeographed pages on Twil-

tone continue the illusion (you could improve only by using several colors) that today is still yesterday. Alas, the end of the issue eventually comes and I am returned to the horrors of the present. Still, knowing that Walt and ShelVy, and Terry are still alive is...comforting. Too often the news is sad, as was Howard's touching letter about Nancy Moore Shapiro. I knew her, not well — it's Hal Shapiro at the Chicon II that I remember best, although her picture is *vivid* — but still her death diminished me subtly. Only 59, my own exact age. Nothing has touched me so centrally since I lost Lee Jacobs and Ron Ellick, perhaps not even the death of my own stepson. I fear this will be a misunderstood statement, and as I have not the will tonight to explain it in detail, I consider retracing it...still, I've said it.

{{☞ One of the fulfilling things about preservationism, even in fanzines, is the knowledge that you've done something — even if only a little — to prevent the memories from fading away. We are only a forum for this, though; we appreciate people like you and Howard DeVore for taking the time to preserve and document memories of people, happenings, and organizations that would otherwise eventually be lost.

But back to the 'food' theme of this issue... We received many responses to our solicitation for contributions, including everything from limericks, to recipes, to vignettes too short to make stand-alone articles. The following letter contains one of these mini-articles... }}

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**Ahrvid Engholm, Renstiernas Gata 29, S-116 31 Stockholm, Sweden**

You mentioned that next *Mimosa* would be about fannish food. I can only contribute with the fact that the most important fannish food in Sweden is unpeeled peanuts. It all began in the '60s when Lars-Olov Strandberg housed the majority of the meetings for the Scandinavian SF Association in his apartment on Folkskole Street in Stockholm. In



these meetings unplied peanuts became standard food. The peanuts were present on every meeting for one and a half decades (until the late '70s), and they are still present now and then even when Strandberg doesn't arrange the meetings.

In the early '80s the local Stockholm convention Nasacon decided to start the Great Peanut Race. We took the idea from the Great Pork Pie Race of British Eastercons. The rules were simple: you should transport an unplied peanut approximately two meters, by mechanical devices or other means. You were not allowed to simply pick up the peanut and carry it — but anything else was permitted.

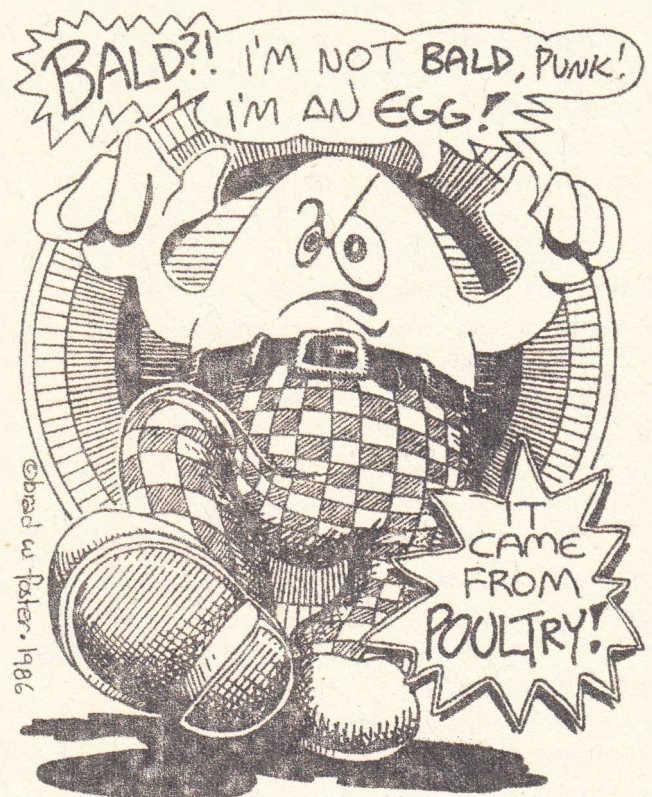
In the mid to the late '80s, the Great Peanut Race reached incredible scientific heights, through the research of a group calling themselves The Peanut Defence Initiative (consisting of Thord Nilson, Jorgen Stadje, Nils Segerdahl, and others). I could mention:

- ▶ The electroshock peanut controlled by the red button. The button was designed to resemble a nuclear warhead release button, and there were a number of computer displays and electrical apparatus in the setup. When the red button was pressed, an irreversible countdown started, and after ten seconds the peanut was flipped away.
- ▶ The electric spoon peanut consisted of a precision motor that held a spoon. The peanut could be tossed up in the air and caught again by the spoon, tossed up in the air and be flipped away with the backside of the spoon, and the device could do lots of other neat tricks.
- ▶ But most impressive of all was the maglev peanut, that is, the magnetic levitation peanut. The Peanut Defence Initiative built a working magnetic train track, where the peanut floated on a small carriage. This contribution was also shown on the national Swedish TV News, which did a report from Nasacon.

