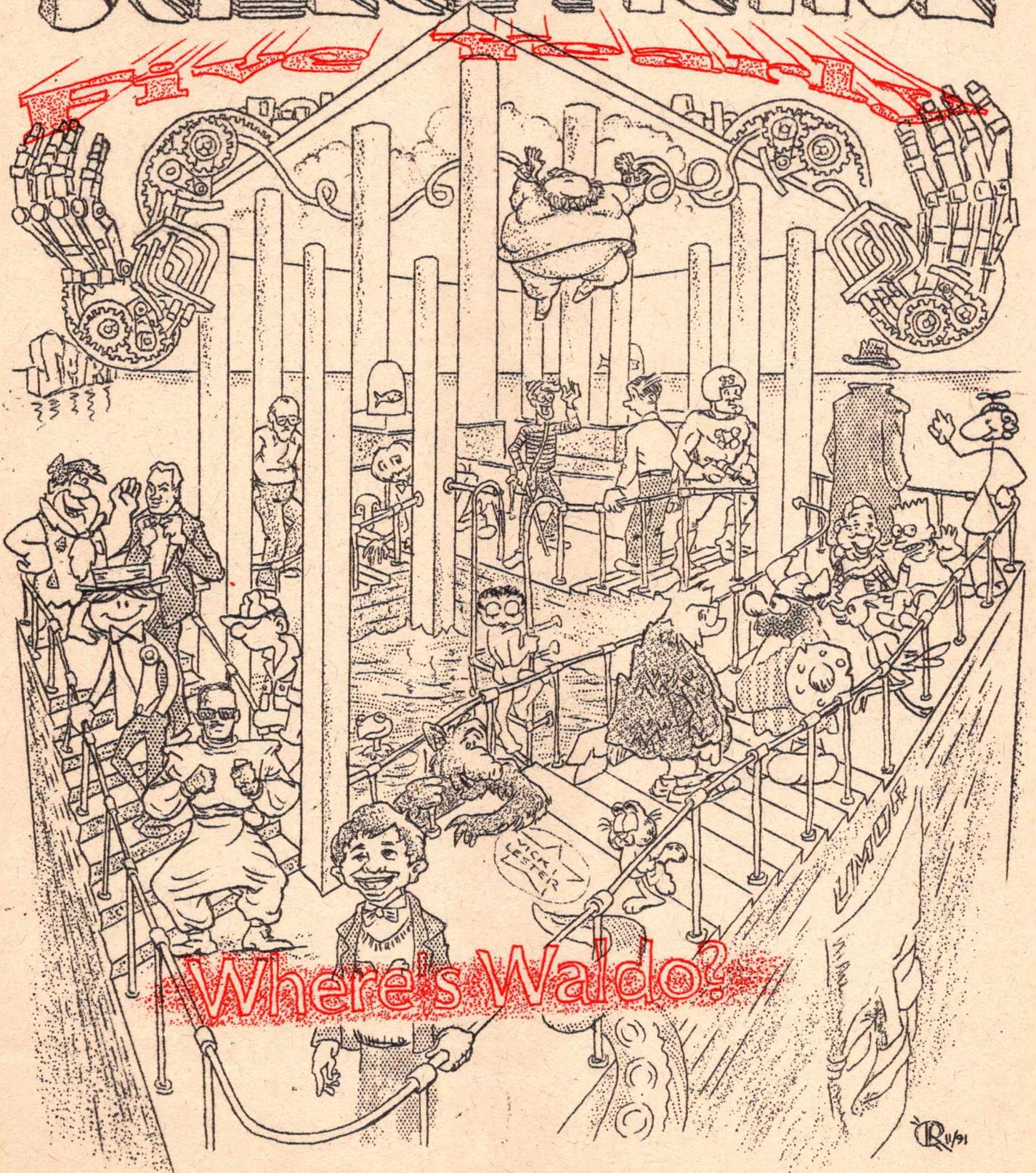


Nov. 1991

SCIENCE FICTION



Where's Waldo?

R 11/91

SCIENCE-FICTION FIVE-YEARLY

Number 9...

Lee Hoffman, editor

November 1991

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SCIENCE-FICTION FIVE-YEARLY, The Fanzine Worth Waiting For, is published four times every two decades by the Quintessential Lee Hoffman with a bit of help from an assistant editor or two. Ye faithful assistant editors for this issue are Jeff Schalles and Gerri Sullivan, with nudges of encouragement and other support from associate editor rich brown. We understand it's all Farber's fault. Or maybe it was the roses. Whatever, SFFY is sent for your express enjoyment, amusement, and enlightenment. Do your part right now.

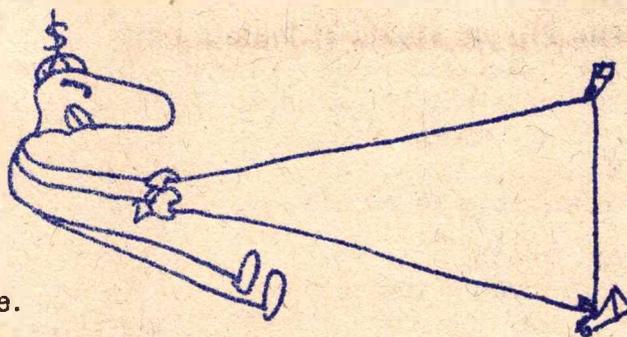
SPECIAL READERS' BONUS! Free Typos! Due to popular demand (and editorial whim) we are reviving the moldy tradition of including a veritable plethora of typographical errors in these pages. In spite of the great effort and no small expense we have incurred to round up so many typos, they are presented at no additional charge to you. We do ask, however, that if you wish to point them out to us, that you include a modest handling charge of 10¢ per typo. SPECIAL "FRIENDS OF MINNEAPOLIS FANDOM" RATE: 1¢ per typo; 1973 pennies, of course.

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I had one once, but that wasn't too many.

FORTEAN FALLOUT

You all know the story of Flight 19, how in December 1945, five Grumman Avengers took off from Ft Lauderdale, Florida, on a training flight, and never returned. Supposedly, they disappeared somewhere in an area triangulated by Miami, Puerto Rico and Bermuda. That was the beginning. Writers discovered they could make money doing articles, even books, about the Dread Bermuda Triangle where various craft disappeared without a trace, for no known reason. Admittedly it is an area of sudden squalls, treacherous currents, even occasional pirates. Identifiable flotsam was sometimes found, and occasionally the points of triangulation had to be stretched from Liverpool to New Bedford to Rio to include some particular incident, but this seldom deterred anyone who was really determined to make a buck writing about vessels being mysteriously swallowed up by the Bermuda Triangle.



We followers of Fortean Phenomena have long been aware that mysterious disappearances are by no means unusual or limited to a particular locale. In any state of the union, any nation in the world, a pencil or a set of keys ignored for a trice can disappear without a trace. It is, of course, the work of the Peripetatic Black Hole.



The first of the missing Avengers from Flight 19 was reported found in the depths near Marquesas Key by Mel Fisher in February, 1987. In September, 1990, John Myhre announced that he'd found one of the planes about 35 miles off Cape Canaveral. Then in May, 1991, the Scientific Search Project located the entire flight scattered in a cluster on the floor of the Atlantic, about 10 miles off Ft Lauderdale. That's seven out of the five planes that have been found in or near the Bermuda Triangle so far, and undoubtedly more to come.

There's certainly more to all this than meets the eye. Last week, I found the keys to the sliding glass door and yesterday I came across my missing Autopoint pencil. There's only one logical explanation. The wormhole has turned. Where the Peripetatic Black Hole has played, its complementary White Hole now roams. Things long gone are beginning to come back. The navigator's locker from Amelia Earhart's plane has been reported found. So has what may be





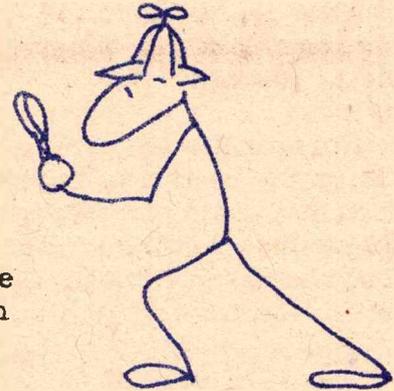
part of Nungesser and Coli's plane. According to a recent super-market tabloid, an astronaut lost in space 18 years ago has returned. Soon it will be Judge Crater and the crew of the Mary Celeste and before you know it, we will be inundated with Ambroses.

Now the turning of a wormhole is not something that happens every day. It is a cosmic event, and something cosmic must have precipitated it. I have a theory.

As you know, assuming the proper mass, when the universe reaches the extent of its expansion, it is to collapse in upon itself again, and time will go into reverse. Or more properly, it did collapse in upon itself and time has gone into reverse.

Yes, friends, we have begun the return trip. Even as you think you read this, you are unreading it. All the things you remember have yet to happen, and all the things you think lie in the future are over and done.

So if you are one of the people who should have received the 1981 issue of SFFY but didn't, hang in there. If my theory is correct, you'll have another chance at it in about ten years.



-- Lee Hoffman
1991

The Chinese say that if you wait long enough by the bank of the river,
the bodies of the other Hugo nominees will come floating by...

At the risk of jeopardizing LeeH's theory, we would like to point out that you don't have to wait ten more years for the 1981 issue of SFFY. Dan Steffan writes:

"As you may know, the issue of SFFY that I produced ten years ago was plagued with the classic Steffan mailing problem. Many, perhaps half, of the copies disappeared in the mail. It was apparently the second half of the mailing, or so I suppose. I will replace any copy that was not received originally, or, for that matter, I will supply a copy to anybody who asks for one."

For a genuine photocopy of SFFY #7, drop a note to Dan at 3804 S. 9th St., Arlington, VA 22204. If you can, please include \$3 or so to cover copy and mailing costs. And watch out for that White Hole. You never know what it will leave in your mailbox....

-- GFS

RANDOM

CHUCK HARRIS

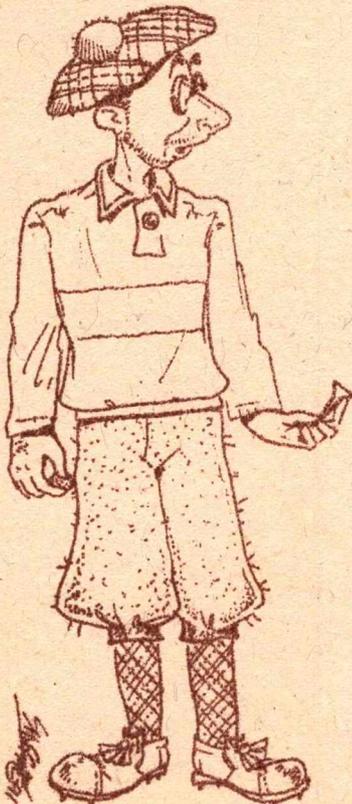


Le Porc Entier

It's blue beanie day today. Sometimes I have this gloomy tendency to sit here staring at the Amstrad and thinking about Immortality and Am I Getting Enough.

Or, rather, will I? Immortality I mean. Up aloft, Time's winged chariot is flapping away like a sword of Damocles in a Force Eight gale. Eventually, no, dammit, who knows when? Tomorrow maybe, or any year now, and almost certainly within the next twenty, they'll shovel dirt onto my chip-board veneered lid, and about ten minutes later I'll be Chucky Who.....?

You know, old Chucky, the deaf lecher.....



Picture of
the well-dressed golfer.

Now, at the Staverton Park Golf and Country Club they have come up with a sort of answer for those of us, unsung, unlauded, miserably hacking away in the rough (it's an obnoxious exasperating Scottish game and I wish now I'd chosen something decent and English like cricket or bear-baiting), who yearn for our names to be legion and our fame extolled for evermore.

It's pretty simple. You give them a small photograph and a large handful of money and they superimpose you (or rather your likeness), over the Club's motto (I can never remember the Latin phrase but it roughly translates out as "Whose turn is it to buy the next round?"), onto a handsome bone china ashtray.

Or, ... wait, ... for a few dollars more, you could finish up on a sweetmeat dish with your eclectic, best ever scorecard in the background.

You see, this way you are instantly an Heirloom. Age will not wither etc... you can sit on the coffee table for all eternity to be marvelled at, even venerated perhaps, by you great great grand-children who will ignore the filter stub or the bubblegum stuck in your left earhole.

