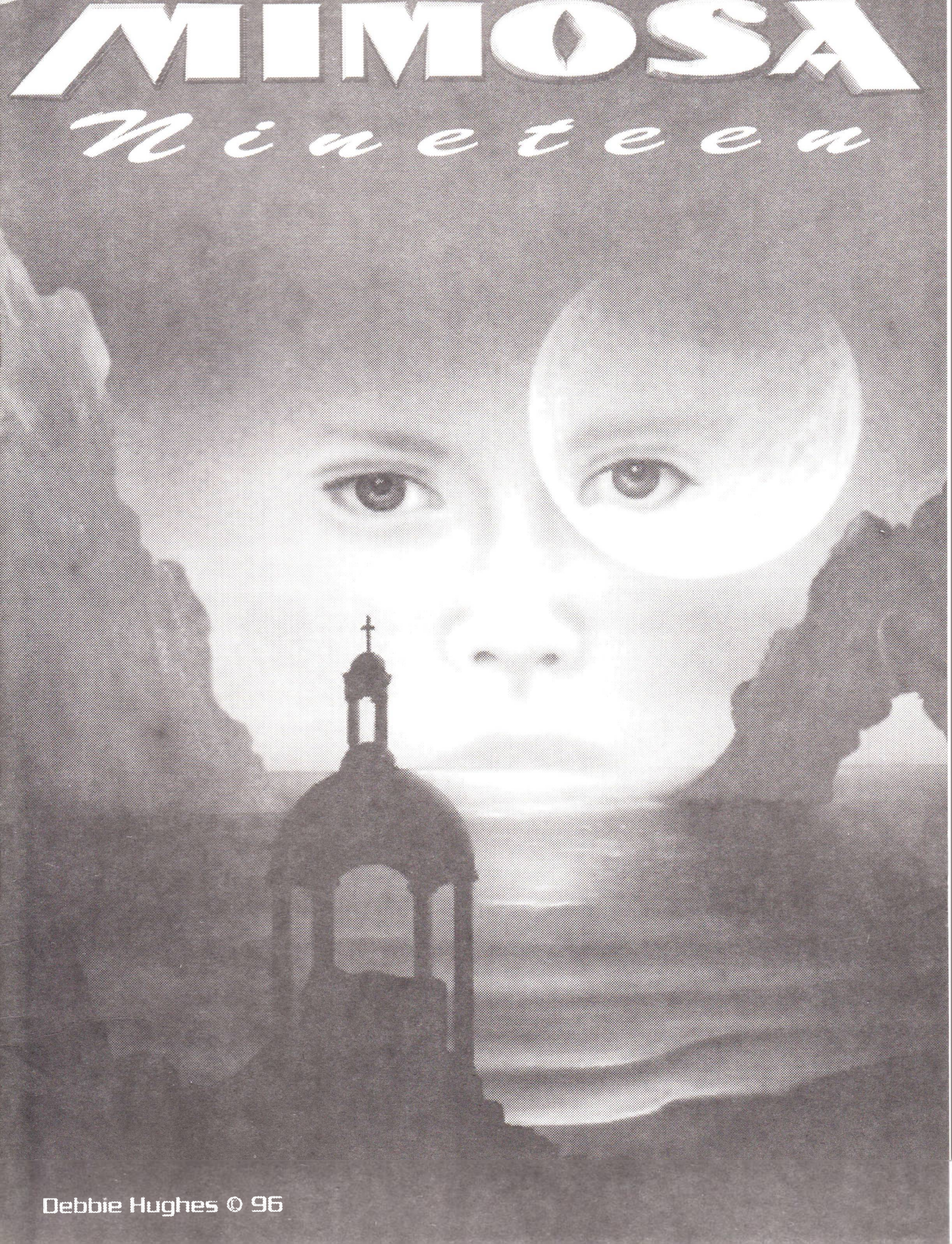
MIMOSA

Nineteen



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

e-mail: lynch@access.digex.net web site: http://www.fentonnet.com/smithway/m_front.html

This nineteenth issue of *Mimosa* was published in November 1996, and is available for the not-very-expensive price of four dollars (U.S. currency or equivalent), which includes postage. We welcome letters and e-mails of comment; one of those, or a fanzine in trade, will get you a copy of *M*20 next year. (We'll assume all correspondence we receive is intended for publication unless otherwise indicated.) Back issues are available; please write us for more info on price and availability.

☐ If this box is checked, we've got to receive a letter of comment or e-mail of comment from you to keep you on our mailing list.

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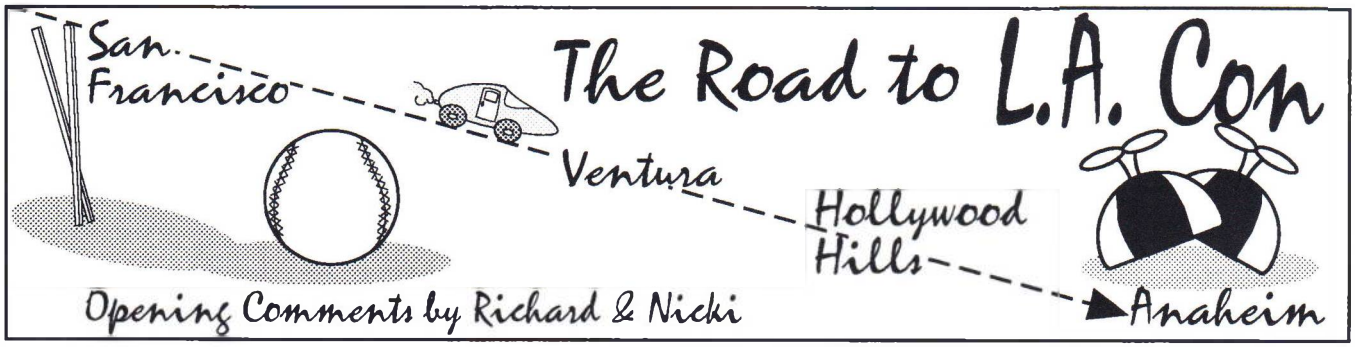


It was a chilly night in San Francisco, as usual. We had intended to take the cable car back to our hotel, but there had been some kind of breakdown in the system and the cars weren't running. After about ten minutes walking down the hill it was time for a rest stop, so we ducked into one of the large hotels on Powell Street, and were surprised to find ourselves in the midst of a convention.

But this wasn't just *any* kind of convention. We'd arrived, apparently, right in the middle of the convention's Big Event. As we entered the hotel, we heard music cascading out from one of the ballrooms, and then thunderous applause as the music ended. That event was closed to outsiders like us, but there was another room open, their equivalent of a dealers' room. We poked our heads in there, and it took only a few seconds to realize what kind of gathering we had inadvertently crashed — it was the worldcon equivalent for belly dancers.

#

San Francisco was just the first stop in a two-week California vacation that would eventually take us to Anaheim for this year's *science fiction* worldcon. It's almost impossible to visit California and not want to spend a few days in San Francisco; the last time we were there, for ConFrancisco in 1993, we didn't allow enough time away from the convention to enjoy the city. There were places we wanted to visit that we never got to; there were things we wanted to do that we never got around to. So when we arrived home, after a very enjoyable worldcon, we were still disappointed that we hadn't planned the trip as well as we should have.

This time it was different. There was no convention as a distraction and we spent two days exploring the city, from the human kaleidoscope of Grant Street's Chinatown to the unhurried congeniality of Union Street's cafes and shops. We went to places that were almost deserted, like the old Victorian house where the only other people were two tourists from Germany, and other places like the 'Stick where we shared a Giants baseball game and fireworks with thousands. When the time came for the drive south, we felt it was probably too soon to leave. We promised ourselves we'd be back again in a few years, but in the meantime further adventures on this trip were still awaiting us.

The road to L.A.Con did, eventually, take us to the Anaheim Convention Center, and yes, there were some adventures to describe. Before we even got to the Los Angeles area, we spent a very pleasant evening in Ventura with Lester and Esther Cole, whose essays about 1950s fandom you've read in some of our previous issues. Ventura is a lovely town, situated between the mountains and the ocean, with a main street lined with used book stores, antique shops, and cafes. The next day, it was time to head down the coast again, then inland for Three Days in the Valley.

The San Fernando Valley, north of Los Angeles, seems to be one big bedroom community, with its share of freeways, golf courses, and shopping malls. It's also the home of much of Los Angeles fandom, including Bruce Pelz. When we were planning this trip, we'd asked Bruce for some help in finding a reasonably inexpensive motel while we were looking around the city for a few days. He didn't have to look very far, as it turned out there was such a place only about five blocks from where he lived. But since he obviously never had to stay there, he was blissfully unaware of the awful truth about the Granada Motel — it was the Hotel From Hell.

To be fair, it wasn't the worst place either of us had ever stayed at. There are much worse places in Eastern Europe, for instance. And the price wasn't bad — the nightly rate for a double was only forty dollars, pretty reasonable for Southern California. But that's where the good news ended. Our room air conditioner seemed to be The Little Engine That Couldn't, which made for two somewhat sweltering nights. The room was clean, but the carpet had holes, the beds were in a state of deconstruction, light bulbs were missing from about half of the lamps, and the towels were very threadbare (actually, it was more than just that — all

the hotel linen had 'Granada Motel' printed in large letters on them, as if they were afraid that someone would actually want to steal any of it). The next day, when two guys driving motorcycles pulled into the parking lot, they suspiciously eyed the place, then asked us how the place was. We replied, "About what you'd expect for forty dollars a night." (A bit later, after they had checked out the rooms, we overheard one of them telling the hotel person, "You don't get much repeat business, do you?")

But you can stand anything for two nights, and we did. We used those three days before the L.A.Con to visit some places we'd always intended to go see someday, but never had until now. One of these was the statue of Bullwinkle Moose and Rocket J. Squirrel, on Sunset Avenue. (We're both Jay Ward fans, and Mr. Peabody's 'Way-Back Machine' is kind of a symbol of the fan historical nature of *Mimosa*.) Another was the Griffith Park Observatory, with its splendid location overlooking the city and nice view of the Hollywood sign in the surrounding hills.

The Hollywood Hills are actually home to a more famous site yet, at least to science fiction fans. Halfway up the twisty narrow road rather generously named Glendower 'Avenue' lies the Ackermansion. We visited Forry's house the same day we went to Griffith Park, and like the observatory, it lived up to our expectations. *Every* room was chock-full of books, paintings, posters, and memorabilia, even including the outdoor storage rooms (one of them is a huge library in itself, entirely of extra copies of books he has in his main library) and the roomy crawl space area under the house (which was set up as a vampire cave). There was much emphasis on the movies, as you'd expect, but it was easy to see that Forry has not lost track of his fan roots; he has many mementos and artifacts from decades past and has probably the second- or third-largest collection of fanzines, including many from the 1930s when sf fanzines were first being published. To restate what Walt Willis wrote about Forry many years earlier, Forry Ackerman really is a true fan in a way that most of us don't come within a mile of being; he really *believes* in fandom. We are sold on Ackerman.

Finally, it was time for Worldcon. We drove to Anaheim on Wednesday afternoon, spending part of the time playing our annual Worldcon First Fan Guessing Game (trying to guess who the first person we recognize there will be). When we rolled into the Anaheim Marriott, we didn't have long to wait to find out; almost immediately, a familiar face appeared at the car's side window, and asked, "Could you take us to pick up some party supplies?" It was that well-known party animal, Moshe Feder.

From then on, our memories of the convention are mostly a string of vignettes, like the interlude on Thursday when Andy Hooper, on the way to a fanzine panel, made the comment that *already* the convention seemed like something out of a David Lynch movie. And then, as he turned a corner, right in front of him was Michael Anderson, better known as the Dwarf from *Twin Peaks*.

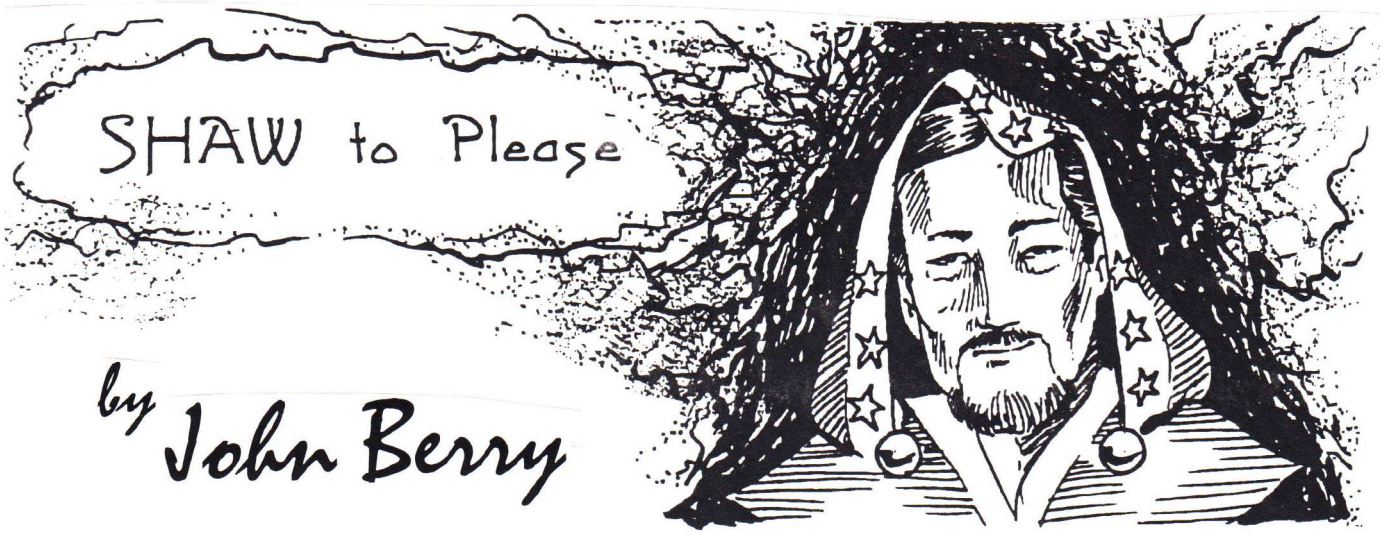
It was that kind of convention, where the real often merged with the surreal. Even the dinner expeditions were unusual. One of them turned into a continuation of a fan artists panel, with five pens furiously scribbling and piles of cartoons mounting ever higher as the waiter looked on in bewilderment. The night of the Hugos, we made reservations with our friends Neil and Cris Kaden for dinner at a more upscale restaurant, The White House; we were pleased to find out that the restaurant supplied its own transportation, but we were surprised when it turned out to be a stretch limo. On the way back, we shared a ride in it with fellow nominees Scott Edelman and Allen Steele, wondering which of us, if any, would be fortunate enough to get one of the Awards this year.

It turned out that Allen Steele was the one. The fanzine category was actually one of the closest votes, but we (and *Mimosa*) finished second to Dave Langford, the scoundrel, by only eight votes. Just wait 'til next year!

One thing about worldcons: they are maybe the best place to find people, especially other fans you've corresponded with but have never actually met before. This year was no different, and we were able to add many new faces to names, including... Roxanne Smith-Graham, who was holed up like a mad scientist for much of the convention behind a bank of computer equipment, furiously digitizing fan photos for an archival project... Noreen Shaw, co-chair of the 1955 Worldcon, who was able to spend only one afternoon at the convention; she looked so much like Richard's mom that he felt like a second generation fan while he walked around with her... Perry Middlemiss, the Down Under Fan Fund delegate, who spent two nights with us in Maryland a bit later in his North American trip... And Michael Burstein, who had lost a Hugo vote almost as close as ours had been. The convention was very much a positive experience for him, and he promised us a fanzine article (which appears in this issue) to describe it all.

But there's not enough room here for *us* to describe it all! So we'll take the opportunity to stop here, with hopes you'll enjoy this new issue of *Mimosa*. We think it's filled with entertaining things to read; we hope you think so, too. ✡

✎ As we mentioned, L.A.Con afforded us good a good opportunity to meet people. However, someone whose absence was profoundly felt was Bob Shaw. Like many others in fandom, we were stunned and saddened when the news of his death reached us. Bob was a part of perhaps the most famous fan group ever, the fabled Irish Fandom of the 1950s, which also included Walt and Madeleine Willis, George Charters, James and Peggy White, Bob's wife Sadie, and the writer of this article. IF provided much of the legendry that 1950s fandom is noted for, from its meeting place at the Willis's home of Oblique House, to the fannish game of 'ghoodminton', to *The Enchanted Duplicator* (which Bob co-wrote). The death of Bob Shaw is the passing of a legend; we will miss him deeply, but he has left much to remember him by.



I retired from my fingerprint office in 1991, upon reaching the pensionable age of 65, and took the opportunity I had waited for for many years, to nicely type my Irish Fandom stories, all 54 of them, and got the contents professionally bound with green buckram, hard covers, no less, with gold lettering on the spine announcing *A Time Regained — Fables of Irish Fandom.* A few days ago, I read in a fanzine about the death of Bob Shaw. It was mind-numbing; I immediately went to my den, reached for *A Time Regained*, and flipped through the entire 240 pages. Bob's name was on almost every page. I looked down the list of pun titles of my stories; he had presented me with many of them: "Rust in Peace" ... "High, Wide, and Transom" ... "Monroe Doctorin'" ... "Cuffed in the Fray" ... "Shill Shock" ... "The Wails of IF," to give just a few examples. I started to read the stories...

* * *

The first article I wrote in fandom, "Coming Up for the Third Time," (a Willis title) partly concerned ghoodminton... in fact, many of my IF stories concern variations on this theme. I particularly remember Bob, a quiet, delicate, skillful player, holding his square of cardboard in a rather effete manner, hitting the shuttlecock only because he had to, being totally non-agressive. I found myself usually partnering another member of IF, with Bob and his beautiful young wife Sadie across the net. It has been said quite correctly that, when playing ghoodminton, I was a terror to behold, with hair askew, moustache at 6 pm, sweating, attired in a grimy once-white vest, threadbare grey trousers and size 12 hobnail boots, leaping about in an uncoordinated manner. I chuckled to myself as I turned the pages, visualizing Bob across the net, grinning to himself, as if a vagrant witty pun had flickered across his mind, interrupting his play. And then, yesterday, after 40 years, an example of his utter subtlety struck me. Why hadn't I thought of it before? It was absolute genius, the epitome of gamesmanship.

I must say I was rather chagrined to read an article written by Madeleine Willis, in which she wrote that whenever I visited Oblique House, she always adjusted her neckline. Bob and Sadie Shaw had lived in the Willis household for a time. So it suddenly struck me, as I sat there thinking about Bob, that perchance certain conversations had taken place, and, on reflection, what else could explain Bob's ghoodminton ploy?

James White and I were 19 points against the

Shaws' 16 points. James and I were superb; the game was won. Then I heard Bob whisper to Sadie, "You look rather hot and flustered. Our opponents will not object if you divest yourself of your blouse; you'll feel cooler and refreshed."

Very slowly, Sadie complied, a tactile fumbling with pearl buttons being eased out of pink cross-stitched button holes, the white satin garment with little green shamrocks embroidered around the collar and sleeves being eased off white shoulders, revealing...

"21-19, the Shaws have won!" I heard Walt Willis shout loudly.

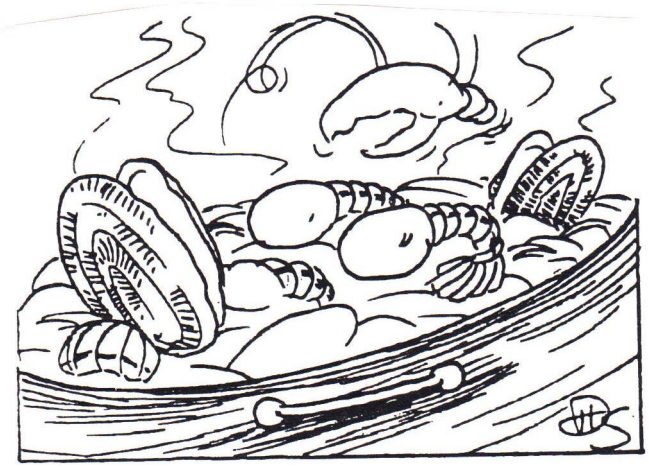
* * *

Everybody knows that punning was a major pastime at Oblique House, and although all the members of IF were adept at the technique, Bob Shaw's were the most cultured and devious. I can do no better to illustrate his métier than by quoting directly from my column 'Belfasters', this excerpt from an issue of Dean Grennell's *Grue* published in 1956:

"Listen," Bob said to me one night, "I've noticed you always use the expression 'a cry of frustration'."

I nodded. It was true... I love that phrase.

"Well, I thought of a brilliant pun today," he enthused. "This is the set-up. One afternoon, your wife is out, and you decide to prepare a special dish. You go out and purchase a few oysters, shellfish, crabs, etc., and when teatime is near, you drop the whole lot into the frying pan. When Diane comes in, you knock the contents of the frying pan onto the kitchen floor, as if it was done accidentally. Then give a loud shout. Diane will say, 'Was that a cry of frustration?' and you will be able to reply, 'No, that was a fry of crustacean.'"



I once wrote an article for Gregg Calkins's *Oopsla* about a robot Bob Shaw and a robot budgerigar, as part of our long-running feud about whether or not budgerigars could talk; I avered that they were quite good conversationalists, although not understanding everything they uttered. I couldn't think of a suitable title for the work, and I asked members of IF to assist me. Bob immediately came to my rescue:

"This is my idea, John," he explained. "Imagine in your story the two robots break down due to some mechanical defect. To mend the bird would be quite easy, because all you would have to do would be to insert a finger and make a small adjustment. But to try and fix the robot Bob Shaw would be more complicated. You would have to open a trap door in the back of the robot, put both arms inside, and fiddle about with the works for hours."

"So?" I yawned.

"So," said Bob, "you could call your story 'A Hand in the Bird Is Worth Two in the BoSh'."

* * *

One of the stories that went the rounds of fandom in the middle fifties concerned my typewriter, which worked only by the use of a 'can of beans' drive. Naturally, because fans suspected that I was prone to exaggerate, it was treated as a myth, broadcast by IF — it couldn't have happened, it was just too incredible. But it was absolutely true, the typer was a wreck, but I needed to use it because my flow of articles for fanzines was a waterfall without the dam. But the platen had seized up, and the only way I could get it to work was by tying a length of cord to the roller on the left end of the platen, and suspending a can of beans. Ergo, every time I pressed a key, the platen was released and the can of beans, using gravity, forced it to move one stop with each pressure on a key. I wrote over one hundred stories for fanzines on the 'can of beans drive' typer, until Les Gerber presented me with a portable typer in New York in 1959. But how did I get conned into purchasing that typer wreck in the first instance? I explained it all in a 1957 *Oopsla*:

(Bob had invited me to his room in Oblique

House to examine a typer he wanted to sell to me. I was thrilled being asked to purchase a vile pro's typewriter, even though it looked rusty, and in fact did appear to represent a hunk of junk.)

"Type something," said Bob, biting his lower lip.

My pet word for breaking in a typewriter is 'terminologicalinexactitudinously'. I've typed it so often that I can do it blindfold, so there was no requirement for me to remove the layer of scum on the keys.

So I typed it.

The keys made a series of staccato noises rather like someone trying to start a car on a frosty morning.

I peered at the sheet of paper and saw something like this:

t e

I must impress on you all that I don't really type very fast. Compared with Walt Willis, you would think my hands were crippled with arthritis. So Bob's next remark, savouring as it did of flattery, came as rather a pleasant surprise.