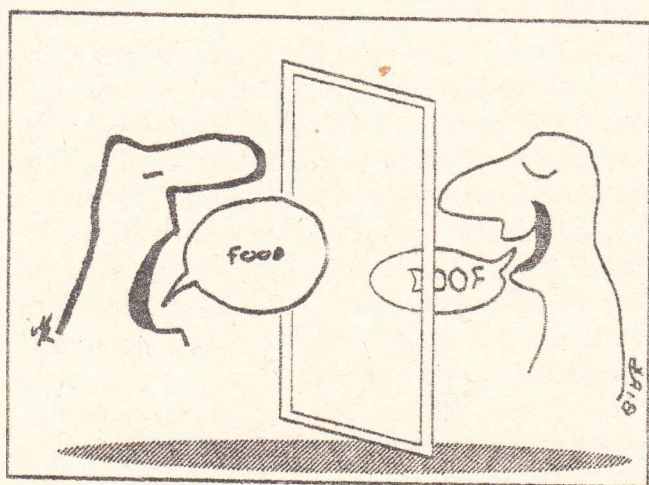
So, peanuts, that's what Swedish fan food is. In Linköping's SF Society, they eat a

sort of candy that looks like flying saucers, but I don't know how the tradition got started. An ex-fan, one John Tehlin, around 1979 invented an ice cream called 'Fanana Split', basically ice cream with chocolate sauce decorated so that it would look like a starry sky. In the ice cream you'd stick a banana, and make it look like a spaceship by applying fins cut out of paper on it. Tehlin gafiated really fast, and has now reappeared as a stand-up comedian on Swedish TV.

And of course, tea has always been important. Along with Strandberg's peanuts you should drink Lipton's yellow bag-tea; nothing else would do. The SF clubs in Stockholm and Gothenburg later had their tea fanatics forming special groups. In Stockholm we had the 'Tea Drinking Party (the party for a better tea culture)' that published numerous issues of its zine *The Tea-drinker*. On the Minicons at the end of the '70s, the Tea Drinking Party would organize tea corners, offering 25 different brands of tea. The party was lead by two people that called themselves 'SuperExtremeColonelGeneralPartyChairman' and 'SuperNotQuiteAs-ExtremeColonelGeneralVicePartyChairman'.







**Catherine Mintz, 1810 South Rittenhouse Square, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-5837**

I was especially interested in the mentions in *Mimosa's* letters column of old fanzines and their expected lifetimes. I purchased a thin sheaf of N3F zines back in the beginning of 1993 from Andy Hooper; some of what I have will be reprinted in the N3F's letterzine, *Tightbeam*. Now I'm on a hunt for old neffania, particularly that from the forties and fifties. While Donald Franson has a collection running from the early sixties forward, and I have some things from the very early sixties that I received from Howard DeVore, almost everything from the first two decades is missing. I'd greatly appreciate xerox copies of the older zines.

There is a lot that is of contemporary interest in these old fanzines. For example, an issue of *Fanvariety* contains an "All Our Yesterdays" column by Harry Warner, Jr., an "STF Quiz" about pulp magazines by Bob Silverberg, and several early illustrations by Bill Rotsler. Harry Warner's piece starts out like this: "It happens like this. Joe Fann puts out an excellent fan magazine. He digs up material which other fans have labored to write, and a hundred or so persons receive copies of the issue. The magazine is read, it becomes the topic of letters to the editor, and that's the end of it. The years pass, fans come and go, new fandoms spring up, thousands of people pass through the field for long or short periods. And in those future

years, only a tiny proportion of the new fans see or read that particular fanzine and its contents. It seems to me a dreadful waste of good reading matter..." The voice is familiar and the comments apropos.

I'd appreciate any help your readers can give in the hunt for our past.

{{ We're happy to second this request. Catherine is the current president of the National Fantasy Fan Federation (better known as the N3F). }}

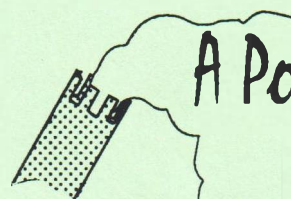
**Robert Bloch, 2111 Sunset Crest Drive, Los Angeles, California 90046**

Thanks to you both, *Mimosa* #14 will accompany me to Necronomicon to read on the plane (while the idiot next to me works on his computer — they always do nowadays). Scary to realize that Willis, Harris, Kyle, and others are still apparently in possession of all sorts of incriminating material from forty or more years ago. One would think all that stuff had been shredded by now!

