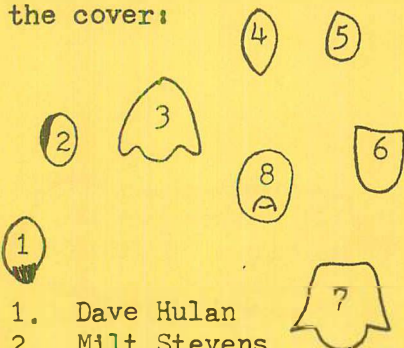




the cover:



1. Dave Hulan
2. Milt Stevens
3. Tina Hensel Jones
4. Ed Cox
5. Cy Condra
6. Dean Grennell
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AWRY is an official publication of the Duarte Science Fiction, Fantasy, and Nurse Novel Society. It is published at least as often as I feel like it, but often less frequently than that. Reviewers should note that one sample copy of AWRY can be had for eight 13¢ stamps; subsequent copies are available for feedback. The material appearing herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor, although he fully supports the rights of the contributors to tell such outrageous lies.

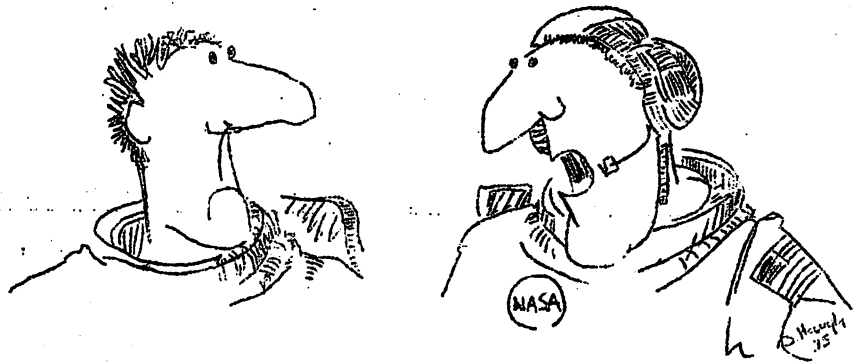
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MY FANZINE AND WELCOME TO IT



"Houston keeps saying something about a chameleon with the personality of a demented fanzine!"

EDITORIAL

by Dave Locke

Welcome to this humble fanzine, which may be the greatest thing since Kohoutek.

Oh, what the hell. After ten issues, truth in advertising finally forces me to tell you that this is not a humble fanzine. Everyone represented herein is as big a Ham as there is.

Sigh, another image shot down the tubes.

THANKS FOR THE MNEME

Let's call this an anniversary issue, shall we? I've never published one of those before, or if I have the fact has been hidden by the trap-doors of my mind. The first issue of AWRY was published January, 1972, which by radiocarbon dating seems like only yesterday, therefore making this the 4th anniversary issue, even though there were not three anniversary issues preceding it. Are you with me so far? Actually, publishing ten issues of a genzine is a new accomplishment for me. It ain't never happened before.

My first genzine, PHOENIX, screeched through perhaps eight or nine issues back in the early sixties before biting the dust with moist but swollen gums. PELF, co-edited with dashing Dave Hulan, was only a part-time genzine. At other times PELF was an apazine, or a one-shot, or a handi-wipe, but it never saw ten issues as a genzine even though it has overall seen twelve issues as of this writing.

I will spare you a historical issue-by-issue reminiscence, but just for the fun of it I browsed through the giant accumulation of material which was published in these ten issues and drew up a list of favorite items within the categories which you see spread out below you. In many cases trying to pick a favorite was decidedly tough, where second and third place choices had barely a gnat's nose lead in a fast photo finish. But anyway, here are my choices.

FAVORITE ISSUE:

The one I'm working on at the time.

Overall WRITING EXCELLENCE:

Dean Grennell (cribit)

FAVORITE ARTICLE: IN THE CELTIC TWILIGHT, Tina Hensel Jones, in #4
 FAVORITE COVER: Grant Canfield, for #8
 FAVORITE CONTROVERSIAL ITEM: THE STARS. OUR DESTINATION?, Jackie Franke, in #4
 FAVORITE LoC: Ed Cagle, in #7
 FAVORITE ILLO: Logo for 60-WATT, by Jackie Franke
 FAVORITE INTERLINO: Ed Cagle, in #7, page 35
 FAVORITE EDITORIAL: The one I'm working on at the time.

Following this non-Australian balloting, I then went through the exercise of tabulating published letter responses. Here are the results of that.

<u>letters published</u>	<u>no. of letterhacks</u>	<u>the top ten</u>
9	2	Franke, Glicksohn
8	1	Warner
7	1	Arthurs
6	2	Bloch, D'Ammassa
5	4	Hochberg, Eric Lindsay, Jodie Offutt, Piper
4	9	
3	12	
2	18	
1	35	Total of 84 letterhacks

Were I to maintain records of unpublished letters, which I do in a way, and had I decided to include such statistics, I'd still be diddling around trying to write this editorial and you wouldn't be reading it right now. As is, sanity prevailed, and I am probably enjoying a cold drink while you are wasting your time reading all these useless statistics.

I've enjoyed publishing these last ten issues, and someday I might even get out another ten. I wouldn't bet any money on it, though.

So much for reminiscence.

QUOTE WITHOUT COMMENT (though the strain is great)

"Dick has never been thought of as a 'literary' writer, so on the whole he is simply not my dish." --- Don Keller, in SCIENTIFRICTION #3

YOU CAN'T BE DAVE LOCKE. YOU DON'T SPEAK WITH AN ELITE TYPEFACE

I met a few new fan faces within recent times. This is an experience which seldom fails to tickle the low end of my thermometer, because it often takes quite an exercise in mental gymnastics to reconcile the real body with the paper personality.

But I guess I'm not the only individual who can be amazed at having a mental image shattered before one's eyes. I met Mike Glicksohn at the Aussiecon Flight Party the night before the group departed for Australia, and of course I saw him at NASFIC after the flight returned. But the first encounter was quite interesting.

I had seen Susan Wood walking by, said that I recognized her because I'd just received two fanzines with her photograph on the covers, and introduced myself. That's as much as I ever said to her, because of a sudden this little fellow standing next to her started choking and pointing his finger at me.

It turned out to be someone named Mike Glicksohn, who was having a terrible problem because he refused to believe that I was Dave Locke. "Dave Locke is 6 feet 3,

doesn't wear a shirt, and has muscles all over the place," he insisted while still pointing his finger. Immediately he flagged down two or three passing LA fans and asked them if I were really Dave Locke and they all said no.

Finally I admitted that I was not really Dave Locke, but had said that I was merely to impress him. He seemed willing to accept this, but then I confided to him that I had always imagined Mike Glicksohn to be much shorter.

It was at that point he believed I was really Dave Locke...

So much for impressions formed from writing personalities.

Mike Glicksohn will be pleased to know that I am not wearing a shirt as I type this stencil.

WITH D.U.E. CONCERN

You'll note from the colophon that I support Disseminating Unpublished Egoboo, and it may have occurred to you to ask what this is all about. Let me tell you about D.U.E.

Not everyone publishes every comment in every LoC received, and depending upon how long their blue pencil is they may even wind up printing only a small fraction of it all. Beyond that, egoboo is generally the first thing to be edited out.

It is my feeling that egoboo is what fanwriting and fan illustrating is all about. Out there, hunched over typewriters and drawing boards are unpaid fanwriters and fanartists who get nothing for their efforts except throwaway comments in a lettercolumn. It seems negligent, somehow, that most of these throwaway comments are read only by the faneditor and then thrown away.

If you are a fanwriter or artist, think about it. Wouldn't you like to see all of the comment that is made on your material?

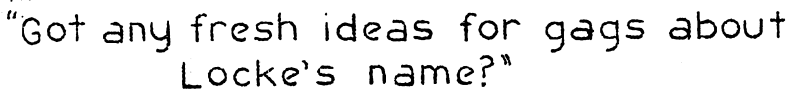
If you are a faneditor, think about it. Are you conscientious enough to appreciate the thoughtfulness in giving your contributors all the feedback which is due them? You might not have thought about it before. Most of us haven't.

But think about it now.

A LOCKE BY ANY OTHER NAME

Well, what do you know, someone finally came up with a new joke about my name. This wasn't easy. After 31 years of bumbling around this mortal coil, encountering a now wit every thirty-two minutes who felt they had a frightfully original remark to make concerning my last name, it isn't easy to approach the subject with any degree of enthusiasm.

I recall being introduced to a gal, whose name escapes me (although it shouldn't), and seeing her wave an outstretched hand in front of my face as I opened my mouth preparatory to saying something innocuous such as "hello." With the hand still waving in front of me, she said: "If you've got something to say about my name, it better be good." When I told her that my name was Locke (pronounced with a silent "e", for those of you hiding away in the boonies), she relaxed somewhat and the juices of conversation were allowed to run free. But I've always remembered her unqualified display of antagonism when confronted with an introduction, and



So it was with a fresh sense of wonder that I was confronted by Cy Condra, a most diabolical man indeed, who came up with a new gag about my name and as an extra fillip he threw my first name into the gag for no extra charge. What happened was that he presented me with the manuscript which you will find in this issue, and on the envelope containing his article was the following fiendish joke:

"Answer: Dave Locke,"

Keep your eye on Cy Condra. He bears watching closely. For our own protection.

As time presses forward, crushing people with the routine of their own existence, I occasionally feel the urge to break out of the smog of mundania which swirls around me. I try to reach out and touch something new, and enmesh myself in the experience of it. By doing this I can feel as though I am standing outside, away from the smog, escaping the crap and clatter which bores the shorts off of me in its never-ending sequence of reruns.

What, you may ask, does all of this drivvel have to do with pingpong machines, to which I must idly explain that there is no other wealth of background which could reasonably cast light upon my recent penchant for dropping an endless stream of quarters into pinball and electronic games machines. I found them a frivolous but amusing diversion, worthy of a modest investment of time and money.

6

possess, and some require only a basic familiarity with the machine in question. The auto racing games are a good example of the skill games, the shooting games a good example of where natural ability is the requirement, and pinball a good example of where basic familiarity with the equipment will show you the very few instances where you can exercise any control over the momentum of the game.

Craig Miller and I spent about two hours in the San Fernando Valley at a Miniature Golf/Pinball parlor, grundling from one electronic game to the other and dropping quarters with all the fervor and fever-pitch of the mindless ones who frequent the slot machines in Las Vegas. We ran through about four bucks apiece, testing our skills with electronic blips, squiggles, and bleeps.

My favorite game was the eight car auto-race, and this machine took up the most floor space of all the electronic paraphernalia. It was more or less a box, which you could look down into to see the race course. Each side of the box had a steering wheel and accelerator for two people and, as I recall, the color of your steering wheel matched the color of your electronic "car". Eight people would whip their cars around the course, trying to avoid the obstacles, trying to avoid going off the road, and trying to avoid each other. If you went off the road your car spun around for a second or two, and became tremendously hard to accelerate until you got it back on the track. If you hit another car, both cars spun out of control until you could manage to fight them back into position or until you spun off the road.

The most aggravating game I've encountered is the electronic pingpong, or rather that version of it which offers you the option of playing against another player or playing against the machine itself. I've yet to lose a game against another player, but I've yet to beat the machine. Craig tells me that he knows of only one person who has beaten the machine, and that's because he's a part-owner of the company that makes them, and has one in his house where he can fiddle with it at his leisure. But I have my doubts...

At the Mann Theatres in Pasadena -- a walk-in movie house -- they fleece the crowd with four or five electronic games machines spotted in the lobby. One of them is this pingpong game, and I've played it several times now. This one may be different than the others, although from an appearance standpoint it doesn't look it, but I've managed to convince myself that it can't be beaten.

It seems that should you return the ball a set number of rallies, the machine stops its random programming of bounce and speed and instead begins returning the ball in a fixed pattern. The ball will bounce from your electronic "paddle" into one of the walls, rebound off the wall to another wall, then to another wall, and then back to your paddle, endlessly. At one time I took my hand off the paddle control, smoked a cigarette, and drank a large Pepsi while waiting to see if the pattern would ever vary. It didn't. I then moved the paddle a fraction of an inch, letting the ball hit a different section of it. The pattern didn't change. After several minutes of experimentation I discovered that you could change the pattern, depending on where the ball struck your paddle, but the best you could do was to deviate from one boring fixed pattern to a second boring fixed pattern, both of which brought the ball back to the same place on your side of the court. There was no way the machine was going to lose that point, unless you could keep everyone away from the area until it died of a malfunction.

The only way to beat the machine, as I see it, is to score your point before the machine tries to bore you to death. To accomplish that, you have to know the proper time to hit the ball with the right or the left side of your paddle, and not

be content to just keep the ball in play. A few more dollars and I may yet figure it out.

But I doubt it. Playing electronic games is something I've been doing so much of, it's beginning to feel like a part of my routine...

Time to move along to something else.

Does anyone out there know anything about brain surgery?

THE SHICK SHAVING EXPERIENCE: NOT ALL TRUTH IS IN FANZINES

There is a little but well-known fanzine which has generated its flavor by publishing little-known facts, writing about little-known subjects, and assuming little-known viewpoints with regard to well-known topics. It is called TABEBUIAN, which is almost as unpronounceable as Cagle's KWALHIOQUA, and is edited by Dave and Mardee Jenrette of Miami, Florida.

I will never believe another word it tells me.

In "TABEBUIAN 24/25 ... Winter 1976 issue" they publish the following piece of information.

"SHAVING CREAM IS PSYCHOLOGICAL. Next time you shave try this: wet your face well with water and shave with no soap or shaving cream. You'll get a nice, smooth shave. You won't believe this until you try it, but a few of you will have the courage to do so, and will make a pleasant discovery. HOW MANY OTHER PRODUCTS THAT WE USE ARE PSYCHOLOGICAL?"