"No, no, John," he explained patiently. "You are typing far too fast. I can see that you are an accomplished typist, and I can assure you that this is the machine for you. Try typing 'the' again, but a little slower."

So much more slowly, I typed 'termino...etc.'. I looked with apprehension at the result, which looked something like this:

term olo inexacti e

"Hmmm," mused Bob. "There must be something wrong with the gribble draw-back lever. It's probably being gouled by the trumbickel snatch wire. I think I can fix it."

(And so on... With each moment that passed by, as Bob tried to demonstrate how I needed that machine, the situation deteriorated...)

Meanwhile, Bob had collected his scattered wits, and with remarkable aplomb said, "...and as I told you, you can have this magnificent machine dirt cheap!"

Rather a difficult situation for me to be in. I guessed that only a dedicated typer mechanic could fix it, but at what incredible fee?? I didn't want to hurt Bob's feelings and say something reasonable, like half a crown. On the other

hand, I didn't want to throw my money away and say something fantastic like five shillings. Whilst I was trying to formulate a reply, Bob leaned over the machine, and patted it affectionately. Tears welled in his eyes...

"What about... three pounds?" he asked quietly, a throb in his voice.

"Well, er, that is...I...um..." I stuttered.

"Settled then!" announced Bob, shaking my hand firmly.

He took his wallet out, counted out three crisp one pound notes, and thrust them into my hand.

"Now take the bloody thing away!!!" he screamed.

* * *

Most fans nowadays all have wheels; even neofans turn up at conventions in high-powered autos. They would not know or appreciate that, forty years ago, Irish fans predominantly used pedal cycles to travel on, although, as we gradually became somewhat more prosperous the motor-assisted pedal cycle began to make an appearance. But in 1954, Bob and myself possessed pedal cycles which were velocipedes in name only.

My pedal cycle was very old and had served me well when, as a village constable in County Down, I had spent most dark nights speeding round the quiet county lanes looking for miscreants who dared to encroach on my district without having red taillights on their bicycles. It had become rusted, and needed to be almost permanently sprayed with oil to make the wheels go around.

But Bob Shaw's bike was in a much worse condition, and he decided to give it a symbolic burial. The whole poignant affair was described in my "Rust in Peace" in the March 1955 issue of *Hyphen*. Bob decided to dump the bicycle in the River Lagan at Shaw's Bridge, aptly named. It was a few miles west of Belfast, and Bob asked all members of IF to attend the ceremony. We met there at the appointed time:

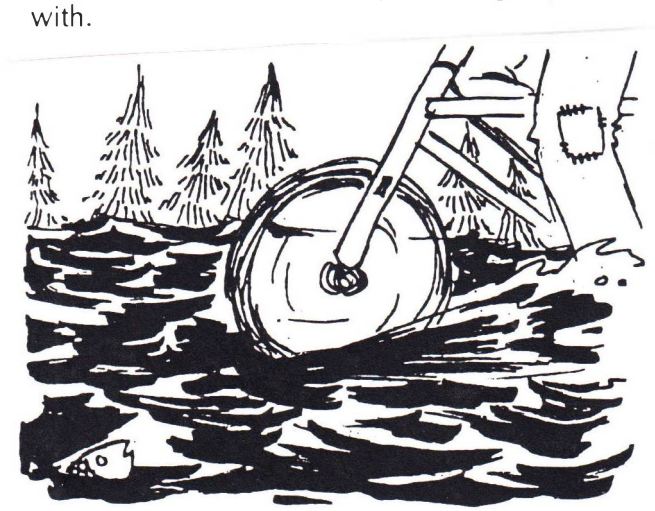
Everyone was there except Bob.

"Where is he?" I queried.

"He said he would cycle over as a last token of respect. He should be here soon," said his wife Sadie.

Ten minutes later a horrible squeaky noise issued from the Belfast direction. We exchanged knowing glances. Fifteen minutes later he arrived, and stopped by the simple expedient of kicking away the back wheel. He replaced the wheel, and jerked spasmodically over to us; the bike didn't have a saddle.

"Here it is," he said slowly. "Let's get it over with.



Walt Willis asked James White to fire the salvo. Thirteen rockets blasted to the Heavens, one for each year of the bike's co-existence with Bob.

Then Bob came over to me. The rest of them turned away.

"This is for you, John," he sniffed. "It's not much, but I know you will treasure it." He handed me the cycle pump. I put it in my pocket. I didn't say a word. He knew how I felt.

We all lined the towpath: Walt, Sadie, George, Madeleine, myself, James, Peggy, and Bob. Walt read the address:

"...and so, Roscoe," he concluded, "we ask that this long-suffering velocipede shall rest content in the shadow of Shaw's Bridge, until rust has finally merged it with its parent Earth."

We hummed the opening bars of "Dragnet" as Bob picked up the bike from the bank and slowly rode into the middle of the river, gradually disappearing until only a trail of bubbles showed where the bike had finally finished its labours. For a moment, we began to think that Bob had taken it too seriously and had gone down with his bike, but a few seconds later he appeared on the surface and swam to the bank. We wrapped him in blankets and hurried him to the car. They all piled in with him, and shouted "Goodnight!" to me.

I pulled by bike from the bank, ran down the towpath for a few yards, and vaulted onto the saddle.

I shrieked aloud in torment. Instead of a saddle, I had landed on a vertical piece of steel tubing. The hair rose on the back of my head. I got off the bike and rushed to the bridge. I still had the handlebars in my hands.

I thumped my fists on the parapet. "You fool, Shaw!" I screamed. "You absolute fool!"

I am writing this in bed, recovering from pneumonia. The only pleasant recollection I have of the event is that Bob's bike now lies strewn over the fields between Shaw's bridge and my home.

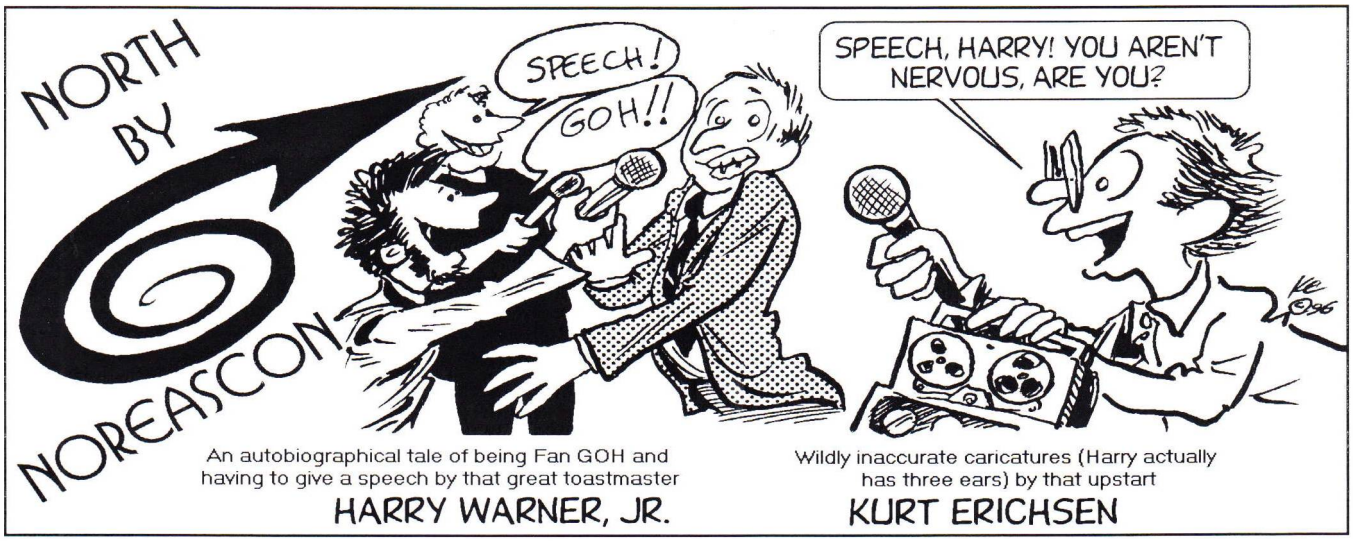
I am keeping the pump until I meet Shaw again. It is filled with lead shot...

* * *

I could fill this issue of *Mimosa* with stories about Bob Shaw, but my brief sojourn into his persona is to merely try to give the impression of what a live-wire, bubbling character he was — always kind and thoughtful, lips trembling with the attempt to express the whimsical thoughts tumbling through his creative mind. Bob Shaw ***was*** the compleat fan, almost unique in the fannish requirements he possessed — as fannish wit, cartoonist (as BoSh), prolific fanzine writer (including much fan fiction), convention attender and speaker, raconteur, and vile pro (some thirty novels, and many short stories that have been anthologized). Frankly, who else in fandom at the present time could compete with his vast fannish umbrella?

Bob Shaw is irreplaceable. To quote a well-worn but magnificently apt cliché, we will never see his like again. ☼

✎ Since we've often bemoaned that many opportunities for preserving the history of fandom aren't being taken advantage of, we'll take this occasion to compliment L.A.Con for arranging the audiotaping of many of their programming events. This once was a common practice at worldcons, but is now the exception rather than the rule. Anyway, here's a tale (reprinted from the apa SFPA) about another such worldcon that had the foresight to tape some of its proceedings, and of a belated reaction to it, some 25 years later.



If by some remote chance anyone needs proof that I'm a rude and ungrateful person, I might as well provide fresh evidence in that respect. Someone was kind enough to send me, more than two decades ago, a free two-LP set that contained the proceedings during the Hugo banquet at a worldcon. And just the other week, I finally played those records for the first time. I'd been intending to listen to them one of these years, but I kept putting it off. Ingratitude wasn't really the big problem, but rather the fact that I hated the idea of hearing one of the participants.

If everything is foreordained ever since the Big Bang, it must have taken a particularly complicated series of atomic circumstances to cause me to play these two LPs at this particular time, only a few weeks short of the night when the banquet was taped, an exact quarter century ago. Nothing in particular happened to induce me to put them on the turntable at the start of July, 1996. I dreaded listening to myself giving the Fan Guest of Honor talk just as sincerely as I had ever since I received the records in 1973 or thereabouts.

That first Noreascon was not my favorite event in fandom. I'd originally declined with thanks the invitation to be Fan Guest of Honor, and only grudgingly did I eventually change my decision and agree to do it. Early in 1971, I'd spent almost a week in the hospital following an operation and I was still not feeling altogether healthy by the time the Labor Day weekend arrived. I was never instructed fully in what a Fan Guest of Honor is supposed to do, other than to show up for the ceremonies opening the convention and give a talk during the Hugo banquet program, so I had to improvise all during my stay in Boston, and was unhappy with my performance. On the second day of the convention, I got up with a runny nose and a sore throat, which left me wondering if I would be able to give that talk, but this was apparently a very real manifestation of a psychosomatic illness which vanished after I'd decided the show must go on no matter how I felt or sounded. I had never spoken before such a large and national audience before, although I'd gotten along okay during a few speaking adventures in Hagerstown to small groups, and I had successfully done a daily newscast over a local radio station for several years. My main fear of the banquet talk was that I might be heckled, and I didn't know if I could keep my cool if it happened.

But I got through the ceremonies without disaster, and nobody saw or heard about the only unexpected problem I suffered. I was terribly tense after the program ended, couldn't endure the thought of spending hours and hours with fans, so decided to go to bed perhaps an hour after midnight. It was noisy in the hall outside my room and I wasn't sure if I could sleep, so I took a sleeping tablet I had left over from the supply I'd been given for my operation

recuperation. After I took it, I jotted down a few notes on what I'd experienced that evening, in case I wanted to write a fanzine article about it, did a little of this and that in preparation for bed, and suddenly I toppled over and burst into uncontrollable giggles. I was high, apparently from the combination of the sleeping pill and the relief that the banquet ordeal was safely past. I've never been drunk, but I faithfully displayed all the symptoms of that condition; I couldn't think coherently, everything seemed funny for no particular reason, the floor was rising and falling and the walls weren't too stationary, either, and I didn't care a bit. I managed to climb into bed and was as normal as I ever am when I woke up around dawn. No, nobody had spiked something I drank that evening, because I had had nothing in any liquid variety from the hands of any fans.

But the next day and in all the days, months, and years afterwards, I fretted about the talk I'd given. Had I mumbled too badly to be comprehended, or had I sounded as singsong as Willy Clinton does when he tries to read something into a microphone, or had my message been so simplistic that people had applauded only out of politeness? The more I wondered, the less willing I was to listen to myself after the records arrived. (The jacket has a 1973 copyright date, so apparently it took a while for the Noreascon survivors to get the tape embodied into recorded vinyl.) I reasoned that I would feel severe although belated despair if I verified a very bad talk by listening to the recording of it, and if I didn't listen, I could avoid a very nasty aftermath of that unpleasant evening.

Maybe I grew reckless and uncaring in old age, or maybe that abrupt creation of the universe included time-released instructions for me to listen to myself, some twenty-four years and ten months after I'd spoken.

And the odd thing was, when I prepared for the worst and played the LPs, I decided that most of my forebodings had been unnecessary. Although I'd stumbled over one word in a couple of sentences of adlib talk at the beginning, I'd gone through my prepared speech without any mistakes. My diction was no worse than that of most of the program participants and better than some, and I hadn't sounded nervous. If I were to do it all over again, the only change I would make would be to slow down slightly, because I did seem to be slightly under the influence of Walter Winchell. The text of my talk holds up quite well after all these years. It contained a plea to fandom and prodom to agitate for continued space exploration, and some of the things I said have been proven accurate by now.

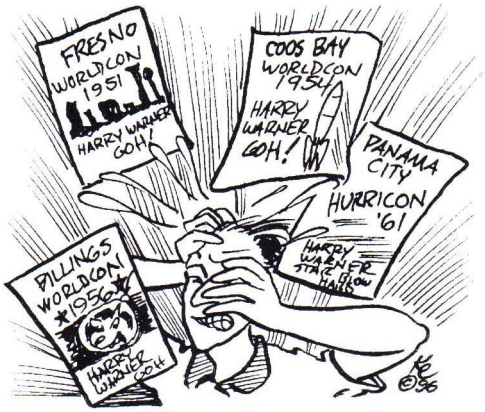
Hearing these records for the first time gave me a good lesson in how badly memory behaves in the course of a quarter-century. I remembered some of the things on the disks, but other portions were totally gone from my recollection. I had completely forgotten, for instance, Lester del Rey's impassioned talk as he presented a posthumous award to John W. Campbell, Jr., from First Fandom. He was easily the most effective speaker on that entire program, in every respect. With that voice, he could have gone far in politics. Then there was the disclosure to me of how time dilation had encompassed me for a while. After I'd finished my talk and had sat down to try to persuade myself that it was really all over and done with, Clifford Simak, as Pro Guest of Honor, gave his talk. I knew I couldn't obey my impulse to get out of there immediately, so I hoped it would be a short one. I remember how I reacted invisibly when he went on and on, and didn't ever seem to be approaching the end of his speech. I would have given anything to look at a clock or watch and make sure it had already been more than a half hour, but I didn't have my wristwatch in a visible position, and I knew someone in the audience would see me turn my arm to stare at it and report it in a fanzine somewhere, so I sat through what seemed like another half hour of his talk. When I listened to Cliff's talk on the records, I checked the time at the beginning and again at the end of it: just thirteen minutes.

A couple of mysteries remain now that I've heard the recording. For one thing, what happened after Asimov announced Ted Sturgeon as the winner of one of the fiction Hugos? On the record, Asimov went on to the next fiction category with no pause and no words indicating that Ted or someone else had come up to accept the trophy. The acceptance event was audible for all other Hugos. It didn't sound as if the tape had been edited at that point (although there are several very audible splices elsewhere during the recording, so I assume some cuts were made to avoid too much dead air or to remove something deemed too embarrassing to perpetuate on the LP). Also unexplained is the identity of the owner of the very first voice on the first side which introduced Bob Silverberg, the toastmaster. I suspect it was Tony Lewis, the con chairman, but it's been a long time since I've heard him speak, so I'm not sure. In several spots there are bursts of laughter from the audience for no apparent cause, apparently because of a facial expression or a gesture from someone at the podium.

One curiosity about Bob's toastmastering is his references to what we now call the Retro Hugos. He evoked a lot of guffaws by pretending that the convention was going to hand out not only the 1971 Hugos but also those for 1954, which the San Francisco convention in that year didn't provide. Then he said that they all had gone to Harlan Ellison, who wasn't in Boston to accept them, so there were more laughs. This encouraged him to bring up the idea briefly, near the end, with a threat to give out the 1932 Hugos. I doubt if anyone in that room on that evening would have believed that belated Hugo Awards would eventually be authorized in real earnest.

It is good evidence of my general state of befuddlement that evening that I learned only this month via the records the identity of the woman who had been sitting next to me at the head table: Robin Asimov. And I think I've already told the story of how after the ceremonies, Marion Zimmer Bradley came up to me and said, "That was really a wonderful talk." I thanked her, and she added "Not *your* talk. *Simak's*." The world would never have known quite a few Darkover novels if I'd obeyed my immediate impulse.

My talk had no perceptible influence on the space program, but I learned later that it made me a few enemies. There were fans who had lost money as a result of my talk; they had lost bets on the question of whether this hermit of Hagerstown would actually show up at the convention and really give a talk to it. I'm pretty sure I would have been out a few dollars if anyone had offered to bet me that I would go through with my duty that September weekend. There was one benefit, however. I was inspired to adopt a firm policy toward all future invitations to become the Fan Guest of Honor at cons large and small. I decided I had shot my bolt in this respect and wasn't going to put myself through the conspicuity and nervous strain again, not even on the occasion when the committee of one medium-sized con offered to move it to Hagerstown if reluctance to travel was the only reason why I declined the honor. Several years ago, I was asked to be Fan Guest of Honor at a worldcon by a bidding city; I said no, but I learned later that the bidding group had decided to ignore my wishes and announce me for the post if they won, in the belief I couldn't do anything about it when it was a *fait accompli*. As it turned out, that city's bid lost to another city, sparing me the fate of suffering headaches every day in the week instead of just most days in the week.



Now that I've played the records, I wonder when I'll be moved to a subsidiary activity; hunting up the batch of souvenirs I brought home from that Boston worldcon. They include, I remember, a beautiful tiny painting on my identification badge by Bob Shaw, a plaque proving to any doubters that I really was Fan Guest of Honor, and a scorecard from the Red Sox-Indians baseball game I attended when I sneaked off from my duties one afternoon. I haven't had the urge to inspect them again during the quarter-century that has intervened, fearing they will reawaken my nerves and maybe even create another psychosomatic cold for a day or two. ☼

✎ One other thing that L.A.Con will likely be remembered for is its awards ceremonies. There were *two* Hugo Awards Ceremonies this year, due to the inaugural Retro Hugos which, for 1996, honored writers, artists and fans for works that would have been eligible in the year 1946, had the Hugo Awards existed back then. The Hugo Award design itself was also a bit memorable, as you will see from the writer of the following, who narrowly missed winning one of them.

Q: How many Hugo nominees does it take to change a lightbulb?

A: It's an honor just to be allowed near lightbulbs.

— Susan Shwartz

- - - - - - - - - - -

What's it like being nominated for a Hugo and the Campbell for your first published story?

I have to admit that that's not a question I ever thought I would be in a position to answer. It is a question that I remember asking Nick DiChario a while back. Actually, I phrased it in the past tense, because by the time I met him, ConFrancisco was long over and Nick had already lost both awards, as frequent readers of *Mimosa* already know. {{✎ see "Breathing Water" in *Mimosa* 15. }} I honestly don't remember what he said.

But I do remember what he said when I asked him the question this past year. Because this time, I had a little more stake in the answer, and he told me just to enjoy the feeling, the way he did.

#

Readers of *Mimosa* may recall that in 1994, I attended the Clarion workshop, as I wrote an article about my experiences which appeared in *Mimosa* 17. Since then, I had sold and seen published two stories in *Analog*, "TeleAbsence" (July 1995) and "Sentimental Value" (October 1995). I got very little outside feedback when the stories appeared — it seems that not a single person wrote to the magazine to comment on my stories — and I thought that was pretty much the end of it.

Until the following year, when I found out that "TeleAbsence" had won the Analytical Laboratory Award for Best Short Story of 1995. And been nominated for the 1996 Hugo Award for Best Short Story. And had somehow gotten me nominated for the John W. Campbell Award for Best New Writer.

To answer, myself, the question I had posed to Nick, being nominated for the Hugo elated me. It came out of nowhere and totally blew me away. I was thrilled, ecstatic, and also scared.

Why scared? For one simple reason, which I think will make a lot of you nod your heads wisely, or explode with laughter. You see, my wife Nomi and I decided that this would be an experience we would never forget. So, even though we live in the Boston area, we made plans to attend L.A.Con III, just in case I won. I wanted to be present at the Hugo Awards Ceremony to accept.

And that meant attending my very first Worldcon.

#

Fortunately, it was not Nomi's first Worldcon, as she had attended Noreascon 3, back in 1989. And it wasn't my very first convention, either, as I had been attending conventions since Arisia in 1992. But the prospect of going to Worldcon was slightly more intense than the prospect of just going to one of the

regional cons which we try to attend every year.

So I ended up looking at it differently. I teach Physics and Mathematics at the Cambridge School of Weston, and one of the problems with attending Worldcon was that faculty meetings begin the week before Labor Day and cut into Worldcon. Since we wouldn't be able to arrive in L.A. until Thursday night anyway, I told myself that I wasn't attending Worldcon, but the Hugo Awards Ceremony, and that anything else I made it to was gravy. That way, instead of kicking myself for missing all the Thursday and Monday events of a Worldcon, I would see all the Friday through Sunday panels which I attended as extras, side benefits of attending the Hugo Ceremony.

On Thursday night, August 29, 1996, Nomi and I flew out to Los Angeles with our friends Joe and Cindy Lazzaro. Joe is another writer, who has also had work appear in *Analog*, and he and his wife are frequent travelers, so we decided to plan our trip together. Cindy is wonderful when it comes to arranging flights and car rentals, which took a load off my mind. In turn, I made our hotel reservations.

We got to the hotel late Thursday night — OK, more like early Friday morning — and collapsed.

The Worldcon itself passed in a bit of a blur. I remember various parties. I remember going to the SFFWA Suite to receive the Science Fiction Weekly Reader Appreciation Award for Best New Writer. I remember meeting a lot of people I had known only from the Internet or Genie. I also remember a panel here and there. In fact, somehow I stayed sane enough to moderate one panel, called "Writing: The Long and the Short of It," about the differences between writing novels and short stories.

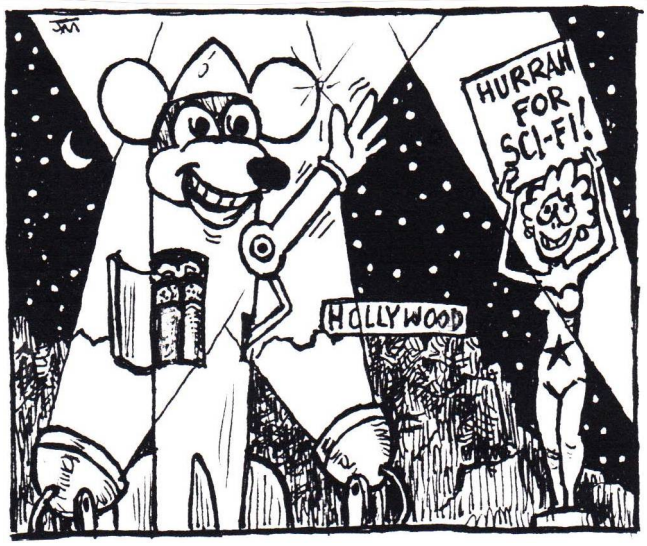
I also remember a very large dealers room, with far too much stuff that I wanted. And I remember one specific event in the dealers room.