And yes, I know, there's nothing very remarkable about this. Unforgettability comes in all shapes and sizes. All the best sites are already taken, but if you can afford it you can still opt for a nice statue like Nelson. It comes expensive but if you've left all your money to TAFF (and so you should), you could still come downmarket a bit, and maybe settle for a little tree with a discreet bronze label proclaiming your generosity, and love of the environment.

Or, if you want, how about stealing an idea from France and Italy? They do a nice line in memorials. You can have your full Kodacolour unretouched portrait (preferably with a pious expression), encased in a plastic insert in your tombstone. All very poignant and reasonably priced.

I've spent a lot of time on this, and it's not easy to come up with a truly original idea. I did consider marketing Chucky Harris Gin to slip me into the Hall of Fame alongside Jim Beam and Jack Daniels, but my good friend Gordon pre-empted my spot years ago.

Personally though, I think that, for Mundanes as well as golfers, the Staverton Park Golf and Country Club ashtrays and sweetmeat dishes might be better, and, well, safer. It's cheap and decent. As a Founder Member I could probably negotiate a small discount if you are really interested. At the very least, you won't get diarrhetic birds crapping on your tricorne hat or stray dogs widdling on your insert.

And you should remember, even elegant tombstones aren't tamper-proof. When the Prime Minister of England, the hated Viscount Castlereagh, committed suicide in 1822 his fancub built a huge ornate memorial for him high in the Pennines -- weeping angels, laurel wreaths, broken columns, real Italian marble, lapis lazuli, The Lot, no expense spared.

Sadly, the granite slab incised with the original laudatory inscription is long forgotten. Within months it was overlaid by a very unofficial plaque indeed.....



"Posterity will ne'er survey
A nobler place than this.
Here lies the grave of Castlereagh,
Stop traveller, and"

Now, I wouldn't want you to get the wrong idea about all this. I write not for myself alone. Believe me, there is something about the sight of a grown man busily massaging his own ego that makes me wish he had taken a cold shower instead. Honest! I'm not like that at all.

But..... I am Chuchy Harris, Trufan. For me, and probably for you, too, fandom is not the *raison d'être* of Humanity, it's not the be all and end all of Civilisation. It's a lot more serious than that, isn't it?

It's okay for 4e, Burbee, Towner, Terry Carr, ATom, Brian Burgess, Walter Himself and Claude Degler, LeeH, Tucker, Block and Ossie Mandias --

all golden immortals until the last scrap of twiltone crumbles to dust -- but what about us *hoi polloi*, I ask you,us nonentities, us half-remembered heroes of The Usuals? You know, and I know deep-down, there's very little chance indeed of them re-christening a Hugo as a Chuchy.



The goofy evangelical
Sprite o' Fandom

Sure, there's always the Curator of Books and Manuscripts at the British Museum, Ghod bless him. The Law says (or said), that he gets a copy of everything in print. He had pride of place on every faned's mailing list, and woe betide you if you failed to send him every issue. We sent him SLANT. We sent him HYPHEN. We sent him the VARGO STATTEN MAGAZINE, Volume 1, Number 3. We are all on a shelf, or a heap, somewhere. If you had a lifetime or two to

spare, you could crawl thru the archives to trace them and find yourself a Chuchy Harris, or for that matter, a Norman G Wansborough anthology....

I guess there's no real satisfactory answer. It's not only a proud and lonely thing. It's instantly forgettable, too.

..... I think I'll settle for a tree. I know where I can get a nice little Japanese Maple for a couple of quid. It's a nice kind of memorial, and when all those lovely crimson leaves drop down onto the lawn in the autumn, generations of aching Harrisises still to come will rest on their rakes and curse me for not choosing a fancy sweetmeat dish.

I think I'd like that.

IN THE TRADITION



OF EPHLESS ELMER

by Bob Tucker

"There is a vast amount of confusion about the recent past because no six fans can agree on anything."

— Eldrin Fzot

"Make that three fans, which is a nice round number."

— Floyd Scritch

Thirty-seventh fandom rose, prospered, and fell the other day. It lasted, in all, about ten hours.

Thirty-seventh fandom was the inspired brainchild of Joseph G. (for Gnu) Fann, second son of Elihu and Martha Fann of Box Elder, Idaho. The historical period lasted about ten hours, in all, because the mail was delivered to the Fann home at eleven in the morning and a foreign telephone call was received at nine that night. The interval was fraught with significance. The telephone call also came collect.

TUCKER

By way of background information, know the following: Elihu and Martha Fann were respected citizens of Box Elder, Idaho, and pillars of the community. Elihu was editor and publisher of the town newspaper, the Box Elder Bugle, and his weekly thundering editorials and fearless news columns kept the townspeople in an uproar. He was also the Elder, the only Elder, of the Box Elder Presbyterian Church. His wife Martha was the church organist. In years gone by she had attempted to be the soloist for the Wednesday night and Sunday morning sessions, but a minister (one of the many, many ministers who had come and gone to the church) dissuaded her from that notion. The minister had pointed out that it wasn't seemly for a female soloist to sing hymns basso.

Because his father was an editor and publisher, and because his father had given him a mimeo and a vast amount of stencils and paper no longer needed by the church, young Joseph Gnu Fann yearned to be a fanzine publisher. The mimeograph and the supplies became his when the church moved into the New Age and purchased the equipment for something called Desk Top Publishing. The church realized only later that they also had to purchase a desk.

Young Joseph was entranced with his new-found wealth. He counted the reams of paper and found that he had enough for a year's run, provided only that he kept the page count under twelve and the circulation under one hundred. He counted the stencils and found that he could meet that goal. He examined the stylus and felt confident that he knew how to use it. He studied the broken lettering guide and concocted ways and means of coping with the missing letters. He would publish a fanzine and it would be called the Box ELdEr Bug because the lower-case l and e were missing, but his father would be proud of him nonetheless. The only object he could not account for in the mass of treasure from the church was one discolored sticky quarter.

Joseph Gnu Fann had discovered fandom a year earlier when he received a shipment of very old magazines called Thrilling Wonder Stories from an antiquarian huckster in Ohio named Rusty Hevelin. Shortly thereafter, in one of those strange coincidences common to fiction, he found a well-worn copy of a book called All Our Yesterdays written by a historian known as Harry Warner, Jr., which was on sale at the Presbyterian Church booksale. It cost him twenty-five cents and was well worth the price, but he never afterward found anyone who would admit owning and donating the volume to the booksale. From another fan in California, a Mr. Bruce Pelz, he purchased for only ten dollars a copy of the Neo-Fan's Guide to Science Fiction Fandom. Thus armed, Joseph became a fan. Or, as the fanzine implied, a faaan.

The only other information you need to know about the Fann family of Box Elder, Idaho are historical footnotes that really do not figure into our story. Remember that Joseph was the second son. His older brother, Claude,

And then Chuck looked me straight in the eye and asked,
'Have you ever had a big one?'

came to a bad end. Claude crossed the border into Montana one day and stole a passel of horses. He was caught and hanged, of course, thereby putting the lie to the long-cherished belief that the eldest child in the family was the most likely to become a fan. Fans do not steal, it is said. The youngest member of the family was Helen, a female. She ran away from home at an early age and went to Boise to become a dirty pro. The family spoke of her only in whispers and quasi-quotes.

Joseph realized he needed a fannish nickname if he wished to become as famous as Ctein, or Teddy Bear, or Big Forry. He chose Gnu to substitute for his middle name because he really didn't want fandom to know that he was named for a distant uncle, Grego Banshuck Fann, now condemned to jail in Sunrise Trail, Florida, for kiting checks. Grego did not fit a fannish image and fans do not kite checks, it is said.

And that is about all you need to know of the background information on Joseph Gnu Fann. Any more would confuse you.

The mailman arrived at the Fann home at eleven in the morning. There were several pieces of junk mail, a few bills for his parents, a letter from Ed McMahon announcing that his father had won ten million dollars, and a fanzine for Joseph. The young fan threw everything else aside. The fanzine was printed on bright green paper and was called Folly, it was published by three fans who called themselves Katz Kunkel Worley, and it appeared to be a focal point of fandom. Young Joseph was enthralled. Reading through it slowly without moving his lips, he found himself thrilled and inspired by an article on page six entitled "The Endless Fun of Numbered Fandoms." At once, the article reminded him of all he had previously read about that fascinating subject and recalled to mind the elder ghods who had treated the subject with the respect it surely deserved: Speer, Silverberg, Ellison, Grennell, Willis.

It had been said that First Fandom arose around 1930 when the first fans of Brooklyn crawled out of the slime and extended slannish tendrils to one another across the ooze of the Hudson River. Perhaps it was the East River, or the Hydra Canal. The waters of Manhattan were not clearly understood in Idaho because those distant foreigners tended to speak in tongues, and exclude one another. Since then, since 1930, according to various historians and would-be historians, eight other fandoms had come into flower and had fallen as first one famous fan and then another gafiated, or one famous fanzine and then another had ceased publication. A numbered fandom appeared to rise and fall according to the appearance and disappearance of an individual, a fanzine, or a newsstand magazine.

Joseph Gnu Fann was confused. The article in this new fanzine Folly seemed to suggest that Ninth Fandom had ended in 1974, the very year of his birth, and the Ninth Transition immediately followed. The article ended with a hint: the hint that fandom at large was breathlessly awaiting the Tenth Coming with the anticipation of a Deep Baptist. Joseph was shaken. It was not lost on him that Ninth Fandom ended during the year of his birth, and that fandom was awaiting ... Something.

Joseph Gnu Fann was electrified, and saw his duty to fandom.

Seizing a pencil he began scribbling on the margins of Folly in the same manner that his elders made comment hooks on their apazines. Someone had written a telephone number on the margin of page three but he dismissed that, thinking that Katz Kunkel Worley had used the page in an absent-minded moment. Joseph's scribbles were numbers, many series of numbers, representing the events of fandom as he understood them thru his limited researches. After all, Mr. Hevelin hadn't sent him everything he wished to know. He labored for an hour or two.

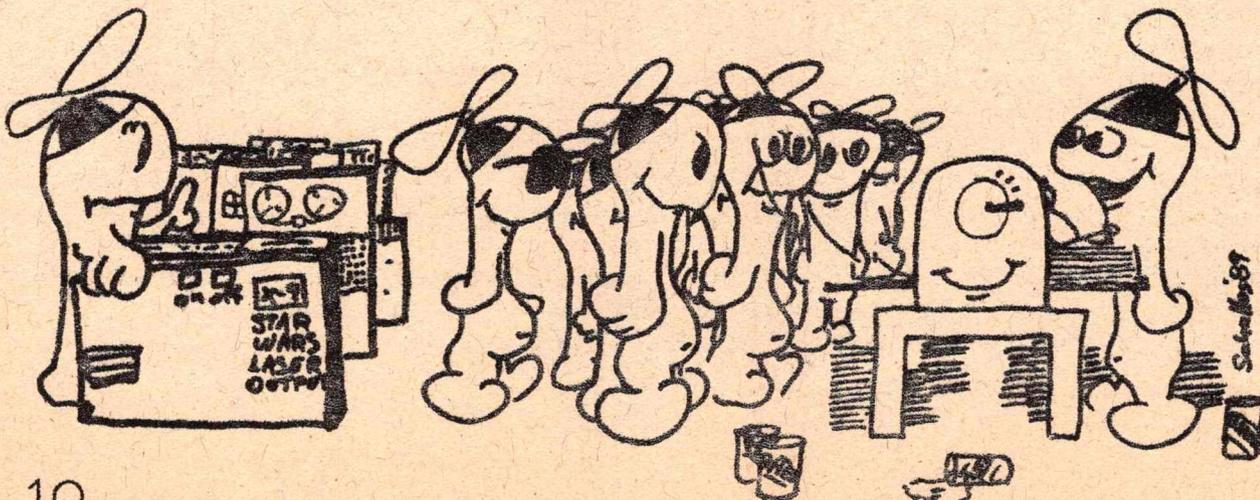
After a long period of tortured labor he made an astounding discovery. An astonishing discovery. Today -- today was the beginning of thirty-seventh fandom! It was a croggling concept but it could not be denied: the beginning of thirty-seventh fandom was the very day Folly arrived in the family mailbox along with an announcement from Ed McMahon that his father had won ten million dollars. Future historians would need to debate the significance.

That fellow, Arnie Katz, would be very proud of him. Using the Katz figures and justifications he, Joseph Gnu Fann, had produced documentation that today was thirty-seventh fandom.

It was a splendid moment to be a fan.

