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"Improve every opportunity to express yourself in writing, as if it were your last." -- Thoreau, Journal, 17 December 1851.

Whither thou go-goest, I will go.

Bryce Canyon

Science dissects to geologic time
the rosedrift orchard and the spiralled pain,
makes chart of beauty, hunts the hidden crime
of violet in the cliff, of genius in the brain;

fathoms the fracture where the lift is music,
measures for murder all this muted red --
structure of dream and labyrinth of lavender;
ticks off the hurt of heaven in the poet's head.

Science that hangs a net and catches wind,
wings reason from rain to calculate despair,
agelong and earthborn, and the grief of weather:
soulrift for a runnel's running in the red there

and the pink here as only a gash for a river
or rainwash in a gulch, can carve no canyons
such as the yellow earth gives and the wind yields,
or hollow a poem from these, or any stones.

-- Harold V. Witt

FAPA: Fandom's oldest continuing bull-session.

On the Town -- With Science Fiction

Imagine how we'd have flipped to read copy like this -- all from the San Francisco Examiner entertainment page for Saturday, 13 May 1967 -- twenty or thirty years ago!

"Wayne Manor, the Sunnyvale night club, has been transformed into an outer-space station. Joseph Lysowski, artist, was commissioned by owner Jow Lewis to create an imaginary way-station in space. Lysowski completely encircled the interior with an unbroken band of wild, luminescent 'Triptic Art.' 'Cosmo,' an astronaut sculptured of polyurethane foam, floats weightlessly above the dance floor. Celestial photography, Astro-Sound and Galactic Lighting combine with subliminal effects to simulate an interplanetary space experience."

And elsewhere -- the same paper, remember, same section, same day -- a writeup calculated to titillate the fag manque in fandom, twenty years ago, or today:

"Muscleman Ed Fury, Jeanie Dell, and John Romero, at the Club Hang-over, introduce something new in entertainment. The 'Cosmic Bodies' is an act about two astronauts who have been drifting in space for a million light years and have turned to stone; they are restored to life by being painted with the magic silver paint."

And goggle over the relentlessly fannish spelling in the ad, same paper, same section, same day, for the Peppermint Tree: "Amatuer topless nightly!"

"Das Lied von der Ardis"

It Happens to Everybody department

(from Asimov's "Portrait of the Writer as a Boy," F&SF, October 1966)

"...since I typed several hours each day, I soon got the hang of it. My typing became first legible and then speedy. Eventually, I could crank a hand-typewriter at 70 words a minute and now that I have an electric typewriter I recently timed byself at 90 words a minute."

Of course at taht speed one maks a f4w errorx.

Leej: The Man Who Was Thirsty.

After the Fall

"Kids risk dangers that grownups are too timid to dare," Bill Blackbeard remarked. We were sipping instant Yuban and staring moodily out of the window at 192 Mountain View into the afternoon where Los Angeles rumbled and pulsed under its glassy dome of smog. He pointed at

three youngsters, eight or nine years old, racing along the top of the retaining wall, a good 15 feet above the pavement, across the street from his apartment. "Look at those kids! They must be watched over by a special angel."

"The angel nods sometimes," I said. And instantly my mind cast back 30 years and more and brought to consciousness the recollection of an incident I hadn't thought of in nearly three decades.

Three decades. Sometimes I feel like an Archaeopteryx. When I was a boy, none of us had heard of the Halloween custom of "trick or treat," and had any mealymouthed teacher or clergyman tried to foist the custom on us we would have scorned it as a milk-and-water substitute for honest violence against property and active malice toward householders who had treated us badly. Today, only three decades later, "trick or treat" is almost as firmly established in America as Guy Fawkes fires are in England on the Fifth of November.

Till I moved to California five years ago I had never heard of "skip day" for high school seniors. I had to consult with a California native to recall the correct term for this custom, perhaps also called "ditch day" -- though, for all I know, it may be common by now back in my native Minnesota. We never observed such a tradition when I was a high school student, but that was a long time ago.

The nearest thing to "skip day" that I remember from my school days was "hobo day," traditionally a Friday in May, on one of the last weeks of classes. On that day everybody came to class wearing elaborate parodies of the patched and delapidated clothes of the hobo. It was surely ironic that such a custom existed in those depression times, when our everyday clothes were often shabby and much repaired.

On the other hand I was fortunately too late to experience "recitation day," such as it is described in The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and is recollected by my mother from her school days (many years after the time of Tom Sawyer). But I was right in season to enjoy an even happier custom which may, or may not, still exist in some parts of the country even today: the custom of "picnic day." On that day, during my grammar school years, each student came to school bearing a box or sackful of picnic lunch and a bottle or two of Orange Crush and, instead of holding class that day, we all -- teachers and pupils alike -- streamed away from the schoolgrounds, down the street to the park, for a day of softball, hide-and-seek, and mumblepeg. Picnic day was always the last day of classes in the spring -- or really the next-to-last day, although you merely appeared to pick up your report card on the very last day. Maybe it was the prototype of "skip day," even if it was confined to the grade school pupils and our excursions were hardly like Disneyland trips.