I've never been lacking in courage, only in energy and the ability to remember that I wanted to do something. In this situation, however, I was reading TAB at the breakfast table just prior to getting up for my shave-and-shower routine, so the thought of shaving cream being psychological was fresh on my mind as I trotted into the bathroom.

I deliberately refrained from pressing the button on my hot lather machine. I also refrained from washing my whiskers with soap and hot water, as is my usual habit. Instead, I rinsed my face with hot water, rinsed my Shick razor with hot water, and then put razor and face together.

Have you ever seen an untrained dog on a leash? Have you seen someone pull on the leash and then watched the dog sit down and dig in, holding his position with stiffened front legs pushing at a ninety-degree angle at the ground in front of him? Have you ever watched a chef try to stuff a live lobster into a pot of boiling water, with the lobster bracing its four claws on the rim of the pot while the chef pushes down on the middle of its back? Have you ever run into a brick wall and noticed how little it gave as the result of your momentum?

The path which the razor travelled across my face could not be measured by any micro-measuring instrument known to mankind. It bit into perhaps five whiskers, and pulled them out by the roots.

Being rather displeased at the results of this experiment thus far, I again washed my face with hot water but added soap this time. I rinsed the soap away, rinsed the razor, and tried again. This time the razor hacked off perhaps four or six whiskers, and pulled out ten or fifteen.

Not being at all happy, but unwilling to give up on the experiment until all scientific avenues of approach had been trodden upon, I again washed my face with soap and hot water and this time did not rinse the soap away. I once more rinsed the razor and very cautiously tried it again. This time it started shaving, but not very well and not without a great deal of pull and irritation.

After three or four swipes I rinsed the soap from my face and then lathered up. At that point the razor glided across my face, scything through the whiskers without reducing my face to more ruin than the ravages of time would normally ordain.

The conclusion which I have reached as the result of this experiment can be phrased quite simply. Dave Jenrette's ideas about shaving cream are the biggest truckload of horseshit to ever come off the farm, and if I had the ability to enforce a punishment upon him for this blatant piece of misinformation I would sentence him to dry-shave for the next two months, using the same razor blade, but not before Mardee had first shaved her legs with it, twice.

I'm not bitter about this, Dave, but I think your ideas are a bit fuzzy. Why don't you shave them?

PARTYING IS SUCH SWEET SORROW: A DATE TO REMEMBER

I missed it in 1975, but I won't in 1976. Don't you, either.

All fanzine fandom should take heed, as I've discovered a trufannish anniversary worth celebrating wherever two or more fans can get together anywhere on the face of the globe. What could be a better excuse for a fan party than to celebrate the anniversary of the first typewriter?

Although there were a number of Rube Goldberg-type machines invented prior to it, the first practical typewriter was invented by Chris Latham Sholes who called it "The Typewriter" and was issued patent #79265 on June 23rd, 1868. It was manufactured by Remington, and the first one rolled off the line on September 12th, 1873. Mark that date.

In 1976, September 12th falls on a Sunday, so the anniversary of the first typewriter can be celebrated with a Saturday night party and we can all give thanks at midnight. Providing, of course, that we're still in a condition to do so at that point.

Mark it on your calendars. Shun all other obligations. Be prepared to drink.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

What can I tell you for sure? Well, the cover will be by Bill Rotsler, dating back to the time when he was doing the Monolith Of Infinity drawings. As many of you know, Bill will often do variations on a theme. I saved this one, which I feel is the best of the lot, rather than publishing it in the same time period as everyone else. Beyond that, I expect to have another I.M.H.O. from Dean, and am hoping to bring Tina and EdCo out of fannish retirement to continue their columns. Milt is vastly tied up in convention activities and in trying to squeeze out another PASSING PARADE, so it may be a while before we can all thrill to more adventures of unusual L.A. sex crimes. And, do you remember that Burbee article I mentioned last issue? It's written. I've seen it. However, I can't make heads nor tails of it because it has more marginal notations than typewritten wordage. Charlie promises to type up a final draft one of these days, providing he can decipher his own handwriting when he finally gets around to it. That's the breaks.

Variation Upon A Familiar Theme

The sexual lusts of a cockroach
Are urgent, beyond all belief.
In fact, once, in great desperation,
One's libidinous itch brought him grief.

For the lady who caught his attention
Was not of his scuttling clan
And amour, with a black widow spider,
Takes quite a bit out of a man.

--from THE TROLLS UNDER WHEATSTONE BRIDGE,
by Eldrin Fzot (Hundt & Pecque Publishing, 1949)

EYE - EMM - AITCH - OH

FOOTNOTE TO FOREGOING

Which sounds as if it could be the spine-branding for one volume of a set of extremely thin encyclopedias, but it's not. Since writing the column for AWRY #9, I happened to be driving a carful (the Buick; at that) of family members upstate to sit in on a familial eisteddfod at Santa Cruz; son Chuck was getting married, if you must know. Some while before we got to Camarillo -- famed in song and legend as "Faroff, Exotic Camarillo," spawning-spot of C. William Rotsler -- we passed the road sign marking the turnoff for Moorpark.

"And, as we all know," I commented to no one in particular, "that's 'kraproom,' spelled backwards."

Considerably to my astonishment, this triggered son Andy very near to the point of terminal tizzy. Just as I commenced applying the brakes so as to administer mouth to mouth respiration, he got his rictus unlocked, his features began to fade their alarming eggplant sheen and he subsided into whoops of coarse mirth that still were erupting now and then as we passed San Luis Obispo. I have seldom encountered so remarkable a reaction to something I regarded as no more than the merest tossaway line.

When we got to Santa Cruz, Andy proudly informed Chuck what Moorpark spells, backwards and we nearly had to call the rescue squad for Chuck. I had thought that every sentient soul in California -- and most of those in contiguous states -- was acquainted with this nomenclatural anomaly. I knew of it long before wetbacking it to California in '66. I think Rotsler mentioned it in a KTEIC MAGAZINE of the mid-50s, but I'd hate to say for sure.

So, just on the faint offchance that someone out there in Awryland may not've got the word, let it be read onto the great scroll. Some day, who knows, you may be able to milk another yuck out of it.



column by DEAN GRENNELL

HOWZAT AGAIN?

There used to be a cartoon series about the nearsighted Mr. Maggoo, suggesting that visual impairment is not regarded universally as an unseemly topic for mirth. Most other fleshly handicaps are viewed as considerably more sacrosanct, at least by some viewers. Recently, thumbing through some issues of GRUE that, if they were Irish whiskey, would qualify as liqueur grade on a basis of cumulative age, I came upon an account of how radio WTMJ, in Milwaukee, had euphemized a pop song of that era almost beyond recognition. Originally, the lyrics had spoken of a happy pack of Southrons, cavorting in innocent revelry atop a levee whilst waitin' for the Robert E. Lee. There was mention of people known as One-Legged Joe, Ole Aunt Jemima "who is past 83," and, if dubious memory serves, Ole Deacon Brown. I'm not going to go combing through old GRUES again in quest of the precise wording because rueful experience says I'd get no more paper covered this night, if I did so. They are like flypaper to my eyecojones, those gently yellowing pages.

Those were the lyrics "most played on the coin-operated phonographs," to employ the familiar phrase of the Hit Parade introduction (Snooky Lanson, where are you, now that we need you?). But WTMJ's audience must've consisted in large measure of cranky types who sat patiently, waiting for something to come through the speaker about which they could dot off an irate letter to the station management.

At any rate, WTMJ must have shopped around and found, or perhaps commissioned a version sufficiently innocuous to pipe out over the airwaves. In it, One-Legged Joe became Bow-Legged Joe. "Ole Aunt Jemima," came out, "And Aunt Jemima, who is spry as can be," while Ole Deacon Brown retained his seniority, but not his hard-earned title, being transmuted to Ole Captain Brown.

There was -- probably still is -- a song called -- ? -- ALL OF YOU, in which the vocalist dwells with some savor upon the charms of his/her beloved, specifically, "The east, west, north and the south of you." Some timid soul at WTMJ must have

really come unglued over the possibility that someone could take that the wrong way. After all, south being at the (if you'll excuse the expression) bottom of the map... So they either chiseled it out of the record groove or erased it carefully from the tape, so that it came out a beat or so of total silence when you expected to hear south. It was sort of unnerving, really, and about as nasty an effect as anything once could think of, imho. Faintly like reading an old Zane Grey book and coming upon a reference to a c--ktail party. Honi soit qui mal y pense and all that.

But I've veered from the intended tack; sorry about that. What I started to talk about was the potential humor in hearing loss, and there's more of it than you might suspect, if you've never been there. True, there's nothing terribly hilarious in total loss of auditory impulses, but it can get sort of amusing when you can hear just fine but can't recognize the furschlugginer words, a state of affairs I've lived with for the past two or three decades.

I used to keep an assortment of moderately valuable items in my garage and one day a visiting uncle, peering about, remarked, "Man, if I had all this in my garage, I'd keep a government pension in it." Upon cross-examination, it came out that he was referring to one of those guard dogs, the nervous-looking black breed with brown around the muzzles. I've thought of them as government pensions ever since.

The thing you learn, quite early in the game, is to keep programming to scan each incoming batch of words with the question: What could they have said, that'd've sounded like that, that'd've made sense? Often, one guesses correctly, but by no means unfailingly. Episodes in which I convulse or confound my contemporaries with what was intended as a reasonable and responsive reply to the question I thought they asked, but really didn't, are so depressingly commonplace that I can't even recall a good, illustrative forinstance. But perhaps it helps to explain, if not to justify, my admittedly obsessive preoccupation with paranomasia, words that sound almost alike.

It had been a couple of years since I'd had any dealings with MDs and I decided it was time to go have another routine physical checkover, just to make sure something useful wasn't coming unwound and unsuspected. I arose at an indecent hour and presented myself at the doctor's waiting room. His receptionist sent a question wafting across the roomful of patient patients at me:

"Have you had a fleet enema?" I swear that's what it sounded like she asked me.

Automatically, lights flashed, buzzers buzzed and relays clanged home in the upper left corner of my head where the action takes place. 'What could she have said, et cetera, etc., &c?' It is not at all unlikely for enemas to be discussed with clinical casualness in doctor's offices, but "fleet" enemas?? A super-fast one? One somehow inexplicably connected with a vast armada of ships? What possible other word? Bleat, sleet, cleat, meat (oh, no, not that), pleat, feet, feat, sweet, street, heat, reet, beat, tweet ... I'll spare you the total litany. Suffice it to say, no possible permutation made the faintest pretense of sense.

Well, to shortcut a bit, I asked her to repeat and she did and it still came through my grundled-up tympani as fleet enema. So I asked for a third repeat and a fourth. No soap, no hope, no way. She, in the meantime, was turning an interesting shade of pink about the face and the other waiters in the waiting room were hard put to preserve their air of cool detachment. Finally, I had what I believed to be a stroke of inspiration.

"I'm terribly sorry," I said, "but would you mind writing your question out on a piece of paper and, uhh, sort of show it to me?" She was glad to. She did it. She showed me the piece of paper and then, ladies and gentlemen, was when I knew the meaning of true confusion. I couldn't decipher her handwriting, either!

About this time, to the vast relief of all concerned, the doctor intervened and took me off to a cubicle to poke and prod and hook up diabolical gadgetry and explained that, since my last 10,000-mile check, they had gone to exploring the colon in depth. He noted that they had discovered three pre-cancerous growths in the past year and had eradicated them successfully and felt the effort was well justified. In order to do this properly, it was necessary to clear away any impediments to the instrument's probe unit and that involved... He handed me a fair-sized cardboard carton. One enema, to go, I thought. He suggested that I make another appointment and we would complete that ... uhh ... portion (I almost said aspect) of the examination. I took my leave, turning the carton over and over, peering at it in a vain effort to puzzle out how it could be referred to as a fleet/sleep/sleek/bleep/creep/neap/freak/ ... enema. No clue; not even a little one.

Well, time came, time went. I passed my physical with flapping pennants. I will spare you the scatological details, so breathe easy. So far as modern medical science can tell, I'm good for another year or so, which could mean another IMHO, possibly two.

But the unsolved enigma continued to prey at the back of my mind, like a silkworm gorging on mulberries. A fleet enema? A fleet enema? (Never look back: An enema may be gaining on you!)

As oftens happens, the solution came along, effortlessly, unexpectedly, fortuitously. This very afternoon, in fact. I needed a cojone of string, so I stopped in at the Thrifty Drugs store in Cuppadrano Beach and went coursing up and down the aisles in quest of where they keep their string.

I didn't find it, of course, and had to go ask someone with a nametag for counsel. But, in my aimless wanderings, I came past a good-sized display of packaged relief for the constipated (I almost said cummerbound). It was about four feet of shelf completely filled with cardboard cartons labelled Fleet Enema.

The one possibility I never thought of considering. Fleet, with a capital eff, as a proper name. Count Fleet, the racehorse; of course! No, I incline to doubt if the pronto-peristalsis-packages are put up by a retired racehorse, though it would be a heartening example of the free-enterprise system at work.

All of which puts me to facing a whole new bucket of snakes, each time a dubious pot of message comes in via the dinged drums. Suppose they really are saying what it sounds like they're saying, what then? Eh?

I'm going to have to ponder up a whole new approach to handling this possibility.

And just a small sobering question to all of you out there, (hopefully) convulsed with mirth at the funny fellow's problems: Are you absolutely sure that your ears can distinguish between an f and an F the first time you hear them?

It is fully as fruitless an endeavor as seriously attempting to tickle yourself.

WHEN REALITY CREAKS

"Gosh but I feel full of pep and energy today," I commented. "Betcha I could turn this drill over on my own power."

So saying, I picked up a standard $\frac{1}{4}$ " electric drill, grabbed its plug, inserted the two prongs into my nostrils, pulled the trigger-switch and the drill went 'Whzzt' and spun right merrily.