Adam-Troy Castro was working at the *Science Fiction Age* table, and I found him there Sunday morning. The dealers room was filled with small exhibits as well as dealers, and Adam told me that they even had a display devoted to the history of the Hugo statuette. He walked me over to the display, and I got my first look at the 1996 model.

It was gorgeous.

Imagine the standard rocket statue, gleaming in all its glory, sitting on top of a film can base. The base, a real recycled film can, is surrounded on the edge by a filmstrip with color stills from famous science fiction movies and television shows. On the back of the base, framing the rocket from behind, is a model of the mountains from *Destination: Moon*. And in front of the rocket are two Hollywood style spotlights, aimed towards the rocket and designed to shine upon it when the back switch is depressed.

The very first battery powered Hugo Award.



I'll admit it. I drooled over this rocket, I put my hands around it, I fondled it. The thought of being up for one of these finally hit home in a way it never had before. Here was actual, physical evidence of the award I was competing for.

I said to Adam, "If I win, it'll be a real problem getting it home."

He replied, "We should *all* have such problems."

#

On Sunday night, after taking in one last panel to calm my nerves, Nomi and I headed over to the Arena building at 7 PM for the Hugo Nominees reception, which took place in a large room next to the main auditorium.

I still had trouble believing that I was present as a nominee, as I was surrounded by all these people whom I knew were deserving of the award; I felt like an upstart. Nomi and I met a lot of people during that all too short hour, and we spent a good part of the time talking with Stan Schmidt, editor of *Analog*, and his wife Joyce.

As it got to be close to 8 PM, the Hugo administrators brought out a sample Hugo Award for us to examine, and to show us how to hold it just in case you happened to be the one called onto the stage to receive it. Once again I found myself drooling over the statuette, and wondering if I'd have to worry

about how to get it home.

And then, they ushered us into the auditorium. Quietly, the mass of us walked in the dark to the central seats, which had been reserved for nominees and their guests. Nomi and I sat with Robert Sawyer and his wife Carolyn Clink, whom we've befriended over the past few years. I tend to consider Robert a well-established pro, and it came as a shock to me this year when I realized that we were both up for our first Hugo Award.

Nomi and I sat down, and I looked around us, at the people filling the auditorium to capacity, and at the huge stage with the two movie screens on either side. All of my nervousness came to a head. This was the moment I'd been waiting for since finding out I was a nominee almost half a year ago.

As they say in Hollywood, it was showtime.

#

Connie Willis was the Toastmaster, which I think was an excellent choice. She is a very funny person, and I enjoyed her performance when presenting an award at the Nebulas a few years ago, but I wouldn't want to have been squirming in my seat while sitting through a monologue placed between her reading a list of nominees and announcing the name of the winner. Having her host the ceremony as a whole was perfect; her humor helped reduce the tension I was feeling enormously.

Unfortunately, the beginning of the ceremony still seemed to drag, especially for me. Think about it. I had never been to a Hugo Ceremony before, and naturally I was assuming that they'd get to the Campbell Award fairly quickly, as it was one of the earlier awards to be presented. But first, there was the First Fandom Award, and the Big Heart Award, and the Seiun Awards, and they felt like they took forever. In fact, they took the better part of an hour.

Finally, it was time for the Campbell Award to be announced. Stan Schmidt walked on stage, discussed the legacy of John Campbell briefly, and stated the names of the five nominees: Michael A. Burstein, David Feintuch, Felicity Savage, Sharon Shinn, and Tricia Sullivan. Then he named the winner.

David Feintuch.

I turned to Nomi immediately, and said, "That's it. I haven't won the Hugo either."

She wasn't sure if that would be so, but I was. I had figured that although my chances of winning the Hugo were not that great, being both a Hugo nominee and Campbell nominee would help me on the Campbell balloting. (A few other writers had told me the same thing.) But I doubted it would go in the other direction.

Feintuch gave a very nice acceptance speech, and then the ceremony continued, with other Hugos being presented and humorous stories being told on stage. I was feeling a little low, of course, but my spirits rose when the *Babylon 5* episode "The Coming of Shadows" won the Hugo for Best Dramatic Presentation. I am a major fan of the show, and felt that the Hugo was well deserved, and I cheered along with the rest of the audience when the winner was announced.

What I had forgotten was that the Best Short Story Hugo came next.

After J. Michael Straczynski gave his acceptance speech and the applause had died down, Larry Niven ascended to the podium to present the award. He listed the five nominees, mispronouncing my last name 'Bur-STINE' instead of 'Bur-STEEN'.

"TeleAbsence" by Michael A. Burstein. "Life on the Moon" by Tony Daniel. "A Birthday" by Esther M. Friesner. "The Lincoln Train" by Maureen F. McHugh. "Walking Out" by Michael Swanwick.

And the Hugo went to "The Lincoln Train" by Maureen McHugh.

Kristine Kathryn Rusch, who published the story in *F&SF*, went to accept the award on Maureen's behalf, while I sat in the audience, applauding. I had been expecting this, so it wasn't too much of a shock. Besides, Maureen's been deserving of the Hugo since her first novel, and furthermore, she's a very nice person. While Kris accepted the award, I kept thinking of how Maureen came to my reading at Boskone last year, and how pleased I was that an established pro of such magnitude would be interested in my

work. Her attending my reading had meant quite a lot to me.

The other fiction categories were left, and the worst part of the Hugos is the fact that there can be only one winner in each category. As I told Esther at one party during the convention, I wanted to win, but I didn't want her to have to lose for me to win. So I was ecstatic when James Patrick Kelly won Best Novelette for "Think Like a Dinosaur" and when Allen Steele won Best Novella for "The Death of Captain Future," but at the same time there were other people on the ballot for whom I felt disappointed, as I had been rooting for them too.

I do want to express my deep appreciation for something Jim said, though. I had helped him with a small piece of science in his story (to the point where he named the protagonist Michael Burr), and during his acceptance speech he thanked me by name for a key piece of research, thus correcting the mispronounciation which Larry Niven had made. It felt good to hear my name as part of the awarding of some Hugo, even if it wasn't a Hugo for me.

The last category was Best Novel, which Neal Stephenson won for *The Diamond Age*. A fine book, indeed, which I enjoyed highly, but I had been rooting for *The Terminal Experiment* by Robert Sawyer.

The Hugos were over, and Nomi and I headed outside with everyone else. We were talking to each other and looking for friends when Priscilla Olson handed me a copy of the Hugo edition of *Stat!*, the convention newsletter, and directed my attention to the Hugo balloting.

My short story had been the last one to be eliminated; I lost the Hugo to Maureen by a final vote of 242 to 232.

I had lost the Hugo by only ten votes.

I was thrilled; I screamed with delight. If I had lost by only one vote, I'd have been devastated; if I had lost by a large margin, my slight disappointment would have been intensified. But ten votes was just right.

I barely remember the Hugo Nominees Party (or Hugo Losers Party, as some people call it). I had a chance to congratulate David Feintuch, and I finally got to meet Richard & Nicki Lynch, who had published my first piece of fanwriting since I was a teenager. But it was all over and we had an early flight, so after only about an hour of socializing, Nomi and I returned to our room to sleep.

#

The story doesn't quite end there, though. When I got back to the Cambridge School of Weston, I announced at an assembly that I had lost both awards. At the very next assembly, a group of my students took to the stage to announce the inception of the first ever CSW Bug Eyed Critter Award for Best Short Story. They read the list of nominees — and of course, my story was the only one on the list. They presented me with an adorable Folktails "Alien in Spaceship Puppet" (the bug eyed critter, of course), which I could control by sticking my hand inside. It even has a control stick for the spaceship, which you move with your thumb, and it glows in the dark.

You know something? It's better than the Hugo.

#

Am I upset? Well, of course I'm disappointed — who wouldn't be? — but I think of the story of one of the American Olympians in Atlanta this past summer, who lost the gold medal and was asked by a reporter if he felt crushed about it.

The athlete stared at the reporter incredulously, and with a big smile on his face, exclaimed, "Are you kidding? I've just won a silver medal!"

And that's how I feel. It's hard to be disappointed when your first published story gets nominated for the Hugo, no matter how you do in the balloting. Getting nominated was a fluke, I know, as it usually takes years for someone to make it onto the Hugo ballot. If I ever want to look at an award, well, I've got my bug eyed critter. And in the end, I have to agree with the truth of what it's like to be a Hugo nominee, no matter how much it's been turned into a joke:

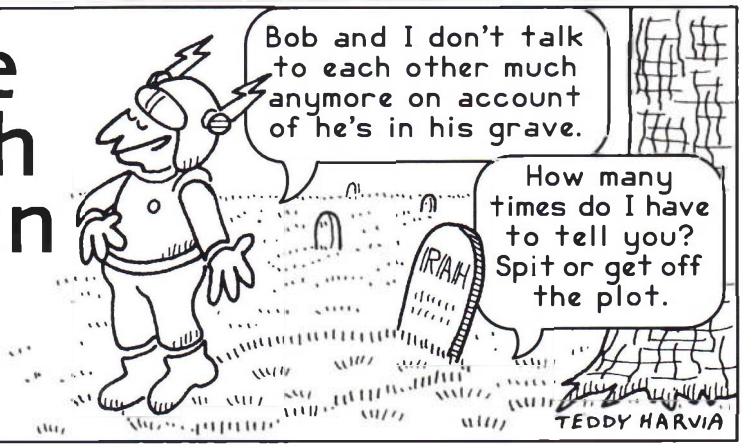
It *really is* an honor just to be nominated! ✡

✎ Time now for Part 4 of Forry Ackerman's autobiographical series about the earlier decades of fandom, but first some good news: we were able to do a taping session with Forry at L.A.Con, so there *will* be some future installments in this series. This installment includes a visit to Irish Fandom in 1951, lingering controversy with Robert Heinlein in the late 1950s, some clowning around with Isaac Asimov in the 1960s, and more...

Through Time and Space with Forry Ackerman

PART IV

by Forrest J. Ackerman



I'm happy to say that Walt Willis has been my friend for over forty years. A lot of people think that I met Walt Willis for the first time when he was brought over to the Chicago Worldcon in 1952. But I had actually met him the year before that, when I traveled to the United Kingdom.

In May, 1951, British fans had put on the first international science fiction convention, and I was a Guest of Honor. It was there that I first met Walt, but with everything going on, that first meeting doesn't stand out very well in my memory. Anyway, one day, after the convention, I found myself in Scotland, and it suddenly occurred to me that, gee, I was only about 45 minutes away by air from Ireland. If I went, I could see the Big Three fans there. And so I hopped in a taxi and got over to the Glasgow airport.

I was the last one aboard an old-fashioned propeller airplane. I was a bit nervous; it was the first time I had ever flown! (I had crossed the ocean by ship.) I had earlier phoned ahead and talked with Walt Willis, and he said they would be in Belfast to meet me. So as my first flight left the ground, I looked out the porthole and saw a cemetery! As the plane climbed, we went three times around a cemetery, and all I saw out there were gravestones. Not a good omen for my first flight! When we touched down in Belfast, it turned out they were having a transportation strike — the only thing they could get to pick me up with was a hearse!

I'd left a cemetery and was picked up in a hearse! And that's how I *really* met Walt Willis.

And now, speaking of being ready for a hearse, I have to tell you the story that involves Robert Heinlein and Cyril Kornbluth, and myself. The year was 1958, and I had just received a flaming mad letter from Heinlein: "How *dare* you accept my Hugo in my absence, hang onto it for over a year, and then when I found out you had it, drag your feet for another month before returning it?"

Well, I went pale and trembling to my wife, and I said, "Honey, is this the way senility starts? Did I ever have Heinlein's Hugo?" And she said, "No, no, no..."

So I phoned Isaac Asimov, and I told him, "Help! Save my life — tell me I didn't take Heinlein's Hugo." The fact was that Heinlein and I were more or less on the outs by then; the time had come if I had said 'up', he would say 'down', if I said 'black', he'd say 'white'. Finally, I wrote him and said, "Bob, I admire your work. You've entertained and educated me about as much as anybody ever has in science fiction. But, obviously, as social beings, we just can't get along. We might as well give up on each other — you've got all your fans and activities; I've got plenty to keep me busy." And we'd just nod when we'd meet at a convention.

So we had given up on each other, and I was certain that he was absent in 1956, when he got that Hugo. I'm sure if somebody had come to me and said, 'Forry, you know Heinlein, don't you? Will you accept on his behalf?' I *know* I would have said, 'No, I don't think I'm the proper person. He wouldn't

appreciate it.' Well, Asimov just couldn't remember the circumstances, so he said, "Robert Bloch was the Master of Ceremonies, and he would have had to physically hand it to you. Ask *him*."

So I called up Bob, and he said, "Oh, Forry, I've been to *sooo* many conventions; I've been Master of Ceremonies so many times, that I don't even remember my own Hugo. But Dave Kyle — *he'll* be able to tell you."

Well, at that time, Dave Kyle was over in England, and it was 4:30 in the morning for him. But I thought, if *I'm* not going to sleep, why should Dave Kyle? So I called him, and I said, "Help, help! Save my life! Tell me I didn't accept Heinlein's Hugo!" Well, to my dismay, he began laughing uproariously! "What's so funny?? C'mon, this is serious!" More laughter. I said, "Dave! This is costing me big bucks! This is a trans-Atlantic phone call! Stop that laughing! What's so funny??"

And he said, "Forry, don't you *remember*? That was the time the Hugos didn't *arrive*! It was a big embarrassing scene! We had nothing to give to *anybody*! You couldn't *possibly* have taken his Hugo!"

Well, I thought that Heinlein might not even accept this unsupported word, but we had our own Watergate tapes — Franklin Dietz, who had taped the entire convention. So I called him, and said, "Save my life! You find those tapes and play them. If I hear myself say, 'It's a proud moment as I accept this Hugo', you will have a scoop, because three thousand miles away, you will hear me put a bullet through my brain."

Well, he was busy then and didn't have the time to look through miles of tape. It was about a year later that he finally found it, and of course, it never happened! So then, finally, I contacted Heinlein and told him the whole story. Then I asked him, "Why did you ever accuse me?"

This is when I learned of Cyril Kornbluth's involvement. Heinlein told me, "When I came back from Europe, Forry, Kornbluth met me, shook my hand and said, 'Congratulations, Bob, on your Hugo!' When I said, 'My Hugo??', Kornbluth replied, 'What!? You mean Ackerman didn't give it to you?!?' " Well, unfortunately, at this point, Kornbluth was dead, so I couldn't call him up and get the straight of that story.

There was never any explanation or apology. And matters eventually went from bad to worse. In the 1970s, there was a new science fiction magazine called *Vertex Science Fiction*. The editor called me up and said, "Forry, we'd like to feature Heinlein in our first issue. Do you think we could get an interview from him?"

At this point, Heinlein had said about the most insulting thing to me that's ever been said to me, in my entire career in science fiction. He said, "I can conceive of no circumstances under which it would be necessary or desirable for you to have my telephone number." For twenty-five years, I could call Vincent Price or Robert Bloch or Ray Bradbury or Arthur C. Clarke, and I'd always give them full protection and never abused the privilege. But that's what he said to me. So I said to the editor of *Vertex*, "Well, I don't speak for Heinlein, but I know he's just been interviewed by *Playboy*." And up to that time, being interviewed by *Playboy* was the apex of your existence. But Heinlein insisted on being paid for it — the first time anybody had ever been paid for an interview in *Playboy*. I told him, "I really doubt that, on top of that, that you'd get either an interview that you could afford, or that he'd give the second one."

Well, they called me again, three days later: "Oh, god, you were absolutely right. No interview from Heinlein. Boy, we're on the spot! We've got his name on the cover, we were so certain that we'd have something by him. Help!" So I thought of his previously-discussed Guest of Honor speech that he'd given in 1941 {{✎ see part two of this series, in *Mimosa* 17 }}, and somewhere in my eighteen rooms I knew I had a copy of it. So I searched it out, and I read it, and I thought, well, this makes Heinlein a prophet-with-honor — many things that he had prophesied had indeed come true.

Anyway, I thought it was still a great speech, and that it was time for fans who missed it the first time around to get the opportunity to read it. So I gave it to them to publish, and I said, "Now look, this is public domain; it was never copyrighted. The minute it's out of my hands you can thumb your nose at me and say, 'Thanks, sucker', print it and pay nobody anything. But I feel by putting his name on the cover, you're using several thousand words by him, so you should pay Heinlein, regardless of public domain." And then I said, "It sort of seems to me you wouldn't know of this; you wouldn't have a copy if I didn't provide it to you, so I think *I* ought to get a few bucks out of it, too. And finally, we ought to recognize that if Walt Daugherty hadn't made the original record-

ings, nobody, including Heinlein, would have it." In my mind, I sort of thought that eighty-five percent for Heinlein, ten percent for me, and five percent for Daugherty would be fair.

Well, it was published; it saved the editor's life. But about a year later I got one of these flaming letters written on asbestos. Heinlein wrote, "How *dare* you give my work away to that magazine and accept a payment for it?!" Well, I'd been sent a check for two hundred dollars — this was from the magazine that later paid me a hundred dollars for one letter of the alphabet {{ ✎ see part one of this series, in *Mimosa* 16 }}. So I sort of thought they probably sent him about seven hundred and fifty dollars, and maybe fifty bucks to Daugherty. Well, it developed that they had sent me two hundred dollars, expecting *me* to make the division — *exactly* what I didn't want to happen! So I wrote Heinlein, explained what happened, and I wrote him a check — not for two hundred dollars, but taking in consideration inflation, I added twenty dollars to it, and considering in a year he could have had five percent in a bank, another ten dollars; I wrote him a check for two hundred and thirty dollars.

At this point, I was out thirty bucks for all my activities. I thought the decent thing for him to do would be to calm down and say 'I'm sorry, here's fifty bucks for your trouble; give twenty-five to Daugherty'. But no — he called and he wasn't too sure this was exactly the way things had happened. He sort of felt that I got caught with my hand in the cookie jar, and I had given him $230 just to assuage my conscience. And then he said, "I'm taking the curse off this money by giving it to my favorite charity." How about *my* favorite charity??

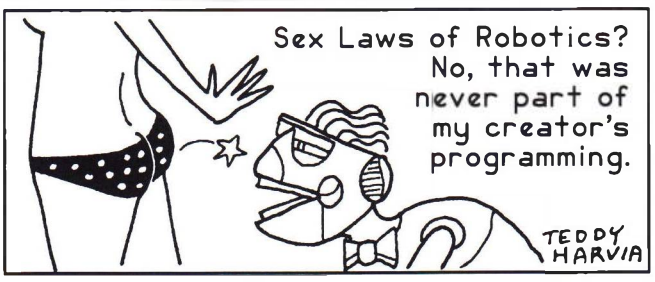
It was "Solution Unsatisfactory" as far as I was concerned...

Speaking of agenting, though, I should say something about my career as a literary agent. It all began in the 1940s — after three years, four months, and 29 days of World War Two, when I was weary of saluting and wearing a tie, I looked around for something to do to support myself without a boss, and representing science fiction writers as their literary agent seemed like it might be a good idea. But my first year at it, I made a thousand and seventy-five dollars in commissions, and spent a thousand and twenty-five dollars in postage. I made a big fat fifty bucks.

That would have been the end of it, but young Ray Bradbury, and Asimov, and other ascending stars came to my rescue. Although they already had agents, they'd let me occasionally sell something abroad for them. Well, I hate figures and love words; I don't like to quibble around with nickels and dimes, so I generally just evened things off. The first time I made a sale for Asimov, I sent him a check, we'll say, for an even hundred dollars when it might have been a hundred dollars and eleven cents I owed him. He immediately wrote back and said, "Well now, Forry, I don't want a penny more than I'm entitled to, but on the other hand, I don't want a penny less." Well, maybe I should have expected that; the next time I made a sale for him, after I figured it out, his payment actually came down to a certain amount and an extra one-half cent. And in those days, the Post Office still produced one-half cent stamps, so I sent him his check and attached a one-half cent stamp to it.

Isaac Asimov in correspondence may have been a little predictable, but there was no telling what he might do in person, especially at conventions. At the end of three days in Asimov's company, he was such a clown, I had to push my cheeks together, they were so sore from laughing! There was the time, at a worldcon in the 1960s, that the publisher of *Famous Monsters of Filmland* had recently started a new satyrical magazine called *Help*. And in order to publicize it, he had a classy model in an itsy-bitsy-teeny-weeny polka-dot bikini wandering around with a sign on her back: 'If You Need Help, Follow Me'. She would bring people to a kiosk, and they would get a complimentary copy of *Help* magazine.

Well, Isaac Asimov got out of an elevator, and you know, he gloried in his reputation of being the Dirty Old Man. He saw this fair derriere about 25 feet in front of him, and he broke the world record for the 25-foot dash. The floor was made of marble, and in the final two feet he went down on his knees, and slid right up to the back of the unsuspecting model. In this position, on his knees, his lips were directly behind her hips. And then the world-famous author of the *Foundation* series bit her... right on her foundation. ☼



✎ First, some bad news. A few months ago, Walt Willis wrote us an apologetic letter, saying that due to recent upheaval in his life (a back operation followed by moving to a different house), he was unable to do a new installment of "I Remember Me" for this issue of *Mimosa*. Luckily, there is a silver lining to this, as it gives us an opportunity to present some vintage Willis. The following was edited together from Walt's column "The Harp That Once or Twice" that appeared, in the early 1950s, in Lee Hoffman's legendary fanzine *Quandry*; we begin at the 1951 British National Convention, and Walt's recollection of that first encounter with Forry Ackerman.

The Harp Meets No. 1 Fan

by Walt Willis

Friday, 10th May, 1951, at the First International Convention

When we arrived from our lunch, Forry Ackerman was just about to start speaking. From his articles and letters I had formed quite a clear mental picture of a thin, dark and neurotic type, eccentric and egocentric in his ways, quick and impatient in his speech. Instead, his appearance came as a great surprise! I found a big easy-going giant of a fan, quiet-spoken and gentle-mannered. There was no loudness or ostentation about him at all, and he was very easy to talk to, once you got used to a disconcerting habit he had of going "Mmmmmmm?" with a rising inflection, whenever you paused for his reactions to what you were saying. Maybe everyone does this in California, but it certainly derailed my train of thought the first couple of times.

Forry Ackerman is a true fan in a way that most of us don't come within a mile of being. Forry really *believes* in fandom; he still insures his life for $5,000 every time he sets out for a convention, in favour of the convention committee, so that if he is killed by some traveling accident on the way, he will be worth more to the convention dead than alive. (From what I saw of what Ackerman did for the convention, $5,000 wouldn't be nearly enough.) His will still provides for his priceless library to go to fandom. It will be inadequate compensation. There are two things that every neofan learns: one is that John W. Campbell, Jr. is the editor of *Astounding Science Fiction* and the other is that Forrest J Ackerman is the No.1 Fan. For my money, Ackerman's position is infinitely stronger. I am sold on Ackerman.