Or rather, it would be as soon as Joseph published the first issue of the Box ELdEr Bug on his donated duper and carefully explained to his readership why he could not use the lower-case l and e on his lettering guide. He would tell his readers that he was carrying on the good fight in The Tradition of Ephless Elmer. Instant fame would likely be his and future historians like Mr. Warner would carefully note that thirty-seventh fandom began with his very first issue, a new focal point of fanzine fandom. All he really needed now was someone well-known to write his lead story or article, someone whose very name would impel readers to open the issue with trembling fingers, after plucking out the staple, and peruse the story with bated breath.

But who? Who did he know? Young Joseph was in a quandry. It really wouldn't do to ask that Mr. Katz to write the lead story because he had



already written one on numbered fandoms, and he would not want to repeat himself now. But yet, it was fitting that his lead be about numbered fandoms because this was the beginning of the thirty-seventh. Who?

Joseph Gnu Fann had a moment of brilliant inspiration. It rekindled his sense of wonder and caused him to speculate that he might be a slant after all. Dashing into the next room for the telephone book, he returned to his chair and leafed thru the pages at the beginning to find the area code tables and the map of the United States. He compared the area codes to the telephone number written in the margin on page three of Folly. The result was a startling story in itself. The code 301 served all of Maryland and fandom's premier historian, Mr. Harry Warner, Jr., lived in Hagerstown, Maryland. Could this be Mr. Warner's number? Could Katz Kunkel Worley have scribbled Mr. Warner's number on the margin of his copy in an idle moment? A passing chance? Perhaps Katz Kunkel Worley had been hand-feeding their duper, or cranking the handle on their way to Twonk's Disease at the very moment someone jotted down the number and placed the call.

Joseph Gnu Fann recognized his moment in the sevagram.

It was but the work of a moment to duplicate that earlier call. Young Joseph dialed the number and waited breathlessly.

An answering machine replied. The answering machine told him in brusque tones that he had reached the residence of Harry the Hermit but that Harry could not come to the phone just now because he was watching a baseball game. The message between the lines seemed to imply that anyone who would interrupt a baseball game was either a fakefan or a prevert. The machine instructed the caller to leave his name, number, and subject matter at the sound of a dropped loc. Joseph did as he was told and retired once again to his chair, contemplating his near brush with destiny. He stared at the stack of virgin stencils, at the many reams of paper piled atop his Nintendo collection, and at the excommunicated mimeo even now awaiting his sweating palm on the crank.

In his mind, he reviewed everything that he had done and said. Following the machine's instructions he had recited his name, his telephone number, his city and state, and had then told the machine that he was in possession of his very first copy of Folly. He said that he was ready and waiting to produce his first issue of the Box ELdEr Bug but that he needed a lead story by a recognized name. He said that the story should be about numbered fandoms and thirty-seventh fandom in particular because of what Mr. Katz had written, coupled, of course, with his own researches that afternoon. He said that he would hold the presses until the ballgame was over, or until Mr. Warner could get his story into the mail the first thing tomorrow morning. He advised that he could not pay for the material because he was a fan, but that he would be pleased to send two free copies of the issue.

So, who was Twonk anyway?
And why did they name a disease after him?

All well and good. All seemed correct and the fannish thing to do. Meanwhile, he could begin his editorial to go on page two. He would explain to his readers the reason for the delay; he really had to wait for Mr. Warner's ballgame to end.

Joseph Gnu Fann was not a baseball fan. He did not watch the games on the telly or listen on the radio. He had no way of knowing that Mr. Warner's team lost the match. Lost deeply.

* * * * *

The telephone in the Fann family parlor rang at about nine o'clock in the evening. Elihu Fann answered the phone because the head of the family always did that. He was first startled to learn from the operator that it was a foreign call: she told him that the call was coming from Maryland, and he was of the firm opinion that any land beyond Idaho state lines was foreign land. He was next startled and thunderstruck to learn that the call was coming in collect. With but one notable exception he had never before received a collect call from anywhere. That only other call had been from the Boise police department, informing him that his daughter Helen had been arrested for shoplifting a copy of Weird Tales and rolling a drunk in the Greyhound bus station.

Elihu was nonplussed. In answer to the operator's query he could only repeat his home telephone number and then ask, witlessly, "What number are you?"

The response was astronomical. Great thunderous peals of rolling laughter came from the telephone, helpless hilarious bursts of laughter so loud they may have poured and boomed from a loud-speaker. The guffaws echoed about the room as Elihu held the telephone away from his hurting ears. Rolling demoniacal laughter. When he could bear it no longer he put the telephone back into the cradle and stared at his wife. She could offer no assistance. Elihu turned his stare to his son with dawning suspicion.

Thirty-seventh fandom rose, prospered, and fell the other day. It lasted, in all, about ten hours.



Hoping You Are The Same

by Robert Bloch

Science-Fiction Five-Yearly has appeared promptly on schedule every lustrum -- a word that is the Latin equivalent for that period of time, as well as a description of two of Bob Tucker's hobbies.

Having been represented (and sometimes misrepresented) in every issue for the past forty years, I'm beginning to run out of topics. And therein lies the rub, as Shakespeare once said when pointing to a massage parlor.

Almost fifty years ago I had occasion to visit with a now-forgotten comedian named Lou Holtz. He had starred on Broadway, appeared in several films, made a reputation both as a guest and as the star of his own radio show, and was presently top-billed in a revue called PRIORITIES OF 1942. He could point to a quarter-century of celebrity and success as a dialect comedian and was to enjoy another decade of popularity until his voluntary retirement. In the course of our conversation, I asked him about the sources of his material.

In response he summoned his dresser, who was a mute, and asked him for "the book." The dresser nodded and pulled a small black notebook from his jacket-pocket, handing it to Mr. Holtz.

The comic held up the little black notebook and nodded.

"Here it is," he said. "My material."

"For this show?" I asked.

"For all my shows," Holtz responded. "Including the radio programs, the revues, the night club acts. Over the years I've used maybe fifty, sixty stories. What more do I need?"

None, apparently. Give or take a few updated topical references, & I'm sure the same holds true for performers like George Burns, who has annually vegetated in Vegas with a standard stand-up act for close to thirty years. And touring one-nighters like George Carlin, who plays the trendy college-campus circuit, probably tote around the same stock of laughing-stock wherever they go.

Unfortunately, writers can't get away with this: their reputation is damaged by repetition. Hence my problem -- now that I'm running out of Tucker gags, I run the risk of appearing Tuckered-out.

And, unfortunately, I don't have a little black notebook -- though, strange as it may seem, I could probably remember most of the Sam Lapidus stories and Maharajah routines that Holtz had written down. The trouble is that no one wants to hear this kind of "racial" comedy in this enlightened era of Sam Kinison and Andrew Dice Clay.

But all is not lost. Surely there is a new crop of young fans equipped to comment on the present state of affairs, and they shouldn't have any particular problem doing so, because science fiction is funnier than ever.

I may not remain a regular contributor to Science-Fiction Five-Yearly in the future, but I certainly look forward to enjoying it as a reader during the next forty years.

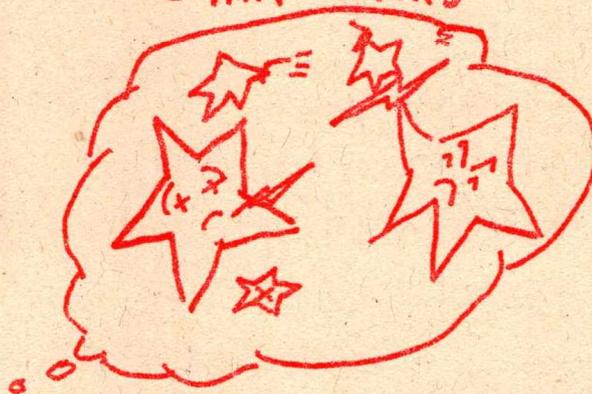
Come to think of it, Moses took forty years to get the Israelites out of the wilderness. Of course, he had God's help. It is in that spirit I voice a pious wish -- God help Science-Fiction Five-Yearly!

PUFFIN FANTASIES by Vic

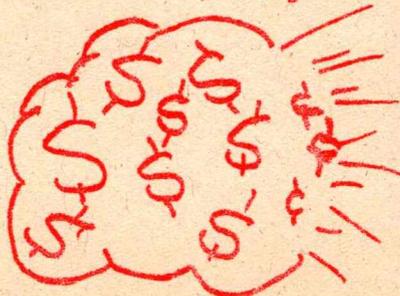
A DREAM OF KINGS



STAR WARS



NO NEW TAXES



CHRISTIANITY IS BUILT UPON THE BELIEF THAT THERE WILL BE A JOYOUS *SECOND COMING!* THEY SAY THAT ALL MANKIND AWAITS THE RETURN OF GOD'S ONLY SON!

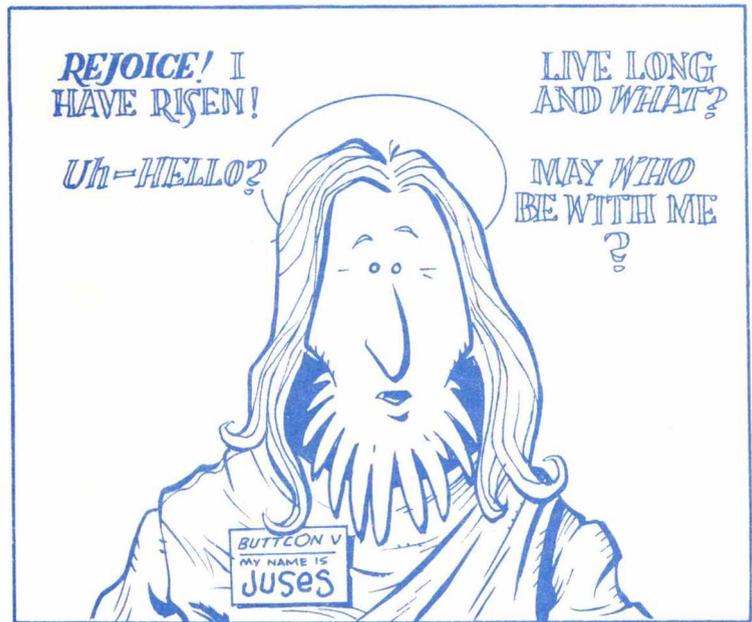
WELL, DEAR FRIENDS, I HAVE SOME *GOOD NEWS* AND SOME *BAD NEWS*...

THE *GOOD NEWS* IS THAT THE WAIT IS FINALLY OVER! *YES!* HE HAS RETURNED! HALLELUJAH!

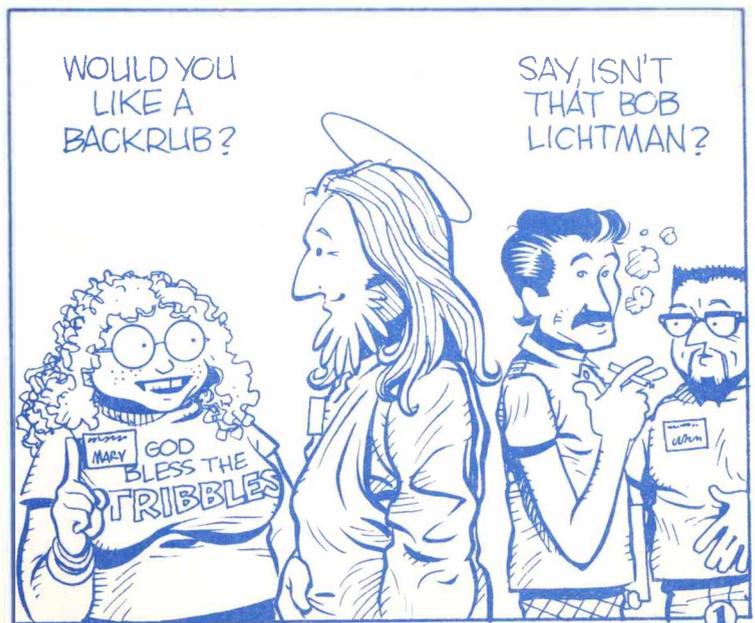
JESUS CHRIST, NEOFAN[®]

Blasphemy and Artwork by
Dante di Stefano

THE *BAD NEWS* IS THAT HE HAS CHOSEN THE LOBBY OF THE BUTTOWN MARRIOT TWIN, HOME OF THIS YEAR'S *BUTTCON V*, AS THE SITE OF HIS TRULY MIRACULOUS REAPPEARANCE!