My hapless audience wore the expression of one whose world is collapsing about his ears. You could see the thought processes racing madly. After a bit, he looked at the mad tangle of cords and other drills, lying on the cluttered workbench, and figured out how I'd done it, and felt a whole lot more secure.

What I'd done, of course, was to trace the cords in advance, making sure the drill I picked up was ultimately plugged-in to a live socket. Whereupon, I just picked up that drill and any old other plug that was loose. Elementary.

There are practical jokes and then there are practical jokes. Ideally, imho, they should cause the victim to have grave concerns about the reliability of his/her faculties for a brief moment, but should cause no long-term anguish or damage. If a jape results in injury to person or property, it is indefensible, or so I sincerely believe.

The foregoing episode took place at an airbase in Tonopah, Nevada, circa early 1945. In the same place, about the same time, one of my cohorts pulled off a jape I continue to admire in retrospect. One of the other guys was a 'backyard soldier,' meaning that he'd imported his wife, rented a room in town and lived off the base. He appeared each morning wearing lowcut, civilian shoes (a precious rarity in WW1) and carefully changed them to high-topped GI shoes for the day's activities, changing back before heading home in the evening.

One night, he went to make the change-back to civvies and found that his cherished pair of lowcuts had been anchored to the floor in a manner most savage and cruel. A short length of two-by-four had been cut off and put over the toes of the shoes and three huge spikes had been driven down through it: one through the toe of each shoe and another, for good measure, through the plank and into the floor between them.

The poor guy took on something fierce. He composed and delivered an extemporaneous speech on the heartless idiocy of practical jokers in general and the one guilty of the atrocity at hand in particular. He waxed eloquently, magnificently wroth.

Finally, at an appropriate point in the diatribe, the instigator of it all could bear it no longer. Grabbing a pinch-bar, he went over to the crucified lowcuts, made a scrawning noise and handed the victim his adored footgear, absolutely undamaged in any slightest degree.

What the fiend had done was to drive three spikes through the piece of two-by-four and had cut the projecting points of the outer two off at the bottom, flush with the lower surface of the plank, with a hacksaw, leaving the spike in the center intact. By driving it into the floor (which no one worried about), it was impossible to tell that all three spikes were not intact, with the outer two impaling the hapless shoes.

The net upshot effect was masterful beyond describing. The victim had become the victim of a victimless crime, as it were, and it left him whuffing ineffectually, still mad, but no longer with a suitable target for his condign ire. I do not think I have ever seen another person quite so completely at a loss for words.

I fell victim to a similar disjuncting of reality, about then, though quite without the intercession of human agency. I was running the .45 pistol range that day, when a staff officer from the base came out to put in his qualification shoot. Having no groups of students, I ran him through the course solo and helpfully stood behind him, spotting his hits and telling him where each shot landed. At the two distances fired, 45 and 75 feet, a .45 hole in the white part of the target is easy enough to see, given the sort of eyes I had at age 21.

What happened was that the officer fired and must have socked one into the black of the central bullseye, where the sudden appearance of a hole wasn't all that clearly visible. Just at that precise instant, some species of huge, fat, desert bug chose to make a landing upon the white, outer portion of the target. I spotted it and sang out, "a seven at ten o'clock."

Picture, if you will, my stark and utter dumbfoundment when the seven at 10:00 started moving with a mind of its own and became, within a short space of time, a six at 11:00, then high noon, moving on down to disappear into the bullseye, which was all black and composed of the eight-ring on inward, as treacherous memory deposes.

I can and duly do testify: It is a damned unnerving experience.

The years flicker past. WW2 subsided. I got discharged and, for a while, worked as a heating sales engineer in Wisconsin with a wholesaler in that line of endeavor. They decided what they needed was a Dictaphone, so they bought one. It was quite late in that particular year; which particular one, I've not the foggiest lingering recollection. A long while back, settle for that?

I stopped back at the office one night to find that the Dictaphone had arrived, so I unpacked it and studied the instruction sheet packed with it. Around the middle of December, that's fairly sure. I kept an S-38 Hallicrafter receiver in my office in those days. It was almost Christmas; I'm certain of that.

And Frieda Birkheim worked there in those days. Still does, in fact, or did, as of early in June of 1975 when last I stopped off there. Dictaphones have (or had in those days) an instant-replay switch in the hand-held microphone. By manipulating the switch, you could reverse the plastic memobelt, on which it recorded the sounds and listen to it, by way of making sure you'd said what you had in mind. The new Dictaphone had been installed in a corner of Frieda's office, next door to my own little cubicle. I walked over and commenced fiddling with the new gadget.

"Hey, Frieda," I requested, "listen to this."

Whereupon, I lifted the microphone to my mouth, walled my eyes soulfully and crooned, "I'umm duhreeeminggg ovv a Whyutt Chrissmusss." Now, if there is any single thing on which the entire world's population could agree, in unanimous accord, it is that my singing voice would puke a buzzard off a gut-wagon. As talents go, that one passed me by. Frieda winced: a predictable reaction.

"Yeah, but just listen when I play it back," I said, and pressed the switch on the mike. Out of the tinny little speaker of the instrument came the still unmistakably mellifluous and pear-shaped tones of one Harry Lillis Crosby, AKA Bing, rendering the same words and backed by a full orchestra.

The impact upon the victim of my arcane chicanery was formidable. She came within an ace of swallowing her gum and gave other evidence of being gripped in a maelstrom of powerful emotions: mostly stark-gibbering incredulity.

What the poor girl didn't know, but quickly worked out by frantic rationalizing, was that when I had visited the office the previous evening, I had recorded Crosby singing White Christmas off of my old Halliscratcher and, with infinite malice aforethought, had maneuvered the belt so it would play the chosen words at the press of the switch. When I ostensibly recorded my own voice, I carefully refrained from pushing the switch all the way down.

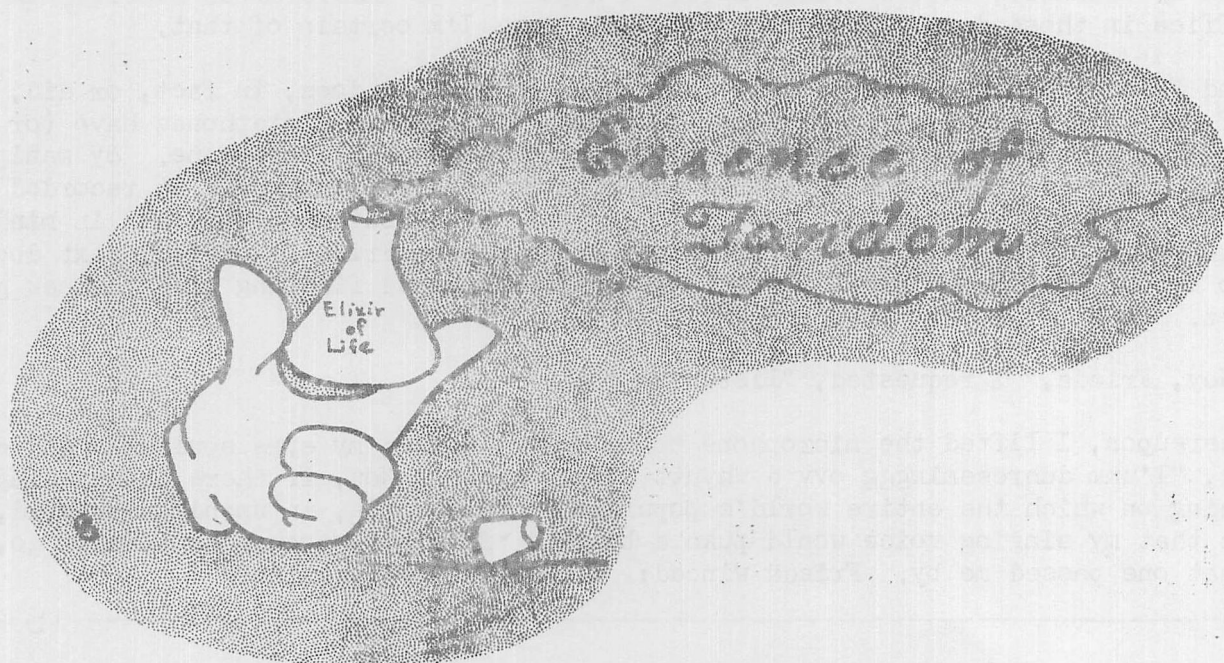
I cite the foregoing examples as practical jokestering carried to its highest art-form, imho. No injury nor damage occurred, other to composure and self-possession but, for a varying interval, the victim had just and reasonable cause to doubt the fidelity of his/her five senses, one or two of them, at least.

Persecution rests. Easy.

XXVHII

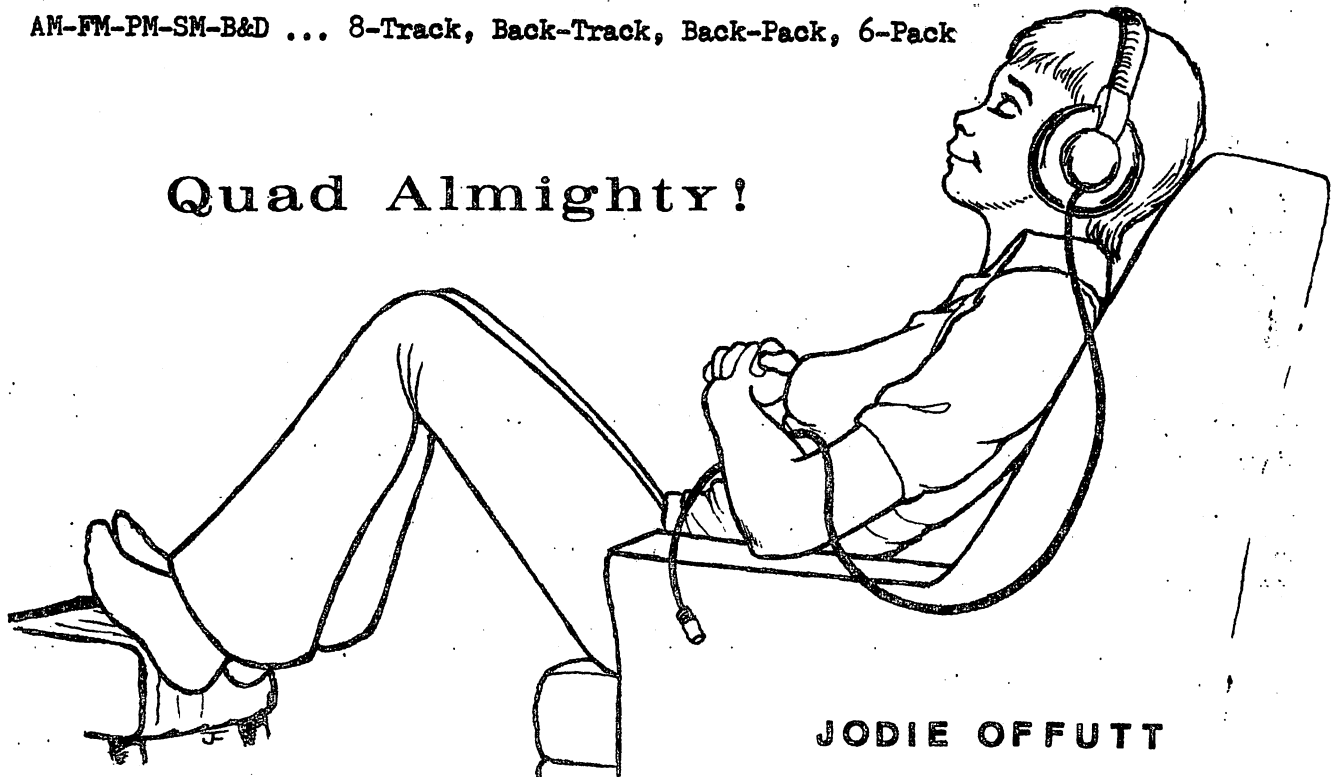
Some for the Brewings of this World, and some
Thirst for the Prophet's Beeradise to come.
Ah, take the Shot and let the Chaser go,
Nor fret about the Morning-After, Chum!

--from NEVER TRUST A DRUNKEN TENTMAKER,
by Eldrin Fzot



AM-FM-PM-SM-B&D ... 8-Track, Back-Track, Back-Pack, 6-Pack

Quad Almighty!



JODIE OFFUTT

We got a new Machine. You date yourself if you "hi-fi" and it is considerably more than a record player, or even a stereo -- though it is stereophonic. We have two varieties of radio, a tape deck and auxiliary equipment including earphones, a microphone for recording, and something called a Head Cleaner, that I at first thought was a new group with a slightly suggestive name.

For want of a more sophisticated word, I call it the Machine: "Put the record on the Machine." "Turn down that damn Machine!" "Can I stick a tape in the Machine?" "Get the ball game on the Machine."

We'd been talking about a tape deck for some time, but I'd been less than enthusiastic. For one thing, we've got a lot of records, most of them unavailable on tape. Even if they were, replacing all our records with tapes would be an expensive undertaking. When an electrician friend made us an offer we couldn't refuse we bought the works in one unit. It's a nice piece of equipment that I feel sure would cheerfully start the morning coffee with a few minor adjustments.

I, for one, am glad the Machine plays records. As far as I'm concerned, tapes will never replace records.

Tapes are not infallible (as I'd been led to believe). If a record gets scratched you can nudge the needle over the spot and listen to the rest of it. But if a tape gets screwed up, it's gone.

Tapes are convenient, there's no doubt about it. They're easier to handle. The youngest offuttspring, Missy, was elated at the prospect of a tape deck. She'd never been allowed to play records by herself because her hands are still too small. Missy has mixed feelings about it. She's automatically off the hook if a

record is damaged; on the other hand she's dependent on someone else to put records on the Machine for her.

My gripe with tapes is that they're too easy to handle. Too convenient. Too impersonal.