Sunday, 23rd June, 1951

I might have realized this was no ordinary day. In the first place, this was the day of our tennis club's annual garden fete, and it wasn't raining. Definitely, *they* had slipped up. In the second place, the July *Astounding Science Fiction* arrived only three days after publication date. Not only that, but it had some good stories. It's lucky I didn't read them all at once. I would never have gotten over the shock of finding that they were *all* good. On top of that, one of the letters in 'Brass Tacks' actually looked as if it hadn't been written by Campbell. How can such things be?

Round half past six that evening I was sitting outside in my slippers — sometimes I wish I could afford a chair — when a telegram boy arrived carrying, of all things, a telegram. I opened it. It seemed the only thing to do.

MEET ME GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY STATION GLENGALL STREET 7:40 THIS EVENING BRITISH EUROPEAN AIRWAYS TERMINAL FORRY

"Steady now," I said to myself and clambered

down off the roof. I dashed through the front door to show the telegram to Madeleine. I think she suspected the moment she saw me that something was up. Feminine intuition I suppose, or it may have been the fragments of wood and glass hanging around my neck. I really should have remembered to open the door first. If you have ever seen a woman who has just been told to expect an important visitor in less than two hours you'll know what happened next. I stepped hastily out of the path of the blur of motion and tore off to borrow some money from my father and order a taxi. Don't think I spend my life ordering taxis — there was a strike of public transport at the time. Don't ask me how they knew Forry Ackerman was coming. Then I went back to the house; it was vibrating rapidly like a power station. There were all sorts of things to be done. I won't bore you with the complications — I haven't decided yet just what else I will bore you with — but at the time, it seemed to me that I had spent the better part of my life knocking beds to pieces, carrying them up and down stairs, and putting them together again. It was a scene of utter chaos and indescribable confusion, something like the subscription department of *Galaxy* magazine.

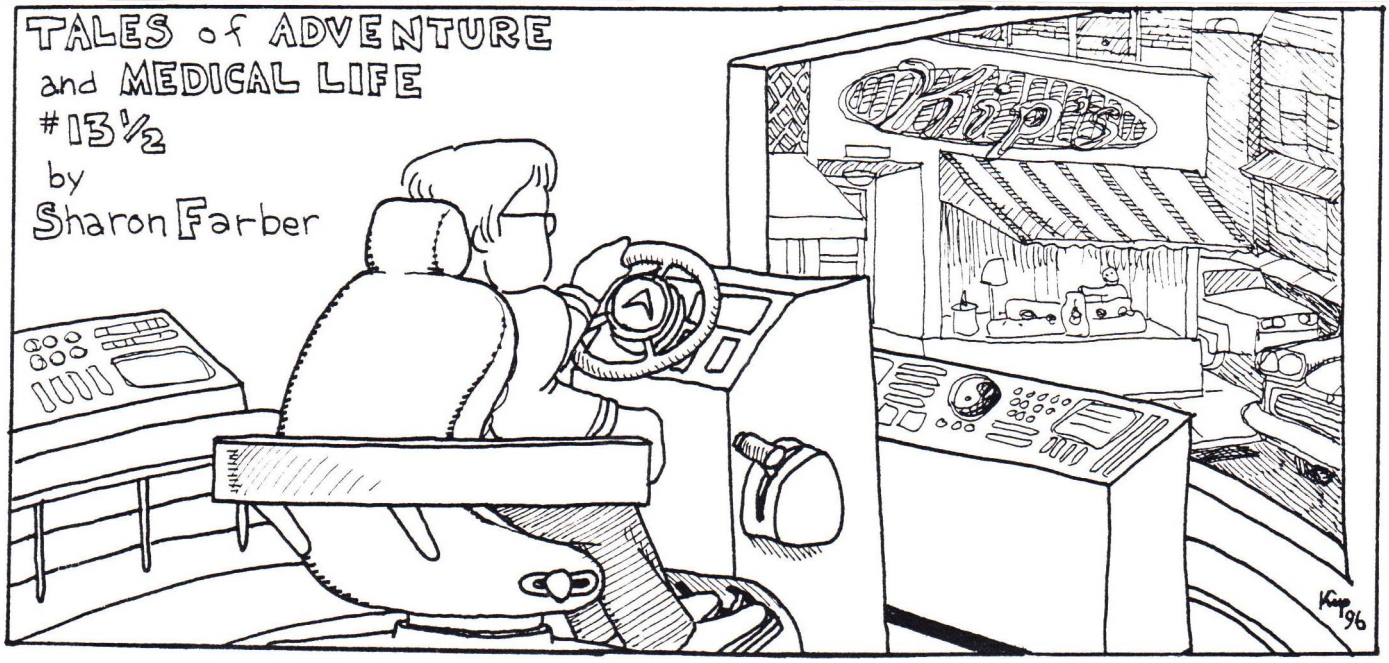
Finally the taxi came and at exactly 7:41, I found the World's No.1 Fan standing quietly in the middle of the railroad station, like a petrified Forrest. I brought him home in triumph and left him with a copy of Lee Hoffman's *Quandry* No. 11 while I mounted my rusty steed once more to send telegrams to James and Bob. I thought of telephoning them, but it would have been difficult since none of us happens to have a telephone. I found they couldn't be reached that night, so I told them to come early the next morning and went back to Forry. I got the distinct impression that he liked *Quandry*; the first thing he asked me when I got back was whether he could get his suit cleaned and pressed. I looked blank, and he explained that he got it all dusty from rolling around on the floor. And the Irish are supposed to have a reputation for making extravagant compliments. As far as I can see, the Americans are way ahead of us. For instance, Forry told us later about one Dr. Keller paid to his wife. They were both seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time. It was a romantic and impressive sight. "You know," said Keller, "when God made the world He thought it needed something like the Grand Canyon, so he just scored His thumbnail across it and made all this." He paused and looked at his wife. "But," he said, "when God made you, dear, He had to use *both hands*." I thought that was perfectly charming, and I should imagine the Kellers are very happily married. It will take more than Dianetics to break up that home.

James and Bob arrived about ten o'clock the next morning and stayed for lunch and tea. Whether through delayed airsickness from his first flight or some mutated virus, Forry wasn't feeling too well, for which we all felt unreasonably guilty, but he didn't let it get him down. He revealed an unexpected talent for mimicry and his impersonations of various fans were delicious. Incidently, I found the reason for that habit I mentioned he had of going 'Mmmmmmm?'. Apparently he had great difficulty in understanding what people were saying and didn't want to be asking them all the time to repeat themselves. We were a bit surprised at this — after all, we only talk about four times as fast as he does and, of course, we have no accent at all.

In the afternoon, I showed him my magnificent collection of books and magazines, which covers the whole field of science fiction from A to B. It must have taken all of two minutes. Then, showing a laudable freedom from envy, Forry wrote a couple of little commemorative pieces for the next *Slant*, and we set up one of them and ran a proof. The other was an unbelievably complicated pun which we didn't feel strong enough to tackle just then. Doubtless, after time has exercised its healing influence, we will be able to face it again.

Not quite twenty-four hours after he arrived, Forry had to fly back to Edinburgh. It seemed an awfully long way to come for such a short visit, but we thought it was worth every penny of Forry's money. I only hope he thought so, too. ☼

✎ Even though a worldcon like L.A.Con is a good place to meet people, it turned out that not everyone we wanted to see did attend. Someone whom we wished could have been in Anaheim is Sharon Farber. We'd looked forward to seeing her (for the first time in three years!), but not long before L.A.Con we received a postcard from her saying she couldn't be there. She was missed, and L.A.Con was less fun without her; we'll have to try again next year in San Antonio.



The Seven Year Itch — Reproductive Strategies in the *Star Trek* Universe ..or.. What Happens When You Drive a Lot to a Satellite Office and Listen to Twelve Hours of Stephen Jay Gould on Tape...

Years ago, before I went to medical school, before I studied chemistry, back about the early Pliocene when it was hard to get to class what with all those giant tree sloths blocking the path... Years ago I was a biology major, studying evolution and animal behavior and comparative anthropology. And I learned what it is that organismal biologists think about all day.

Sex!

Well, they called it 'reproductive strategies', but it was really sex. Everything else — food, shelter, parenting — were all subservient to a creature's need to pass on his or her genes. And every single evolutionary adaptation led, in some way or other, to enhanced reproductive fitness. In other words, you ate, drank, grew, slept, interacted, and breathed in order to have sex.

This eventually led to the realization that sex-obsessed teenaged boys must be the larval form of PhDs in biology.

Around that time, a local station began showing *Star Trek* reruns for the first time. I re-watched "Amok Time," where we learned that every seven years Vulcans must return home to spawn or die. Like salmon. (That puts a bit of a damper on your desire for lox and bagels, doesn't it?)

But it just didn't make sense. Because we had also learned (in "Journey to Babel") that Vulcans are monogamous. And it doesn't make sense for monogamous animals to only mate every seven years. Infant mortality in the wild is too great; the species would die out. The only animal I can think of with a remotely similar cycle is the elephant, and they can get away with it because they're big, live a long time, and are more than able to protect their young.

Okay sure. Infant mortality in civilized society can be pretty low. Modern humans and Vulcans could easily keep a population stable or even expanding by a single birth per breeding every seven years... but remember, it's only been in the last 150 years or

so that a human baby has had over a fifty percent chance of surviving to adulthood.

Well, a friend pointed out, this could have evolved after Vulcans got real tough. But we know from our own history that major physical changes in species stop once cultural evolution takes over. (I don't count sickle cell anemia and racial differences as major changes.) Unless it was the product of conscious gene engineering... yeah, sure, like the Vulcans would consciously invent a method of reproduction that simultaneously scares and embarrasses the hell out of them. A complex reproductive strategy of this sort obviously had to evolve early in the species history. It may even have been a holdover from pre-Vulcan homonids.

Maybe, you say, protoVulcans went into season yearly, and then when more kids survived they only had to do it once every seven years. Okay, that sounds good... but it's hard to evolve in the direction of diminished reproduction. Think of it... Joe and Tom only go into *pon farr* every seven years. But Fred has a mutation that allows him to get horny every five years. Why, in just a millennium or two, everyone will be descended from Fred and cycle twice a decade. That's what they call a reproductive advantage.

Or we could get around it by saying that Vulcans have litters. Yeah, and Spock was an only child because he was mixed breed. I don't think so. Humanoid babies are just too dependent and too demanding of resources and parental care. Most twins in primitive societies don't survive — sometimes there is ritual sacrifice of a twin, which at least assures the survivor of a chance.

We've established that mating every seven years won't keep the species going. And think about the problems of a monogamous relationship — what if the timing is off, and the female isn't in estrous when the male is in *pon farr*? The phrase, "Not tonight, honey, I have a headache" could signal racial suicide. Obviously then, females could not also have a seven year cycle. One suspects, rather, that they are seasonal induced ovulators, releasing eggs as the need arose.

So why did CroVulcans only go into cycle once every seven years? I suspect it has to do with the temperament of Vulcans. I remember Spock saying, sometime or other, that his pre-logic ancestors were emotional and violent. Add sexual competitiveness to that volatile mixture and you lose any chance of pack cooperation. The men are too busy killing each other to hunt mammoths and fight other packs.

#

Back we go to the dawn of time, early summer. A tribe of *australopithecus vulcanis* is huddled about the waterhole, making stone axes, picking vermin from their loved ones' pelts, and fighting over carrion remains. One of the guys puts down his flint knife, and wanders away to sit apart from everyone. He's shivering and a little wild-eyed. His hunting buddies watch him go, and exchange the prehistoric version of 'nudge nudge wink wink'. The women giggle. It'll be a hot time in the old desert tonight.

Night falls. Our hermit (assuming he's not just been picked off by a saber-toothed selat, away from the safety of the fire) steals back to camp, grabs a woman of fertile years without a baby at her breast, and...

...And what? Romances the love of his life? Engages in a lengthy courtship dance? Get real.

No, he rapes her. And then he grabs the next available woman of child-bearing age and rapes her. And so on. Remember, he's only got a night or two, and he has to impregnate as many women as possible to keep the tribe going.

Romantic, huh?

(Though I will admit I had a killer crush on Spock when I was fourteen, I didn't recognize the attraction of his horny incarnation. He had all the subtlety of a teenager full of peach brandy, all hands and looking ready to vomit.)

One suspects that interpersonal affections might have entered into it, or at least that a lack of mutual repugnance was necessary. A male would go first to his favorite female. She might try to keep him there for another go around — repeated matings increasing her chance of conception. (Not consciously, of course. Remember, reproductive drives constitute an

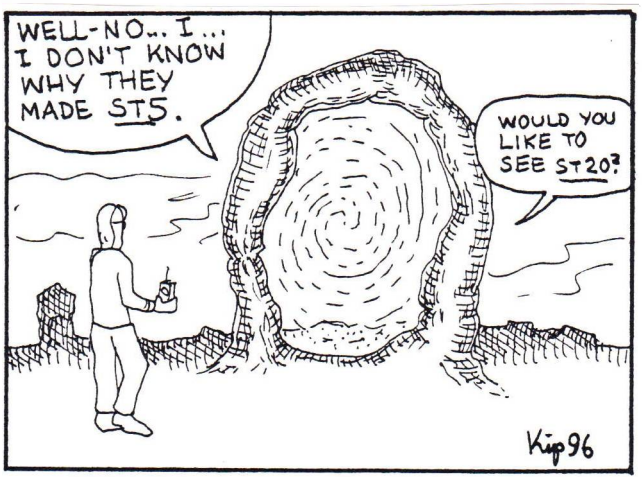
urge to breed, without a consciousness of the consequences.) If she didn't like him, she might fight... and he'd be smarter to look elsewhere than to waste his limited time and energy on an unwilling mate.

#

The seven year cycle raises a few interesting related points. The first is that male and females would have to achieve sexual maturity at different ages, in order to prevent brothers from mating with sisters, with the resultant chance of a high percentage of unfavorable mutations. This would only matter for the first *pon farr*, but given the lifespan of primitive populations, the majority of males would only get a single pop, so to speak.

Also, it would imply that early Vulcan cultures were matriarchal, or at least matrilineal. (This was suggested by the role of T'Pau in Spock's *pon farr* ritual. Face it, Vulcans were portrayed as a very sexist society, but here was a woman presiding over a religious ceremony.)

And remember Spock's dorky brother from *Star Trek V*? (Actually, I prefer to think that when Kirk fell off the mountain and was caught by Spock at the beginning of the movie, his entire spine was sheared from his brain, and he spent the next six months regenerating, making the whole dreadful movie a hallucination while he was sedated. It beats the alternative.) He was the offspring of Sarek and 'a priestess'. 'Priestess' in this case meaning holy hooker. Vulcan society would need a way to deal with the unpleasant fact that unresolved horniness was fatal (unlike human males, who just *say* that)... probably by a religious sisterhood (the Vestal Vulcans?) who have as their spiritual healing mission the succor of unattached males in need.



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But wait, where does monogamy come into this? How can marriage evolve in a species where males only mate every seven years? The closest you should get would be clans with communal harems.

Time for a little hand waving, as my theoretically-inclined professors used to say. What would happen if those saber-toothed selats got organized and ate everyone in the tribe except a very few males and females? Or let's say the tribe has grown too large, resources are short, and everyone's quarreling. Naturally, a small band splits off and crosses the great Red Desert to new hunting grounds. *Pon farr* mating just can't support a small group. How can the species survive, let alone expand?

We have to hypothesize that a Vulcan male and female, in constant close contact, will become able to mate more frequently than every seven years. Maybe, for you romantics, as often as they want to. Thus they will have lots of kids, found a big tribe... and once population density reaches some critical point, the males will once more go into cycles.

I initially thought that this implied *pon farr* involved negative feedback from the pheromones of other Vulcan males — in other words, male-bonding cutting down on libido, kind of like a perpetual bowling night. Then, every seven years, like tension building up on a fault line, horniness bursts out. But if that were the case, Vulcan civilization would inhibit monogamy simply by so many people being around, and Mr. Spock, isolated from his species' pheromones, would be much more attentive to Nurse Chapel.

Thus, monogamy must be possible with positive feedback between pheromone secreting males and females in close proximity, with *pon farr* as the reproductive fall back position. The resumption of *pon farr* would be behavioral — guys associating with guys in hunting groups in larger tribes, with probably a milder group pheromone negative inhibition. Thus, modern Vulcan civilization, with small groups living in dwellings, would allow pairbonding.

One final word on the subject... The low libido of the species goes a long way to explaining how Vulcans could accept a philosophy of logic and self-restraint. After all, it's easy to act cool when you're not hot.

#

The *Star Trek* universe has this bizarre ability to

make all humanoid aliens, no matter how weird and socially obnoxious, monogamous (and able to interbreed. Go figure. We can't interbreed with chimpanzees and we share 99% of our genomes. But I guess it's not quite as bad as *Independence Day*, where a laptop interfaces with an alien computer. I can't even get my Mac to make nice with a PC!) The Federation may have done away with nuclear power, but the nuclear family is everywhere. It's like *Father Knows Best* in outer space. (Hey, no wonder Jane Wyatt was there...)

Let's look at the Klingons. All we know about them is that they live in clans, have a rigid hierarchal social structure, and are very romantic and monogamous. How does that evolve? (And remember, no one's really sure how our species went from the primate basics — harems or amorphous interbreeding tribes — to out current putative monogamous state.)

The closest analogy might be the wolf. Everyone knows that the alpha male and the alpha female are loyal mates, and their adorable puppies are raised by the parents and older siblings, uncles, aunts, etc. It's a bit less well known that the loving alpha couple spend a large proportion of their time preventing other wolves in the pack from mating. The pack can really only support a single litter, so mom and dad have to bully and snarl and interrupt to make sure no one else has any fun.

Perhaps early Klingons were like that — pair-bond couples with subordinate kin. Of course, wolf packs don't mix well with their peers, and Klingons need some mechanism for getting together and forming societies. Perhaps CroKlingon spent the summer months in small packs, hunting, mating, and raising kids. Then in winter they'd join into larger groups, again with rigid hierarchies, to follow migrating herds.

#

The Ferengi... let's think about them for a minute. Make that a brief minute, please, being that they are truly obnoxious antisemitic parodies. Ferengi males like to claim they keep their women naked and subordinate, but so far as we can tell they live in all-male units (the only family we're familiar with being two brothers and a son) and invariably get the hots for tall, domineering women. And their major visible drive is the acquisition of wealth.

(Okay, let's pretend that the recent show with Quark's mom, I Love Lucy-esque as it was, never happened. My scenario is a lot more entertaining.)

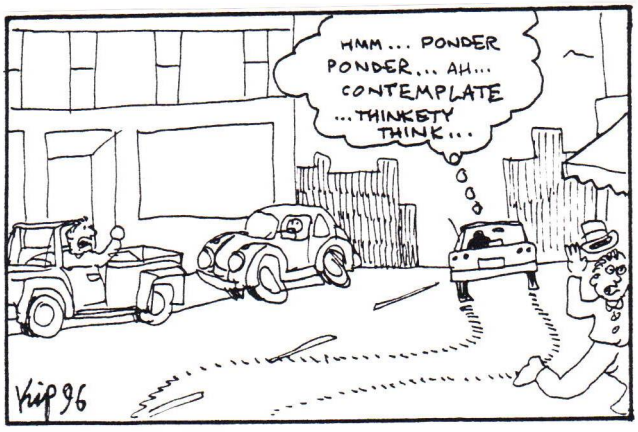
I was thinking Ferengi just pretend their women are weak and inferior — the poor short guys get picked on enough. So they brag, trying to make themselves look like macho dudes whose women stay home tending to kitchen, church, and children.

But I suspect that Ferengi women are big and tough. They stay on the home planet, living separately from the men, hunting and gathering, and raising the kids (kicking the boys out at puberty to join a male herd, like elephants and numerous other relatively social mammals).

They don't need the menfolk until it's time to mate. Then the little guys approach boldly and with great display, bearing gifts. They impress the women with their wealth. (Think bower birds, only with tax-free bonds and jewelry rather than real estate.) They... hell, they bribe them. The guy with the most stuff wins. (Of course, he winds up broke, but I'm sure there's a Rule of Acquisition about starting over.) The women know their suitors are intelligent and canny, and get some nice presents to boot. It certainly fits the facts better than the 'Ozzie and Harriet' scenario that *DS9* inflicted on us.

(I personally like to think of Quark's mom as looking something like Julie Newmar — tall, in control, and disdainful. And she may be naked... but only because she's wearing so many jewels and scarves and other expensive gifts that there isn't any room for clothes.)

Well, that's all for *Star Trek* aliens and their evolution; I've got more important things to ponder on my long drives between hospitals... like who's stronger, The Hulk or Superman? ☼



✎ There were some obvious contrasts between L.A.Con and the 1995 Worldcon, Scotland's Intersection, not the least of which was the climate! However, in spite of the great distance between the two locations, both were truly *Worldcons*, with large delegations from many countries in Europe and Australasia. Although fandom originated in the English-speaking world, there are now many prominent fans whose first language is not English, including the Fan Guests of L.A.Con and the writer of the following article.

Reflecting back over twenty years of involvement in fandom, I think that the thing that first of all got me caught in fandom was the fan-slang, or its fannish language. It's a remarkable language in many respects, but not a respectable language in some remarks, to quasi-quote Walt Willis. The first fanzine I ever received, in the spring of 1976, was No. 78 of *Fanac* (the Swedish version of *Fanac*, which lived much longer than its American counterpart). Just receiving something called 'fanac', or speaking of 'fanzines' will make you intrigued and confused — and hooked in about a second!

Basically, Swedish fandom uses the same fan-slang as American and British fandom, but there is a smorgasbord of local variations and inventions. If a fannish word exists in English, it is perfectly acceptable to use it at once and expect everyone to know it. (If they don't they will have to learn — and your ego-boo increases since you managed to puzzle your fellow fan.) We will certainly understand mimeo, LoC, beanie, hoax, oneshot, mimeo, gafia, fiawol, fijagh, DNQ, RSN (short for *Riktigt Snart Nu*, but it means the same), con (the longer word is *kongress*), and so on.

English words usually work fine in Swedish, since both languages are Germanic and related. Not to mention that Swedish since the 19th century has borrowed many English words, due to the industrial revolution, the British Empire, American music and film, and later the computer industry. Swedish has borrowed words from Latin, German and French too, which English has also done. English has even borrowed from Scandinavian languages. When the Vikings occupied most of England, English got words like 'gate' and 'window'. (But 'gate' or *gata* in present day Swedish means 'street' not 'entrance', and 'window' means 'an eye towards the wind' in Danish and Norwegian.) Present day Swedish has also exported a few words into English, like 'ombudsman', 'smorgasbord' and 'moped'.

Of course, we'd often put Swedish endings and spelling conventions into English fan words. Consonants are often doubled in Swedish and an ending 'a' indicates a verb, so 'pub' (or publish) became *pubba* and 'sub' (or subscribe) became *subba*. 'To LoC' could sometimes becomes 'LoCca'. To make a Swedish verb out of 'to trade' becomes more difficult — *tradea* just doesn't look right. There is sometimes a variation in pronounciation. Swedish tend to put the stress on the second syllable, or have equal stress (which for foreigners make the language sound like the Swedish Chef in *The Muppet Show*). Thus some Swedish fans will say 'fanzi-ne' instead of 'fan-zine'. Fannish spelling is also important. An extra 'h' here and there shows the rhight shpirit. An 'f' in front of words is fanother fhing, with fariations.