THE PEOPLE HE ENCOUNTERED AT *BUTTCON* WERE WARM AND FRIENDLY, THEY ACCEPTED HIM INTO THEIR SOCIAL GATHERINGS AND IT SEEMED THAT HIS TEACHINGS HAD SURVIVED THE AGES, THOUGH, AT TIMES, HE WASN'T SURE IF THEY REMEMBERED HIM!



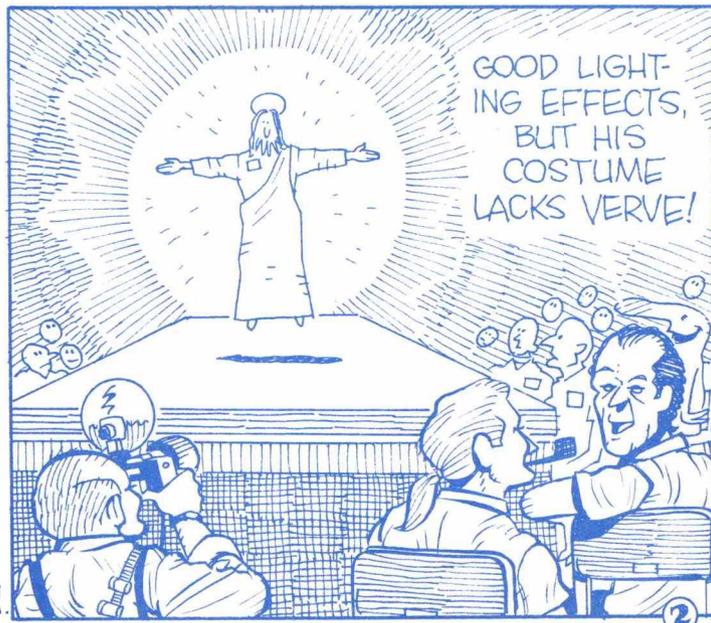
JESUS TRIED TAKING A FEW WORTHY INDIVIDUALS ASIDE TO REVEAL HIS TRUE SELF AND TO OFFER THEM TOTAL ABSOLUTION.



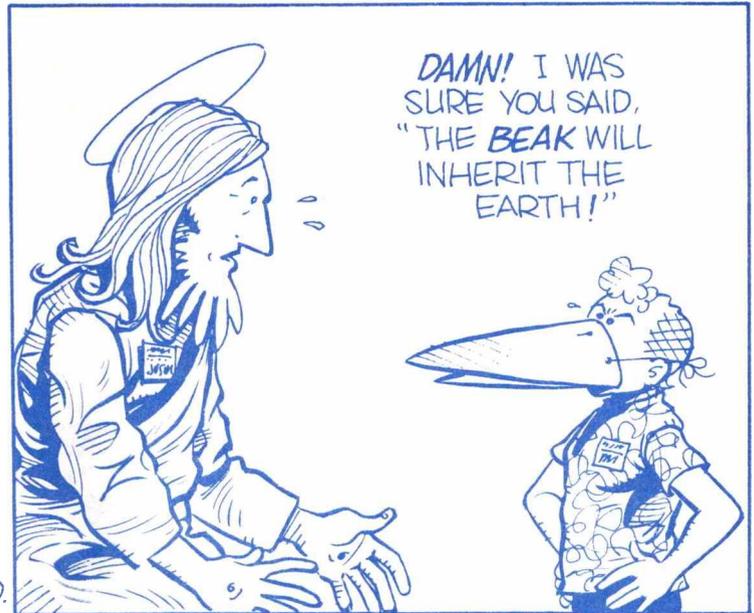
BUT, DESPITE HIS BEST EFFORTS, JESUS' ATTEMPTS TO CONVINCE THE NEW FRIENDS HE'D MADE OF HIS TRUE IDENTITY ALWAYS SEEMED TO END IN CONFUSION.



TAKING A DIFFERENT COURSE OF ACTION, THE SON OF GOD, THEN CHOSE TO APPEAR TO THE MASSES GATHERED AT SOMETHING THEY CALLED THE MASQUERADE. SADLY, NO ONE NOTICED HIM—THO' HE DID WIN AN AWARD FOR BEST PRESENTATION.



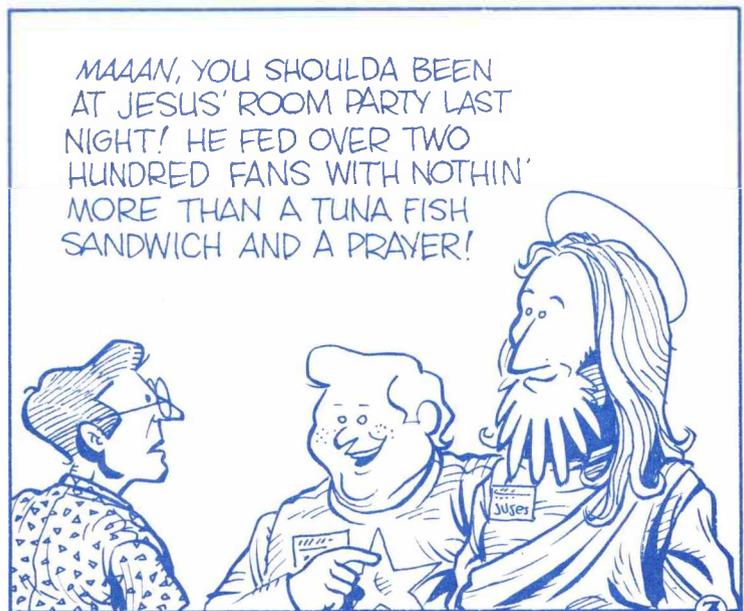
HOWEVER, WHILE ACCEPTING HIS AWARD, JESUS FINALLY GOT AN OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO THE CROWD AND DELIVERED AN ABRIDGED VERSION OF HIS FAMOUS SERMON ON THE MOUNT. DURING WHICH, UNFORTUNATELY, THE PA SYSTEM MALFUNCTIONED.



LATER, AFTER TRYING TO WATCH A STAR TREK BLOOPER REEL, JESUS DECIDED TO COMBINE THE BEST OF ALL WORLDS AND HOST A ROOM PARTY WHERE HE MIGHT FINALLY BE ABLE TO DISCUSS THE GOOD WORD.



THOUGH THE PARTY DIDN'T LIVE UP TO THE KING OF KINGS' EXPECTATIONS, IT DID SEEM TO PLEASE ALL WHO HAD CONGREGATED THERE AND JESUS MADE MANY MORE NEW FRIENDS AND EVEN MANAGED TO HOLD A COMMUNION, OF SORTS.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN,
GET BEHIND YOU? I
WAS HERE FIRST, YOU
STINKIN' HIPPIE!



DESPITE ALL OF THE GOOD WILL
JESUS ENCOUNTERED **HE** STILL
OCCASIONALLY FELT THE EVIL
PRESENCE OF **THE DARK ONE!**

BUT GENERALLY, **HE** FOUND THE
BUTTCON ATTENDEES TO BE
OF GOOD WILL AND OPEN TO
HIS PHILOSOPHIES AND WILLING
TO OFFER SOME OF THEIR OWN.

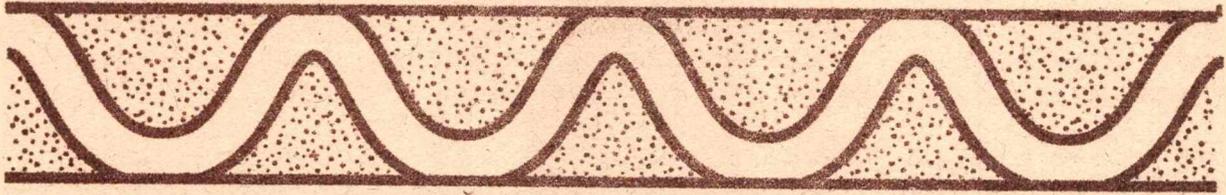


BEAM
ME UP,
SCOTTY!



BUT, IN THE END, **JESUS** REALIZED
THAT THE TIME WAS NOT YET
RIPE FOR **HIS** RETURN. MANY
HAD WELCOMED **HIM** THIS
WEEKEND, BUT THERE HAD BEEN
NO CONVERTS! **OR HAD THERE?**

CORRUGATED



CONFESSIONS

by Jeanne Gomoll

The nuns and Mr. Waldschmidt organized an annual Spring Fair as a fundraiser for the library when I attended seventh grade at St. Luke's Catholic Elementary School. That year, I teamed up with another kid to build the "Maze of Terror and Thrills" as our contribution to the extravaganza. Other seventh and eighth graders organized games of skill involving Goldfish bowls and ping pong balls, or they taped colored construction paper squares onto the floor, appointed a DJ to operate the phonograph player and signed up moms to bake desserts for a cake walk. A group of eighth-graders operated the highly-profitable "jail." But these were all fairly traditional highlights of your typical Catholic School Spring Fair, and I was aiming for something a little more unconventional that year. My dad's occupation would provide the key ingredient, but I also needed an accomplice, someone who could handle masking tape, someone who owned a phonograph player. It may even have been required that we team up with a classmate for our Fair project, I don't recall. But in any case there were two of us, me and Frank.

Mr. Waldschmidt taught my seventh grade class, and for the most part, I liked him because he was not a nun. In fact, he was the only male teacher at St. Luke's, if you didn't count Father Mehan, who taught one religion class a week to us seventh and eighth graders. Anyway, I liked Mr. Waldschmidt, except for those times when he caught me reading library books during class and assigned me another portion of the Bill of Rights to memorize. At the time, I thought he was pretty tough. Knowing what I now understand about the chaotic potential of a roomful of seventh graders, I can sympathize with the principal, Sister Mary Rupert, who decided that St. Luke's needed a strong disciplinarian in that class. She herself taught the eight graders and together, she and Mr. Waldschmidt, kept us prepubescent delinquents in line.

I doubt that St. Luke's teachers considered me a major discipline problem at that point. The demerits I received mainly concerned my inattentiveness. "Jeanne does not pay attention in class. She is a day-dreamer and needs to learn to apply herself." I spent a lot of time reading books that interested me rather than the stuff we were assigned. That, in the long run, turned out to be the wise choice, but at the time, teachers probably considered me a less-than dependable child especially for any large undertaking, requiring organization and diligence.

"I want to build the "Maze of Terror and Thrills," I said, when it came time to declare a project to the two nuns who taught fourth graders and were in charge of organizing the Fair.

"'Maze of Terror and Thrills'?" Sister Mary Aloychious repeated with a worried tone to her voice. (All nuns of the Notre Dame order must take "Mary" as their middle name.) "Why not work on the cake walk with Edith and her team? I think they need one more person. Or maybe some sort of game. You know, we still have all those goldfish bowls from last year." She started to write "Goldfish Toss" down on the list next to my name and I had to interrupt her.

"No -- my dad said he would help me do the maze." That stopped her. This wasn't just some silly, misguided kid idea that needed to be redirected. We were dealing with parents here, and a DAD at that. In the mid-60s, dads didn't get involved in non-sports activities at St. Luke's very often. Dads volunteered to coach the baseball and basketball teams. Moms volunteered baked goods for cake walks and sewed costumes for the Nativity Play in December.

"Your FATHER wants to help you with a booth at the fair?" She was incredulous. Maybe that's because I was also known to the St. Luke's faculty as someone who occasionally "stretched the truth" as they politely described it to my mom and dad at Parents Night. My folks had not been surprised at the news.

"No, not a booth -- a MAZE -- and he said he'd help." I stood my ground. They could investigate if they wanted to; I wasn't making it up. It was a mere technicality that Dad hadn't specifically said he would help me with a maze. He had agreed to make the boxes for me. "Frank will be helping me." I waved behind me in Frank's direction, and Sister Mary Aloychious shrugged and carefully wrote "Maze of Terror and Thrills," next to Frank's and my names.

Before he retired in 1990, my dad designed and sold corrugated boxes for Mead Containers. My dad is the guy who invented the box design you see at toy stores all the time now, that looks kind of like an open stage. It's got a cut-out opening in front, through which a kid can touch a toy truck or a car, maybe honk the horn, or spin a wheel, but can't actually

Dry Rot: Better on the house than on the brain.

remove the toy. Dad's package was a revolutionary container at the time, because the manufacturer could produce one package that functioned as both a shipping container and a display container. Toy stores like it too, because they don't have to waste a toy as a "display model," and customers aren't always opening packages to get a better look.