Like, one of my favorite leisure activities is browsing. I've spent countless hours of pleasure browsing in book stores, dime stores, hardware stores, looking at shoes, dark glasses, jewelry and records.

Have you ever tried to browse in a tape department?

I always feel like a potential thief as I insert my hands inside the cabinet. Every time, I have the uncontrollable urge to glance up and around for the convex mirror or the TV camera to be sure they're aimed in my direction.

I remind myself of two things when my hands reach through those little holes: a nurse administering to a preemie in an incubator, and a scientist about to deal with radioactive material.

These images, along with the Big Brother Eye in the ceiling, tend to dampen the pleasure of Just Looking.



In addition, I'm subject to the anxiety produced by the thought of somebody yelling "FIRE!" or being goosed or poked in the ribs. The reflex action of my arms trying to rise in the standard position for defense, anger, surprise or surrender could quite possibly bring an entire section of shelving clattering to the floor, domino fashion, breaking my spirit and all my forearm bones, as well as embarrassing me terribly.

To digress for the moment, we all need privacy at one time or another; some of us seem to need more than others. Some need occasional long periods of seclusion. Others get along nicely on regular small doses. Privacy comes in different forms: there is literal solitude in a room behind a closed door, or often one can have adequate solitude in a large crowd of strangers.

Perhaps mothers appreciate the need for privacy more than most, therefore are more cognizant of being alone. For mothers, being alone often means being free of responsibility -- at

least temporarily. I think mothers learn to achieve and acknowledge privacy in situations where others aren't even aware of its potential existence.

The bathroom is the presumed tower of solitude in most homes. Nonsense! Not with kids in a house, unless the air of modesty and unnaturalness borders on the Victorian. Conversation can be carried on through bathroom doors. Arms can come snaking in, fingers outstretched for toothbrushes. I once had a leg poked in for a dab of Mercurochrome on a stubbed toe! A nose inserts itself in the crack of the

door, followed by a comment about my using New Lemon Pledge in the bath water. An eyeball slithers around its socket, checking, then the eye's voice says, "You're just putting on makeup, do you mind if I just come in and wash my hands?"

Contrary to popular belief, motherhood is the oldest profession (well, the second oldest, then!), and a most demanding one. Through the ages, therefore, mothers have been constantly alert for shortcuts, and help in making life among the savages a little easier. Since mothers have to fight for even the barest of needs, we come up with all sorts of inventive ways of achieving them.

Motherhood, I feel sure, and not necessity, is the mother of invention!

For instance, one of my tricks I devised for gaining a degree of privacy among my own is running the vacuum cleaner. All sorts of would-be distractions can be going on around me, but if I'm lost in the sound of the vac, I can get a fantastic amount of hard thinking or successful daydreaming done. I sometimes sit in the same room with the rest of the family and wear the earphones to the Machine -- and I'm alone. (The phones don't even have to be plugged in -- as long as they think so.)

I love to drive and there is a tremendous feeling of freedom in the mobility of wheels. In a car by myself I am truly alone. When I've been gone for three or four hours -- or a whole day -- the feeling of privacy is enhanced when I'm asked where I've been, what've I been doing and I answer airily, "Oh, just hanging out.. ..mucking around....you know, nothing really."

BUT!

If I've been looking at tapes, there is evidence. Those tell-tale red rings around my arms.

"Oh, you've been checking tapes, I see. Didja' buy anything?"

ZAP! There goes all my psychological privacy.

The cost of tapes as opposed to records is bassackwards, and as soon as somebody realizes that we'll all be paying that extra dollar or so for records. An album jacket in itself is often worth the price of what's inside. Most of them are expressions of art in one form or another. Paintings, photography, collages. Is there any way to get the full effect of a SANTANA album cover when it is reduced to the approximate size of a playing card?

Besides studying the art, I've spent a lot of time reading record jackets and inner sleeves while listening to records. Tapes come in a flimsy little cardboard box with most of two sides out. There are other bonuses that come with records. Posters and lyrics. I wouldn't trade my MOODY BLUES jackets for all the tapes in the Columbia Tape Club TV GUIDE centerfold. Every one is a work of art, nearly all of them contain pictures of the Moodies and the words to their songs. That's the kind of prize you get for not spending that extra dollar.

If there's a song you really like on a record, or if you don't quite catch a line or two, you can set the needle back and listen again. Or, if there's a cut you'd just as soon skip, you can do that too. You need a stop watch merely to get a tape to start at the beginning of track one.

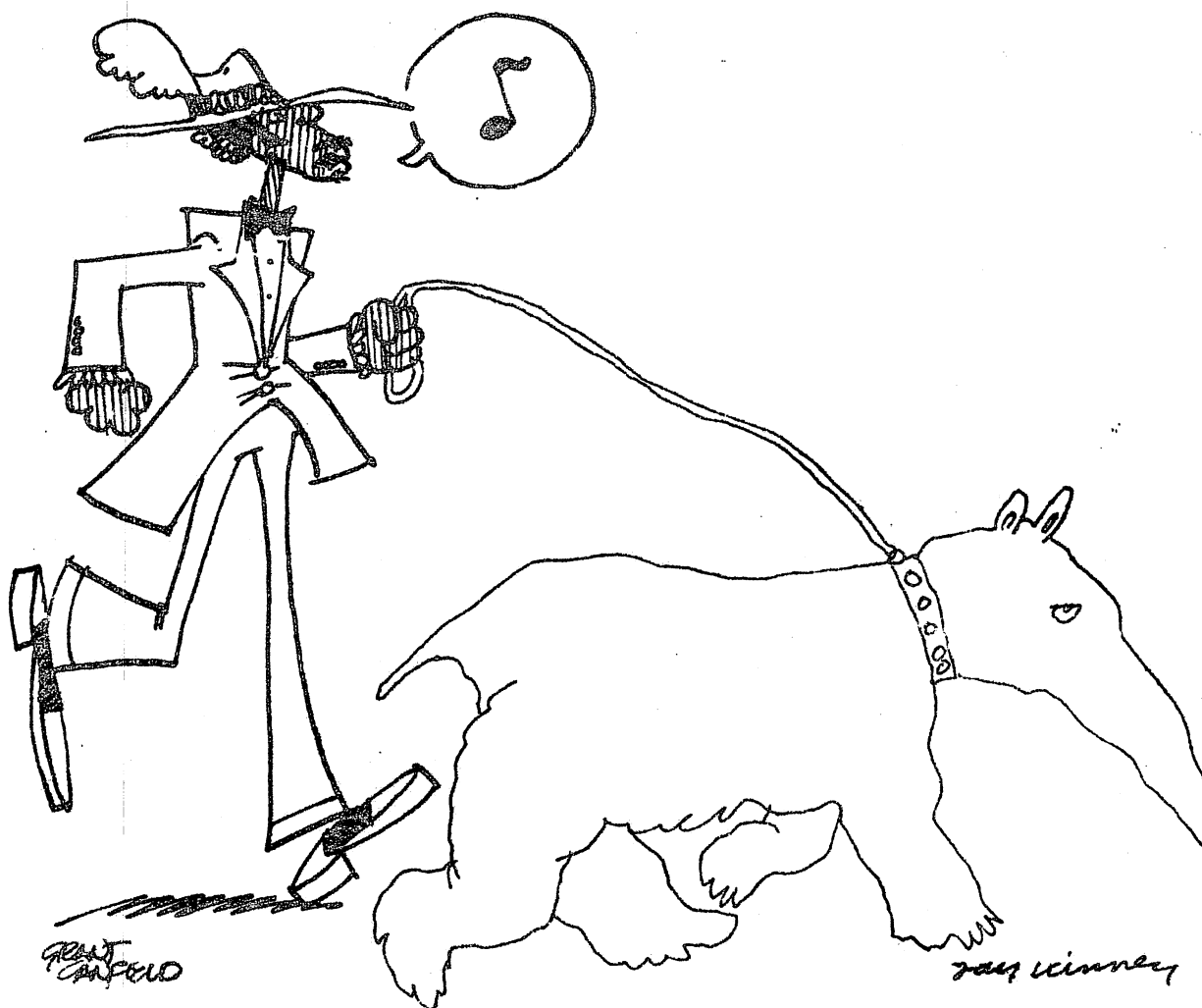
Playing tapes is like reading books without having to turn the pages or hold the book. I'm not that lazy. I rather enjoy handling my books and records.

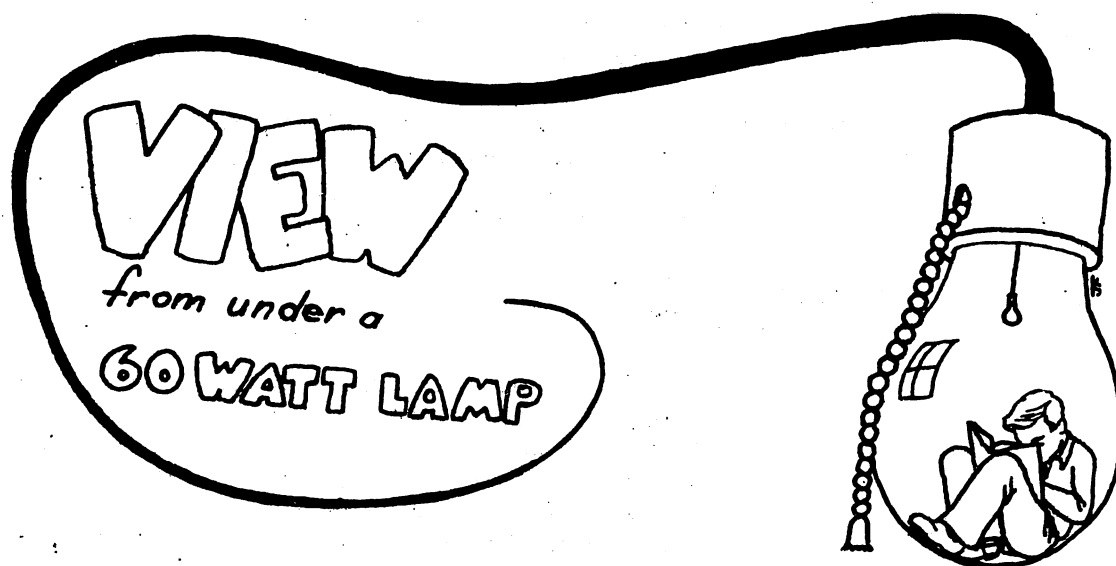
Browsing in record bins is like browsing in book stores. You can find them alphabetically by artist and subject, read the jackets, front and back. It's personal. Tapes are impersonal. Just little strips of plastic in little plastic boxes, that you don't even have to be too careful with. And if you want to look, you have to squint and have a supple wrist.

You know what else? I like to blow the dust off a record and tilt it around to check for more dust, then, for good measure, give it a swipe across my butt before it goes on the Machine. And I like to watch other people swing out a hip and dust themselves off with a record.

I think of records as "ours" or "mine". The tapes are just... the tapes.

Sure Missy can play tapes, but she's still looking forward to the time when her hands are big enough so that she can dust a record off on her butt and put it on the Machine by herself.





THE CLOUD WALKER -- by Edmund Cooper

reviewer: Dave Locke

Ballantine Books, 101 Fifth Ave., New York NY 10003

#03209-8-125, \$1.25

Not a new book. This one was published in 1973 and, in an effort to continue my high tradition of being the last to discover anything, I have only just now read it.

Back in AWRY #4 I reviewed Cooper's THE OVERMAN CULTURE. My complaint about Cooper's books was that the imaginative content varied from pedestrian to brilliant and the quality of writing from borish to orgasmic, and I looked forward to the day when he combined -- in one story -- his best efforts in both areas.

This isn't quite it, but it's awfully close. It doesn't quite have the sweeping imaginative concepts of A FAR SUNSET, and in writing quality it doesn't fully sustain the pyrotechnics of ALL FOOLS DAY. But close, real close, and it's awfully damned good.

It's the story of an apprentice painter, in an England of the far, far future when mankind has reverted to the days of the sailing ships and the sword. In England the Luddites ruled, and declared that machines were heresy. Kieron wanted to fly through the air, and dreamed of building a hot-air balloon, but that was an offense which could get him burned at the stake. The first half of the book, and it is the best half, follows Kieron as he grows up. It tells of his apprenticeship with the master painter Hobart, of his illicit love affair with the high-born daughter of the ruler of their city, and of his run-in with the church because of his efforts to build a flying machine. The prose and the story line are beautiful and moving.

In the second half of the novel, England is attacked by a fleet of seagoing freebooters, and the swords and clubs of England are no match for the cannon and superior fighting numbers of the freebooters. They control the sea and they mean to control the land, but Kieron intends to control the air. The beautiful cover painting depicts the most exciting scene in the book; the burning of the ships from Kieron's hot-air balloon.

The last chapter and the postscript take us through the balance of Kieron's life. In an economy of prose, Cooper rounds out Kieron's life story in a most beautifully

worded manner. We see life on earth as it crawls out of the dark ages of Kieron's youth, and we see the spirit of men set free.

This is really an excellent story. The prose is top quality, the characters come alive, and the pacing and story line are very exciting. It is one of those stories which moves you with its aching beauty and sweep of grandeur. One of the best novels, in my opinion, to come out so far this decade.

NOW YOU SEE IT/HIM/THEM... -- by Gene DeWeese & Robert Coulson \$5.95
Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City NY reviewer: Dean Grennell



NYSIHT, despite its ominous tone, is a clean word; the convenient acronym of the book's title, though it worried me a little when first encountered on the inner dust-cover flap. The book arrived with a letter from Sharon Jarvis, of Doubleday, who identified it as "almost the first copy off the press... [the authors] suggested you would like to see the book because (a) you're in it, and (b) you can plug it in your magazines."