Swedish fanzines in my early days sometimes had lists of hundreds of fan-slang terms, which were immediately consumed and put into use without the slightest hesitation. If there wasn't a word for a central concept, one would immediately be invented, and if something funny happened a new word or phrase or

concept emerged. This is the basis of local variations.

Two early sources of inspiration were Elst Weinstein's *The Fillostrated Fan Dictionary*, which I ordered from the States (I found every every second word in it to be an abbreviation of some sf society, but still...) and Ingvar Svensson's *Skandifandom*. Svensson did two thick 'yearbooks' of Scandinavian fandom in the mid 60s, which did things like listing the short stories in all fanzines, exploring all possible variations of abbreviating 'science fiction' ('sf', 's-f', 'SF', 'Sf', 'Sci-fict', 'sci-fi', etc.), and listing fan-slang.

In the 50s Sweden had its local version of Ackermanese, 'Appeltofftese' (or *appeltofftska*), named after Alvar Appeltofft, an enthusiastic but somewhat eccentric Swedish fan from that decade. Appeltofftese was a mixture of general slang, English, other languages, fan-slang and totally invented words. A simulation of Appeltofftese would sound like: *"Amigo, I dig dein fanzine. Jeez, it's cool & ql! Fillot på side zwei is tooooo much! But beware of the marsianerna som will invadera. Jag have mein Luger ready."* 'Ql' reached widespread use, an abbreviation of *kul*, which means 'funny'. The incomprehensible 'Henrylinderese' and the witty 'Adlerberthese' are later variations of importance. The latter, by book reviewer Roland Adlerberth, always notes that the heroes *klarar hyskan å det förtjänstfullaste* ("fixes up the mess real good"), making a book *en hörnsten i varje sann sf-fans bokhylla* ("a cornerstone in the bookshelf of every true sf-fan" — of course, you'll need a bookshelf shaped like a polygon).

In late 1978, I and a (then) friend started a newszine, *Vheckans Åvfentyr* ("The Wheeks Advfenture," which I have mentioned in earlier articles in *Mimosa*) that did a lot of fan-slang-slinging, constantly distorting words and inventing new ones. For instance, the then half-known semi-pro Steve Sem-Sandberg was renamed 'Steve Slime-Sandberg' since we didn't like him. (Now he is the highly paid cultural editor of Sweden's second morning paper, and I'd better shut up.) Things we didn't like were 'highly puerile' (*högeligen puerilt*) or 'unreasonably humoristic' (*orimligt lustifierande*). We were in constant feuding with the local Tolkien Society Forodrim, or *Fårodrim* ('Sheepodrim') as we said, covering the adventures of the typical member, *Burkalf* ('Tinalf' or 'Jaralf'). Letters to Tolkienists should, we argued, be ended with *Ringaktningsfullt* ('Disrespectfully', note the 'ring'). The fantasy fans have a wide variety of words, by the way. I won't go into that, but I could mention that the imcompetent translation of *LOTR* into Swedish by Åke Ohlmarks is the cause of *ohlmarxism*.

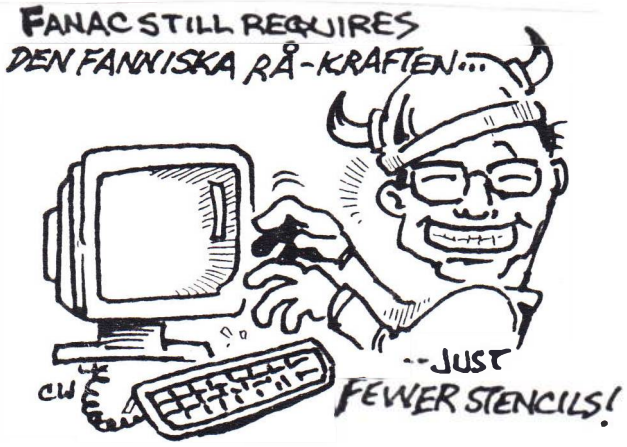
There were sometimes mini-feuds ('feud' is *fejd* in Swedish) around the usage of fannish words. Some wanted 'fanzine' to be spelled *fansin* (since we say 'magasin' instead of 'magazine'). Others pointed out that fanzines weren't a fannish sin and the 'fansin' side eventually lost. Some comics fans have adopted 'fansin' but that's OK since comics *is* a fannish sin.

Roscoe, the third fannish Ghod, was an important import into Swedish fandom. The concept of fannish Ghods was too powerful to bypass. Available information on Roscoe was a bit meagre, but it was easy to fill in details. Every issue of the newszine quoted the Roscoenian motto "The Reality of Fanac, the Hope of Ego-boo, and the Promise of Bheer". (The newszine was also called *The Jack Wiedenbeck Magazine*; Harry Warner, jr. once wrote that "Jack Wiedenbeck was the first fake-fan.") From 1981 on I have arranged Fourth of July parties to the honor of Roscoe, when Stockholm fans gather to drink enormous amounts of bheer after which we will see Roscoe's shimmering rocket in the sky, to remind us that the beaver Ghod on the last day of the 200th Fandom will descend from the sky to revive all acti-fans and bring them to the Perfect Fandom.

There were some attempts to use competing Ghods (Ghu had a brief popularity), even Swedish ones like *Birger*, a hedgehog who flies over the sky in his *red UFO*. (A rip-off of Roscoe? Beaver = hedgehog, rocket = UFO?) 'Birger' was invented by Mika Tenhovaara and Tony Eriksson, who also made a long complete list of new Swedish fanslang, that had some humorous points but never caught on. For instance,

they suggested *NKVD* instead of 'SMOF' ('NKVD' is the old name for the Soviet KGB). They also called the mimeo *vevmys* (approximate translation: 'crank-cosy'). Eriksson also found The Best Place in the World (*Världens bästa plats*) in a sand-pit outside the city of Eskilstuna.

Another concept of fan-religious implications is 'the fannish raw-force' or *den fanniska rå-kraften*, which is the high energy extra-force a fan may utilize when he for instance goes into the twentieth straight hour of typing stencils. Just *rå-* ('raw-') became a popular, genral prefix from this.



Stockholm fandom (or StF, or The Squares of StF, from Irish Fandom or The Wheels of IF) wasn't the only ones to invent new words and concepts. In Sala fandom they found out that any question could be answered with *Det finns mycket* ("There is much"), a phrase that spread rapidly, and that an sf hero always could get out of trouble by *gnägga sin käcka rokokorumpa i morgongröten* ("rubbing your dashing rococo ass in the morning porridge").

When it comes to food, *jordnötter* (peanuts) is important, being the food of the early Stockholm club meetings in Lars-Olov Strandberg's apartment and later the object of The Great Peanut Race. In Gothenburg, *spritskransar* (a sort of cookies) became popular. (I think it started with someone saying: "Anything may become fan-slang. Take *spritskransar*, for instance." And he proved right!) In Linköping the fans eat some sort of small candy, shaped like flying saucers. A mythical dessert is 'Fanana Split' (ice cream with bananas shaped like rockets).

Witter, from the name of the fangroup *Witterhetssällskapet Din Ven Fandom*, became a central concept in Stockholm fandom. It is a variation of the word 'vitter', which means 'knowledgable', but came to be used for anything witty, fannish or funny. Local inventions in Stockholm fandom included *ärkeneo* ('arch-neo') and *KG* or *Kul Grej*, 'cool [or funny] thing'). The arch-neo *Ture Storm* is a Swedish variation of Joe Fann. The concept of *dumska*, an ungrammatical variation of stupid (approx. 'stupidness'), became popular from the absurd comic strip "Blixt-Grodon" by the fan Lars "Lon" Olsson. The term 'recenzine' is sometimes used for a review-fanzine. 'Blast corflu' (*sprängkorrekturlack*) was used by fannish secret agents to get into high security board rooms. Maybe you could get the help of a *FATT-fan*? ("Fandom's Answer to a Twelve-ton Truck," a big and strong fan.)

An important invention, for good or more likely worse, was the fanzine blockade (*fanzineblockad*; Swedish often use compound words, like German), invented by Marvyn De Vil in 1978. If you are in a feud with someone you may put him in fanzine blockade, i.e., you won't send him your fanzine and you may possibly persuade your friends to do the same. The theory is that your resolute action will force your foe to gafiate, ha ha! (But in practice it seldom works.)

For many years the concept of a *fanvecka* ('fan-week') was important — if you have the house for yourself, announce a fanweek and invite all fans. A 'fannish weekend' is just for a couple of days. To attend these events, you we're often tempted with *ett koppel brudar* ('a leash-ful of broads'), which is quite essential to engage in *göka spånken* ('to fuck the booze') resulting in *en massa skakande gående på* ('a lot of shaking going on'). If you can only meet in a group phone call, over a switchboard, you have a *telefangathering*.

Swedish fandom adopted the name *Sverifandom* (from 'Sverige' = 'Sweden' in Swedish) and Scandinavian fandom was *Skandifandom* (local spelling is 'k', not 'c'). If you like something, you may say "it'Sveri ghood." Bheer, of course, became *öhl* ('öl' is related to the English 'ale', but don't order a big 'öl' in Germany unless you are a robot and fancy a can of oil) and we did sometimes try to build that bheer can tower to the moon. The Danish and Norwegians are similar to the Swedes in fan-slang use, but maybe not so extreme.

An import from Danish and Norwegian is *bytteabbo*, which means trading subscriptions to fanzines. The Sala fans in the late 70s, by the way, had

the habit of explaining all typoes as "Norwegian fan-slang." The Danish fans call their country 'Fanmark', but if you're in evil spirits you may say *Mundanemark*. A Norwegian breakthrough in printing technology was the *Rory Rull*, basically mimeographing without a mimeo. If you're really desperate you can use with *pottography*, invented by Denis Lindbohm in the 50s, using special paper developed in ammonia that smells like piss. Anyway, it is better than *proffset*. You might want to do a tape-fanzine on a cassette instead, a *kazzine*.

Two words (possibly) inspired by German fandom, that has had some use here, are *Vurguzz* and *voldes-fan*. The first is a fannish drink, some sort of blog, said to be popular among German fans. 'Voldes-fan' is a fan who is "violent and destructive," like throwing water-bombs from the top floor; the term had some use after the incident when a couple of fans attracted the police after firing blanks outside the SFSF clubhouse. Speaking of blog, one might mention my own home-brew wine, Chateau Roscoe; I've called my homebrewed *Fannenbräu*, and I've sometimes tried to brew cider, *TryckCider* (= 'printed pages'). If you drink enough of this weird stuff you become a *brungangol*, an ancient Nordic word meaning 'he who often goes to the well'. By the way, Yngve, as in the similar "Yngvi is a louse," is also old Nordic.

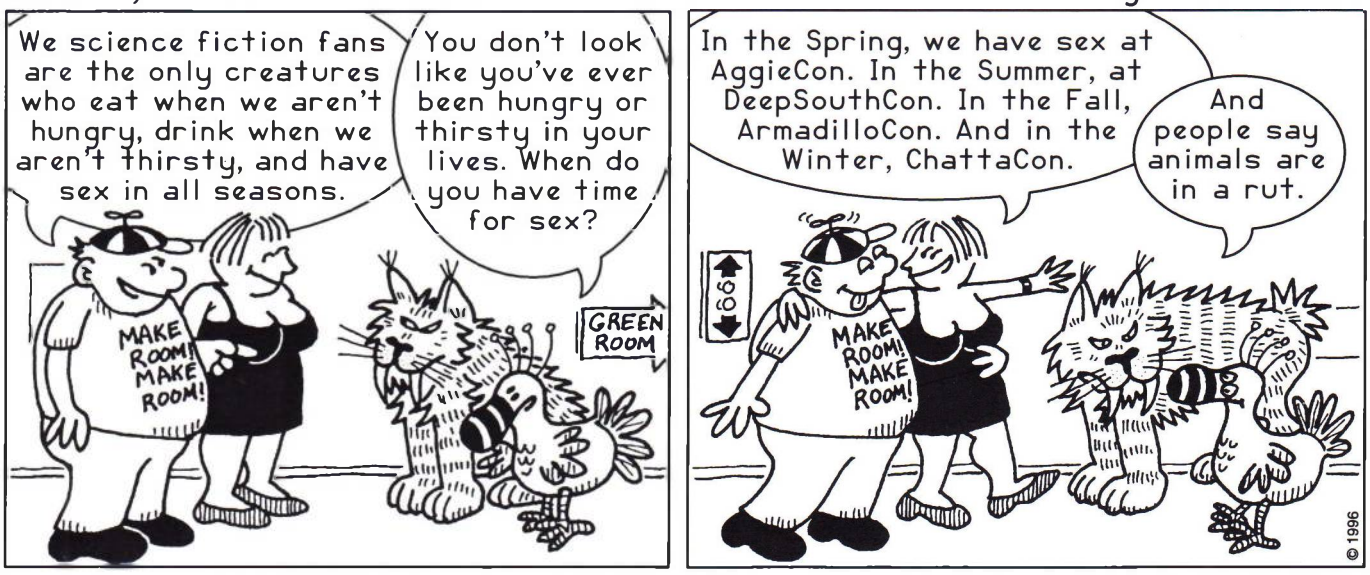
Some have tried to replace the term 'science fiction' itself in Swedish. Suggestions include *vetsaga*, *teknovision* and *faktasi*. The latter was in fact Swedish *Galaxy*'s winner in their great contest to find a replacement-word, around 1960. The only impact it had was to rename the publishing firm of Sam J Lundwall (Lord Theo of Chandra), Fantasi & Fakta, to *Faktasi & Fanta*. The latter is a popular drink, *'stäss* ('of course').

Finally, a number of quotations have intrigued and amused Swedish fans over the years. The motto of Borås fandom used to be "How, but where?" (*Hur, men vart?*), unless they simply shouted *Boråååås!* or commented *Så sött då!* ("How sweet, eh!"). Gothenburg fandom correctly observed that "Fandom is something much bigger than ourselves" (*Fandom är något mycket större än oss själva*). Anything may be "scratchy and so" (*raspigt och dant*) or "such shit!" (*sån't skit!*). If you really want to see Swedish fans roll on the floor you may claim, "My name is Nisse Ear" (*Jag heter Nisse Öra*). But is hard to beat the interview with the fan Wolf von Witting (also known as *Wull Vör-Wirring*, 'total confusion') in a national newspaper in 1979. When asked why he liked science fiction and space, he answered: "Just imagine, white dots in a black darkness!" (*Tänk, vita prickar i ett svart mörker!*). That was years before Carl Sagan (when he wasn't busy stealing my *Ansible*s) found out about the blue dots. And if you have to finish a letter or an article fast you might write, "I have to finish now, because Lars von Laserbeam just entered the room."

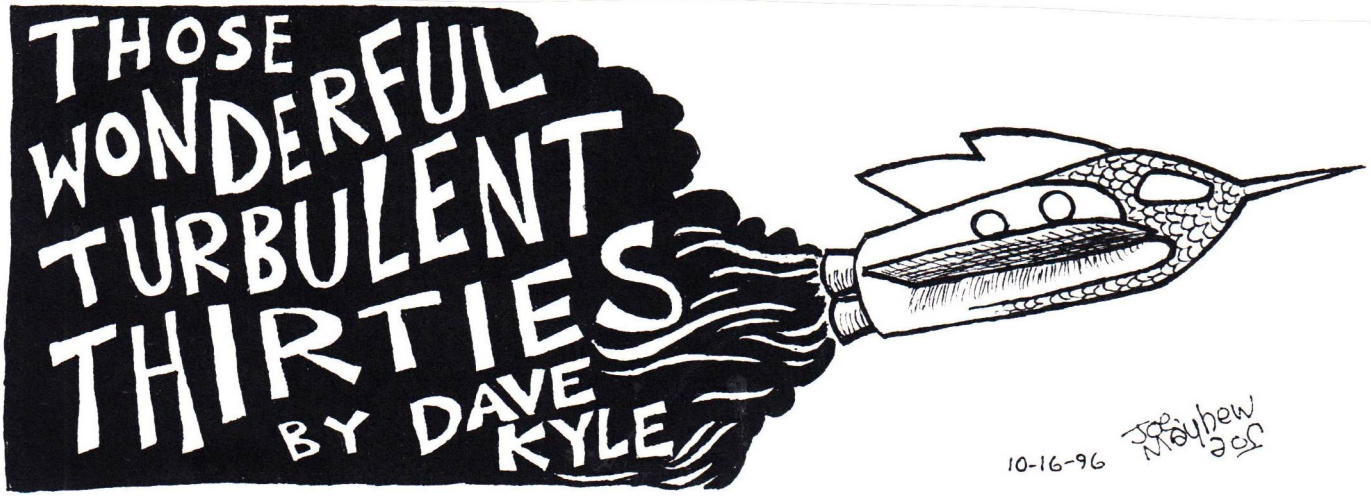
Jag måste sluta nu, för Lars von Laserstråle kom just in genom dörren. ☼

CHAT, the 4th Fannish Ghod

By TEDDY HARVIA



✎ L.A.Con and Intersection had other commonalities besides their international nature, of course. One of the most interesting was their timebinding nature; many different fan generations were represented, and you could delve through past eras of fandom just by talking with some of the attendees. One of the attendees at both Intersection and L.A.Con was Dave Kyle, who has been active in every fan era from practically the beginning of fandom. In this article, Dave continues his description of the pre-fandom days.



On January 7, 1929, Buck Rogers — a comic strip character — woke up in the future. He staggered out of his cave into the twenty-fifth century one week *before* my tenth birthday. About six months later, Hugo Gernsback snapped back onto the magazine scene. His *Science Wonder Stories* and *Air Wonder Stories* appeared on the newsstands alongside his lost child, the pioneering *Amazing Stories* where Buck was born. History also marks that in 1929, the term 'science fiction' was used for the first time.

In the previous issue of *Mimosa*, I recalled my first ten years of life when I was "Raised in the Roaring Twenties." I indicated that my second decade began in that historic science fiction year of 1929, although I unknowingly and unfortunately missed the start of the action.

Would that it were so, but neither Hugo Gernsback nor Buck Rogers stirred my passion for the yet unnamed science fiction. Instead, it was certain youth-oriented material that whet my appetite, such as boys magazines, and particularly Tom Swift. *The American Boy* magazine was very much an early source of imaginitive fiction by writers like Carl H. Claudy and Thomson Burtis. Then came the pulps.

As I left the 1920s, I had an explosion in my reading tastes. Pulp magazines, I slowly realized, were a plethora on the mass reading market. I became fascinated by their gaudy-colored covers. The fast-paced stories were slam-bang adventures about every imaginable topic — sports, the West, railroads, the sea, aviation... just about everything. Well, *almost* everything. Only an occasional 'unusual' story, a genuine prototypical sf story, surfaced in that ocean of fiction. These pulps pushed me considerably farther along the road of the popular fiction of the day and made me an avid aviation fan.

It took Gernsback to inform me that what I really liked was 'scientific fiction', or 'science fiction', and that through those gateways I could fly into other dimensions using my imagination. That awareness finally crystallized after my thirteenth birthday.

I vividly remember that day. It was the spring of 1933, and I was now in that rarified air of being a teenager and a high school freshman, with a new sense of maturity. The event which lit up my new world happened on Cottage Street, on the wooden steps of the front porch of two elderly neighbors, the Joyces, brother and sister. Their house was diagonally across from mine in my hometown of Monticello, New York. Across the dirt road from them, the local gang of kids (using the pleasant, old fashion term) customarily played in a huge, ragged field partially bordered by wild apple trees. The Joyce front porch was a sort of friendly community hangout, a peaceful spot honored with good manners during the rest breaks between stickball and kick-the-can games.

The event which changed my life was simple. One of the older boys, Nick, who might have been one of those whose evening conversations I overheard one evening arguing about stars and planets and possible extraterrestrials, casually laid down a magazine next to me. It was not just another pulp, for its larger size was

unique. It had an intriguing, fantastic, colorful cover — a golden cylindrical, needle-nosed, wingless aircraft was arrowing down on a large, green globe, a strange mechanism whose companion lay half broken on the sea. I picked it up and looked at it.

It was the June 1929 issue of *Science Wonder Stories* — four years old, yet it seemed like new.

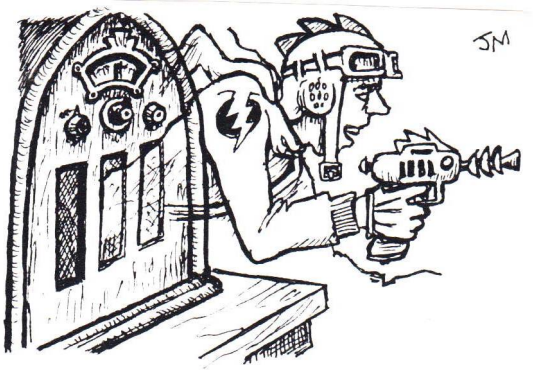
I was immediately intrigued, on my way to infatuation.

I didn't have to plea to borrow it. Nick recognized a possible convert, so I took it home and sealed my destiny. Appleton's simple yarns of young inventor Tom Swift had been terribly juvenile; Burroughs's swashbuckling adventures on Earth and Mars were fantasy yarns, good but not 'scientific'. But here there were stories more fascinating and intellectually more provocative than I had ever previously imagined.

It turned out that the magazine was Volume 1, Number 1 — the one in which the term 'science fiction' was first coined. My life in sf had begun and fandom was just around the corner.

#

It was the radio broadcasts of Buck Rogers, first airing in November of 1932, which had greatly fed my interest in the yet-to-be-identified science fiction. The term 'science fiction' had, by then, been introduced to only a hundred thousand or so magazine readers, but 'Buck Rogers stuff' was quickly picked up for use by the uninitiated. It was the easy password for reference to the technologically or scientifically unusual, and 64 years later, it still is. 'Buck Rogers' has been in the dictionary for many years ("of pertaining to all things futuristic"), but lost its academic status and was generally discarded when 'science fiction' entered the dictionaries and replaced that comics-created romantic term. But yet, that shouted, echo-chamber enhanced, long drawn-out radio introduction — *"Buck Rogers in the Twenty-FIFTH CEN-tury"* — still lingers forcefully in my head.



By the third year of the Buck Rogers broadcasts, because I had some artistic talent, cartoonist Alex Raymond had become the dominant influence on me. I regularly savored his *Flash Gordon* in the Sunday newspaper. Not only did the adventures thrill me, but the artistry of his drawings had me imitating his distinctive style. To this day, I have many sheets saved from the Sunday papers. In no small measure, Flash and Alex (not to overlook Dale Arden) nudged me into going to an art school after high school graduation in place of Dartmouth College (which I couldn't afford). Before Buck Rogers, I found nothing comparable in the comics, yet the strip had hardly any early influence on me, because my family didn't get the newspapers in which he appeared. Nevertheless, those two comics together inspired me to create, in 1935, my first fanzine. At first it was titled *Fantasy World.* According to Robert Bierbohm, who is currently finishing a book on the history of comics, I was the first ever to create a sf comic book in fandom.

#

One particular store in Monticello was a focal point for my interest in the pulp magazines. It was called the United Cigar Store, locally owned by a family named Wollenski. The store was part of a widespread chain, distinctive for corner locations in New York City, similar to and functioning like the ubiquitous candy stores. The large tomato-colored signs above the door with their bold, gold raised letters proclaiming 'United Cigar' are a warm and friendly memory.