I remember the picnic day that I believe must have ended my third year of school back in Breckenridge, Minnesota (population 3000). The picnic was held in Island park, which wasn't an island at all, but only a pleasant sylvan area nearly circumscribed by two rivers, the Otter-tail and the Bois de Sioux, that flowed together there to form the Red River of the North. The park was used at the end of each summer for the county fair, and contained various buildings for housing displays of

homecraft and agricultural products, as well as a small racetrack and a grandstand. I suppose it still exists, almost unchanged.

During the school picnic, some of us began to run up and down the stairs of the grandstand and then, like a swarm of monkeys, to clamber along the ledges in back and up and down the supports for the roof. Our teacher, Miss Tweeton, came around once or twice and sternly admonished us not to do such things or somebody would get hurt. But of course as soon as she hurried away to shoo other schoolchildren back from the bank of the river, we went right back to our sport.

I was climbing along a narrow ledge in the rear of the grandstand when I slipped and fell. I had only a horrified moment to realize what had happened before I landed on the hard ground, perhaps 20 feet below, with a jar that loosened my teeth and splintered 117 separate bones in my scrawny nine-year-old carcass. Or so it felt, at any rate.

My classmates scurried around my dazed and recumbent form, more awed than concerned about the accident. Finally somebody helped me to a seat on the soft grass a short distance away. Somebody else said they'd better run off and get the teacher.

"No!" I gasped. "I'm all right. I'm not hurt. If you call the teacher, she'll just bawl us out for climbing up there where she said we shouldn't. Let me alone. I'm all right, I tell you."

"Are you sure you're all right?" a schoolmate said suspiciously.

"I just got the wind knocked out of me is all," I said defensively, in as strong a voice as I could muster. "Let me rest a little while and I'll be OK again."

I wasn't bleeding, there wasn't any compound fractures to goggle at, and no other visible damage, so at last everybody else went away, and I lay back in the grass, sweaty and pale from shock. After a while I began to feel a little better, but when I tried to move I found I could hardly walk.

I was lucky in two respects. First, the afternoon was nearly done, and the picnic was nearly over. Second, my brother Jerry was at the picnic too, and he had brought his coaster wagon along. He came looking for me, and I prevailed upon him to pull me home in the wagon. He did so, realizing that I was more badly hurt than I had let on.

When Miss Tweeton led our class from the park in a straggling bunch I was sitting in the wagon while my smaller brother tugged me manfully along. It was no easy job, but I was suffering too. As we passed along the path behind the American Legion pavilion another lucky thing happened. The right wheels of the wagon ran high enough up on the bank to overbalance the burden and overturn the wagon, dumping me out heavily.

I climbed back in, choking back groans. The teacher was walking nearby and realized something was wrong. "Are you hurt?" she asked.

"A little bit," I said. "But I'll be all right."

She regarded me suspiciously, but since the fall from the wagon hadn't looked very damaging, she soon forgot the matter. We went on, and I arrived home somehow or other -- practically an ambulance case, being conveyed in a child's coaster wagon. My mother took one look at me and urged me to go to bed at once. I crawled gratefully into bed and huddled up, sick with shock, and feeling like one large lump of pain. I was about all used up.

"What on earth happened?" Mother asked. "Are you hurt?"

"Maybe a little," I admitted. "I fell out of the wagon."

The next morning I was still feeling so bad that my mother refused to let me go to school to pick up my report card. She said she herself would drop around and get it, and she did.

"Miss Tweeton can't understand what's wrong," Mother told me later. "She saw you fall out of the wagon, and didn't think you could possibly have gotten hurt."

It was curious that nobody had told the teacher about my great fall -- half the class had seen the accident or observed me lying on the ground immediately afterward. And from shame or chagrin, afraid of receiving a lecture about venturing to dangerous heights, I never told my parents what had happened. I haven't told them even to this day.

I spent the next several days concealing the extent of my agony and insisting stoically that I had merely wrenched my leg a bit in the fall from the coaster wagon. Looking back now, I realize that I should have had a doctor's care; instead, I pretended I was just a little hurt. With the resilience of youth, I recovered within a week and soon forgot the matter. But now I wonder if whether occasional pains I felt in later years in my back or leg might not have been caused by the injuries I sustained that day at the picnic and refused to admit I had. In boyhood the fear of a terrible scolding is more fearsome than the pain that comes after a 20-foot fall. Maybe angels protect kids, after all.

There's a BEM in my soup!

Human Excrement? Why, That's -- !

(from the Minneapolis Star, 25 February 1966).

