

first week of Nov, 1959

Well, it's morning, more or less, and after my breakfast of cinnamon doughnut and coffee, I feel up to starting my usual fight with Al Lewis' typer. And it looks as if I've lost, already....

This beast is older than I am, and weighs almost as much as I do. It sits heavily on the desk, fighting back at my pressure on the keys, finally condescending to allow one or two ponderous keys to rise from the depths of dark machinery and crash into the stencil. More often, it saves up strokes until a whole word has been typed, and then a massive tangle of keys and other mysteries stagger up in a race toward the stencil. It makes typing a sheer adventure.

We have a Vari-typer on hand, but have not yet tamed it, and so most of our stencils are still typed on this old Underwood or Ernie Wheatley's portable. The portable is fine, except when you type too fast, and then it skips merrily across the table and onto the floor, if you're not careful.

Little things like this keep faneds happy and healthy.

Maybe I ought to have some clam chowder for breakfast and wake up before finishing this; you will have nothing but ramblings to read, if I don't.

All I've got is Manhattan clam chowder, tho; and I would prefer New England style. That is what comes of letting the Mountain Movers do the shopping.

Guess I'll just have another cup of coffee while I read the ^{OMPA}OO and find out the rules of the game. (I say, is it cricket to use a monogramed tiddley?)

Sorry, even my third cup of coffee has failed to bring me to my usual glorious wit and good humor this morning; you shall have to do with rambling.

I do like coffee to start a day off, and tea when I have the time (or need the time) to enjoy it. Dark, rich tea; not pale, green stuff.

I hate breakfast. I simply can't stand getting up and eating something first thing. I have to wander around a bit, grouse and grumble about starting days in the morning, and have a cup of coffee before even considering the idea of eating. Then I consider it thru the second cup of coffee, and one or two chapters of a book. Finally, I wander into the kitchen, feed the cats who have wanted breakfast since last night, and find something to eat.

I have a package of some sort of "instant" hot cereal, and several "dry" cereals in the cupboard. The cats love them. I hate cereal of all kinds, tho I will eat it if I have to.

Usually, I heat some canned soup, or fix a small salad, or eat an avocado. Often I toast an English muffin, and have another cup of coffee. This will hold me until someone reminds me to eat again.

After breakfast, I start the days activities, usually by trying to answer at least one or two of the stack of letters I owe. Then, if my job schedule is for later that day, I set up the paints and do a bit of artwork before going to work.

I have only one problem there; I keep washing my brushes out

in my coffee. Makes it taste odd. This is a strange habit I have not been able to break. It doesn't matter where I put the coffee, I will reach over the water jar to wash my brush in the cup. It's cold by that time, anyway, for I leave cups of coffee around the house like some smokers leave lighted cigarettes.

My new job is answering the telephone for young TV and movie personalities who want to keep their home phone number a secret. This saves them time and patience when avid fans and would-be suitors (of both sexes) insist on calling at all hours. I sit in a tidy little office, answering a push-button phone (not a PBX switchboard) and taking messages. When the client wants his/her messages, they call us for them. If it's call from a casting company or their agent or a studio, we call them right away.

The job is fun, and interesting. When I go to work in the mornings, I wake up folks ("Good morning, this is your answering service, it's 8 o'clock") who were up late last night and who have learned to ignore the alarm clock. One guy I have learned to ring again after about 10 minutes, for I know he's gone back to sleep.

The only really big name we have on our board is Irish McCulla, the six-foot tall, stacked blonde who used to be Sheena of the Jungle on TV. She has a voice like warm honey poured over black velvet. It runs little shivers down my back; men must go crazy when that voice whispers in their ear! A very nice woman, really, and polite to me.

This is not always true with all the folks on the board. Some of the men are real jerks. One of them got tough with me the other day, and was quite surprised when the quiet-voiced girl he'd been shouting at suddenly whipped into a drill-sargeant tone of voice and told him in no uncertain terms just where to get off.

He said that he'd have my job for insolence, and I said go ahead and try it; for if the company that they'd bought my soul for the price they were paying me, I wanted to know right away. There was quite a skirmish, because I told him that he was being impolite and ungentlemanly and no one with any upbringing would pick on a defenceless girl who was only doing what she was told to do by her boss. He had been trying to get around one of the rules of the office by getting tough.