Except for a few summer vacation trips when dad made us all corrugated box suitcases in which to pack our belongings, and I experienced the terrible angst of a teenager embarrassed by a parent who cannot understand the importance of looking and acting like other people, I mostly thought that dad's career was pretty cool. I did hate that cardboard luggage though. "Why can't we have real suitcases like normal people," I cried, no doubt disappointing and frustrating my dad who had spent a lot of time constructing the cute handles and choosing colored corrugated styles, a different one for each of us.

When my brothers and I were little kids, Dad used to design elaborate Halloween costumes for us out of corrugated cardboard. One year I asked him if he would make me a robot costume, and he went all out, installing little, battery-powered lights that blinked through little holes cut into a white cardboard box. Antennas, knobs, dials, and meters were cleverly attached to the outside of my "body," and a smaller box was attached inside, with a hole cut just above it, chest high, so that when we called out "Trick or Treat," I could point at the opening and someone could drop a candy bar through the hole into my corrugated pouch.

Years later, Dad's profession came in handy frequently, whenever I moved. "Dad, I'm going to move and I need some boxes," I would say.

"How many?" he would say. "What color?" A few days later, he would drive into town with twice as many folded, pristine boxes as I had asked for, and several rolls of 3"-wide, reinforced tape to seal the box ends. The beneficiary of this unique advantage, I've learned the art of the Perfect Move. When I move, everything I own is sealed into closed boxes, and neatly stacked in one room by the time friends arrive to help me load the trucks. Every box is labeled according to the room in which it will belong. There are no paper bags. There are no loose odds and ends.

But when I was twelve and in the seventh grade, I considered the main advantage of my dad's corrugated box expertise to be the opportunity it afforded me to build a "Maze of Terror and Thrills" at St. Luke's Spring Festival. Dad delivered the boxes, as promised, dozens and dozens of huge, white, refrigerator-sized boxes, all pristine, unused, flat, and waiting to be folded into 3 dimensions. Dad also delivered many rolls of wide, reinforced tape that needed to be moistened with wet sponges and smoothed onto cardboard surfaces, where -- because of the reinforcing wires -- would provide virtually impregnable seals.

 Anyone have any pointless and annoying questions?

Rather than folding the ends of the boxes down onto themselves and taping them shut, Frank and I cut and taped boxes into one another. We became proficient in the use of matt knives, learning how to slice cleanly or score and fold the cardboard. The path of our maze would wind an intricate trail through the cloakroom, just off the cafeteria (where the main body of the Festival would take place), and would then meander down the hallway, rise half-way up the stairway that led up to the classrooms and then come back down again, returning to the other side of the cloakroom. I spent several days drafting the path of the maze on blue-lined graph paper and, along the way picking up another Amendment to memorize for taking class time to work on my drawing. Frank and I constructed the maze basically the way I drew it except for the change that Sister Mary Paul demanded when she noticed that we were building the hall section right in front of the girls' bathroom.

"You can't block that door, Jeanne."

"Why not?"

"JEANNE!"

The nuns seemed nervous about the whole enterprise, but once began, they couldn't stop it. Building that maze provided my moment of fame at St. Luke's Elementary School. Kids from all grades, even the big kids in eighth grade, were excited about the "Maze of Terror and Thrills." We'd never had anything close to a "ride" at the Spring Fair and we were all a little tired of throwing ping pong balls into goldfish bowls. But the nuns were nervous because they wouldn't be able to supervise activities within those boxes. In fact they couldn't even inspect the maze before we opened for business, not with those long black skirts and veils, they couldn't.

Frank and I were counting on that.

Our "Maze of Terror and Thrills" was more than just a string of boxes taped together. Crawling through a dark tunnel with no idea of when it will turn a corner or when it would end might provide a few thrills, but -- as we saw it -- very little terror. So, the day before the Festival, we added a few accessories to the entertainment.

- * We cut several slots into the tops of some of the cloakroom section boxes, through which we dangled strips of damp terry cloth. We planned on refreshing these strips as necessary during the day. From other slots throughout the maze, we hung dozens of pieces of string, thin veils of cloth, and long pieces of wax paper. Then we sealed over the slots with duct tape so the openings didn't admit any light.
- * We installed Frank's phonograph player on a hat rack shelf in the cloakroom and borrowed an album with creepy halloween-type music and sound effects from one of Frank's friends. Frank's phonograph could be set to play and replay the same record over and over again.

- * We glued flattened-out orange peels and sponges to the cardboard covering the steps within the stairway section of the tunnel. We thought it was amazing and funny how pitch darkness confuses kids who can't see what they are feeling beneath their hands and knees.
- * Throughout the maze we glued big cotton balls to the side walls. This was an afterthought in our plans, but later on, some kids told us that it was the scariest part of the maze. Few kids figured out what the stuff was unless they pulled some off the wall and examined it in the light.
- * On the morning of the Fair, we replaced the working lightbulbs in the cloakroom with old, burnt-out bulbs. The "light holes" Mr. Waldschmidt suggested we cut in the cloakroom section of the maze wouldn't admit much illumination if there wasn't any to start with.

Without a doubt, the "Maze of Terror and Thrills" turned out to be the most popular attraction at that Spring's Fair, and we almost sold more tickets than the Jail, which traditionally raised the most money at the Fair since it charged people to send their friends to jail AND to get out themselves when their friends took revenge. We would have sold the most tickets too, if only fifth-grader Marie Louise hadn't freaked out in the cloakroom when she got licked in the face by a wet terry cloth strip and heard the wolf howl on Frank's friend's record.

"Get me out of here!" she screamed. "The wolf is going to kill me!" was followed by incoherent screams and sobs and wild hiccups. Frank and I tried to talk her down, but Marie Louise just got more hysterical. We could hear her trying to claw the walls open, but the reinforced tape resisted all attempts. Marie Louise was trapped. We tried to convince her to crawl forward.

"The wet stuff is just a piece of a towel, Marie Louise, just crawl ahead and it won't touch you any more," Frank said. I scowled at him. We'd sworn not to tell anyone what materials we'd used inside the maze. However, I didn't press the point; Frank's strategy seemed to be working. Marie Louise's sobs lessened, though her hiccups were increasing in frequency and volume. It seemed to me that she was crawling slowly forward, but then then an owl hooted and Marie Louise screamed again and we thought that maybe a murderer actually did lurk inside the corrugated tunnel. It was too bad that we couldn't manage to turn off the sound effects, but the phonograph was sitting in a corner on the other side of all the boxes.

"Something touched me! Something touched me! Get me oooooout!" And she was off again, screaming and crying. I looked over my shoulder. So far so good, no nuns had heard the commotion yet. There seemed to be an argument taking place outside the jail involving a bunch of kids and several nuns. So far they hadn't noticed Marie Louise's panicky screams. I said, "let's cut her out, Frank. We can tape up the hole later."

"Right," said Frank, and reached into his back pocket for a matt knife. I took the knife from Frank, but neither of us considered the potential effect on Marie Louise if the knife blade happened to slice her arm, and luckily we didn't have to find out. Just as I grabbed the knife from Frank, steadied the corrugated wall closest to Marie Louise's screams, and prepared to make the incision into cardboard, Mr. Waldschmidt's baritone voice thundered across the cloakroom.

"Stop that right now!" he yelled. He was aiming a flashlight in our direction, the beam focusing on my hand and the poised matt knife. Marie Louise snuffed suddenly with the sound of Mr. Waldschmidt's authoritative voice, and now she began crying out, "Help, help! Please get me out! Help!"

"What's going on here?" Mr. Waldschmidt growled, as he snapped the wall switch on and off without effect.

"The bulbs must be burnt out," I offered and knew immediately that I would memorize the twelfth amendment -- the long one about the Electoral College -- that night. I sighed, and Frank took over. "Nothing," he said. "Nothing's wrong. Marie Louise's just stuck. We'll get her out."

"Put that knife down right now." Mr. Waldschmidt ordered. "I'll get her." And without warning, the tall seventh-grade teacher suddenly bent down and disappeared into the tunnel. Frank and I glanced at each other and could just make out each other's worried expressions in the dark. He had entered the exit, not the entrance and would crawl the whole length of the tunnel, which zig-zagged through the hallway, climbed up and down the stairs, and wound its way back into the cloakroom before he found Marie Louise.

"What the HELL is this stuff?!" Mr. Waldschmidt bellowed just as Sister Mary Rupert materialized behind me. One moment no one was there and the next moment, there she was, her hand gripping my shoulder like an iron claw. Nuns are like that; you never know when they're going to show up.

"Mr. Waldschmidt, I will not tolerate language!" she thundered and suddenly the world was quiet. Marie Louise no longer sobbed and her hiccupping had been stifled. I imagined that she had drawn her legs up under her arms and had ducked her head onto her knees at the stern voice of St. Luke's principal. Mr. Waldschmidt crawled purposefully forward and entered the hallway segment of the maze. The combatants at the jail had negotiated a settlement, and several curious faces in the cafeteria now peeked through the open, lower, half-door of the cloakroom entrance. I slowly craned my head around and up to look at Sister Mary Rupert, whose fingernails still pierced through my shirt and into my flesh. Her face,

Entropy isn't what it used to be.

framed in a white wimple, floated in blackness. The rest of her black habit disappeared amid the general blackness of the rest of the cloakroom. Her thin lips were pressed together and her eyes glared down at me.

"Give the knife to me, Jeanne." I clicked the blade down into its sheath and handed it up to her without argument. Her hand released its grip on my shoulder and the matt knife disappeared into the blackness of her billowing sleeve. We waited. I attempted to stop breathing altogether but my breath exploded outward in the next moment, before I'd become light-headed.

A thump, a baritone grunt, and a kid's shrill scream tore through the silence from the hallway. Crawling the wrong way through the maze, Mr. Waldschmidt had frightened a kid on his way out. I ducked and spun around and through Sister Mary Rupert's skirts before she could grab me again. She didn't realize that Mr. Waldschmidt no longer occupied the cloakroom and was momentarily confused. Marie Louise began sobbing pitifully. "Please, get me out of here..."

The light streaming through the glass doors in the hallway momentarily blinded me, but a few seconds later I noticed a section of corrugated tunnel swaying from side to side. Mr. Waldschmidt was pouring forth a stream of "language" and suddenly his head and shoulder burst through the top of the box. He stood up and extricated himself from the paper wreckage, a wad of cotton in his had which he was examining curiously. Billy Bodus followed, slowly rising from inside the torn opening, looked around a little nervously before he ducked back inside the maze again and settled in until Marie Louise had been rescued and Sister Mary Rupert and Mr. Waldschmidt had finished their investigation of the situation.

Eventually, Sister Mary Rupert got Marie Louise calmed down, instructed her to sit still, and cut a small doorway into the cardboard wall a few feet away from the terrified little girl. Sister Mary Aloychious was given temporary custody of the damp child and the two of them detoured around the other side of the cafeteria to the girls' rest room. Mr. Waldschmidt closed and locked the door into the cloakroom, and Sister Mary Rupert, whose left hand was rattling the rosary beads clutched there, simply pointed at Frank and I, and then pointed upward, whether to heaven or her office it was all the same. She sailed off into the cafeteria, her skirts and veil billowing behind her, and Frank and I followed her slowly through a sea of sadistic on-lookers, my classmates.

The next year, my eighth grade year, Leslie Baseheart and I would operate the fish bowl coin toss booth. The nuns would be most happy to see our bored expressions. But I would always recall the "Maze of Terror and Thrills" as my shining hour at St. Luke's.



THE PURPLE FIELDS OF FANAC

Part Three

by Ted White

He'd taken a lot of kidding about his name the first few years he'd been a fan. "James Oldfan" -- the name had to be a put-on, or "Oldfan" a hoax; surely no one was born with that name. And at first he'd enjoyed the attention. It was certainly one way to get noticed, to be singled out from that year's crop of neofans.

But eventually he'd put a stop to the jokes and speculation. He sent a copy of his birth certificate to Joe Biggs, who Gestefaxed it and published it in BIGGOT. "Oldfan is apparently an old and undeservedly uncommon Welsh name," Biggs had observed at that time.

That was many years ago. Now he felt like an Oldfan: he was tired.

He was tired of a lot of things, but most of all he was tired of fandom. It had changed somehow, and in the change had passed him by. While once he had gotten stacks of fannish mail each day -- letters and fanzines -- it seemed like today's mail was mostly junk mail, full of slips of paper with blurry pictures of generic children printed in colored ink under a heading that asked "Have You Seen Me?" and envelopes that announced "You May Already Be A Winner!" Fanzines showed up infrequently, often not for weeks. Letters from his correspondents -- those with whom he still corresponded -- were hardly greater in number.