I hope Ms. Jarvis had in mind AWRY as one of my magazines, since any friendly ink I might splatter upon the book in any of the titles with which I'm connected in my dayside chores would furrow the brows of readers and publisher alike. The awreaders of AWRY, however, are much more apt to enjoy NYSIHT. It is redolent with creeping tuckerism, for one thing. Tuckerism, of course, being the practice of naming your characters after more or less real people. In fact, the first corpse in the book is that of the late Silas Tucker. It is not until page 63 that the reader encounters Lamont Grennell, a bumbling has-been Shakespearean actor and sometime telekineticist of considerable attainments.

Much of the action takes place at a hotel in which a science fiction convention is being held, although the male lead -- a mild-mannered reporter, so help me -- is not a fan; at least not of science fiction.

Not surprisingly, habitual attendees of such functions will recognize many of the major and minor characters. Buck Coulson wrote himself a walk-on in the Hitchcock manner and Juanita Coulson is recognizable, even before she's mentioned by her first name. If Gene and/or Bev DeWeese got in front of the camera, I didn't happen to catch it. Joe Hensley, James R. Adams and Don Thompson (the Cleveland one) are among the other principal characters more or less named after characters in the book, or perhaps vice versa.

As for the plot, and yes, there is one, it is more psience than science fiction, replete with characters who become invisible under stress, or absent after mainlining adrenaline. Yes, really. The female lead is Kay Clarke, a tall folksongstress with an Afro hairdo, who dowses emotions. If she has a connection with anyone we know, it escapes me.

There is, of course, the obligatory Lieutenant of Homicide, Betteridge by name, who waxes somewhat wroth in the time-honored manner when Joe Karns (the m-m reporter) keeps discovering corpses and dutifully reporting them to headquarters. As it all turns out, that happens to be Karns' psionic schtick.

All in all, it is a book in the tradition of which *ROCKET TO THE MORGUE* was an early example, if not the start of it all. (By H.H. Holmes, you'll recall, AKA Anthony Boucher, AKA William A.P. White, etc.) It is good fun, though faintly distracting, if you happen to know the people whose names were tuckerized, since you are bothered a bit by the fact that the doppelgangers bear little if any resemblance to the originals. Lamont Grennell, for example, has a flowing mane of snowy hair, while that of his namesake remains mostly a nondescript brown, cut to the length considered conventional in the early '50s.

You can work up a little concern for the casual reader who encounters the entire plotframe on a cold-turkey basis. Looking at it from that viewpoint, it's not all that baffling, really. The in-group references are kept under commendably taut leashes and it could be read by any innocent browser among the shelves of a library ... provided, of course, said browser is willing to suspend disbelief to the extent of accepting people who not only become transparent as a response to peril, but likewise radiate some esoteric manner of transparentizing emanation that makes their clothing and personal bric-a-brac (pocket knives, keys, tooth fillings, etc.) equally invisible. That strikes as one helluva good trick.

For there are a lot of intricate complexities to the invisible man concept and most of the authors who've delved into this particular sub-genre tend to overlook them with whatever savoir faire they can muster. For but one example, assuming a human becomes totally transparent, light waves of the visible spectrum would zip blithely through their eyeballs and they would be blind, for all intents and purposes. Or so it would seem. In vaguely the same manner, no one has ever conducted a searching survey on whether or not time-travelers have problems with constipation, though Larry Niven could get around to it, almost any time.

All petty quibblery asside, where it belongs, it is a fun sort of book and the odds look good that you can extract \$5.95 worth of enjoyment from it.

Letter of comment on Dean Grennell's review of NYSIHT

from Gene DeWeese

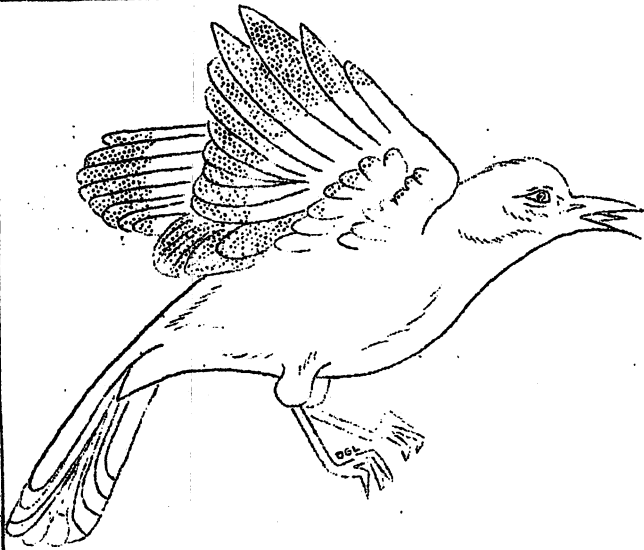
I thought I'd send you a brief note about the "invisibility". As it stands, he's completely right. (We said the same thing in *THE INVISIBILITY AFFAIR* a few years ago; everyone inside the invisibility "field" was blind.) But in this case, though we never got around to mentioning it, the little guy doesn't really disappear. He just "clouds men's minds". If anyone took a picture of the spot, they'd see him. Or someone a hundred yards away watching on tv would see him. Maybe in the next book, we'll go into that. Actually, there are a couple of stages to it. In the first stage, he just disappears, as he does several times in *NYSIHT*. But if he ever really gets scared, the memory of having seen him at all will also go away. If that ever happens, someone could be chasing him down the street, see him vanish, and then, a second later, start wondering why the hell he himself is running down the street.

Unfortunately, I don't have as easy an explanation for the teleportation... But maybe we'll think of something.

2000 A.D. - ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE GOLDEN AGE OF SCIENCE FICTION PULPS

Henry Regnery Co., 180 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago IL 60601 reviewer: D. Locke

This book, assembled by Jacques Sadoul, is available in cloth for \$17.95 or in paper for \$7.95. With a preface by A.E. Van Vogt, this collection of art from the sf magazines of 1926 - 1953 is exceptionally well-done. Each source is credited, and much comment is included regarding the magazines and the stories. A good coffee-table item.



McSORLEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES

by

Cyrus B. Condra

Some years ago I wrote something in praise of Joseph Mitchell's McSORLEY'S WONDERFUL SALOON, a collection of twenty profiles Mitchell had originally written for the NEW YORKER magazine. Enthusing over his accounts of McSorley's Old Ale House (oldest saloon in New York City); Dick's Bar and Grill; Houdini the Calypso singer; Captain Charley, who talked as though hit on the head with a cow; and Professor Sea Gull, putative historian of Greenwich Village and guttersnipe bon vivant extraordinary, I left a couple of loose ends to be gathered up in this present writing.

For example, in writing OBITUARY OF A GIN MILL in McSORLEY'S WONDERFUL SALOON, Mitchell wrote of it as Dick's Bar and Grill whereas in real life it was Nick's, the proprietor, Dominic Settiducatti, being commonly known as 'The House'. H. Allen Smith's TO HELL IN A HANDBASKET, Doubleday, Garden City, 1962, not only devotes a couple of chapters to the place, but includes Nick's picture as Plate No. 32 in the Photo Section.

This is very open treatment indeed, compared to Mitchell's camouflage, and it reflects the difference between the free-lance and the house writer. Mitchell, writing in the late thirties for the NEW YORKER, couldn't possibly give free publicity to one saloon out of thousands unless its story -- like McSorley's -- was of national interest. But Smith in 1962 was free to write, "When I first joined his fraternity Nick's saloon was a foul trap across the street from its present location. Joe Mitchell once wrote two memorable pieces for the NEW YORKER...and I suspect that many of the stories in those articles had their origins at Nick's," which tells us several things. Smith is obviously under no restraint by the NEW YORKER or anybody else and further knows that not enough people read books -- even his own -- to make any difference in the take of Nick's or any other saloon so publicized. And his "...and I suspect..." is palpable understatement -- than he, no one knew better that Mitchell was writing about Nick's.

Indeed his own description of a typical 'Cabaret Night' in the foul trap reveals that Mitchell himself occasionally participated in the action. On that particular night Smith had coaxed Helen Morgan (at that time having problems and in eclipse) to come down and belt out a few songs for old time's sake, and her presence proved inspiring. And amidst the noise, the action, and the crowd, stands out the figure of Joe Mitchell, writer and anomalous non-drinker, whose contribution to the festivities seems at once both vivid and obscure.

Smith writes, "I remember glancing up at one point and seeing Joe Mitchell behind the bar with an enormous carving knife in his hands, raised aloft, the point of the blade aimed downward at the chest of Vinnie, who was Nick's partner. Vinnie had hold of Joe's wrists and Joe was straining mightily, trying to bring the knife down and kill Vinnie. And across the bar stood Joe's wife Therese, watching the scene. She did not cry out for Joe to stop, nor did she cry out for Joe to kill Vinnie -- she just stared, fascinated by it all. Then along came Nick and took the knife away from Joe and a bit later I asked Joe what the trouble had been and he said what trouble..."

This was the Joseph Mitchell whose first profile on Dick's Bar and Grill (entitled DRUNKS in his first book, MY EARS ARE BENT, Sheridan House, New York, 1938) opens its second paragraph with, "While I never drink anything stronger than Moxie, I often go into Dick's to observe life..."

That night had Vinnie spiked the Moxie? Well -- that's life.

The loose ends mentioned at the outset and which I now propose to gather up, involve Professor Sea Gull and his unlikely literary protege, William Saroyan, whose impressions of American literature at the time he came on the scene conflict somewhat with mine. What follows may make me sound as though posing as an expert on American literature, which I am not. An ordinary reader with an ordinary interest in the shindigs of the Avant Garde Old Frontier, I was born and raised on an Iowa farm and am expert only on a few things relating thereto, including horse manure, the aroma of which I can always tell, whether pitching or reading it -- though possibly may write it sometimes, unaware.

But first some background for those to whom all this is new. (Some dust, Lushington.) There once was a man who called himself Professor Sea Gull...

Professor Sea Gull, a very real person named Joe Gould, had the ability to listen to hours of conversation and later write it down verbatim if he chose. With an eidetic memory -- a human tape recorder -- he was also a nut. Gripped one day by the conviction that what ordinary people say is just as much history as the major military and political mistakes for which they have to pay and suffer, he was inspired to confound the Muse and reform the discipline of History by setting down for the benefit of future generations every conversation of interest that he heard. It was to be a unique work -- AN ORAL HISTORY OF OUR TIME, he called it -- and diligently passed the word that he was working on it.

Moving in somewhat less than exalted circles as he did, the kind of talk he heard in tenements and public parks, Skid Row bars and occasional bouts in the gutter, turned out to be mostly hard luck yarns, dirty stories and tales of sexual prowess fit to pale the PERFUMED GARDEN and make old Rabelais himself pant and whinny in the woodshed. And when he announced that he had managed to fill two hundred and seventy school composition books with an estimated 20,000 conversations running to nine million words of this stuff -- about eleven times as long as the Bible -- he stood revealed as human interest material of a kind that NEW YORKER editors drool over in their dreams but never expect to find in the flesh.

So Joe Mitchell wrote him up. He became a minor celebrity.

He was also a fraud, for in fact the Professor had quickly tired of the drudgery of writing and quietly shelved the project while maintaining an illusion of progress as a conversational gambit. And any impulse to tell the truth was quickly stifled when the Oral History plus notoriety proved a gold mine. Suddenly he was

getting attention, free drinks, and frequent small sums of money from tourists who in imagination saw themselves also becoming immortalized as their words too winged to swell the Oral History's ever-growing bulk. A lovely racket, and he did quite well.

But Joseph Mitchell was not satisfied. Some of what the Professor had told him he had taken on trust with assurance of proof to come and it was not forthcoming. He had seen only a few of the two hundred and seventy composition books supposed to be in storage and difficult of access, nor counted them as he was bound to do. Profile writers are exceeding stubborn about verifying facts, so Mitchell turned bloodhound and satisfied himself they didn't exist. But by the time his second profile on the cover-up of the fraud appeared, Professor Sea Gull was dead and gone, having in 1957 himself become an entry in the Big Copybook in the Sky although on earth his semblance continues to cavort among us in the pages of Mitchell's JOE GOULD'S SECRET, Viking Press, New York, 1965; in print at \$4.95 and well worth it.

The literary connection between Saroyan and Joe Gould -- unlikely though it seems -- was this. In 1929 Gould had written an essay, CIVILIZATION -- perhaps his only published work -- that Saroyan found and read a few months later in a second-hand copy of THE DIAL, one of a number of obscure literary magazines now long defunct. This was during his formative period when he was floundering around desperate to become a writer and getting nowhere.

Gould's essay seems to have had a catalytic effect on Saroyan, pointing him in the direction he was soon to go. In later years Saroyan not only credited Gould with having been a major influence on his writing career, but on the occasion of a personal meeting attempted to show his gratitude by taking Gould out for dinner and drinks and talking so volubly that Gould said afterward, "I couldn't get a word in edgewise."

Prior to this at about age thirty, Saroyan by that time successful, sought after, and apparently with his head somewhat turned, had written of Gould's essay that, "It freed me from bothering about form... To this day I have not read anything else by Joe Gould. And yet to me he remains one of the few genuine and original American writers. He was easy and uncluttered and almost all other American writing was uneasy and cluttered. It was not at home anywhere; it was a little sickly; it was literary; and it couldn't say anything simply. All other American writing was trying to get into one form or another and no writer except Joe Gould seemed to understand that if worst came to worst you didn't need any form at all."

I admit this impressed me; my personal response being, "Well!! That's quite an indictment and if its second level of meaning is what I think it is -- until Saroyan came along no one knew how to write -- I want to go into that sometime, but not here."

Which fills in the background and brings everyone up to date. Now to gather up the loose ends.

If I read the man aright, 1929 and the Depression years should have seen American Writing bankrupt and down the tubes in company with the Stock Market save that Saroyan caught it just in time. Other writers -- James Thurber? Ring Lardner? Robert Nathan? James T. Farrell? F. Scott Fitzgerald? John P. Marquand? E.B. White? Clarence Day? Don Marquis? Erskine Caldwell? Ernest Hemingway? -- all of them sickly, literary, uneasy, and cluttered, were unable to say anything simply (he implies) until, inspired by Joe Gould, he showed them how. Modesty of

course forbids him to say so in so many words, but what else can one infer? It's hard to swallow.