#### **We Also Heard From:**

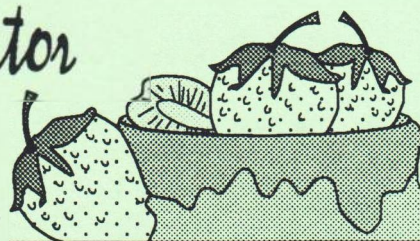
Harry Andruschak, Lon Atkins, C.S.F. Baden, Pamela Boal, Ned Brooks, Terry Broome, Gary Brown, Ken Bulmer, Dennis Caswell, Russell Chauvenet, Esther Cole, Chester Cuthbert, Nick DiChario, Carolyn Doyle, Cathy Doyle, Linda Dunn, Leigh Edmonds, Walter Ernsting, Sharon Farber, Tom Feller, Elizabeth Garrott, Tim Gatewood, Janice Gelb, Judith Hanna, Mark Harris, Harry Henderson, Binker Hughes, Alan Hutchinson, Ben Indick, Tom Jackson, Ben Jason, Irv Koch, Linda Krawecka, Dave Langford, Sam Long, Adrienne Losin, William Lund, J.R. Madden, Joseph T. Major, Bill Mallardi, Laurie Mann, Pat Molloy, Lewis Morley, Joseph Nicholas, Pär Nilsson, Jodie Offutt, Bruno Ogorelec, Mark Olson, Karen Pender-Gunn, Robert Peterson, Sarah Prince, Charlotte Proctor, Peggy Ranson, Tom Sadler, Ben Schilling, Noreen Shaw, Els Somers, Malgorzata Wilk, Bridget Wilkinson, Walter Willis, and Ben Yalow. Thanks!





# A Portrait of the Fan Editor as a Child, Part 2

Closing Comments by Dick Lynch



It has been my pleasure, in the nearly two decades I've been involved with science fiction fandom, to have met hundreds of others of you, either in person or in print. With you, my friends, I have enjoyed and experienced many good times, ranging from dinner expeditions, to sporting events, to sightseeing.

But now, I'm going to do something different. In fact, I'm about to do something I rarely ever do. I'm going to tell you about myself.

I'm not very comfortable about doing this. I can't really think of anything about me that anybody would find all that interesting, and I don't like the thought of being considered a bore or a wind-bag. That's made me a pretty good conversation manipulator. When I'm talking with you, I always gently and subtly try to steer the topic away from myself, and can usually get *you* to talk about *yourself*. I usually find out a lot about you, but not you about me, because you've done most of the talking and I've done the listening.

So let me tell you a few things about me that you probably didn't know; maybe I can answer a few questions you haven't been able to ask, starting with: No, I'm not an only child. I have two older sisters, and a younger brother and sister. No, none of them have ever been involved with science fiction fandom (though they all know that I am), and yes, both my older sisters bullied me mercilessly when I was just a little kid.

But this essay is supposed to keep with our 'food' theme, isn't it? Well okay, then, my very first memory has to do with food — I can remember, very clearly, sitting on my grandfather's lap while he fed me a piece of bread that had the crusts cut off. And many of my most vivid childhood memories, in fact, involve food. For instance, there was *The Night the Dessert Went Wrong*...

It was a warm summer evening, and I had been looking forward to strawberry shortcake, which back then was just about my favorite dessert in the whole wide world. *This* night, though, was to be different — *this* night I was judged to finally be Big Enough to spray my own whipped-cream topping from the can on my own dessert, much to my delight (and much to the envy of my younger brother, who was seated just to my left at the

kitchen table).

The spray topping was in one of those pressurized cans that were so popular in the late '50s and early '60s; to get the whipped cream out, you had bend the long nozzle with your finger to release some of the pressure with some of the can's contents. Well, this looked pretty easy to me, but I was still given a stern warning to BE CAREFUL! If I made a mess, there would be \*NO\* television time for me later in the evening!

Well, fine! I could be careful if I needed to be. So, after vigorously shaking the can under watchful approval, I *carefully* pointed the nozzle towards the top of the shortcake, sighting along the side of the can to make sure the nozzle was aimed right at the exact center of the plate. But then anxiety set in — I couldn't wait any longer to get the topping onto my dessert. So instead of *carefully* bending the nozzle to *carefully* let out some of the whipped cream onto the shortcake, I jammed it as hard as I could, and the nozzle bent sharply to the left.

The whipped cream flew out from the nozzle like a rocket exhaust, and with a noise to match. It missed the shortcake entirely, traveling on a trajectory that would take it to the next town if something didn't get in the way. Something did. Cringing, and with a great feeling of dread, I slowly turned my head to the left and saw that...

...I had scored a direct hit on my brother's face. With an open-mouth look of great astonishment, he was wiping whipped cream out of his eyes with his index finger, wondering what-in-the-world had happened. That expression on his face is burned into my memory for all time. Unfortunately (or maybe fortunately), the rest of the evening fades into the background noise of lost memories. I did ask my mother about it not too long ago, but she had great difficulty keeping a straight face as she recalled that evening...

Hm... I think I'd better stop this walk down memory lane, before I incriminate myself any further, so here's where we turn things back to you, our readers. We look forward to your letters of comment. Meanwhile, I can't promise that I'll talk too much about myself in the future, but if you write us, I do make you this guarantee:

You talk, and I'll listen. ☆