Thumbing through the day's stack of mail he mused that the amount of mail he received daily was as great as ever -- maybe even greater. But what felt at first like a magazine was more likely upon examination to be a bound collection of advertisements or a catalogue. Then there were the loose ads -- like newspaper inserts -- touting the latest home-delivery pizza. And the letters! When he opened them they turned out to be form letters asking, "Thinking of selling your home?" or offering insurance plans and policies.

But, wait -- here was a genuine letter from a real person, Will Wheatly. Will used to live nearby. He used to drop in all the time, and he'd been a pest -- always getting his copies of the latest fanzine a day or two earlier, flaunting them at Jim.

He'd moved away a year ago, and Jim had experienced the odd sensation of unexpected loss. He found he actually missed Will.

They hadn't corresponded much since then, so the arrival of a letter from Will was something of a surprise. Oldfan took it, still unopened, into his fanden, wanting to savor for another moment the pleasure of its arrival before actually reading it. "Probably just another address-change," he told himself, to guard against the possible letdown.

After settling himself into the easy chair by the window, he used his letter-opener to neatly slit the envelope, and took out Will's letter.

Well, at least it wasn't a form letter or an address-change. But it was in some sense an advertisement.

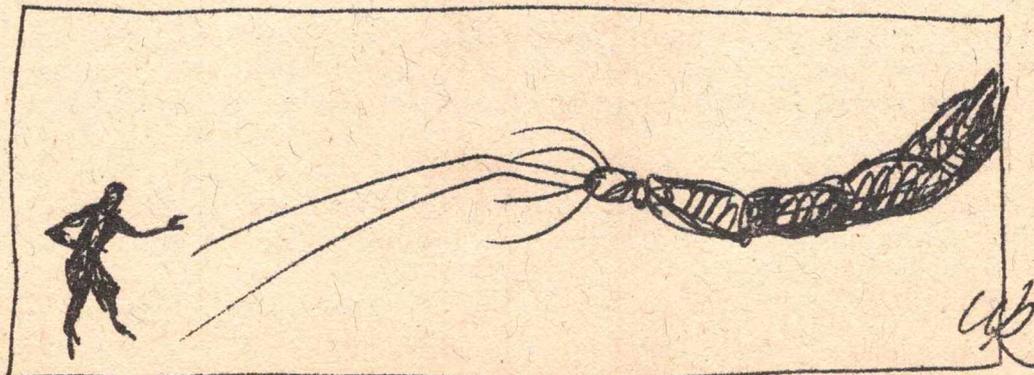
"Dear Jim," Wheatly had written, "I wonder if you've noticed the paucity of fanzines lately? I don't know about you, but I haven't gotten but two in the last month, and one of them was **BOOTWAH**."

Oldfan sniffed when he read that. **BOOTWAH** was published by Sara Parsons, an elderly woman who had been a faithful member of the **N3F** since she'd joined it as a teenager. It looked like a church bulletin, which was no surprise to anyone who knew that Sara also published her church's Sunday bulletins each week, which, as she (often) put it, "helps keep me regular, ha ha." In **BOOTWAH** she listed the books she'd read, using an arcane system by which each book's content was classified with a group of letters -- the latest Busby trilogy had earned a **PTFX** -- but otherwise went without comment. **BOOTWAH** was almost totally devoid of interest to anyone other than Sara Parsons, but she published it religiously ("ha ha") every month. It was impossible to easily distinguish any one issue from all the others, but it occurred to Jim that he hadn't noticed the arrival of one in several months. But maybe he'd tossed them into the pile of junk mail and forgotten them.

"There's a reason, though," Wheatly's letter continued. "In one word: **NETwork**. I just signed up and plugged in, and let me tell ya, that's where the action is. Crawford, Vegas, Tucker -- they're all there and they're all active."

Wheatly's letter went into details, but Oldfan just scanned that part. A computer "bulletin board" -- that's where the fanac was now.

He'd been getting advertisements in the mail, solicitations to join **NETwork**, the newest and supposedly the best of them. You could use it any



time between 6:00 pm and 6:00 am for a really minimal charge (billed through the phone company). "Like the best room party at the convention!" one ad had touted. "Eavesdrop on the BNFs!" advised another. "(Modem and initial registration charge not included)" whispered the fine print at the bottom of each.

"Listen, buddy," Wheatly's letter concluded, "you got to get back in touch with everybody. Jump into the NET!"

Oldfan shook his head in disbelief. Why, he didn't even have a personal computer, much less a modem. But Will's letter explained a lot: fandom had regrouped around the new technology and if he didn't want to be left totally out of it, he'd have to get a PC and catch up.

Groaning a little, he climbed out of his chair and went back into his living room to retrieve the day's junk mail from the wastebasket. Sorting through it found the flyer he'd half remembered. "Your own personal computer!" it said, "complete with modem for joining your favorite bulletin board! Now only \$29.83 a month for 72 months!"

He turned the flyer over in his calloused hands, and considered the idea...

#

Will Wheatly looked up from the monitor screen on which Oldfan could be seen, still holding the flyer advertising a computer. Another monitor showed Oldfan's fanden, and Wheatly's letter lying on the floor next to the easy chair, where Oldfan had dropped it.

"He made the connection," said the being next to Wheatly, speaking through a vocoder device that it manipulated with several pseudopods from within its personal life-support system. "He's taken the bait."

Will grinned at it for a moment. "That's good," he said approvingly. "You're starting to get the idiom now." Then he sobered. "I hope it works," he said. "Everything's riding on this -- everything we've done here for the past ten years, the fake Terran house and environment, the fake fandom we've been feeding him, it all comes down to this. We've got to get him computerized. Otherwise..."

"Otherwise, it will all be wasted," said the being.

"And everything will be lost," said Will.

"We cannot allow that," responded the being.

Will fought hard and managed to suppress a shudder.

TO BE CONTINUED...

The Harp that Once or Twice

I am about 38 years of age. I am aware of evidence appearing to indicate that I was born in 1919, but I try not to let this temporal paradox affect my behaviour. As Elinor Busby put it once, the most important thing about getting older is not to get psyched out by it. I think of it by reference to computers, influenced by Elinor herself, my guru in these matters. When I find myself moving more hesitantly than I used to, I reprove myself sharply. "You are acting in Old Man Mode," I say to myself, and press the Escape key in my mind. At once I begin to move in my normal lithe and nimble manner.

The fact is, I think, that the changes in one's behaviour with age have more to do with fear than with physical incapacity. The longer one lives, the more falls one has, and the memory of them inhibits one's actions more than does any objective bodily deterioration.

I arrived at this conclusion as easily as falling off my front porch. The porch in question has two steps leading up to a concrete platform. Between that and the tiles of the porch proper there is an iron bar one and a half inches square in cross section, providing a permanent weather seal under the outer door. Well, almost permanent; in the century or so since this house was built, the iron bar has worn down in the middle by about one eighth of an inch.

One morning I dashed out of the front doorway to chase away a heron which was stealing the fish from the pond in the back garden. In making the sharp right turn my toe caught the unworn part of the iron bar and I tripped down the steps, running faster and faster down the drive way in the attempt to regain my balance. The attempt failed and I crashed on the side of my face on the tarmac. There was no permanent damage but my eye filled with blood so that I looked like something out of a horror comic, and for weeks I went about wearing sunglasses so that people meeting me in the street would not scream and run away in horror. No more than usual, anyway.

The experience was worrying because it reminded me of something that happened in Portugal. We often go to the South Coast, the Algarve, in the autumn. The eastern end of the Algarve is Mediterranean in character, with undertones of North Africa, but as you drive west, everything changes. There is grass and heather instead of scrub and flowers, sheep instead of cattle, drystone walls instead of hedgerows. There are few trees, and they

lean eastwards, clinging onto the scanty soil. Houses are few and remote. The hills and valleys are on a larger than human scale and the sky seems to have got bigger. There is a feeling that something important is about to happen: as indeed, there is...the Atlantic Ocean.

We turned back that time without actually reaching the west coast, because the road plunged downwards along the sides of steep slopes and was so narrow I did not like to contemplate what I would do if I met another car. But next autumn we took a bus tour to a place called Sagres, which is where Henry the Navigator had his college for the captains who discovered the rest of the world.

Here Europe comes to an end in 600 feet high black cliffs, falling sheer to a dark and angry sea. The top is all rock outcrop, a type of terrain I was familiar with. As a boy I was secretly proud of my ability to run along a rocky shore, picking level landing-places several steps ahead. I didn't try this here, but I did move briskly towards the edge of the cliff to look down. I caught my foot on an underestimated rock, stumbled and pitched forward trying to regain my balance, and fell full length with my head about two feet from the edge. What I have been wondering ever since is this: if I had tripped a yard nearer the edge, would I have been able to throw myself down immediately, or would I have stumbled on, qualifying for the epitaph "Born Belfast 1919, Fell Off Europe 1988"?

I wrote that bit before my recent trouble with an aortic aneurysm, the same thing that killed John W. Campbell. I am recovering well, but it will take a lot of time...as long as a year...before I regain my energy. Meanwhile my thanks to all the friends who have written.

MY LIFE WITH BRIAN ALDISS

"You didn't tell us about this science fiction fandom thing," said one of the men from MI5. The scene was rather like one of those gentlemanly but deadly interrogations in the BBCTV version of a John Le Carre novel. My two visitors sat on the other side of my desk, apparently at ease and drinking tea out of china cups provided by my angelic personal assistant, Kathleen, but one had the feeling they had not entirely discounted the possibility that the tea might be drugged.

The top security chiefs in London had decided that my grade of civil servant was to be "positively vetted." Hence the presence of these two awfully nice chaps from Whitehall. On their first visit they had asked me a great many highly personal questions, designed to discover any sexual predilections, emotional entanglements, or other interests which might lead me to serve the interests of a foreign power; viz at that time, some dozen years ago, the USSR. Then they had gone away to compare what I had said with the views of everyone who knew me. And now here they were back again having found me out. My cover was blown. I blamed Brian Aldiss for this predicament.

by Walt Willis

Evinced no more than mild surprise, I explained to the spy-catchers that I had not mentioned my past interests in science fiction simply because I had not been in touch with this particular literary field for more than ten years. At one time, I explained, I had written an occasional review or monograph, but since the troubles started in Northern Ireland in the mid-sixties, pressure of work had left me no time for that sort of thing. They seemed to accept this, which confirmed my suspicion that Brian Aldiss was at the bottom of it all.

I vividly remembered the day last year when my boss and I had been walking along a corridor in Westminster on the way to an important meeting. My boss abruptly changed the subject we had been discussing, namely the technicalities of voting in referenda. "Are you, by any chance," he said, "Ever known as Ghod? With an h?"

It turned out that yesterday evening in his branch of the Belfast Public Library he had accidentally come across a book by one Brian Aldiss, in which he recalled a science fiction convention at which he had met a fan called Walt Willis who was referred to as Ghod. There was nothing to indicate why this encounter had been particularly memorable. I explained to my boss that according to one Bill Temple, as reported in a book by Harry Warner, I had a godlike ability to shape destiny to provide opportunities for puns. "Like when you were having dinner at our house," said my boss, "and my wife explained her dessert recipe and you said "Souffle, souffle, catchee mousse?"

So when I got home, I phoned James White, who has all the knowledge that hasn't reached fanzines yet. "What memorable thing ever happened with Brian Aldiss?"

"Well," said James, "when he visited us in Belfast you drove him up the coast road to Cushendall, where he bought a cut glass napkin ring."

"Even more sensational than that," I said. "It was something that happened at a convention."

"There was the Great Confrontation at Harrogate in 1962," said James. "I reported it in Hyphen."

I thanked him, hung up and found the 25 to 33 volume of Hyphen. The reported was called The Long Afternoon of Harrogate. It was long, detailed and fascinating, like all James White convention reports. (His report on his first convention, London in 1951, would have been his first published work if it had not turned out rather long for our hand-printed fanzine, the first 49 pages having taken the reader only as far as 8:30pm on the previous Friday.) I noticed that in the subsequent Hyphen Brian Aldiss submitted in admiring emulation a ten-page report on the Peterborough convention the following year attended by Kingsley Amis. Which is, as they say, another story... but is enough to demonstrate the unremitting accuracy of James's convention reports.