All United Cigar Stores seemed constantly busy, especially because they were the place to go to make a telephone call, in the type of booth that Superman was to make famous for another generation. Inside our local store was a metal rack holding magazines and newspapers. Outside, on the street, was a large wooden newsstand, a waist-high box on which was spread the various newspapers and around which were, upright, a ring of the latest magazines. These displays of publications were to me as dazzling lights are to moths. The bright and provocatively colored covers of the pulp magazines most captured my attention. Carefully, I would slide a pulp from the indoor rack, never from the outside table-box where I might be considered a potential thief. Gingerly, almost guiltily although not furtively, I would examine some pulps. I knew my actions might be disapproved, but my conduct was exemplary and I was tolerated. As I became a regular customer, with my pulp addiction for flying stories soon followed by my stronger science fiction addiction,

I became friendly with the old man (well, to *me* he was old) who ran the store. When Mr. Wollenski became aware of my enthusiasm, he encouraged rather than disapproved of my examinations. He was patient when I would ask, "Has *Wonder Stories* come in yet?" And when he said it hadn't but that another magazine had (the non-Gernsback *Amazing Stories*), I would glance at it, hunger for it, sigh inwardly and then deny myself, because I couldn't spend the money I had saved for my *Wonder*. Twenty-five cents was a big deal in those days.

And so it was that in 1933, I became a certifiable regular reader of science fiction, with Hugo Gernsback and his magazines as my guide and standard. Loyally, I bought *Wonder Stories* immediately upon the day it reached the newsstands. I quivered with the thrill of holding it, feasting my eyes on the inimitable Frank R. Paul cover, sniffing the aroma of the pulp paper and fresh ink. Soon I had a routine: first, I checked the contents page, then I quickly skimmed the department at the back, 'The Reader Speaks'. It was there I had the camaraderie of fellow fans, listening to their printed praises, their boasts, their comments, and — with irritation or approval — their criticisms. Two letter writers were predominant: Jack Darrow from Chicago and Forrest J Ackerman from San Francisco. And soon another regular: David A. Kyle from Monticello, N.Y.!

In the June 1934 issue my first letter appeared. The heading read: 'From a Young Fan'. That was me!

The letter was long and told in detail how I had discovered *Science Wonder Stories*. I was lavish in my praise for Frank R. Paul, and was proud of my growing collection of back copies. Most significant was my closing paragraph: "I'm going to stop now, for I think this letter is too long already. Watch for my letter every month, for my middle name — is Ackerman!"

Shortly thereafter, I received a personal letter typewritten with a green ribbon and signed in green ink. In a friendly and casual manner, it personally drew me into the whirlwind of fandom where I have been ever since. It was signed by Forrest J Ackerman.

Forry and I are related only as brothers in the fraternity of science fiction, but I consider we are as truly cousins as two might be.

From then on, my personal sf adventures began. That same year, the Science Fiction League was organized by Gernsback, with Forry and Jack on the editorial board. {{ ✎ see Dave's article "The Science Fiction League" in *Mimosa* 14. }} My involvement became intense, and my activities accelerated through my final high school years, with 1936 being the zenith of excitement and glory. That year, I published and contributed to fanzines, joined the formation of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, started the Phantasy Legion, was a participant in the first science fiction convention ever held, was on the verge of close friendships with Fred Pohl, Dick Wilson, Don Wollheim, Isaac Asimov and others — and *Wonder Stories* accepted my short story, "Golden Nemesis."

Yes, 1936 was a great year!

And 1936 was also a terrible year!

I'll repeat the ending to that previous article: "Then the world ended after April 1936. *Wonder Stories* was gone! Hugo Gernsback was gone, too!" No doubt about it, the departure of Hugo Gernsback from the science fiction field was devastating for me and for others.

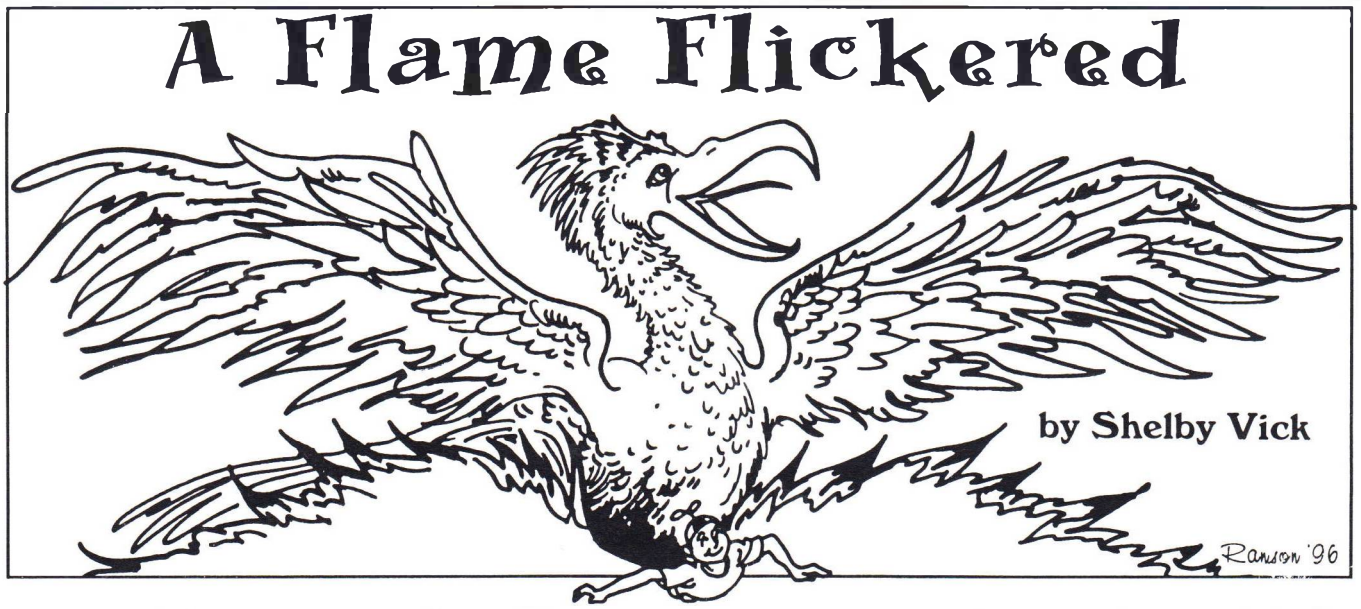
Science fiction has, however, survived, soaring to greater heights in the Golden Age as the Grand Masters began appearing on the scene. (How the revitalization of sf affected me in the second half of my second decade is a tale to be told further in the next article in this series.) In the autumn of 1936, I stepped through the most magical gateway of them all, at the first-ever science fiction convention, when typewriters and letters took on the substance of flesh and blood — and again, in 1939, at the first 'World's SF Convention', when my childhood mentor 4SJ and other young men, fans and pros alike, became real.

In retrospect, it is so very difficult for me to comprehend that the giant in the science fiction magazine field, the one who recognized the unique niche and created scientifiction (scientific fiction) and science fiction with its fandom, Hugo Gernsback, rose and fell within one decade — from 1926 to 1936. This historical fact is almost incomprehensible — only ten years, ten years which shaped not just my life but those as well of so many of my friends. In fact, Gernsback put his imprint on an entire, enormous field.

I remember when I was about ten years old, overhearing those older kids out on the street, under the street lamp arguing fantastic ideas. They were thoughtful, imagining wonderful things. Science fiction epitomized romance then. Science offered mysteries — dreams with infinite possibilities about a technological future. There were youthful, optimistic visions. And there was a strange universal truth — truth as it existed for that turbulent time so very many years ago. We science fiction readers had the promise from our genre of a continuing search for the truth as it would be in the future. I felt that way before I was a teenager. With the promise still there, I still feel that way now. ☼

✎ With more than 6,000 attendees, L.A.Con was one of the bigger science fiction conventions we've ever attended. It seems normal now to expect conventions of this magnitude every September, but it didn't used to be that way; some of the early worldcons had only a hundred or two attendees. Early fandom was very much a grass roots movement, and it's only too easy to forget that it all got started many decades ago with obscure, nearly forgotten little fan groups like the one described in the following article.

A Flame Flickered



It was a balmy summer day in the small town of Lynn Haven, Florida. The light, sweet smell of honeysuckle was in the air, the aroma augmented by the cloying sweetness of gardenias. Naturally-jeweled hummingbirds darted from blossom to blossom, undisturbed by the few cars that passed on the concrete street. Inside a two-story frame building, an old building, much bare wood showing between flecks of white paint, *The Shape of Things to Come* was flickering on a sheet that had been hung as a temporary movie screen.

The year was 1948. The Florida Flames were having their one and only convention.

Now I'm sure Harry Warner, Jr., has no record of any fan group called the 'Florida Flames', and I doubt if there's a record anywhere of our convention. We consisted of several Lynn Havenites, most of which did no corresponding whatsoever, and we had no clubzine. At the time, I was not publishing an ish, so there was little word spread.

This didn't bother us; we weren't up to anything big.

My memory bears a strong resemblance to a farmer cultivating a field; my subconscious is the farmer. Some things are weeded out by mistake, never to be seen again — and unfortunately, the names of the members of the Flames escapes me. Or else there were only three — a friend named Charles Heisner, another friend named Sandy Land, and myself; that's all I can recall. We three were all in our late teens, and avid readers of sf. Dunno why we decided to take a name, but we did. We decided it should be something alliterative, and almost became the 'Florida Flamingos', but sanity prevailed.

By now, I forgot who first came up with the idea, but all agreed to it. Joe Green (now Joseph L. Green, published author and NASA employee) lived in Cottondale, a smaller town about fifty miles north of Lynn Haven. Joe had a friend, Joe Christoff, in Pensacola, who said he could round up a copy of *The Shape of Things to Come* for us to show. Ladies of a local writers group I belonged to agreed to provide covered dish meals for a couple of lunches if they could attend. Because of my presence in the club, they were aware of sf and wanted to see the movie; a couple of them had even heard of it.

There was an old building which had once been a movie theatre, but now belonged to the city. It was used as a meeting area for some local clubs. These clubs usually met at night and seldom on weekends, so we were able to obtain it as our convention hall. It came complete with some tables and folding chairs, so we were in business.

Three out-of-towners attended: Joe Green, Joe

Christoff, and Lin Carter, who was from St. Petersburg. I had met Lin a year or so earlier when I was in St. Pete for a few months. With the presence of these three, the event wasn't just a few locals getting together anymore; our gathering was a Real Convention.

One social commentary: Sandy Land and Joe Christoff were practicing homosexuals, and Lin Carter said he was, as well. While the locals may not have known the tendencies of Christoff and Lin, they were certainly aware of Sandy's sexual tastes. No one, however, seemed to pay any attention. Another 'plus' for Lynn Haven.

Other than the movie, I remember very little of the convention itself, except that everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, including the women from the writers club. And there was a costume party! I had so much going on that I had no costume; at the last minute I got out my pipe and put a pen behind my ear.

"You're not in costume!" someone objected.

"Sure I am!" I responded, using the stem on my pipe to indicate the pen behind my ear. "I'm the author who dreamed all this up!" I was accepted.

But even though the convention was a success, the Flames never tried it again. The fire just slowly died...

...for the Flames, that is. Lin Carter went on to active fandom and a career as an author. Joe Green ended up working for NASA (what field could be more desired, at that time, for a fan?) and sold many stories, articles, and books. I sold a few paperbacks (not sf) myself, and even went on to put out a fanzine or six. In 1952, I formed the Willis Fan Fund, and have now returned to active fandom. A series of Phoenixes arose from the ashes... ☼

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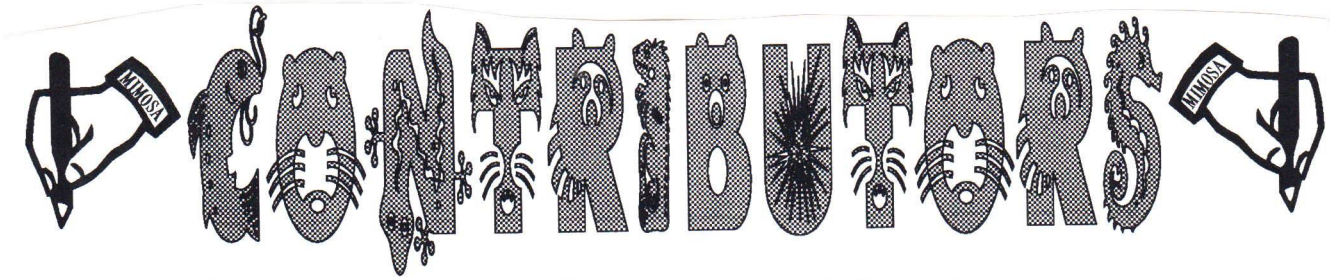
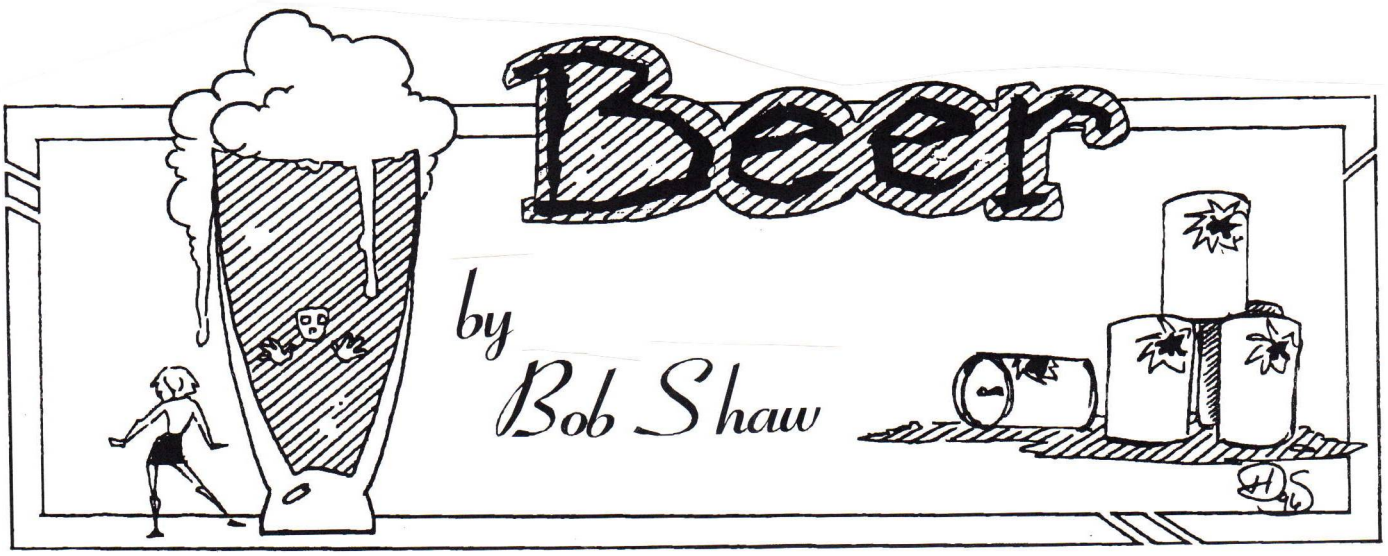


Forrest J Ackerman, 2495 Glendower Avenue, Hollywood, California 90027
Ray Allard, 3603 South Taylor Street, Arlington, Virginia 22206
John Berry, 4 Chilterns, South Hatfield, Herts AL10 8JU, United Kingdom
Sheryl Birkhead, 23629 Woodfield Road, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20882
Michael Burstein, P.O. Box 1713, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146 **(COA)**
Ahrvid Engholm, Renstiernas Gata 29, S-116 31 Stockholm, Sweden
Kurt Erichsen, 2539 Scottwood Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43610
Sharon Farber, 1000 Panorama Drive, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37421
Brad Foster, P.O. Box 165246, Irving, Texas 75016
Teddy Harvia, 710 Regency Drive, Hurst, Texas 75016
Debbie Hughes, 220 Watt Road, Farrugut, Tennessee 37922
Dave Kyle, 289 Ashton Road, Potsdam, New York 13676 **(COA)**
Peggy Ranson, 1435 Toledano Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70115
William Rotsler, 17909 Lull Street, Reseda, California 91355
Julia Morgan-Scott, 108 Woodlawn, Chattanooga, Tennessee 37411
Nancy Tucker Shaw, 695 Judd Road, Saline, Michigan 48176
Diana Stein, 3665 North Adams Street, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48304 **(COA)**
Shelby Vick, 627 Barton Avenue, Springfield, Florida 32404 **(COA)**
Harry Warner, Jr., 423 Summit Avenue, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740
Charlie Williams, 1200 Woodcrest Drive, Knoxville, Tennessee 37918
Kip Williams, 118 Terrell Road, Newport News, Virginia 23606
Walt Willis, 9 Alexandra Road, Donaghadee BT21 0QD, Northern Ireland **(COA)**

✎ We want to close out this issue with more wit and wisdom of Bob Shaw. This one is special. It's a transcript (kindly provided by Nancy Tucker Shaw) from a speech that Bob gave more than twenty years ago, at "An Evening for James Blish." Perhaps appropriately, it's about one of Bob's favorite things...



I don't know how many of you realize it, but when Judy [Blish] was masterminding this evening we're having together she assigned different tasks to different people, and she told me I was to speak about beer. I'm wondering why I was chosen for this particular job. It may have been because a couple of years ago at a convention I was seen standing holding a pint of beer. But I'd like to hasten to add that this was beer which didn't belong to me. I was minding it for somebody else. It in fact belonged to Harry Harrison, who had just nipped upstairs to write a novel.

Actually the subject isn't inappropriate for Jim, as we all know. When I first met him I expected him to be a very grimmy-faced, serious type person on all levels. I noticed Armageddon cropped up a lot in his work. And I, presuming to advise such a man, actually said to him, "Jim, don't worry about Armageddon. It's not the end of the world!"

In fact, there's a long and honorable connection between SF writers and beer. Well, fairly honorable. In fact, thinking back on it, it's downright disgraceful in places, but then...

Bradbury, of course, introduced beer to Mars in his books — well, beer cans. He complained a lot about earthmen strewing the desert with beer cans, which spoiled the look of the ancient fragile temples. And in science fiction fandom in the 50's, I seem to remember, there was actually a project to build a pile of beer cans which would extend to the moon.

Talking about Jim, he liked beer, and he brought bottles of beer along with him to conventions, carefully chosen. But it says a lot for his cosmopolitan tastes that he even learned to like English pub beer. And this is quite a feat for an American who's used, all his life, to the chilled, fizzy drink which is served up in American bars and given the name of beer. The gulf between that kind of beer and ours is summed up in a three-cornered conversation Jim and I were having with another fan. This chap was a keen member of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale. He was describing a beer he had got in a pub which he was recommending, and he said it was "a bit sour, lukewarm, flat as a pancake — perfect!" And Jim knew enough to agree with him because he had, in fact, learned to appreciate our kind of beer. He understood, too, that a dedicated boozer isn't put off a drink just because it doesn't taste very nice. Sometimes we have to force ourselves. Quite often when my wife thinks I'm out enjoying myself, I'm going through hell!

I've got one final beer story about Jim, and it goes back to the time two years ago when four SF writers were commissioned by the Arts Council of

Great Britain to do a week-long tour of the Northeast, giving talks. One or two nights in the week a friend named Mark and I put away quite a lot of beer and other drinks, and, strangely enough, the organizers of that otherwise very good week had made the ghastly error of putting it into a temperance hotel. The lady who ran it was a rather puritanical type, and Mark and I arrived home one morning about two o'clock. We had forgotten our keys. I remember very well that last walk up to the hotel, because we kept bumping against each other at every step. It was strange, this synchronous bumping into each other which went on the whole way along that street — we couldn't help it.

We got to the hotel, and it was one of these places made up of what had formerly been a row of private houses all joined together, and all the entrances sealed up tight except the one which was supposed to be at the hotel. Mark and I hadn't our keys, but we tried all the other doors anyway, which hadn't been opened for year, because we didn't want to face the lady who owned the hotel. Finally we had to knock on the door, and she came out in her night-gown and told us off very, very severely. She said that was the third time that week that it had happened, and she wasn't going to put up with people who drank a lot behaving like that on her premises.

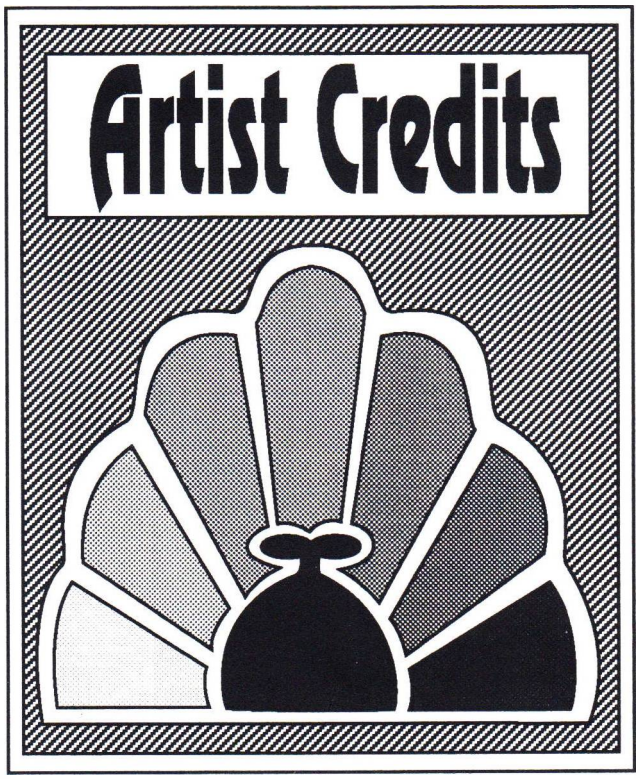
The next day — that was toward the end of the week — Jim was arriving. I was talking to the owner of the hotel out in the lobby, and she had decided to go on with part *two* of the telling-off. She really got on about it, how she didn't like boozers at this temperance hotel.

And then, just at that moment, Jim came into the hall. He was so tired, he had traveled up from London. He was wearing his black suit, and a black turtle-neck shirt, and a fur hat pulled down, and he looked remarkably ascetic.

The landlady looked at him and said, "Is this Mr. Blish?" And I said, "Yes, that's Mr. Blish." And she said, "Is he a minister?" And I said, "No, but he has written books that dealt largely with religion."

Her eyes lit up with this, and she dashed across the lobby and said, "Mr. Blish, come with me and I'll get you your key." And he went to back away, and put his hands across her and said, "Can you get a drink round here anywhere?"

And she *knew* there and then that he was one of us. ✡



Ray Allard — page 42
Sheryl Birkhead — pages 3, 33, 35
Kurt Erichsen — pages 9, 10, 11
Brad Foster — page 39
Teddy Harvia — pages 16, 18, 19, 20, 28
Debbie Hughes — front and back covers
Joe Mayhew — pages 12, 13, 14, 15, 29, 30, 38, 45
Peggy Ranson — page 32
William Rotsler — pages 41, 46
William Rotsler & Sheryl Birkhead — page 2
William Rotsler & Alexis Gilliland — pages 37, 40, 43, 44, 47
Julia Morgan-Scott — page 36
Diana Stein — pages 5, 6, 7, 8, 34
Charlie Williams — pages 25, 26, 27
Kip Williams — pages 21, 22, 23, 24

{{✎ We very much appreciate all the letters of comment we receive. It's not possible to publish all of them in our letters column, but we do want all our correspondents to know that your comments are in fact being passed on directly to the contributors, whether or not your letter sees print here. So please keep writing us! Our contributors value your feedback.