Finally he shouted at me once too often, and I said, "Sir, I wouldn't treat a dog or a cat the way you are trying to treat me!" And he shouted, "I don't think you'd know how to treat a dog or cat!" So I said, "Sir, I know you wouldn't know how to treat anything alive!" And he got a bit incoherent about this time. The boss said I was right in

I left spaces all thru this letter! My mind is still tuned to typing fanzines, not letters. I used to illu my letters - so - why not?



"WHERE'S
TH' COFFEE?"

not giving out information about our clients. We don't tell anyone anything about the people on the board, unless we have been given specific instructions to do so. ("If Central Casting calls, tell them that I'll be available tomorrow.")

It's a hectic business, this TV stuff. For one thing, the shooting schedules are so rushed, and so many of the shows are on film today, that a person with a good job today will need another job tomorrow. They have to worry about where that job is coming from, all the while they are on the set of their present show. They film lots of shows "back-to-back", which means that they are filming two or more at the same time, under two different directors.

But the feeling of power when you put in a call to a studio is quite a kick. Say you have a call for a Marci Powers to report to her agent right away. He knows where she is, but he has other clients to contact, and so gives the job to us. I look on her card to see if she has called in to tell us where she is today. She told us last night that she would be on the Hotel de Paris set at MGM. I phone MGM, getting the switchboard there. All I say is, "Please connect me with the Hotel de Paris location, lot 15." The girl does so, and I ask whoever answers the phone to call Marci Powers, or give her the message that her answering service wants to talk to her. We never give the personal message to anyone but the client. If anyone challenges my right to phone directly to the lot, I simply say that I am an answering service and that it is important. Everyone knows that it is a job call, and they put me thru. Fun!

In the late afternoon, when the usual work-day is over, we are likely to get calls like this; "Central casting, have Troy Donahue call us before 9:30 tonite" and they hang up without even finding out if you got the message. When 16 of those calls come in as fast as you can punch buttons and write, then you have put in a real work-day, yourself! Being busy, and having loads of people to call, they often make mistakes and phone the wrong answering service.

This happened the other day, and we got a call for a Bryon Rafeal. There was no name on our board, but they'd hung up before I could say so. I wondered what to do, but was so busy taking other casting calls, and the personal calls of the people calling each other for dates and rehearsal appointments, that I set it aside for a moment.

Then in comes a call for one of our folks. "Just tell her that Byron Rafeal called," he said, and I yelled "Wait! I have a message for you!" "From her?" "No, from Hollywood Casting, they want you to report to them before 10:30 tomorrow morning." "Thank you," he said in a puzzled voice, and hung up.

Wonder if he got the job?

*I'm not as good as
Cotter is at writing of
my everyday adventures,
but would like to
know if you want
to hear/read more.
This particular letter
is because I'm
desperate!*

I'm getting a small reputation for getting things done, tho. It has been a complaint of some of the clients that there wasn't enuff "follow-thru" with the important messages. The company just changed hands, and we have all been given pep-talks on getting those job calls to the client, no matter what!

So, late one afternoon, Phil phones in for his messages. There were a couple from his girlfriend, but nothing else. He seemed disappointed, but said that he'd be working late on the Hotel de Paris set, for they were doing some night shooting. Less than 15 minutes later, Independent Casting calls and wants Phil to contact them before 8 the next morning for the new Rawhide schedule.

I phone MGM just before the switchboard goes off regular duty, and ask her to ring the set. She says that they aren't working on the set, but in the back lot. I ask her to ring the set, anyway. She does, and we get an answer. Seems a passing electrician heard the phone, and answered the thing. Thank ghod for people who can't ignore a ringing phone! I asked him to deliver the message that Phil's phone