The Great Confrontation at Harrogate had been with our Ian McAuley, (the Dublin one, not the Atlanta one who tried to publicise the interlineation *Eat At Omars* in the early 'Fifties). Our Ian was outraged by what he regarded as the scientific travesties of Aldiss's story *Hothouse Planet*. There is no doubt that it is a great handicap in the appreciation of some science fiction to know something about science. Dr. McAuley's onslaught was forceful, but the Aldiss defences turned out to be unexpectedly impregnable. James reported the dialogue verbatim...

Ian: Aldiss, what d'you mean having men with diode valves in their heads...?

Brian: I know, I know. Totally implausible. Terrible story.

Ian: Absolutely no technical verisimilitude! How could the vacuum be maintained—

Brian: Worst story I ever wrote. Got sent out by mistake. Thought I'd burned it.

Ian: Full of scientific boners...

Brian: I agree entirely. A horrible story. Lousy, should never have seen print. I feel terrible about it, Ian.

Ian: It wasn't a bad story. As a matter of fact it was pretty good idea-wise. But for the one small scientific inaccuracy...

Brian: Can I get you another beer, Ian?

At this point James once again demonstrates his meticulous accuracy by regretting that he could not remember Ian's reply to this question; though he does record later the only occasion on which Ian was ever known to refuse a drink...("I've only got two hands, mate!")

After I'd finished reading the report I phoned James again, regretting I hadn't found anything that Brian was likely to have remembered all those years. What about, I asked, that trip we made to the Spanish restaurant? James had recounted how the offhand Spanish waiters had addressed us in Spanish, and how Margaret and Harry Harrison floored them by replying in purist Castilian. In revenge they made us wait ages for our food, as if they had decided we should all starve until Brian and Harry gave up Gibraltar. Did anything else happen, not reported?

Now I have great faith in James, owing him the homage due to anyone who actually backs up his computer disks. It would not have surprised me in the least to find that his comparatively terse convention reports were backed up by voluminous notes, with an appendix including the menu of the restaurant and the receipted bill. I recalled that remarkable sequence of photographs taken of one spot on the earth's surface, ranging from a view of the planet from space to a molecular image by an electron microscope. I waited with confidence for the great brain to zoom in on the conversation in the Spanish restaurant.

 Too bad there isn't a 'Find File' for your house.

The mountain laboured and brought forth, if not a mouse, an animal nearly as small. "There was the kitten," said James.

It seemed that at one point during our long wait for food we had started passing around old photographs. James had produced one of Dave and Ruth Kyle standing outside a convention hotel. Brian Aldiss was in it too, and he was holding a kitten. Someone asked about it and Brian explained it was a stray he had found outside the hotel entrance. James asked what had happened to it. Brian looked even hungrier, if possible. He said, wolfishly, "I ate it."

"I said that explained his guilty look," said James. "Shall I go on?"

James must have heard my groan and taken my assent for grunted. "You said 'They call it the Eat-a-Puss Complex,' and Brian said 'Oh Ghod'."

WHEN WE SURVEY THE WONDROUS DOUBLE CROSS A periodical with perspective like that of SFFY should be among the first to note that since the last issue an event of unique significance to the human race has taken place, one never forecast even in science fiction. I mean the death of the system of ideas associated with Marxist socialism.

Nothing like this has ever happened before. Certainly there have been other times when established beliefs were challenged, as by Galileo, Copernicus and Darwin, but there has never been so sudden and complete a conversion as we have seen in the past two years. It is if the Pope and all the College of Cardinals, except the one from Cuba, had admitted the falsity of religion and apologised to the millions it had led to waste their lives.

An Iranian newspaper last summer urged that American help should be spurned after the earthquake that killed 30,000 people. "Even under the rubble, our people are chanting 'Death to America'," it claimed, according to the London Times. I wonder why this reminds me of Joseph Nicholas.

IT'S ONLY FAANFICTION BUT I LIKE IT Re-reading the above, I realise I underestimated science fiction in saying it had never anticipated anything like the recent ideological revolution. I had forgotten that as far back as 1962 there had been a story about how the communist system was destroyed and the cold war ended almost overnight by one issue of a science fiction magazine. I should have remembered it because I wrote it myself.

Admittedly it was only a faanfiction story, written for fun for Ted White's fanzine Void: it featured a goldfish called Horace and was based on a news item about the prozine Fantastic Universe being sold at public auction. But it was science fiction, and helps to make a point in support of the thesis eloquently argued by rich brown in BSFAN #17 (Elaine Stiles),

Where would America be without the number nine?

that in abandoning faanfiction, as fan writers have tended to do in recent years, we are in danger of losing something of unique value.

There are different kinds of faanfiction, and to my mind Bob Tucker invented them all; as he did so much else of value in fandom. At Irish Fandom's first Convention, in London in 1951, we met Forry Ackerman and when he got home he sent me several packages of old fanzines. They included issues of *Le Zombie* in which Tucker recounted the adventures of a character called Joe Fann, whom we later transmuted to Jophan. But even before that we had been introduced to faanfiction by Bill Temple, whose convention speeches were the equivalent of Bob Shaw's Serious Scientific Talks. On this occasion his lecture recounted the voyage of a spaceship powered by what he termed mitogenetic rays. Noting the repellent effect of onion-laden breath, Arthur Clarke had designed a spaceship consisting entirely of a giant mutant onion. This was the precursor of other ingenious space ventures by faan fiction authors, including Bob Shaw's beer drive and Berkeley Fandom's Tower to the Moon made of beercans. Lee Jacobs from the Berkeley area was at the London Convention too, and took the MS of Temple's talk with him. Lee was to become the chronicler of Fabulous Burbee fandom and its mythology.

Anyone who doubts the importance of conventions to fanzine fandom should study the connections made at the London Festival Convention of 1951, all affirmed in *Quandry*. The Festival was inspired by the Great Exhibition of 1851, and designed like that one to inaugurate a new era of peace and prosperity. It certainly worked for fandom.

So far faan fiction could be divided into two classes, fantasy and satire. In *Hyphen* #3, Bob Shaw wrote a new kind of story called SFAN! The title derived from van Vogt's *SLAN!* but the story itself was more like Heinlein's *If This Goes On*. It told of a future society in which fans were literally a persecuted minority, because of anti-science feeling following atomic war. The fugitive hero was betrayed to the authorities by trolley-car fans and sentenced to death. Little did the authorities realise that the dreaded giant executioner was actually James White, agent of a conspiracy to transport fans to the safety of the Okefenokee Swamp, and we are left with hope of a future in which fans are safe. All this in two and a half pages and apparently written with complete seriousness. The story represented with complete accuracy how fans of that era saw their position in society, and it helped give rise to a genre called Trufan Tales, of which Vince Clarke's *Scrooge on ice* was the most notable example.

But the future in which fans were safe was now arriving, with the increased public acceptance of science fiction. There was still a useful role for satirical faanfiction, particularly in the peaceful resolution of conflicts. It could perform a function like that of the play performed before the King in *Hamlet*. But the increasingly disparate character of fandom diminished its importance from that point of view.

However, when one door shuts another opens, and rich brown is quite right in noting the historical importance of James White's *Exorcists of If*. Here is a story which is not only trufannish, but science fictional, in that

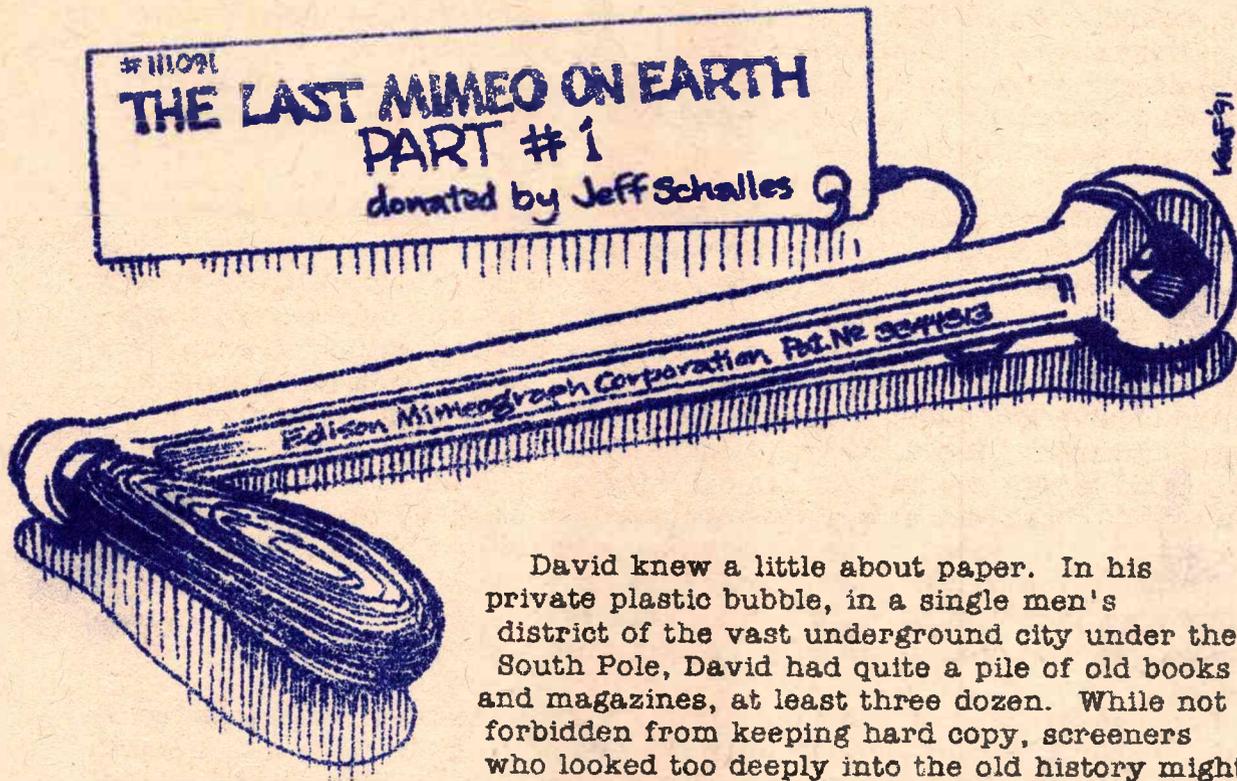
it is based on a genuine sciencefictional plot. The same applies to James's more recent short story about meeting the ghost of George Charters in a supermarket. This contains an entirely new sfnal idea, about communicating with the dead by switching off your word processor, after completing your letter, thus consigning it to the limbo they inhabit. This can be appreciated by people who have never heard of George Charters, thereby enlarging its potential readership enormously. More recently James has further expanded this concept by writing a long story based on the legend of Merlin, who is said to have lived backwards. He has Merlin visiting the Worldcon in Minneapolis in 2073, where he wins Third Prize in the Masquerade Ball, and follows him backwards in time to Camelot, via the Mermaid Tavern, which he sees as an archetypal fan group. James has trimmed this into an 11,000 word novelette and sent it to F&SF. That was 4 months ago, so at least it has apparently given the heirs of Boucher and McComas something to think about.

SEX DRIVE

When the Hubble telescope was fixed, the first thing it detected was a huge comet on a collision course with Earth. The United Nations went into secret session. Unanimous reports from the world's scientists made it all too clear that the collision would completely destroy the Earth and that there was nothing anyone could do to avoid it. All the governments agreed there was no point in blighting what remained of the life of humanity, so the terrible secret was kept until four hours before impact, just enough time for people to make their peace with their maker, as the old expression went. In the event, however, most people decided that there was only one thing worth doing in that time. Curiously there was no sadness: rather a kind of exaltation. For the first time in history all humanity was united in the despairing ecstasy of a climactic act of love. For all these billions of couples, the Earth Moved.

The Earth Moved, and the comet sped harmlessly by.





David knew a little about paper. In his private plastic bubble, in a single men's district of the vast underground city under the South Pole, David had quite a pile of old books and magazines, at least three dozen. While not forbidden from keeping hard copy, screeners who looked too deeply into the old history might inadvertently type a forbidden word or phrase into an official file. And soon after they would disappear.

David was a screener. On an improbably overpopulated Earth, after the slogan "A Job For Everyone!" became law, jobs were analyzed and divided up so that four or five people could do the work once done by one. A screener spent his workday sitting in front of a System terminal. Keepers, builders, low level techies, gofers, badgers, fixers, meds, bullies and even supes were forbidden to learn to read. To the screeners the System interface was seamless. Sliding their fingers over a smooth tablet, they could quickly move about through the vast areas of information kept in the System. Not meant to do physical work, take action, or make decisions, scanners tended to be obese. And nearsighted. The System terminals were everywhere, always on, their two-way display screens always watching.