Almost as soon as we mailed out issue 18, it became clear to us what the leading comment-getter would be — Ian Gunn's wonderful spaceport cover. We received **many** comments on it, by far more than any other cover we've ever had. That looks like a good place to start. }}

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Catherine Mintz, 1810 South Rittenhouse Square #1708, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-5837

Number eighteen was a good issue, including the wrap-around cover drawing of a spaceport only a little more strange than some airports I have been in. I particularly liked the enterprising pickpocket — who could scarcely be described as light-fingered, since he is all tentacles — and the ideographic signs for where to find your luggage, your pet, and whatever the skull dripping liquid means.

Hmm... Could it be that not only Elvis but Great Cthulhu lives?

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Teddy Harvia, 701 Regency Drive, Hurst, Texas 76054-2307

Ian Gunn shows rare mastery for drawing overpopulated alien scenes. I'm for giving him acres of paper and worrying about how to publish the resulting cartoon. (Trying to find the WingNuts in his latest effort kept me occupied for *hours*.)

In Rich's opening comments {{✎ "Lost in the Sixties" }}, removing the crossout from the phrase "such as eating this fanzine" makes for amusing ambiguity. He has good taste.

{{✎ It seems to read better that way, too... }}

In the letters column, anticipating Irv Koch's complaint about Chat being confined, I released the beast (Chat, not Irvin) from the mundane real world back into fantasy. His next adventures will again have him stalking and eating fans. Perhaps even Irvin himself.

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

We do have a photo of Roger Ebert wearing the lampshade referred to in Richard's opening comments, though that photo was taken from across a fair-sized room. And who can recognize anybody wearing a lampshade, anyway? He also wrote letters and contributed a few items to *Yandro*. That Midwestcon may have been the only con he went to.

Someone a bit less famous who was active at the time was Sidney Coleman; I noticed his name

being coupled with Stephen Hawking in an *Analog* article a while back, but not many scientists become as well known as TV personalities. Sid had a ready supply of somewhat acid humor, and probably still does, though I haven't seen him since Discon II in 1974, or thereabouts. We started wandering around in that enormous hotel, and eventually got lost and took a while to find our way back to civilization. At one point there was a room full of wicker furniture, which reminded me forcibly of *The Twilight Zone*. Sid was a marvelous conversationalist, when he held his talk down to subjects I could comprehend.

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William T Goodall, 62 Holburn Street, Aberdeen, Scotland AB10 6BX, United Kingdom

<wtg@wtgab.demon.co.uk>

The story in the Opening Comments about Roger Ebert is quite revealing. Having read a great many of his film reviews thanks to *Microsoft Cinemania*, I already suspected that he was a bit more knowledgeable about sf than he was prepared to admit to outright (hey, the man's a serious film reviewer). But his coy little denunciations of improbable plot devices in major sci-fi movies retrospectively take on a new flavour now I know the guy is a closet *fan*.

In Dave Kyle's article {{✎ "Raised in the Roaring Twenties" }}, his comments on the public perception of sf are spot on. 'Sci-Fi' as far as the general media are concerned is synonymous with lamebrained illogical childish credulous junk. Of course, most popular entertainment media (tv, movies) are lamebrained junk but 'sci-fi' is somewhere at the bottom of that barrel. *The X Files* and *Independence Day* are reaffirming that tired old 'sf-fan = UFO nut' just when one might have hoped it was going to die out.

Vincent Clarke, 18 Wendover Way, Welling, Kent DA16 2BN, United Kingdom

<vincentian@cix.compulink.co.uk>

The cover for *Mimosa* 18 is fascinating. I haven't unravelled all the pictographs yet, but it's a magnificent scene. Ian Gunn has impressed the hell out of me. In fact, all of the interior illos are good and I particularly like Teddy Harvia's Shakespearean characters at the head of my small piece. I'm also fond of Sheryl Birkhead's pseudo-ATom heading for Walter's column.

Dave Kyle's memories are in some ways similar to mine, born three years later. I can't remember when I knew that SF was my preferred reading, but at 10 years old I saw *Scoops* No. 1 in a wire rack outside a newsagent, instantly borrowed two pence from my father and bought it. *Scoops* was a weekly paper with all-SF stories, articles by rocketry enthusiasts, and lurid covers. It lasted 20 issues — it was not only before its time, it couldn't make up its mind if it was a juvenile or should appeal to everyone. The indecision was fatal.

I still didn't know about American SF'zine, but somehow came across *Flying Aces*, which I expect Dave knew. It was another U.S. product, and featured hard news about flying meets in the U.S., plans for model planes, and fiction which was more than 50% fantastic. It was while searching in a pile of large-sized zines for copies of *Flying Aces* when I was 14 that I came across a four-year-old copy of *Amazing Stories*. I then stopped reading *Flying Aces*, and you can guess why.

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Ken Bulmer, 5 Holly Mansions, 20 Frant Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5SN, United Kingdom

Dave Kyle's "Roaring Twenties" article makes fascinating reading, and the romantic nostalgia comes through very clearly. As he says, it's odds on that his experiences were paralleled by lots of those early devotees. Aeroplanes were the great and glorious future, and we were innocent enough to enjoy WWI aerial combat adventures. I remember when Dave was staying with us, I dug out a small file of *Flying Aces*, probably the top aviation zine of that type, which really perked him up. I add that because of *FA*'s size they were stored away from the bookcases where the bomb fell, so their condition was still remarkably good. I look forward muchly to the next

instalment, and must thank both Dave and you two for writing and publishing this brand of material.

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Roger Waddington, 4 Commercial Street, Norton, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 9ES, United Kingdom

I can say, without fear of going over the top, that I absolutely loved Ian Gunn's cover; with so much going on, it reminded me of nothing so much as the 'Where's Waldo?' books. Of course, if this had been intended to be 'Where's Elvis?' rather than 'Where's Waldo?' then the game would have been over in seconds.

I enjoyed the account of Dave Kyle's apprenticeship in science fiction, as another pilgrim on the road. Each of us might think we were among the first, surmounting overwhelming odds in our discovery; but compared to America in the Twenties, Britain in the Fifties must have been like a wonderland, so welcoming to sf was the climate. There was John Wyndham, a best-selling author on the strength of catastrophe novels like *The Day of the Triffids* (though he started off around Dave Kyle's time); the most popular series on the radio was *Journey Into Space*, with an audience measured in millions; and later on, there would be Edmund Crispin, Robert Conquest, and Kingsley Amis spreading the message, hot-gospellers all.

The title of Kev McVeigh's article {{✎ "Some of My Best Friends Are Pros" }}, perfectly sums up my other Sense of Wonder on discovering fandom; that as well as enthusiasts discussing science fiction in the pages of fanzines, the writers and artists themselves were more than willing to give their time and energy to contribute as well. There was always an extra thrill of recognition in artwork from people like Jack Gaughan and Dan Adkins, and letters from such as L. Sprague de Camp and Piers Anthony.

{{✎ And it continues to this day. There are many people who contribute to *Mimosa*, for instance, who have a better name recognition for fiction or artwork sold professionally, yet still consider themselves as fans. You see the same thing in many other fanzines. }}

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Rodney Leighton, RR 3, Pugwash, Nova Scotia B0K 1L0, Canada

I really enjoyed "Some of My Best Friends Are Pros" by Kev McVeigh. It was highly amusing but also, I thought, did an excellent job of contesting this 'filthy pro' foolishness, which I can't understand at all. People should be proud to have successful authors among them as acquaintances and friends.

An intriguing and amusing story by Vincent Clarke {{✎ "A Small Skirmish on the Borders of Mundania" }}, with a very good illustration by Teddy Harvia. Harvia's 'Chat' cartoon was also good, as always. A weird coincidence: about the time *Mimosa* arrived, I had a bobcat running around the yard and barn. It looked quite a lot like Chat. I don't suppose Teddy sent him up here to get revenge on me for my "Teddy Harvia is not an artist" comment?

I really liked Sheryl Birkhead's illo of Nicki's closing comments. Is it strange that I am seeing more and more of her work which I really like since making those unwarranted teasing comments in *Fosfax*? And I also liked that 'I Am a Fanartist' illo by Sheryl. Yes she is. It fit in well.

Steve Green, 33 Scott Road, Olton, Solihull B92 7LQ, United Kingdom

I enjoyed very much Kev McVeigh's contribution to *Mimosa* 18. (Since he asks, Martin Tudor and I do have theories regarding the true author(s) of

Wavering Criticism, but — as of yet — no *conclusive* proof, and it *was* more than eight years ago...) Like he, I've done a fair number of 'promo' interviews over the years, including several for prozines, thought I doubt I'll ever get the same high again as when I interviewed Stan Lee for *Interzone*. Talk about meeting your childhood hero...

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Brad Foster, P.O. Box 165246, Irving, Texas 75016

I was totally blown away by that Gunn wrap around cover. I've always liked Ian's toons, but suddenly he's doing these huge epic fannish murals! I just got finished sending off my Hugo ballot, and he got my vote for first place for sure — now it looks like he might be blowing us all away!

{{✎ It wasn't to be in 1996; it's not often that someone wins in the Fan Artist category the first time nominated. But watch out for him next year! }}

I also loved Steve Stiles's tale {{✎ "Art School" }}. It's nice to find another struggling artist out there. Not that I'm saying it's nice to hear that Steve is struggling, but that too many artists seem to be starving. I myself am in that 'struggling' stage, one notch up from starving. I think the next step is 'reasonably well fed' artist.

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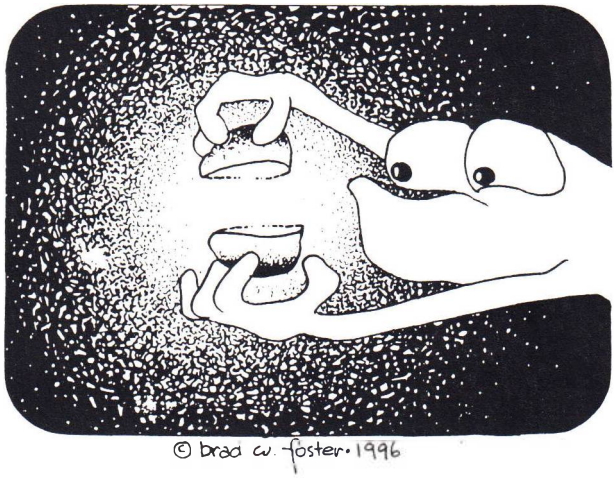
Kevin Standlee, P.O. Box 64128, Sunnyvale, California 94088-4128
<standlee@lunacity.com>

Thank you very much for *Mimosa* 18. Love the Ian Gunn cover, especially inasmuch as I had just recently seen his cover for *Thyme* 106 (which I nominated for the Best Original Artwork Hugo). As with the *Thyme* cover, I continue to find new things in the piece every time I look at it.

Fred Lerner's story {{✎ "Sci-Fi Days" }} about Sci-Fi's preoccupation with "punning, mock parliamentary procedure, and other manifestations of young fans reveling in their eccentricity" put me uncomfortably in mind of current meetings of the Bay Area Science Fiction Association (BASFA), where I was recently accidentally elected President. Recently, the routine approval of minutes of a particular meeting became the subject of much parliamentary humor, as the motion for approval was laid on the table, taken off the table, and put back on the table repeatedly in what appeared to be an attempt to annoy the President, although it did give me practice with the various parliamentary forms.

BASFA's primary source of income is from fining members for making puns, and one of our pastimes is making up new rules for fining members for making puns. The basic pun tax is 25 cents, unless you can convince five other people to pay 10 cents on your behalf. You must put the pun fines in The Jar, and if you miss the jar, it costs an additional ten cents. If you toss the fine toward the jar and happen to hit one of the club officers, it's considered an 'assassination attempt' and costs $1. If you knock the jar off the table and break it (it happened once), you must *match* the money in the jar and buy a new jar. If someone has to explain your pun to you, the 'cluelessness tax' is $1.

The point of all these fines is to raise money to buy our clubhouse. To date (about five years), we've managed over $3,500. Our rules make it extremely difficult to actually spend money, so we still have over $2,900 left. We figure this ought to purchase about three square feet, but we're working on it!



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

Thanks for *Mimosa* 18. The cover is wonderful. And the inside's pretty good too. But having switched from mimeo to commercial printing, shouldn't you change the title to something like 'Printosa'?

{{✎ Hmmmm... }}

It's interesting to read in Fred Lerner's memoir of now the CCNY club "would argue passionately how to cast the club's corporate vote for the Hugo

awards." I gather that there were once a fair number of clubs that did this, but the practice had pretty well fallen into desuetude by the time Hugo voting was restricted to 'natural persons' a few years ago.

{{✎ There probably ought to be an exception to that restriction for any sf club that chooses to support a worldcon by buying a supporting membership. }}

I started to read Les Cole's article about how the Little Men claimed the a piece of the moon {{✎ "The Men Who Claimed The Moon" }}. As you may know, NESFA laid claim to the whole moon in 1970, I think in ignorance of what had gone before; it didn't notify the press, either. But we have gotten a good amount of fun out of it since.

{{✎ George included in his letter a list of 'rules' that were passed concerning the moon, including the following entry from December 1970: "[Tony Lewis] showed the moon map from the November 1970 issue of *Sky and Telescope* magazine. Hugo Gernsback crater was identified, as were Ley, Verne, Wells, etc. As a result of this increase in cultural knowledge it was moved, seconded and passed that the Moon be designated as NESFA's Moon and that the Aerospace Cadets protect it." George went on to mention that the Aerospace Cadets were commanded by Col. Harry Stubbs (a.k.a. Hal Clement), whose title was 'Lord of the Wings'. Who *says* NESFA is a sercon club?? }}

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Ahrvid Engholm, Renstiernas Gata 29, 116 31 Stockholm, Sweden

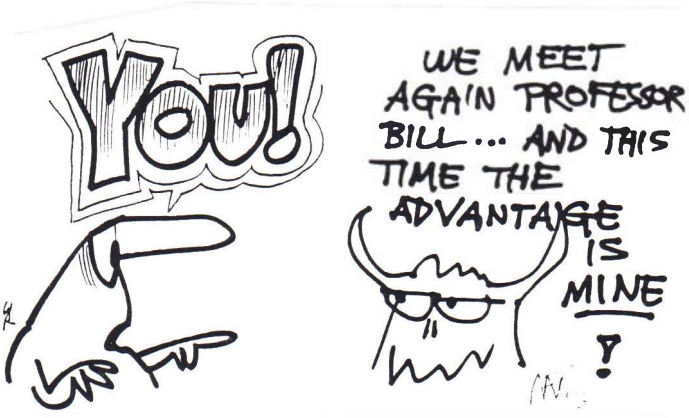
<m9731@msg.abc.se>

It is always interesting to see an artist, like Steve Stiles, write and especially when he writes about how he started his career. Some tend to think that artists can't write. I think artistic and verbal talents goes together. Remember that, for instance, Bob Shaw started as an artist.

Fred Lerner's article about New York fandom was interesting. I have read everything I've been able to find about New York fandom in the days of the Futurians in the 40s, but naturally New York had a fan life after that and that's interesting reading. Dave Kyle covers the period before the Futurians, I note, which also is interesting. New York is such a huge city. It probably has more people than the whole of Scandinavia, in one single place. It's so much easier to do fanac when you can take the subway to anyone, instead of having to fly or take the train for half a day.

I feel a bit of envy when I hear about British and American fans tell about the famous pros they know, like in Kev McVeigh's article. You have many more chances to meet the big names in the sf field. They live in North America or Britain, and you have many more conventions. In Sweden, the only chance to meet a foreign big name is to invite one as GoH. This is of course done, but we have fewer cons, so we seldom get to know all these nice people, like Harry, Chris, Brian or whatever their first names are. We have local pros, maybe half a dozen of them (or more like semi-pros — it's hard to make a living as an sf writer here). After a few years the local pros have all been GoHs on our cons so then we have to start the rotation again. "This guy was GoH as far back as five years ago! Let's invite him. Practically nobody has met him!" (Alternatively, you can find more obscure local GoHs: "This guy wrote an article about science fiction eight years ago and once in an interview said he liked sf. Let's invite him!")

Les Cole's article raises interesting questions about ownership of the Moon. Back in the colonial days, ownership of far away territory basically came from putting your flag there first. It's a questionable criteria; it for instance totally ignores anyone who happens to live there first, like the American Indians, and has the misconception of owning the land. For the Moon, the USA put the flag there first, or perhaps the Soviet Union if you count robot vehicles, but that's hardly relevant. Who will own the Moon, the day it is economically feasible to go there on a bigger scale? I don't think the UN owns the Moon. We can't even settle who owns the Antarctica. There is probably a few plots for good sf stories in this.



Ruth Shields, 1410 McDowell Road, Jackson, Mississippi 39204
<RShields@aol.com>

I love the wraparound cover by Ian Gunn (whose artistic signature I always read as "Jan" at first). I spent a long time picking out all the delicious details; I especially liked Elvis's luggage, and the signs directing one to all sorts of dubious destinations. And I wonder who belongs to the spiked suitcase. And...well, it's lots of fun.

Sharon Farber's doctor jokes were amusing but less interesting than her reminiscences. I think my favorite essay in the issue was "The Men Who Claimed the Moon"; it's great to envision the hard work they put into this grand hoax, and satisfying to read about the response it drew. (Too bad that the political types didn't respond better.)

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Joseph T. Major, 3307H River Chase Court, Louisville, Kentucky 40218-1832
<jtmajor@iglou.com>

Concerning the proposed history of 1960s fandom referred to in Richard's opening comments, you can rest assured that no one will like your work. First off, everyone whose point of view did not get accepted as the final version will object. Everyone whose particular interest did not get at least half the book will feel slighted ("Lynch has utterly failed to comprehend the great interest and growth that fan gardening experienced during the sixties, and his incomprehension leaves the book vitiated."). Whereas those who dislike certain interests will object if they are mentioned at all.

{{✎ All too true, but it wouldn't be the first time that happened. Anyway, it's important to realize that the proposed history of the 1960s would not be *the* definitive history. Other points of view would obviously be just as relevant, should anyone want to write one. }}

The price we, including Dave Kyle (in "Raised in the Roaring Twenties"), pay for there being as much good SF being available today is the glut of "empty calories forced upon [us] from everywhere and every direction." So much being available means that while worthwhile work is not being shut out, less-good material also gets in. Who ever would have thought that anyone would ever be complaining about there being *too much* science fiction out there! Still, looking at the local super-bookstore and seeing shelves of tie-ins (Trek, *Star Wars*, "Magic", etc.), franchised universes, and Piers Anthony, I can rather gain a certain understanding of Kyle's feelings in the matter.

Roxanne Smith-Graham {{✎ in "Born That Way" }} can rest assured that she was not the only one at MidAmeriCon to underestimate the future of *Star Wars*. Fan artist Phil Foglio has drawn in his own memorable fashion the scene of how he thoughtfully avoided fame and fortune by declining to participate in Lucas's work. And I myself remember going into the *Star Wars* room at the con, looking around, and being only mildly interested. When the movie opened in Louisville, I hoped that it would stay in that particular theater long enough for me to be able to get to see it in Dolby sound on a 70-mm print. I could have done so a dozen times, and I was so broke then (it was right after my first graduation from college) that I could not get to Louisville that often.

About eight or nine years after Les Cole started the ball rolling with the Little Mens' Moon Claim, the Antarctic Treaty put in abeyance all territorial claims in Antarctica. Britain, Australia, and New Zealand claim great pie-wedges, with France holding a small one. Norway claims a substantial part of the coast. Argentina and Chile claim areas based on their colonial grants, and have gone so far as to establish colonies in the Antarctic Peninsula. Given that settlement seems the most effective way of proving control, they may be right, or left anyhow. Which points to a resolution to the problem that Les and the Little Men were trying to address, and which D. D. Harriman worked on in "The Man Who Sold the Moon."

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

Although a couple of the contributions seemed sort of sketchy, most of them are detailed and vivid enough to maintain your high reputation for fan history material. Steve Stiles, for instance, provided me with much information about himself that I'd never known. If memory serves, the High School of Music and Art he attended is the same one that served as locale for the television series *Fame* some years back, although you'd imagine from the series that it produced nothing but rock music.

The fine new installment of Walt Willis's series {{✎ "I Remember Me" }} caused me to think once again about the probability that almost all fannish correspondence is doomed to be lost. I don't think any of the institutions that preserve fanzines have any interest in letters between fans, unless perhaps some of the correspondents became famous pros. Certainly there is no place in fandom that can serve as a depository for preservation of letters. Very few fans leave, at their death, direct descendents who will preserve correspondence files as a symbol of filial piety. So it would be good if other fans would imitate Walter's example and publish in fanzines extracts from their letter files, guaranteeing continued existence for some samplings.

Les Cole's inside information on the Moon claim is probably the most valuable item in this *Mimosa*, from the standpoint of fan history preservation. I can't think of anything else that has ever happened in fandom that was carefully planned in advance as a publicity stunt and received so much attention from the mundane media. Just think how many talk shows Les would have been a guest on, if television in the early 1950s had them in the abundance of today.

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Gary Deindorfer, 447 Belleview Avenue #9B, Trenton, New Jersey 08618

Steve Stiles is not only one of the best fanartists going these days, he is also a very fine and funny writer. This story of his days in "Art School" is a comic masterpiece, and fills me in on a period in Steve's life I didn't know that much about, although in a personal letter he'd already told me that Steve Bochco story. This proves there is little justice in this world: Bochco the S.O.B. is a multimillionaire whereas Steve Stiles, a nice and unassuming guy, breaks his back just to make a buck.

Some issues back in a letter of comment I had expressed displeasure regarding Walt Willis's "I Remember Me" column. I have since changed my mind. Walt's column is invaluable fan history, though at times it seems a bit self-congratulatory when Walt quotes letters from fans copiously complimenting him about his writing, which (come to think of it) usually deserves to be so lauded.

Anyway, I especially enjoyed the John Brunner letter to Walt. John was a fine and fiercely intelligent man. If he was not a science fiction writer of the first rank, he was better than most. My favorite Brunner novel is *The Squares of the City*, which is especially fascinating to anyone who, like me, likes chess.

Gene Stewart, HQ USAFE — IM, PSC 2 Box 6151, APO AE 09012

Just before he died, I was in correspondence with John Brunner over a review I'd written on his superb *Children of the Thunder* for Catharine Asaro's *Mindsparks*. He thanked me for spotting the underlying Greek myth he'd employed, but found no joy in my positive review. He was despondent, convinced that his writing amounted to little and would be read and remembered not at all. My protests to the contrary fell on deaf ears, as, at the time, he had literally *no* books in print in USA. (I'm not sure the situation has improved even now; it's a ridiculous shame all around.) He also refused an offer from John Carr to write some War World stuff; it wasn't his cup of tea, that strutting right wing stuff. It was appalling to see so great a writer reduced to a flat cynicism about himself and his work. Consequently it was both revealing and saddening for me to read the Brunner letter included in the Willis article. He seemed destined to be in conflict. If there be a consolation, I suppose it's that we're left with his writing — we really ought to talk it up a bit more often, eh?