The more one ponders what he says, the more pungent the aroma from the barn. Augean, almost.⁻¹ If worst ever should come to worst (whatever that means) you not only won't need any form -- you probably won't even bother to write, like Joe Gould who wrote as little as one possibly could, yet who Saroyan calls a writer.

And that grandiloquent dismissal of all American writing (he says in one place 'almost all' but one can infer that he and Joe Gould are the only exceptions) is sweeping, superficial, and false enough to make anyone eye him narrowly and ask, "What makes him talk like that?"

He was posing, of course. While intelligent and shrewd enough to judge of things he knows well, nothing shows the capable literary critic. And at that time no question but that what he knew best and felt most deeply was his inner compulsion to become a writer and loathing of his inability to do so. That second level of meaning -- that only he knows how to write -- is nothing but bravado. He's bluffing. It's on the third and possibly deepest level that we get the message loud and clear. He's really saying, "My writing was uneasy and cluttered, not at home anywhere, trying too hard, miserable, sickly, literary, and unable to say anything simply," -- all of which was certainly true until, like any other beginning young writer, he found himself.

An intuitive interpretation such as this is hard to prove, perhaps impossible. Yet it's not uncommon to suppress things too painful to face consciously and shift them over to some other, outside entity that one can denounce in safety. Here, almost certainly, Saroyan put what he most loathed within himself outside, making it an attribute of what he felt most opposite and alien to -- the body of successful writers who were being published and of whom he despaired of ever becoming a member.

The brighter side, his turning for the better, was something to remember as indeed he did. Joe Gould bumping him in the direction of success (however accidentally) must have looked like Deliverance from Evil, Money from Home, and How to Make Good Home Brew Without Failures all wrapped up in one. No wonder Saroyan later tried -- rightly if however clumsily -- to requite him.

But he went about it wrongly. Nothing he says rings true. Except himself and Gould no one could do anything right and even his praise for Gould comes out self-praise. God forgive us all, he was doing what I myself have done and suspect us all susceptible to do though rarely on so magnificent a scale; so shot with folie de grandeur, so complete an image of equal parts of Charles de Gaulle and narcissistic Joe, the robot can opener in Kuttner's Gallagher stories, squealing with delight at his own transcendent loveliness -- in Dean Grennell's succinct phrase, Sheesh! Or perhaps, Sheeg!!

The way people fool themselves ... years ago at the Douglas Santa Monica plant I was trying to make some kind of Tooling tie-in between the Aerospace and Airframe halves of its schizophrenic personality which, human nature being what it is, never quite came off. But the Director of Tooling liked part of it and turned me loose to fit it in among the various Tooling design and control groups. At long last and at the bottom of the totem pole I checked into a minor function that was the responsibility of one, let us say, A.B.C. Newberg.

I explained how things would have to be done in the future and he heard me with disfavor, dragging his feet and protesting that such things were not provided for

in the Standard Practice Bulletin, their departmental Bible. Unknown to him this was already in process of being revised so, having noticed his fifteen-year pin I merely suggested that as an Administrator of long experience and on familiar terms with the powers that be, he was uniquely favored to bring about any such needed reform. He brightened up at this and said, "Yes, I'm pretty well known around here," and made no further demur.

I then spent a few minutes in the men's rest room reading the graffiti on the stall door, those upwellings that make us (you should forgive the expression?) privy to the basic promptings and resentments of others, staring with unfeigned interest at the one that said, and I quote, "A.B.C. Newberg is a bald-headed idiot."

It gave me pause. "Egad," I told myself, "he is well known around here."

But enough of such pleasures.

I can't agree with Saroyan about the state of American Literature in 1929. It was exciting, it was lively; there was more going on than he realized. For one thing, defenders of conventional prose were still over-reacting to the stream-of-consciousness technique in James Joyce's ULYSSES and getting it or keeping it banned in Boston while enthusiastic proponents were ecstatically trying the technique themselves with results that for the most part don't seem very well remembered today. At the same time the field of poetry was still in shock from the publication of T.S. Eliot's THE WASTE LAND seven years before (in 1922), concerning which rational discussion was only beginning to be possible. THE WASTE LAND differed from the stream-of-consciousness technique in that its best effects resulted from a concept normally anathema in any form of serious writing -- deliberate ambiguity. I've always thought ULYSSES a sideshow of no particular importance or interest either, but THE WASTE LAND intrigues me and seems worth talking about.

Normally I detest ambiguity; to me good writing means clarity, style, and again clarity -- its object is to make the writer understood. To say unmistakably what one wants to say and above all to be interesting (my own output to the contrary notwithstanding) is what one strives for. Sweat blood if need be, but at all costs avoid ambiguity.

Yet this was precisely what THE WASTE LAND did not do, and say whatever else one may, as a conversation piece it was an instant success. Probably sui generis -- there may be later works of equal stature by other writers but I don't know of any -- rather than a new school of poetry it seems to have inspired instead new schools of literary criticism. Except the Bible and Shakespeare I doubt any other work has been such instant Paradise for critics and commentators, flocks of whom to this day flit through its branches, peck the fruit of its phrasing, and scatter their droppings -- in the form of more or less well digested studies -- all over the adjacent ground of literature.

One of the happiest spots in this Happy Hunting Ground is THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD around which some of them are always shrieking and twittering. A sample may move you to join them...I theenk...

Stetson!

You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!

The corpse you planted last year in your garden,

Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?

Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
Oh keep the dog far hence that's friend to man
Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!
You! Hypocrite lecteur! -- mon semblable -- mon frere!

which meant to the writer possibly more than it means to you, and especially if you regard Stetson as old hat. Frankly, the poem is neither intended nor possible to be understood in the conventional sense; the man doesn't really care what you think he means, he wants you to feel the way he feels -- feeling being to poetry what clarity is to prose.

The mystery of THE WASTE LAND has challenged scholars for decades -- everybody wants to know what he's really saying and nobody knows; very few men and probably no women ever will. This is because each word or phrase evokes particular emotions on different levels, and only those whose background of reading and emotional experience most closely approach those of the poet can be expected to respond as he did. It is something like 'in' jokes, where the common background is everything. Nevertheless others can speculate as to how he felt and why.

Eliot's reading background was extensive; he read, wrote and spoke six languages, including Sanskrit, untranslated fragments from all of which are scattered freely throughout his work. Yet while from any point of view scholastically a rather special person, his emotional background by contrast seems almost ordinary. Of course he had his problems and their compensations; his offset for a hang-up that left him sexually inadequate being a promiscuous wife. And he was a banker by trade.

So one may perhaps understand why he wanted to express himself and share his feelings, though why anyone else would want to read him in order to feel the same way, God only knows. He put out some odd lines. In another poem there occurs

In the palace of Mrs. Phlaccus, at Professor Channing-Cheetah's
He laughed like an irresponsible foetus.
His laughter was submarine and profound...

which raises in me a sense of wonder as to how a responsible foetus might laugh.

Certainly people will long continue to read THE WASTE LAND and puzzle over what it really means, but readers of McSORLEY'S WONDERFUL SALOON will be content to presume that he was hit on the head with a cow, shrug their shoulders, and let it go at that.

Another tidbit for critics is that moment of introspection in the London room where Philomela's picture hangs on the wall and the poet expresses a succession of emotional experiences in these words:

"...yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried and still the world pursues
'Jug Jug' to dirty ears...

and here my own experience with nightingales clearly diverges from that of the poet with whom I must unhappily take issue.

The nightingales around my house (for example) lurk in the shrubbery during the evening, wait until everything is quiet, and then at midnight or thereabouts cut loose with all the finesse of a steam calliope or king size bull horn. To awake

as I have done, gibbering in panic and clinging to the chandelier, while outside the corpse planted in the garden has resurrected at a bound and is fleeing down the road a quarter-furlong behind though gaining on the friendly but departing dog, is a truly traumatic experience. And let me add that even at this acme of emotional stress one knows that what he heard was not 'Jug Jug' and he who says it was himself has dirty ears if not a dirty mind.

Being moved by afterthought I have just consulted the Authority who on occasion tells me what I think, and she says a trifling detail up above there needs correcting; that our birds are not nightingales but mockingbirds. My rejoinder that it's all the same since they are obviously mocking nightingales she dismisses out of hand on the feeble grounds that there aren't any nightingales around here to mock. This sounds specious and evasive to me, but let it pass.

Philomela? Who is she? We find that in classic allusion, Philomela (Philo - lover of; mel - melody or song -- by no great leap of the imagination 'lover of song') signifies the nightingale which is also identified with the Philomela of Greek myth.

Looking further we learn that the Philomela of Greek myth was the young sister-in-law of a Greek king, Tereus, who enticed her to come visit her sister, raped her, and cut out her tongue so she couldn't tell who did it, though she managed nonetheless in a piece of needlework. In the Latin version the gods in pity changed her into the nightingale, though surely they could just as easily have restored her tongue since the nightingale she was turned into had a tongue, and while about it, being gods, could just as easily have tinkered her virginity back in shape as well, but the wisdom of the gods surpasseth understanding. They changed her sister into the swallow and Tereus into -- of all things -- the hoopoe which at least gets to sleep nights, I think. The Greek version naturally is backwards; sister becomes the nightingale, Philomela the swallow; Tereus I don't know what - possibly the extra-marital lark. So much for Philomela except that anyone who takes all this on trust will do well first to check up on mockingbirds.

That the use of ambiguity both in writing and understanding this stuff is hard to explain is well shown in what is possibly the best-known commentary on this passage, by the professional literary critic, Edmund Wilson. In his AXEL'S CASTLE, a study of imaginative literature (not stf cbc.) of 1870 to 1930 Mr. Wilson hath writ:

"The picture is like a window opening upon Milton's earthly paradise -- the 'sylvan scene,' as Eliot explains in a note, is a phrase from 'Paradise Lost' -- and the poet associates his own plight in the modern city, in which some 'infinitely gentle, infinitely suffering thing,' to quote one of Eliot's earlier poems, is somehow being done to death with Philomela, raped and mutilated by Tereus. But in the earthly paradise, there had been a nightingale singing; Philomela had wept her woes in song, though the barbarous king had cut out her tongue -- her sweet voice had remained inviolable. And with a sudden change of tense, the poet flashes back from the myth to his present situation:

And still she cried, and still the world pursues
'Jug Jug' to dirty ears.

The song of birds was represented in old English popular poetry by such outlandish syllables as 'Jug Jug' -- so Philomela's cry sounds to the vulgar."

Speaking as one of the vulgar myself but without getting particularly upset, I

would like to quote from Joseph Mitchell's preface to McSORLEY'S WONDERFUL SALOON and say that "I regard this phrasing as patronizing, repulsive, and vulgar," except that I feel that here Wilson was simply floundering.

I doubt there was ever a 'Jug Jug' in the whole body of English literature until Eliot wrote it, though that's not the point. The point is that 'Jug Jug' has no place in a description of the struggles of a tongueless person. Even a child ought to place 'Jug Jug' high on the list of sounds impossible to one without a tongue. The front part of the tongue plus the roof of the mouth back of the front teeth makes the 'J' sound. The hard 'G' also needs the tongue -- without a tongue, you can't say 'Jug'. And also perhaps Wilson was not aware of the reader who, familiar with both birds and poetry, had long since reported that Eliot actually had confused the nightingale (which does not say 'Jug Jug') with the European nightjar which apparently does. And I shall head most of you off at the pass right now with the obvious aside that American nightjars (in the old days at least) were usually found under the bed.

I remember reading a little of Eliot's poetry in High School; there was THE HOLLOW MEN from which the phrase "Not with a bang but a whimper" has been made so much of, and the more clearly remembered SWEENEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES (Eliot really had a 'thing' about those birds), which starts out

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh

which gave me the creeps until I understood that he was sitting down and sprawling back and that he, not his arms, was doing the laughing. Also I remember an unfortunate student (for once, not me) who read it "A peneck" instead of "Ape Neck", being misled by the look of the word just as one might say "mizzled" for "mis-led", being misled by the look of the word -- I have known it to happen. The rest of the poem, somewhat puzzling to the student I once was, now leaves me not only puzzled but oppressed by feelings of Weltschmerz, Alas poor Yorick, and Sic Transit Gloria Mundi, which is probably what Eliot was driving at all along.

As indicated above, THE WASTE LAND gave impetus to several kinds of criticism that are still going strong; literary criticism has become a full-time occupation for so many people that inevitably there had to appear a specialist and an ultra, a critic of critics. The first of these, ⁻²I think, was Stanley Edgar Hyman whose THE ARMED VISION, Vintage paperback no. K20 triggered much of this perhaps overly-familiar essay. With a rare wit and penetrating insight he takes up or rather takes apart the leading literary critics, of whom Eliot himself was one. From perhaps a too-heavily Freudian standpoint, Hyman (coincidentally himself a NEW YORKER staff writer) tells both what they do and why they do it.

One of his subjects, William Empson, an Englishman particularly enraptured of ambiguity as a means to communicate feeling, is by no means himself ambiguous in expressing his views. His impromptu comment on ALICE IN WONDERLAND is a marvel of precision and to me a revelation.

Like everyone else I have long known that Charles Lutwidge Dodson, the 'Lewis Carroll' who wrote ALICE IN WONDERLAND, was obsessed with photographing naked little girls; thought it freakish, and let it go at that. Not so Mr. Empson whose reactions I am lifting unashamedly from pages 250-251 of THE ARMED VISION. In talking with some friends about literature and criticism and all that, he happened to mention that there were things in ALICE that would give old man Freud himself the creeps. Being pressed to explain, he explained, taking ALICE "as a conjuror takes his hat, (producing) an endless swarm of lively rabbits from it..."