A high level techie or an Illit might have their very own reader assigned to them, equipped with a portable terminal. It was an Illit's job to deliberately know nothing about anything, assign tasks, and make decisions. "Knowledge Is Tyranny!" was another slogan from the dark days of the climate changes. As the population migrated towards the cooler poles and the great cities of the former temperate zones became flooded tropical jungles populated by savages, the Illits emerged as the dominant political power. Above them, maintaining totalitarian control through their cybernetic domination of the System, lurked a very small group of brilliant, demented control addicts . . . the Octopus.

Nearly a century after the forced retreat from fossil fuel industrialization, the earth's climate had begun to cool, and the Octopus was moving to resettle the abandoned temperate zones. Their monopoly on information,

their exclusive knowledge of history, engineering and mathematics, their Super User status on the System, and their near-immortality (permitted by secret access to advanced medical techniques not fully understood by the Meds who operated the machines), had kept them alive and in power since the Holy Reagan Revolution.

Only the free readers, or "fans" as they secretly called themselves, opposed the Octopus. A free reader was usually a builder or a fixer, occasionally a gofer or even a particularly clever supe, who had survived childhood dietary mind-control indoctrination intact and entered adulthood with a clear head. Most of the population unknowingly stumbled about in a junk-food and soft-drink induced and maintained daze, reduced to a life of slogans ("Love Your Job!" "Always Ask The Illit" "Have You Spoken In Tongues Today?" "Death To Free Readers!"). The free readers recruited in small cells, taught reading and traded information. Survival was hard. People could disappear at any moment, whisked away by the bullies, the Illits secret police army. The System was programmed to recognize dangerous qualities in a citizen such as curiosity, intelligence or disobedience. Bullies were part cyborg, hard wired to the system, selected for the lowest possible levels of blind obedience and brute insensitivity.

Free readers could not openly use the System, so they communicated by paper. Paper was rare, the forests it once came from mostly gone. People barely knew what it was when they saw it. Down at the flea market David had recently found, amid a stack of something called "Popular Hot Rodding," a small magazine crudely printed on soft pulpy paper. It was called "Lem's Luminary" and it was full of reviews of old books. At the bottom of the title page was a cryptic note: "Distributed by FWA."

David wanted to know more about FWA. He'd known of free readers for quite a while and had been hoping to be contacted by them. Screeners were a problem for the free readers. They were too often caught, and the bullies could usually torture the names of their cell members out of them. Many free readers had disappeared . . . into the food processing sectors.

"Lem's Luminary" also had a chatty editorial where the editor lamented his printing problems, talking about his "mimeo" and "typer" and how he was running very low on "stencils, ink and paper." David knew something about these. Exploring in the tunnels of an abandoned military base he had found a copy of "The Preventive Maintenance Monthly," a sort-of comic book that had instructed soldiers in equipment maintenance. In addition to explaining how to replace the safety switch on an M79 tactical nuclear warhead (a "factory recall"), grease the equilibrator on an M103 tank, and replace a stripped range correction gear on a M13 ballistic computer, it described cleaning and operating a "mimeograph machine." David also knew where there was just such a mimeograph machine. He'd found it in a forgotten storeroom below the Admiral Byrd Museum. All the other things mentioned in "Lem's Luminary" were there too, ink, stencils, paper, even a "typer."

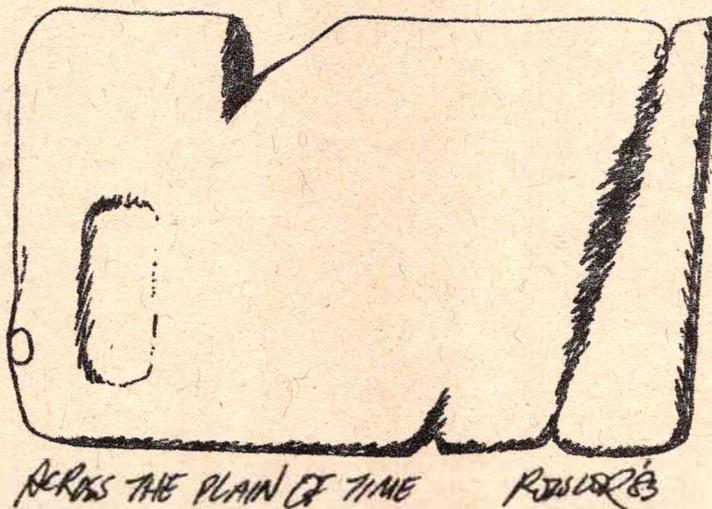
During his periods of recreation David had begun to produce his own "fanzine" on the old typer. Taking "Lem's Luminary" as a model, David

had already written a review of each of his books, along with a synopsis of several articles from magazines, newspapers and pamphlets he had collected. Now he was stuck on writing his chatty editorial. For years he had only dreamed of writing the way he wanted to write, using his own words. He'd imagined himself pretty good at it. As a screener he was required to enter data and comments into the System, but there were strict protocols and formats for all key entry. To add something to the database you needed the proper password, which was usually made up on the spot by the overseeing Illit, who promptly forgot it. Things were always fouled up. Builders could wait for days for the instructions they needed, gofers constantly wandered the corridors following confusing directions provided by the usually wrong Illits.

Sitting in front of the typer in the dusty forgotten room, illuminated by a single bare overhead lightbulb, David had writers block. He didn't know enough about it to call it that. He had no dictionary, no thesauri. He didn't quite know whom he was writing to or how he was going to distribute it to them. He had never dared discuss his outside reading interests or his fanciful ideas with the other workers. There was a catch in his throat, a tightness in his chest, as he labored to introduce himself to this unknown, barely glimpsed audience. He did not know who the fans were or what FWA was. He was unsure that he would be able to make the old mimeo work -- but every fiber in his body, every convoluted twist and turn in his brain seemed to be tuned, oscillating in harmony with this dimly perceived audience. Time turned in on itself. David felt profoundly as if he were walking through a sunny wild-flower filled meadow with the sweet sound of harp strings in his ears and an ever expanding glow emanating from deep within his proud chest. A beautiful lady, smiling, ageless, wearing a flowing white gown and holding a shining wand before her, came floating down from the sky in front of him, and she began to speak, "Davidphan, we have been waiting for you . . . "

But the draft of cold air and the rattle at the door brought David back to Antartica, to the forgotten storeroom. And there was the sound of a theremin humming nearby.

TO BE CONTINUED...



ACROSS THE PLAIN OF TIME ROSS 1983

THE LETTER COLUMN

A collection of the most popular letters in Science-Fiction Five-Yearly for the past 40 years...

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Notes from
the Toad Hall
Champion
Mimeo Center and
Frog Preserve

Back at the New York Corflu, when rich brown suggested we consider helping with this issue of SFFY, November 1991 seemed comfortably far off. There were 18 months -- plenty of time to finish painting the house, stabilize a new business, get the mimeo center set up, and publish a fanzine or three to break it in, right? Right. Being practicing followers of the philosophy of P.T. Barnum, we gave rich the o.k. to put forth the motion to LeeH.

Soon it was official, 'though why she didn't fire us after receiving a bag containing a stick surrounded by a miniature lake of melted chocolate, we'll never know. Don't ever send a chocolate sucker to Florida in May. Or chocolate anything.

Time passed. Seasons came and went. They mostly went. Summer fell on a weekend, but we were too busy to have a picnic. Welcome to life à la Toad Hall. Halloween brought 28 inches of snow -- HEAVY, slushy snow. And ice dams, which lead to rainstorms in the dining room. Oh, joy. So now it's November -- time to mail SFFY! Whoa, oh...where does the time go?

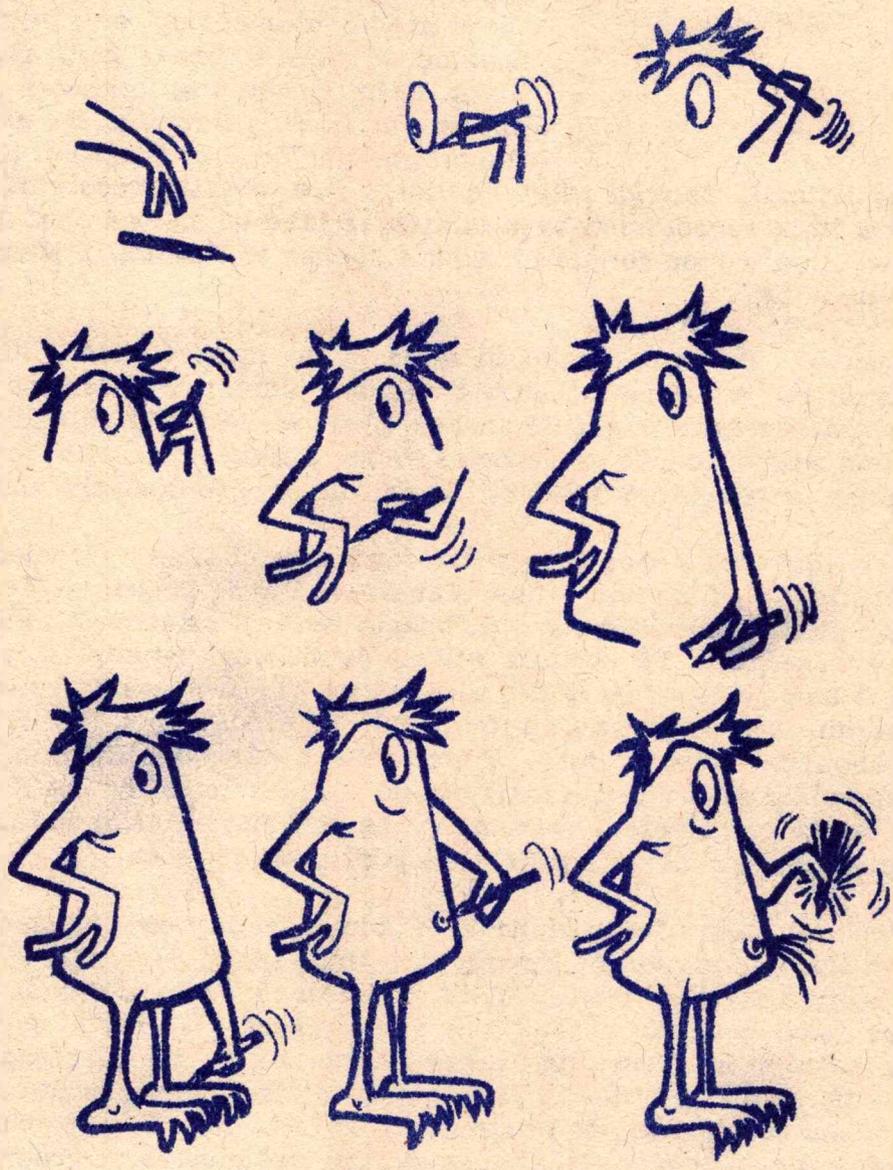
At least we found a moment or two for a few publishing projects. Jeff built the Toad Hall Champion Mimeo Center and Frog Preserve (complete with a Champion spark plug sign). It boasts seven Gestetners, two of which are currently working. Two others will no doubt work wonderfully just as soon as Jeff has "just a few hours to work on the impression rollers." The other three mimeos we're saving for parts. We also keep a Rex Rotary and A.B. Dick around -- Just In Case. Then there are the two E-stencilers, and the corresponding note for the attic office: "Please contact the Electro-stenciling Department before starting up LaserWriter." (Ah, the joys of 8-amp appliances and sensitive light amplification circuits.)

The first real test of our multi-color mimeography capabilities came last spring with the publication of Beyond the Enchanted Duplicator ... To the Enchanted Convention, by Walt Willis and James White (Famous Fans You've Read and Read About in These Very Pages). We found a local supplier of affordable Fibertone (Logos Productions -- \$4.30/ream) and set up an account with Gestetner to obtain their ridiculously-priced colored inks. Be warned: the colors you see in these pages are the only ones they still carry. Oh for the days of purple, orange, and two shades of green.... We may start trying printer's inks as soon as Jeff figures out how to feed the ink from a can rather than a tube, and if we can find ink that dries properly. I can see it now: 1,000 PMS colors, plus the metallics and pastels! Well, if we have to cut back, I could do without Pantone 458....

The best part about working on SFFY has been: letters from LeeH; talking with contributors; seeing it all come together; and, at last, sending it to You (It's done! It's done!). Let's have celebrate at MagiCon. If you're reading this, you should be there.

See you on the funway ...

-- Geri Sullivan



In memory of ATom