{{✎ Brunner's place in science fiction's his-

tory seems pretty secure; he was not only a first rate writer, he was also on the forefront of bringing new concepts into science fiction, an example being his novel *Shockwave Rider* which anticipated the Internet and computer viruses. There have even been a number of articles in computer journals that reference Brunner and his novel. }}

Michael A Burstein, P.O. Box 1713, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146
<mab@world.std.com>

Being a major fan of DC Comics superheroes, I greatly enjoyed Steve Stiles's article "Art School." It was particularly interesting to read about the School of Visual Arts, because in the Spring 1995 semester (the last semester I lived in New York City, just before I got married), I took a course there! It was a night course, which met once a week, called "Writing for the Comics" and taught by Denny O'Neil, the senior editor of the Batman books. Although I haven't written for the comics since taking the course, I learned a hell of a lot from Denny on story structure, even more than I learned at Clarion, I think. Of course, Stiles's experience was quite different than mine — he's an artist and was a full time student — but that was exactly why I found his article so intriguing. And it was well-written, too!

I really identified with something Dave Kyle said in "Raised in the Roaring Twenties." I have difficulty imagining what it would be like to live in the world before science fiction, but I well understand the difficulties of explaining science fiction in a world saturated by it. When I told co-workers about my Hugo nomination, one of them told me how much she loved SF by saying that she watches *Star Trek* all the time. Now I too enjoy *Star Trek*, but it rankles me when I hear someone refer to *Star Trek* as if it is the be-all and end-all of SF. When I tell my co-workers that the story was published in *Analog*, I get blank stares.

{{✎ But it might always be that way. When we became active in fandom, in the mid 1970s, the most visible well-done science fiction production up to then was the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey*, which was regarded in the mundane world as little more than a cult film. It wasn't until the late 1970s, when Sci-Fi productions like *Star Wars* came along, that science fiction started to become chic. There's some irony in that somewhere. }}

As always, it was a pleasure to read "Through Time and Space With Forry Ackerman." I love his stories of fandom, especially ones like the story about the fan from Japan, Tetsu Yano. Older stories about fandom always puzzle me a little, though, as fans perpetually seem to (a) have no money and (b) be very mobile. I mean, the guy stayed in the U.S. for six months?! Who paid his rent at home? What if his house had burned down?

And now we come to my favorite article in the whole issue, "Born That Way" by Roxanne Smith-Graham. Articles like this make me wistful. Why? Well, with trepidation I admit that I knew very little of fandom and conventions when I was growing up. I went to my first convention in 1992, at the age of 22, and all weekend I was thinking, "My God! Where has this been all my life?" Like Smith-Graham, I read the true quill from a young age, but I didn't get to meet my idol, Isaac Asimov, until my middle to late teens, and never at a real fan-run con. Her stories of meeting Forry Ackerman and ignoring George Lucas were wonderful, and have really sparked my desire to attend a Worldcon.

Sharon Farber is another writer who never fails to entertain, and the latest installment of her series {{✎ "Tales of Adventure and Medical Life #13" }} is no exception. I have one brother who's a paramedic, and another who's an Emergency Medicine Physician, so I have a slight insider's perspective on these jokes. For example, I had already heard the

duck joke and the neurologist/balloon joke from my brothers...but the one about the dogs floored me. The ones about insurance companies and HMOs, on the other hand, were frightening, as they hit far too close to the truth. Which I'm sure Dr. Farber realized.

In the letters column, Harry Warner, Jr. is absolutely right that Clarion can be harsh and ruin a writer before he or she begins. But as I always tell people who ask me for advice on workshops, Clarion is most certainly not for everyone. I agree with Harry's assessment, that I was tough enough to withstand the workshop, and I believe that it did improve my writing tremendously. But I'm only one test case. There are many people who came through Clarion and hated it, and found it unhelpful, and, as the rabbi put it in the old joke, "They're right too." Or, to paraphrase Tom Lehrer, Clarion is like a sewer — what you get out of it depends on what you put into it.

Also, I am so glad Rachel Russell enjoyed my Clarion article. I know exactly what her husband means when he says that no wife of his is going to go to Clarion. And I'm glad she elaborated on my description of Howard Waldrop; I think she brought him to life twice as much as I did.

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Steven desJardins, 1711 Massachusetts Avenue NW #134, Washington, D.C. 20036 <sdj@sff.net>

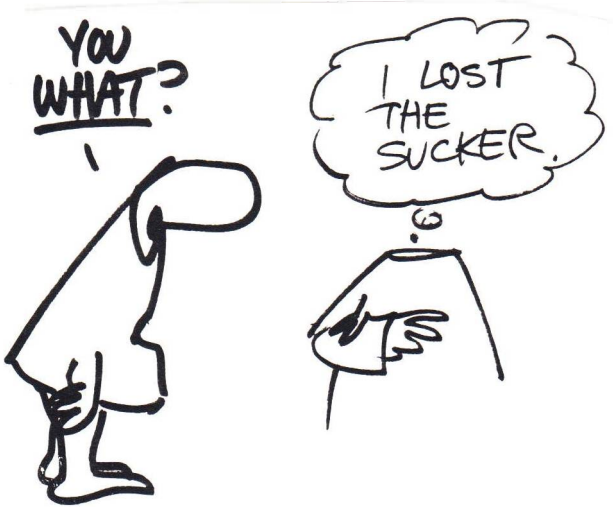
I was surprised that nobody responded to Michael Burstein's article with Clarion reminiscences of their own. It seems that every year must have their own set of stories to tell. One of my favorites is the time that Geoff Landis's teddy bear was kidnapped. He learned of it when he opened a box containing a pasted-up ransom note and the bear's severed ear. He later received a photo showing the bear with a ketchup-stained bandage wrapped around its head holding a copy of that day's newspaper.

My own Clarion experience had plenty of stress-related silliness, but not much in the way of practical jokes. One hoax grew out of a discussion of whether Harlan Ellison had *really* denounced a story as worthless garbage and set the manuscript on fire. Graham Collins decided to recreate the incident at a new teacher's first workshop session. After a round of mostly positive critiques, Graham said that he completely disagreed with everyone, that this was the same old tired story the author had been turning in every week, that instead of showing improvement her work was actually getting worse and worse, and the only thing to do with this manuscript was to destroy it, at which point he pulled out a cigarette lighter and set the manuscript on fire. Or, at least, he tried to. He had never actually used a cigarette lighter before and couldn't get it to work. The entire workshop — or at least those of us who were in on the joke — collapsed in helpless laughter.

But even though I don't have many stories of my own to share, I do appreciate reading the ones presented in *Mimosa*. Roxanne Smith-Graham's article was a delightful look at a youth in fandom, and the Forry Ackerman anecdote was wonderfully funny. I also liked Fred Lerner's account of the 227th meeting maneuver, a stunt that seems perfectly natural after witnessing a couple of Worldcon business meetings. Somehow I doubt that parliamentary pedantry is quite as amusing anywhere outside fandom.

The attitude in Kev McVeigh's "Some Of My Best Friends Are Pros" is one I share. I was in awe of professional writers right up until my first week at Clarion, when James Patrick Kelly came to teach. There's something about being chased around the courtyard by a man with a water pistol that makes it impossible to take him too seriously.

In fact, one of the greatest things about science fiction fandom is the way that pros interact with the fan community on equal terms. A few years ago I was surprised to see Jim Kelly at ConFrancisco, since he wasn't on the list of program participants. It turned out he decided to attend too late to get on programming, but came anyway. I wish every pro who attended worldcons had that attitude.



Ken Lake, 1A Stephen Court, Eccles-bourne Road, Thornton Heath CR7 7BP, United Kingdom

As a dedicated admirer of Sharon Farber, I have to admit she's right: her in-house jokes are just not funny. Mind you, I had to get translations of 'internist' (physician) and 'intern' (resident assistant surgeon or physician) before I had any idea what she was talking about anyway.

Steve Stiles was even more enigmatic with 'Reggie to my Archie', 'E.C.', and 'slipping the meat'. Similarly, Roxanne Smith-Graham was pigeonholed as 'too American'; we really *are* two peoples separated by a single language and culture.

Half an hour before reading Dave Kyle's article, I was doing the same thing for an apacontrib: trying to figure out just how, and why, I came to SF as a small child. My encounter was with H.G. Wells, at age 7, in 1938, but we were a long way behind the U.S. Then the War virtually stopped comic and paperback production; my first prozine encounters were BREs — British Reprint Editions of *Astounding*, *Planet Stories*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, and the wonderful *Unknown Worlds*. These were abbreviated versions, reset on cheap pulp without the editorial features and lettercols, appearing irregularly every few months, and read and re-read till our eyes wore the ink off the pages.

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Elizabeth Osborne, 137 Emerald Lane, Lima, Ohio 45850

The front cover looks like many scenes that I have witnessed in many airports. I had fun trying to decipher the direction symbols displayed on either side. The amount of detail work is just wonderful, and I really loved the little touches, like the alien getting his pocket picked, the fish inside the robot outfit, Elvis, the golf balls rolling around the floor, and the zine's title and number displayed on the flight board. Ian Gunn is a very talented person.

The best thing in the issue, though, was Richard Brandt's story about the filming of *Manos: The Hands of Fate* {{✎ "The Hand That Time Forgot" }}. I never knew that it existed until I saw *MST3K* do it. It took a few tries but I finally was able to sit through the whole thing. It's as bad as you could imagine, but I am impressed at the sheer guts of anyone who would try and make a motion picture on a tiny budget. I also have a real interest in auteur filmmaking, even if it results in nothing more than watching the 'finished product'.

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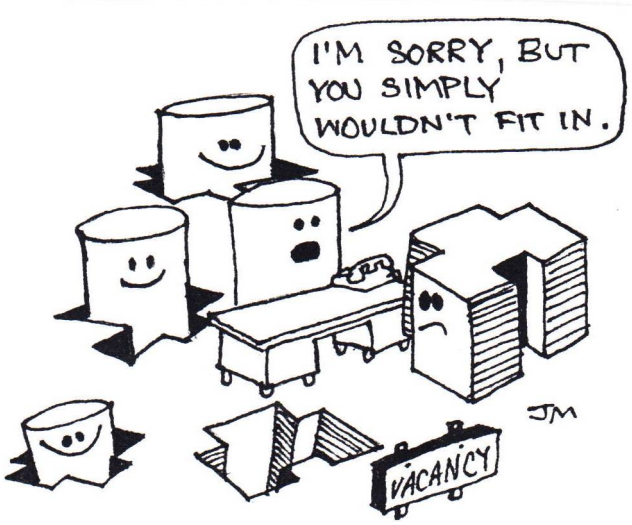
Todd Mason, P.O. Box 21, Fairfax Station, Virginia 22039

<FoxBrick@aol.com>

The articles in *M*18 I expected to find (such as the Kyle and Ackerman memoirs) were as good as I expected, and to get more from Steve Stiles was an extra coup (to say nothing of the charming piece by Les Cole...didn't he have a twin brother, ho ho), but the piece that blew my mind was the *Manos: The Hands of Fate* cast/crew interview. My goodness, to actually seek these people out is a brilliant idea that flatly never occurred to me (which is perhaps why I'm not Michael Wheldon or Tim Lucas, or at least one of their competitors). Kudos to you for running this piece, and to Richard Brandt for not selling it to *Film Threat*, instead (which he probably should do, now!).



Jerry Kaufman, 3522 N.E. 123rd Street, Seattle, Washington 98125

<JAKaufman@aol.com>

I really enjoyed the Ian Gunn cover, especially because it rewarded repeated examinations with more and more weird and fiddly bits of humor and incident. I also liked the way some things, like the octopoidish creature's long arm, stretched through the center of the drawing to tie the whole thing together.

The two pieces that I enjoyed the most in Mimosa were the two least concerned with fannish memory and anecdote: Steve Stiles on "Art School"

and Richard Brandt on "The Hand that Time Forgot." Steve's memories of Bochco are particularly arresting. In addition, I laughed out loud at several of Sharon Farber's jokes, and so did Suzle.

I also particularly liked Kurt Erichsen's cartoons for Roxanne Smith-Graham's "Born That Way," Joe Mayhew's for the Stiles piece and everything else (I think Mayhew is one of the less appreciated fanartists), and Charlie Williams. As for the ubiquitous Teddy Harvia, his heading for Vincent Clarke's piece is sneaky and pretty funny once I realized what was going on. It played well with the article.

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Dave Rowe, 8288 West Shelby State Road 44, Franklin, Indiana 46131

Ian Gunn's cover was just amazingly creative. It's not so much his style (which is good) but all the small details that make it so hilarious. Did you notice Elvis's *luggage*? The Dalek on the balcony? The 'Baby On Board' sticker? And his use of analogic aliens... the Moonie, the pickpocket, and the Judge Dredd security guards, not to mention his own touches of total originality such as the fish in a bowl operating a biped walker. Lovely stuff.

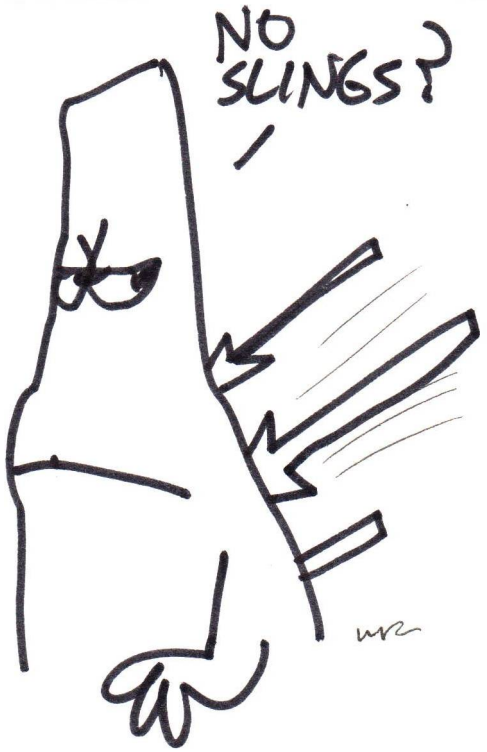
{{✎ We're not aware if Ian has decided to make the *M*18 cover available as a poster print. But he should! }}

On the other hand, sorry to say it, Fred Lerner, Kev McVeigh, and yourself, Richard, gave *Mimosa* 18 a bit of a slow start. The writings weren't engaging or vigorous, so they came across as little more than lists. Compare Kev's to Roxanne Smith-Graham's article (whose subject matter was pretty much the same as Kev's). Roxanne took three small incidents and built them up with an impish attitude and some good humorous writing into three warm and funny stories. Also, Kev's piece was not helped by Kip Williams's heading illo, which was very pedestrian. Pity, as Kip's off-beat strip in *New Pals* is wonderfully original. Too bad he didn't bring more of that left-field style to bear.

{{✎ We're probably asking our artists to go above and beyond the call of duty to do illustrations for the articles and essays we run in *Mimosa*. They not only have to come up with ideas for these articles and essays, they have to do them to fit available space at specific places that are dictated by the layout. Then they have to put up with us pestering them (good-naturedly, of course!) about us needing the artwork on *real* short notice. In spite of all this, we never hear complaints; fan artists seem to be a hardy breed. At any rate, we're very grateful for all the fine art contributions we publish each issue. }}

Walt Willis's remembrance of Arthur Thomson brought to mind how truly phenomenal that quiet, unobtrusive man was. At one party years ago, someone got out a large drawing pad and said, "Let's have an artists' duel between ATom and Dave." This was like a duel between an elephant and an ant. Arthur could draw quickly, seemingly without even thinking about it, and each piece was good enough for professional print. My efforts were little better than scribble, and took ten times as long to draw. At one point, I had drawn two cartoons on a sheet of paper, of totally separate subjects. Arthur looked at them for two seconds, and immediately drew a cartoon connecting the two! Like I said, he was phenomenal.

At any rate, having earlier made several downer remarks, I can at least say in all honesty that you finished with your two best articles. Les Cole's and Richard Brandt's were both full of laughs, well written, and really enjoyable.



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

I don't think being a second generation fan is that unusual. I'm a decade older than Roxanne Smith-Graham, but I grew up with plenty of copies of *Astounding* and *Analog* in the house. My father began reading sf in 1934, when he discovered a copy of *Amazing Stories Quarterly* in the trash and took it to high school with him. While he was never active in fandom, my father was an active sf reader until John W. Campbell's death, and it was thanks to him that I attended my first Washington Science Fiction Association meeting, in 1961, when I was three. My father had co-written a letter to *Science* with Robert A. Heinlein on why 'xenobiology' was a more correct term than 'exobiology', and WSFA invited my father and his family to be guests of honor at the WSFA Fourth of July picnic. Striving to contribute to the history of fandom of the 1960s, I proceeded to "get losted" in the woods, and it took several fire engine companies to find me. I would have been the lead story in the Washington newspapers that day had it not been for a pesky Soviet cosmonaut named Yuri Gagarin. As my first memory is of this event and my second is of being scared by a *Superman* episode, I have been involved with sf as long as I can remember.

In the letters column, it may well be, as Kristin Thorrud argues, that the Norwegians, Finns, and Danes are as fannish as the Swedes are. But Sweden is the only nation I know of that exported its fan feuds to America and conducted them in English. They've also been producing fannish zines for a long time; I bet in the fanhistory of the 1960s, Sweden will be the only non-English speaking nation given extensive space.

{{✎ Not quite. There will also be 'extensive space' (as you put it) given to Japanese and German fandoms (though much more information is presently needed about the latter). Swedish fandom is fascinating, though, and we'll probably continue to publish articles about it. }}

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Michael Walsh, P.O. Box 19951, Baltimore, Maryland 21211-0951

<mwalsh@mail.press.jhu.edu>

I just now got around to looking at *Mimosa* #18 and saw Lloyd Penney's letter about banquets. His comment about the the ConStellation crab feast banquet is greatly appreciated {{✎ Mike was Chairman of 1983's worldcon, ConStellation }}, but there is a significant error that needs to be corrected, i.e.: "The con lost its collective shirt on this banquet."

Actually we made money off of the banquet.

The vendor we were required to deal with quoted a set price for the particular banquet we wanted. To cover Guests of Honor food, administrative overhead, etc., the cost to each banquet attendee was adjusted accordingly. If anyone lost money it was the vendor, but I kind of doubt it. With the right food and/or setting, a banquet can actually turn a tidy surplus back to the con.

Oh, the sound of 1,000+ crab mallets banging away at the same time was a sound to hear...

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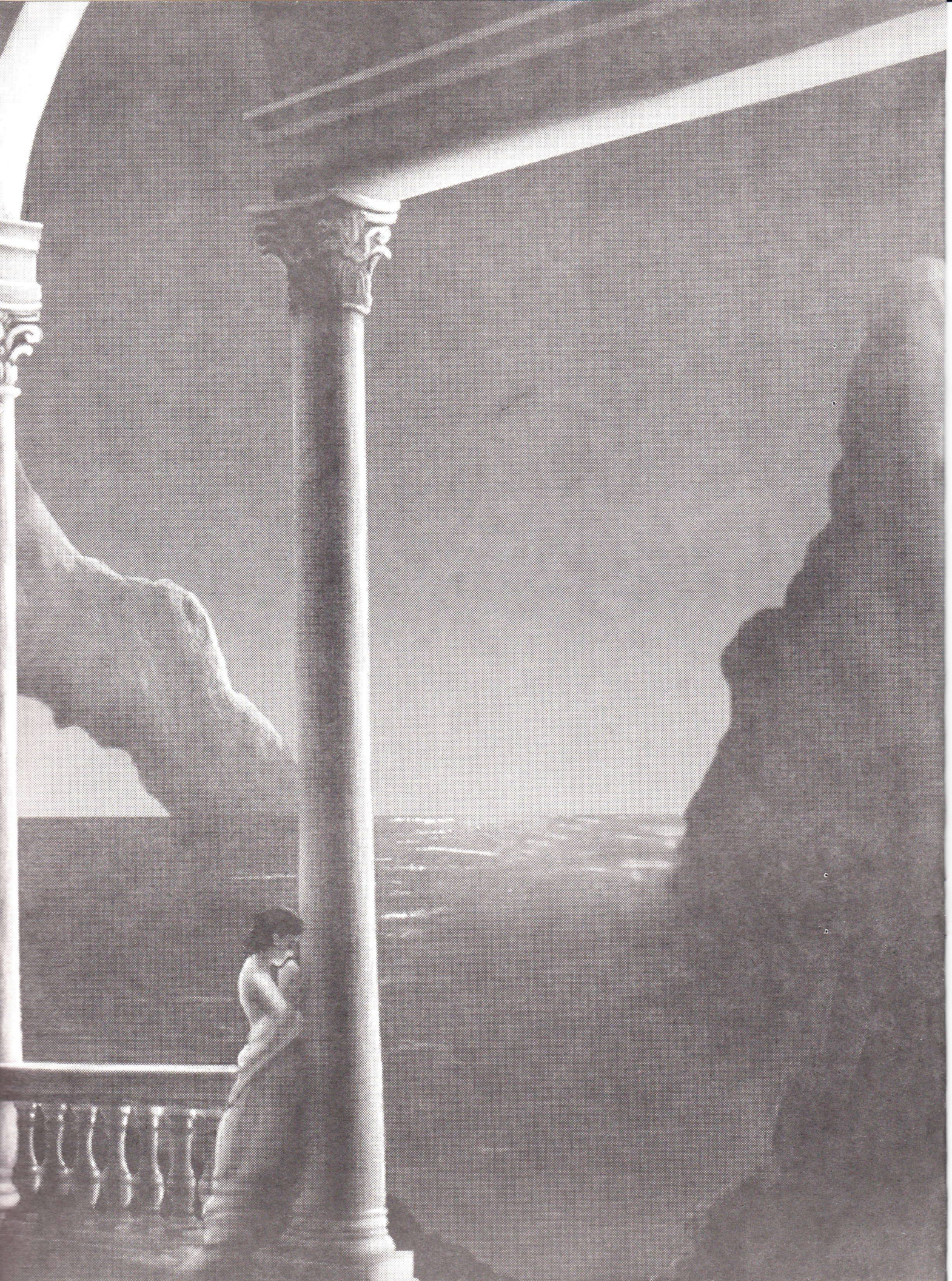
We Also Heard From...

Harry Andruschak, Martha Beck, John Berry, John D. Berry, Mark Blackman, Pamela Boal, William Breiding, Dennis Caswell, David Clark, Les Cole, Chester Cuthbert, Rich Dengrove, Carolyn Doyle, Cathy Doyle, Kurt Erichsen, Sharon Farber, Tom Feller, Jan Howard Finder, Steve Green, Deborah Hartle, Sam Helm, Dave Hicks, Irwin Hirsh, Ben Indick, Ben Jason, Terry Jeeves, Steve Jeffery, Robert Kennedy, Dave Langford, Roy Lavender, Mark Loney, Adrienne Losin, Sam Long, Heidi Lyshol, Murray Moore, Julia Morgan-Scott, Pär Nilsson, Marc Ortlieb, Darroll Pardoe, Galen Peoples, Lloyd Penney, Robert Peterson, Derek Pickles, Yvonne Rousseau, Tom Sadler, Leland Sapiro, Julius Schwartz, Michael Shannon, Noreen Shaw, Roger Sims, Robert Whitaker Sirignano, Roxanne Smith-Graham, Steve Sneyd, Elise Somers, Alan J. Sullivan, Kristin Thorrud, Dorothy Tompkins, Taral Wayne, Henry Welch, Kevin Welch, Walt Willis, Taras Wolanski, and Joe Zeff. Thanks to one and all!



MIMOSA

Nineteen