"To make the dream-story from which WONDERLAND was elaborated seem Freudian one has only to tell it. A fall through a deep hole into the secrets of Mother Earth produces a new enclosed soul wondering who it is, what will be its position in the world, and how it can get out. It is in a long low hall, a part of the palace of the Queen of Hearts (a neat touch), from which it can only get out to the fresh air and the fountains through a hole frighteningly too small. Strange changes, caused by the way it is nourished there, happen to it in this place, but always when it is big it cannot get out, and when it is small it is not allowed to; for one thing, being a little girl, it has no key.

"The nightmare theme of the birth-trauma, that she grows too big for the room and is almost crushed by it, is not only used here but repeated more painfully after she seems to have got out; the rabbit sends her sternly into his house and some food there makes her grow again.

"The symbolic completeness of Alice's experience is I think important. She runs the whole gamut; she is a father in getting down the hole, a foetus at the bottom and can only be born by becoming a mother and producing her own amniotic fluid." (Dodgson had) "...the desire to include all sexuality in the girl child, the least obviously sexed of human creatures ... he is partly imagining himself as the girl child ... partly as its father ... partly as its lover -- so that it might become a mother -- but then of course it is clever and detached enough to do everything for itself."

So obvious -- why couldn't I have seen it like that?

And what was I saying about striving for clarity and saying unmistakably what one wants to say? Wasn't that what Dodgson was doing? Can you find a more straightforward, clearly written, children's fantasy than ALICE? Yet Empson picks it up, twists it around into what you see there -- and makes me believe it! God knows what shocking truths in PETER RABBIT, JACK AND JILL, or (whisper it) McSORLEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES await the light, but in view of Erich Fromm's suggestion that LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD is a copulation drama representing women who hate sex, I really don't think I want to know.

Indeed, though writing clearly as I can and only to set the record straight as to how I differ with Saroyan (and dispel Dave Locke's implied canard in the last AWRY that I'm a Professor Sea Gull type more prone to talk about what I'm going to write than write it -- which may be true though truth itself shall not prevail when I set out to write) I shudder to think what some budding Empson out there could read into this innocent line of prattle. One thing certain; I am monumentally uninterested in any photographs of naked girls ... unless full grown and the fuller the better.

Getting back to the subject somewhat, Eliot has probably been eclipsed in the public mind by an aggressive ex-Pennsylvanian transplanted to Paris and actually doing something else. Gertrude Stein, initially a patron and critic of the French Impressionistic school of painting was moved to try to do with words what they seemed to be doing on canvas with results superficially similar though not truly equivalent to the work of Joyce and Eliot. Choosing words for their associations and sound rather than for meaning, she also used intricate patterns of repetition that seem both resulting from and tending to sustain a state of self-hypnosis so that it seems fair to classify her work as more nearly a form of automatic writing.

So the period from 1918 to date has seen concepts and techniques from psychoanalysis permeate the field of creative writing to the point of making it if not a whole new ball game, at least one in which players and spectators alike share an

enlarged understanding of the reasons for the rules. Speaking as the ordinary interested reader and subject to correction if wrong, I think that to make blanket statements about the whole body of American Writing without such things in mind is not to know what one is talking about. Anything one says may be true of some tiny segment while false as to the whole, and the sheer bulk of what is being published makes it impossible for anyone to keep current. The problem of bulk in publishing in itself is worth another essay ... which I shall probably never write.

Let us wrap up the subject of ambiguity, beginning with a belated aside that if Eliot's wholesale use of ambiguity ran flatly counter to tradition, which was deplorable, his message to this best of all possible worlds was worse. The poem is his outcry of protest and despair at finding himself in a world of anarchy where nothing makes any sense, including -- his detractors were only too quick to point out -- THE WASTE LAND.

That mistrust and distaste for ambiguity is normal and instinctive is nowhere more evident than in our majority response to its lowest form -- the pun. Being pressed for space I recently stored an ancient and enormous farm dinner bell in the shower of the guest house bathroom, reserved for gentlemen at the Petard party. During the party Dean Grennell glanced in and said, "So that you can get ringing wet?" at which I had to laugh, though if I were Nero and he a Christian I'd have thrown him to the nightingales. No doubt he goes around wringing doorbells.

He and I share a fondness for odd song titles. One of my earlier favorites was I'VE GOT A CROSS-EYED PAPA BUT HE LOOKS STRAIGHT TO ME. Later I found such things as CELERY STALKS AT MIDNIGHT; then parodies such as BIG CRASH FROM CHINA inspired by BIG NOISE FROM WINNETKA and NORTH, a take-off on Benny Moten's SOUTH, with the original melodic phrasing inverted. Finest of all are reversed titles of which Red Ingle's parody of NATURE BOY must be best known -- SERUTAN YOB, though my favorite is that shining jewel OUCH OUCH AGOONATTACH, which sounds like an Eskimo Rock Session but is really our old friend CHATTANOOGA CHOO CHOO puffing along in reverse. I should have bought that record when I found it second-hand for a dime, but it was beat up -- played to death. So it must have been good...

Dean and I have used this little gem for a number of things -- greeting, farewell, comment on the unspeakable or inexpressible -- what you will. It's haunting, lilting; it deserves to be put in rhyme and I'd do it except the only rhymes I can think of are snatch, catch, scratch, and others of that ilk which somehow I hesitate to work with...

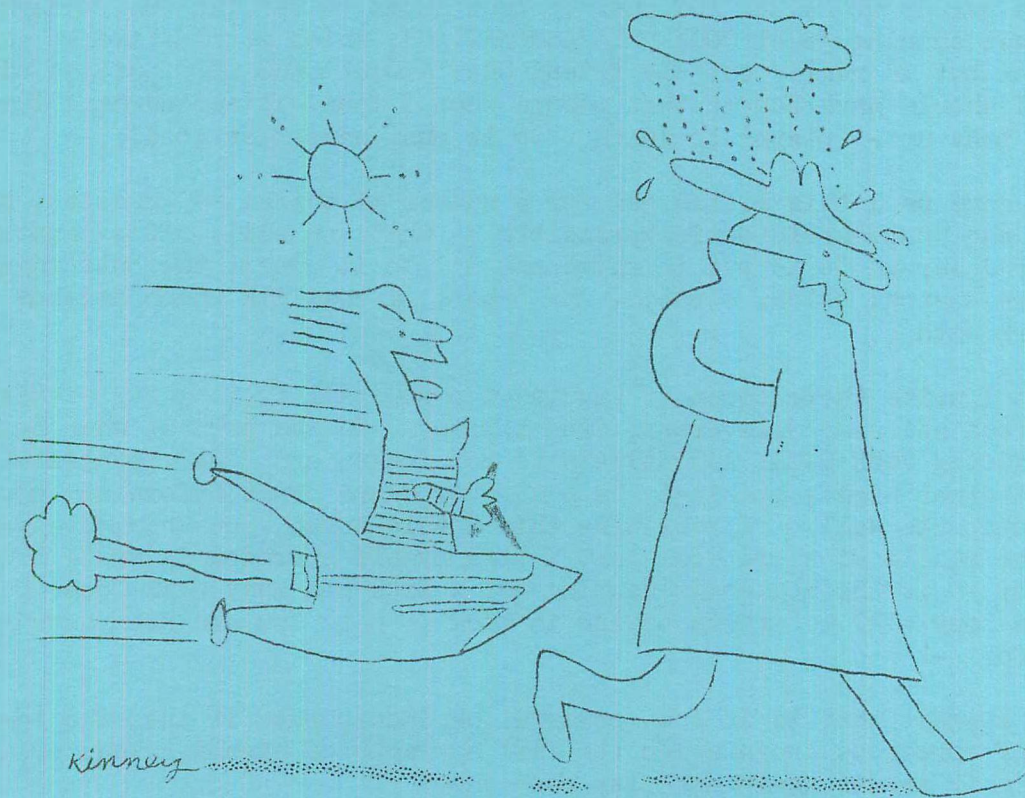
And even as I write there comes an anguished phone call from Ed Cox seeking somebody's address and also deliverance from torment. He was present when Dean and I were introducing OUCH OUCH AGOONATTACH to Bob Tucker and Rusty Hevelin at Dave Locke's the other night; amazingly he had never heard of it before and now it was driving him up the wall. "I'm writing this Gothic novel, you know," he said, "and right in the middle of a critical part I find myself starting to write OUCH OUCH! AGOONATTACH! -- if the dog comes wanting out I kick him away with Ouch! Ouch! -- it won't be long till he starts saying it back at me! You and Dean have got a lot to answer for --"

I can only suggest that if it's so powerful he incorporate it into the yarn as some kind of sorcerous incantation (to lift a plague of nightingales, or something, or else turn it around again and play choo choo.

The familiar essay is a delight to write; it can wander all over the place and end at the writer's pleasure. I think that now, with some 5000 words conscientiously put on paper, the pleasure is mine.

NOTES:

- 1. While writing those words I had a vision of an eight or nine year old Dave Locke being introduced to Greek mythology; reading about the labors of Hercules. King Augeas had kept three thousand horses in his stables for thirty years without ever having had them cleaned until he set Hercules to do it. In the myth Hercules cleaned out the stables by running two rivers through them. I can see Dave's chubby face setting first into an expression of doubt, then utter disbelief, as he ponders that in thirty years those horses have long since been buried under tons of their own excrement. Shaking his head and tossing the book aside, his is muttering, "That's a lot of horse manure..." -3
- 2. Looking up Stanley Hyman in CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS I was shocked to find it referring me to the NEW YORK TIMES obituary columns, consulting which I learned that he died July 29, 1970, at the untimely age of 51; about a year before I started reading him. I feel a sense of personal loss; his was exceptional intelligence coupled with strong common sense, and lovers of literature are poorer for his passing.
- 3. Not trusting to memory I have belatedly looked up the Augean Stables and find those horses were actually oxen. Apparently my vision could have stood a little fine-tuning, for what Dave really said was, obviously, "What a lot of bull..."



WORDSMITHING

BRUCE D. ARTHURS

Scottsdale, Arizona

The worst drunk I ever knew was, of course, in the Army. I met him in AIT at Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, a chap name of Nevers. He had a good reason for being a drunk, though. Back when he was a civilian, he took out a girl he wanted to impress. Swankest restaurant in town, rented limo and tuxedo, formal dancing, the works. He spent over three hundred dollars in that one night.

She shook his hand when she said goodnight. So naturally he joined the Army and became a drunk.

Nevers' best friend in AIT was Westerhaven. Whenever Nevers had had enough to drink for the night, Westerhaven was the guy who told him in what direction to crawl to get back to the barracks. One night, they came in late, Nevers staggering around as usual. Nevers took off his clothes, then decided he was still thirsty. "I'm going out for a beer," he said, heading out the door in his underwear.

"Wait a minute, Nevers," Westerhaven cried out, fetching a can of beer from his footlocker. "Here's a beer for you." Nevers drooled at the sight and staggered after it, with Westerhaven backing off from him whenever he got near. Finally, Nevers made a running lunge for the can. Westerhaven jerked the can to one side and Nevers went right on by, until the wall coming into contact with his skull brought him to a stop. He did a slow slide down the wall and lay still. Westerhaven dumped him into his bunk and went to bed himself. When Nevers woke up the next morning, he complained about a particularly bad hangover. If those two have ever worked up a stage act, they would have wowed them in Las Vegas.

DAVE HAUGH

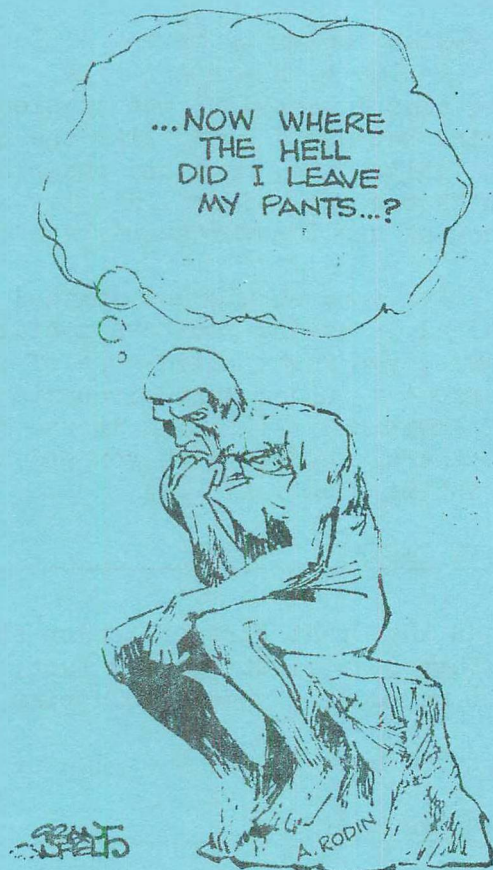
Campbell, California

The southern comic was Brother Dave Gardner. His most famous line was "Miz Rachael was fine till we turned her head around straight."

SHERYL BIRKHEAD

Gaithersburg, Maryland

I've never been drunk, and never had the slightest interest in it really. I did



surprise Tucker by having a Black Russian followed by a Brandy Alexander one night in the bar with him and Mike. I'd never had an Alexander before and wanted to try it; also I wanted to get to sleep later. I tried to explain to him that I don't drink because I don't like the taste, and given a choice I generally choose not to imbibe. So, sigh and chagrin, there's no tale to be told here. When we lived in Europe for a year I did try a sip of whatever drink was being consumed, but then as now I never acquired a taste for anything in particular.

XXX Everyone should get smashed at least once. There's great perspective to be gained in seeing your own mental walls tumble down. In the reconstruction afterwards, you might build some of them a little higher or a little lower. Out of curiosity, under what circumstances would you not be "given a choice" with regard to imbibing? At NASFiC it was nice to finally meet the face behind the name, and to share a coffee with you and Mike. Did it ruin my image for you to see me drinking a coffee? XXX

DAVE PIPER

Ruislip, England

When the Great Fire of London started in Pudding Lane nobody was particularly bothered at first and, in fact, the Major was heard to say (apparently) "That's not so much, a woman could piss it out!" Might not be true but I like that.