"A 20-year-old Big Lake youth was being held in Hennepin county jail under \$10,000 bond today on a charge that he dumped two buckets of human excrement into the files of the Sherburne county draft board at Elk River.

"Held is Barry Bondhus, who was arrested by FBI agents on Thursday night at his home. He is one of 12 children of Thomas Bondhus, 43, who operates machine shops at Big Lake, Monticello, and Orrock in Sherburne county. Sidney Abramson, assistant U. S. district attorney, said the youth would be given a hearing today before U. S. Commissioner Bernard Zimpfer in Minneapolis federal court.

"The arrest of the youth apparently climaxed a series of difficulties he and his father have had with the draft board. The elder Bondhus said he has told the board repeatedly that he is opposed to any of his sons serving in the armed forces. Barry is the second oldest of ten Bondhus boys.

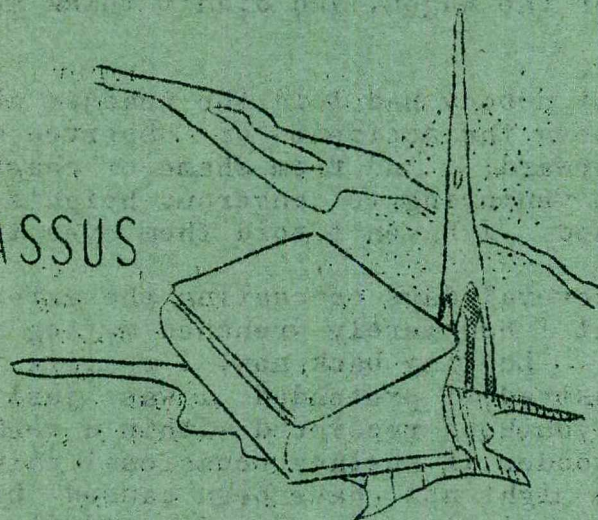
"After a board hearing (February 15) the youth was classified 1-A and ordered to take a pre-induction physical examination in Minneapolis. The FBI said the youth refused to co-operate.

"Wednesday, the complaint charges, young Bondhus walked into the board's office and dumped the substance into six draft board file cases. His draft board status is still pending."

She's got a fond itch for Don Fitch.

PARNASSUS

ON JETS



Books by Friends and Foes

(1) The Apotheosis of Piffle

One of the culturally deprived, I was hardly aware of "The Man from UNCLE" at all till I read Ted Johnstone's book* recently. I knew only that it was a TV program and was supposed to be a very funny parody, perhaps even a satire, of the James Bond adventures. Dick Ellington once remarked that he judges everybody to some extent on their response to the query, "What do you think of 'The Man from UNCLE'?" and I hate to imagine what he must think of me. He gave me my only opportunity to see an episode of "UNCLE" and I went sound asleep on his sofa, sitting bolt upright, in seven minutes flat. I offer the excuse that I was bone weary from a long drive up from Los Angeles that day, but unfortunately the only recollection I preserve from the experience is one of sleepy amaze that people presumably laugh themselves silly over one of those

* The Man from UNCLE #4: The Dagger Affair. By David McDaniel.
New York: Ace Books, 1965.

you!"), the futuristic weaponry, the lordly authority and autonomy. It is almost as good as becoming a member of Hitler's Gestapo or even the

The Esthetically and Scientifically Naive Critic Department

(from The SF Critic #4, published by Andrew Porter)

"Code Three, by Rick Raphael, Berkley Books, 1967. 60¢.

Based on the stories first published in ANALOG, this is the highly engrossing and scientifically accurate story of the Highway Police of the Future...."

At last we can call fuggheads fuckheads.

Figs and Thistles

Disquieting report: That the New York fans who traveled to California for last year's Westercon and such events were festooned with "Win in Vietnam" (!) buttons and their car -- the rented one, I wonder? -- had a "Support Your Local Police" (!!) bumper sticker. Various fans who saw them (I didn't see them) were incredulous and amused. Are the New Yorkers these days so naive? # Speaking of the latter slogan, Castlemont High school in Oakland had a poster contest on the theme and one inspired teenage cartoonist came up with a drawing of a little old lady helping a drunken cop across the street. Support Your Local Police. This news brightened my whole day, I tell you. # So did a story about some Oaklander who was being a kind father to his girl-child. He drove ten miles across town to a Baskin-Robbins place where she would have her choice of 31 flavors of ice cream. What kind did she choose, after all that? Vanilla, of course. # Hand-lettered notice on the bulletin board of a Berkeley laundromat: "Chilean person offers his services for cleaning yard in your home." OK, but won't your garden rake be a little rough on the carpet? # What's the difference between a buoy that marks the rocks off Point Pinos at the entrance to Monterey bay and a man who is professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley? Well, the one is a shore marker and the other is Mark Schorer.

"There's nogutsch like an Ogutsch." -- Bob Gaines

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Coming next issue: A microcosm-shaking announcement.