XXX I'd hate to see the size of the women the Major was familiar with. XXX

LAURINE WHITE

Sacramento, California

The plans for NASFiC look great on paper, but Linda Bushyager doesn't think it will be much of a con.

XXX NASFiC was fine, so long as you went into it without expecting to meet many out-of-state people. And, as far as I'm concerned, Linda Bushyager is a con. XXX

DON D'AMMASSA

East Providence, Rhode Island

What's this skinny little fanzine I find in my mail? Surely this can't be a real AWRY? AWRY is that monster fanzine that always takes me two or three days steady reading to get through. Perhaps this is a hoax AWRY. It looks like AWRY, has a Locke editorial about various disasters, has a Dean Grennell column that is entertaining throughout. But the lettercolumn; that's a dead giveaway. Someone's sending out fake fanzines and signing your name to them, Dave.

XXX I hope they keep it up. I don't really have that much time for AWRY anymore. Wish they'd send me a copy, though, so I'd know what all these damn letters are referring to. XXX

The mention of sports in the lettercolumn recalled to me my own experience. You see, until 7th grade I was the biggest kid in my class. I reached five feet six with remarkable speed, fleshed out to 120 pounds, and was usually one of the first choices for baseball, basketball, and football, and particularly volleyball. But about 7th grade, either the world expanded or I contracted, because everyone seemed to pass me. In fact, here I am at 29, still five feet six, 118 pounds, a 24 inch waist, and everyone is bigger than I am. It's all a plot.

XXX I know how you feel. I got cut off at 5'8", at about eighth grade, and have gone around ever since feeling the world owes me another four inches in height. XXX

I wanted to pass along local funny story of the month. It seems that this 22 year old bandit bought himself a Saturday night special and decided to stick up a variety store. He received the cash in due course, picked it up with the same hand in which he held his gun, and began stuffing it into his inside jacket pocket with the hand still clutching the gun and shot himself through the underside of his chin, killing himself instantly. I suppose I ought to be liberal and sympathetic to this poor unfortunate youth, but my honest reaction is to laugh hilariously and say it serves him right.

XXX A rather stiff form of unintentional self-discipline, though. If he hadn't lived in Rhode Island I'd have suspected him of being the same fellow who gave my Fiat Spyder its last tune-up. XXX

Unsigned letter postmarked Miami; probably DAVE JENRETTE

Miami, Florida

When I joined the service I became the absolute champion chug-a-lugger of my pre-cadet squadron at Waco, Texas, and in cadets at Ellington AFB in Houston. Similarly to Lamont Cranston I had learned the secret of clearing my throat so that beer could be poured straight down it with no swallowing needed. I could not do this the first time I tried it, but required 2-3 glasses to relax the muscles. We would also occasionally sit in a circle, each with a can of beer, and the last person to drink his, bend it, and throw it in the center bought the next round. That was before the days when beer cans were made of tin foil -- today's soft drinks are still in fairly tough cans; we even had a special grip and I used to have a half-dollar size callous on my palm from bending them (what else would it be from, smartass?). I learned later that one of my favorite people, H.L. Mencken also had that ability to relax his throat while drinking beer. At the time I did not believe I had any literary qualities.

A few years ago I had an Age of Aquarius party in which my neighbor and I blocked off our dead end street and invited 250 people to come get drunk with us. Since this property was about 6 acres of pine woods it lead to amusing/interesting results; since it was a BYOB party there were lots and lots of half-empty or 90% empty bottles left; I saved the good ones, but took all the cheap BYOB bottles and poured them together into a gallon jug that I used to use for darkroom chemicals. I then pasted a label, Dave's Dose, on it and took it to parties. Friends were curious and I invited all comers to share it with me -- few repeated the experience (I mean, that jug was full of scotches, whiskies, cheap gins and vodkas, some tequila, coffee liqueur, creme de menthe, and a little D-76) so my jug hardly ever diminished and since I offered my jug to them they offered their booze to me, rotgut like J&B, JD, etc. At the end of a party, the hosts, knowing that I saved booze, would pour the rotgut into my jug -- at one party I got a half bottle of rum made from Florida oranges. Needless to say, I usually only pretended to drink from this jug although I occasionally gargled with it, brushed my hand across my mouth, and said "smoooooth".

Unfortunately, at one party the jug got broken. It was probably at the limbo party where we didn't have a limbo stick, but one of the girls did a fantastic split across (or is that on) two guy's shoulders. It worked great but you had to hold your breath when you went under (that was before feminine deodorants became popular). Then again it might have been the New Year's Eve party on Hugo Wessels' house roof. He had a flat roof and we all went up a ladder to the roof -- then someone said that he had to leave and Hugo said "nobody leaves my parties" and he kicked the ladder over into some bushes behind the house; then the party got wilder and the natives complained, which brought the police, who demanded we come down. Hugo and the rest of us insisted we couldn't (true), but the police thought

there were steps inside so they broke the door down and dashed madly through the house. Then they came out and called for a ladder truck which got us safely to the ground with various spotlights and neighbors. Since Hugo moved to DC (he's in charge of UPI photographers there), there haven't been many parties like that...

XXX I'll refrain from generating a line about everyone at the party being high. XXX

RICK SNEARY

South Gate, California

Had you thought that #9 is the third with a sea creature motif? It was not quite as interesting as #8s, but at least I could leave it laying around, face up... You and Canfield forget that there are some of us readers that still live at home with easily shocked Mothers. Of course the reflex action to turn all science fiction magazines face down, that I acquired in the mid-40's, allows me to do this without much thought... Kids today, when everything seems to be permitted, don't know what it's like to pretend what you are reading is something else, or have to hide it all together, just to prevent a family dispute... As I've said elsewhere, I've been more carefull to hide my reading of a PLANET STORIES, than some kids are today about smoking pot. (We have no clinical reports on the relative effects on the brain.)

ERIC BENTCLIFFE

Holmes Chapel, England

Dave's piece on booze was pleasant and evoked a couple of memories in that I was partly responsible for his getting onto wine by being one of the people who got Ron Ellik drinking wine -- it was at a Liverpool Group party when he was over on TAFF, and we told him the Beajoli was a new kind of French Kool-Aid. (Err, the French call it Beaujolais, but us serious wine-drinkers don't spell so good.)

Dean brought a few memories to the surface as well. Him and his mention of Greeps -- crottled and otherwise. Little does he know (I suspect) the consternation that was caused throughout Northamptonshire during the year of our Lord 1954 as a result of his quote-cards. This was at the time when British fandom being rather naive (but quite enthusiastic with it...) was taking all the tall tales of wild orgies at American conventions as the gospel truth and were actually ruining their whole metabolisms acting it out. A true example of the 'Playboy Snyderome'; ie, if a market doesn't exist, pretend it does and eventually you'll get enough people convinced so they'll act like you write ... the porno-kings are trying it now, and the end result can only be a race of Super-Humans, or Shambling Wrecks... (Hi... you fellow shambling wrecks!) But I digress (I find it almost as easy as becoming a Shambling Wreck). During that anno domino '54 the first of the Kettering conventions was held, and Crottled Greeps were asked for in numerous restaurants in the region; where they weren't on the menu and they rarely were, they would be biro'd in by visiting disappointed fen for the next hungry mob to order. I'm quite sure that the local restaurateurs cleared all their left-overs by selling 'Crottled Greeps' to fen... And Grennell may even be responsible for the Green Splotches that later developed on maps of that county. If it hadn't been for the therapeutic effects inherent in copious draughts of BLOG which (happily?) also enhanced that convention I'm sure those fans wouldn't be around today. Eh, what's that, they aren't ... oh.

RICHARD BRANDT

Mobile, Alabama

Enjoyed mightily Dean Grennell's wordsmithing column, from the Jackie Franke illo on down. One of my own favorite words is "collop", which has a deliciously

unrespectable connotation, but is actually an old and somewhat absurd unit of measure; it's the amount of land required to graze a horse, or the grazing equivalent in sheep. Very hard to measure out a parcel, I should say, especially since one must find another way to determine how many sheep it takes to graze a horse under the table. While we're tackling the subject, my kid sister once wrote a Tolkein-esque tale for school in which she made up as many of the words as possible. Came up with a passage in which the hero was schlepping through the desert; broke her heart to find she wasn't the first, and we suggested that Schwepping through the desert would have evoked more substantial imagery...

I am still burnt up over the local news station's opening a news spot with a report on a 13 year-old girl who was thrown from her horse and to her death, with the victim's name prominent in the air play. Now, not only can this story have no conceivable interest (I mean, aside from the deceased's family, who I am sure are eager to see the details splashed on the screen), but the tactic of tagging a news spot with this bit to hook interest in the following news on Congressional investigations on oil interests and the CIA is, to coin a phrase, in what I call bad taste. Even if you argue over "censorship in the public interest", etc., I can't think twice about running a human interest story when the interest is in necrophilia. The station has also run from time-to-time film footage of childrens' bodies being fished from the waters off nearby Dauphin Island, which is shocking and unpleasant but also purposeful, since far too many people go swimming in the area's scantily posted and dangerous undertows; however, when the same station runs film footage of a child's flayed and greenish remains being lifted from an auto wreck, from which his parents survived with injuries (as well as an uninjured dog in the back seat, who got his picture on the air), one regrets the unpleasant taste in his mouth at dinnertime, even though the wreck occurred at an intersection known for accidents.

There was the competing station whose anchorman ran a brief report on a cult's prediction of a UFO landing during the Hattiesburg flap, and closed with "so come out to So-and-So at eight o'clock if you want to see the UFO." The place was packed that night with hundreds of cars, which doesn't say much for some of the people in this area (though not much ever does), whereas the announcer was not to be seen on the station after that.

MIKE GLICKSOHN

Toronto, Canada

The Canfield illo heading up your comments is as brilliant as the words that follow it. How often have I known the sense of quiet despair that overtakes one staring at a blank stencil, desperately trying to think of something to put on it. And when I've overcome that statutory waiting period, how often have the readers of fanzines wished I'd left it blank and undespoiled! (You've seen the latest Tojo flick? About the sculptor who grows to gigantic size and chisels Tokyo to destruction? It's called RODIN, of course.)

Articles such as Dave Hulan's are a delight for me, naturally. You know my inclinations in such matters (horizontal, for the most part). I ought to reply with similar sagas from my own dissolute past and present, but you clearly haven't room for such things in a mere twenty, thirty, or even forty pages.

What can one say about Dean Grennell that hasn't already been said, and said better? I hope he has to work hard at generating the delightful wordplay with which he fills IMHO because if he just sits down and writes it, I'd have to get annoyed at him. He makes it sound and look so easy! I sit here pulling and stretching my head, wracking my brains, and it all comes out like a woman who spends a week

in the delivery room: overly laboured. Whilst the puns and the plays on words fall lightly and unerringly from Dean's typewriter keys. The points he makes strike a resonant chord too. In a letter recently published in another fanzine, I commented on how I've found myself automatically reading off the initials of any capitalized company name I happen to read, in fiction or in fact, and I'm often brought up sharply if the result isn't a meaningful acronym. And I invariably read any alien-looking name backwards now, just because so many hack sf writers named their aliens that way. For example, had you observed that your own name, when written backwards, could be interpreted as "evade kcal", an obvious condemnation of your ruthless decimation of the letters in this issue...

People don't actually believe those letters to PENTHOUSE, do they? (No, just Bruce Arthurs...Oh, that's different...) My credibility gap became a veritable chasm with the fellow who masturbated by filling a Mason Jar with flies and inverting it over his penis so the insects would crawl over his organ and excite him to orgasm. His question as to the existence of others like himself so he could form a club was a little too much... Besides, I found they all drowned or suffocated after the first time, and what fun is that?

XXX I wonder if you would call that 'getting walked off'? That dude was just a sissy, though. All the guys in my neighborhood used mosquitoes. XXX

JACKIE FRANKE

Beecher, Illinois

After reading Dean's column I'm urged to ask: by adhering to the rather rigid rules he delineated, did Dean ever manage to concoct a four-letter word that was both pronounceable and not changed into a "regular word" by the alteration of one letter? I think and think and think, and simply couldn't come up with a single word. Got tripped up by one or the other of his ~~stupid~~ rules, and too often both. I have a hunch he set an impossible task there, but curiosity has gotten the best of me and I simply have to ask.

XXX Why ask Dean. If you want a new word, you've come to the right person. Of course I don't have any unabridged dictionaries to verify my findings, but three minutes with pencil and paper and pocket dictionary have turned up the word "jimk" which I hereby christen with the following definition: "the little confluent spots on a stencil." Now watch fifteen people, with large dictionaries, write in to tell me I didn't make it. XXX

I was pleased to see that Dean, later on in the lettercol, recognized the main cause of male baldness -- a genetic trait carried by the female and passed on to sons, much like hemophilia is spread. I mentally wince whenever someone sighs about their shiny pate and wonders how it could've happened since "Dear Dad still has a full head of hair and he's in his nineties!" It just doesn't matter whether Dear Dad has lost nought a hair, or has a dome as polished as a doorknob -- it's the Mother's brothers who should be eyed with suspicion. Of course, as with the gene that causes unchecked bleeding, male pattern baldness can miss an individual, despite it being present in the mother, since she has a "choice" of one out of two sets of genes to pass on. I would assume that if both maternal and paternal uncles and his father as well, were bald, there'd be No Hope for Dean, but apparently this is not the case. Not that being bald is all that horrible a fate to contemplate. Look at Yul Brynner and Telly Savalas for cases in point...

XXX Savalas shaves his head, and so does Brynner. This fact, I suppose, is irrelevant. And not even very interesting. However, both men look better, imho, with full growths of pate-covering. Hmm, my mom's brothers were both bald...XXX