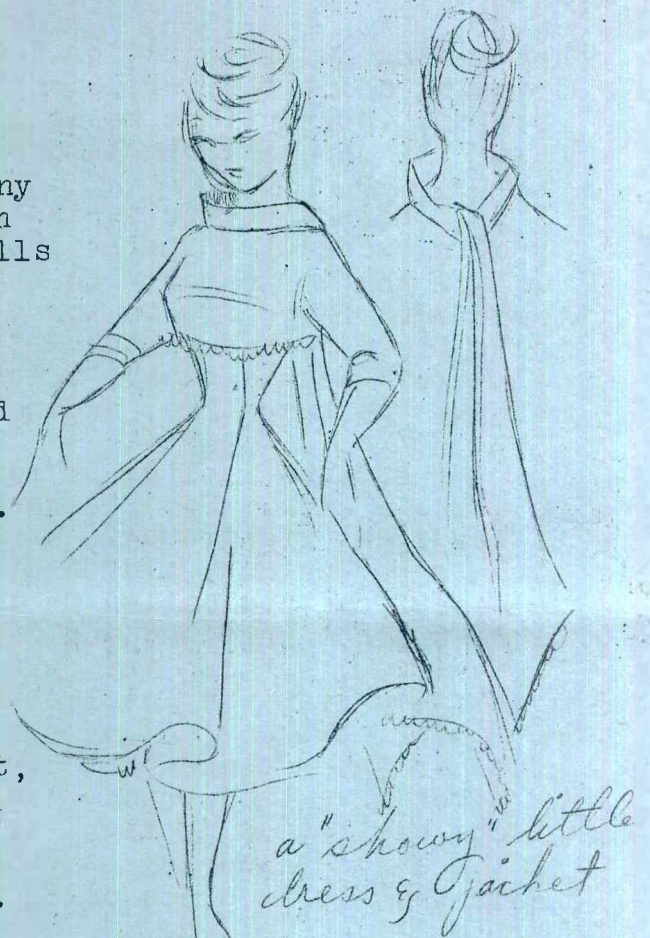
service wanted to talk to him immediately. He said that the whole crew was 'way out in the back lot, and it was about two or three lots away (these "lots" measure anywhere from one acre to five or six) and that he wasn't going that way, that he'd only been there because he was supposed to pick up some wire....I put on my nicest voice and asked him to please do this for a very nice guy who would have a job tomorrow if he did. He grumbled that it was a long walk over there. I said please. He said that he'd just have to walk back, too. I said that I would be very grateful to a friendly person who would do a favor for a total stranger, just in kindness. He said well, and I added that only really noble men went out of their way to do nice things for others. He said o.k., o.k. lady, and hung up.

My co-worker looked at me very oddly for a moment, then went back to her work.

About half an hour later, Phil called in. "The strangest thing just happened," he said, "an electrician who doesn't even work on the set came up to me and said to phone my cotton-pickin' answering service, and he hoped I got the job." I gave the message, and he got the job.

So far, I have been invited over to listen to a hi-fi stereo set-up that the guy made himself, asked if I drank dry martinis (I don't) and if I have a car.

The last by a young engineer who doesn't have a car because he just spent his last \$1,368.49 on a bit of gear



THAT has some electronic value or other. He says he never dates girls who don't have cars, and until I'm insured to drive mine, I'm also disqualified. I say that it breaks my heart, but c'est la vie.

So that is my job. I work all sorts of hours, but draw the line at the midnite to 8 a.m. shift. I don't always work a full 8 hours, either. But I'm usually so frazzled at the end of a workshift that I am not up to much fanac. Which explains in part this bit.

It's not a very well-paid job, but I only sit, talk, and write messages. Easy for one who can't do anything strenuous.

What has happened since I last wrote; or in the case of some, since I last saw you? I'd like to hear from you guys.

Well, as some of you know, I lost the last round with the Dr, and am now wearing a flexible (but not much) plastic cervical collar. It is neatly trimmed with leather-covered foam rubber to keep the edges from biting into my jaw bone and collar-bone. Everyone seems to think I've broken my neck or something, and I alarm folks by unsnapping the thing when I eat or drink. (Just try drinking hot coffee with your chin tilted very high; you'll make it if you're part bird, but it's not pleasant)

The thing is, I simply wasn't improving from the accident. Not at all. The Dr was very upset about it and told me to wear this thing at least for several hours a day. So, I wear it to work, and when I'm not doing artwork around the house. It's terrible if you sneeze, tho.

You can't choke or strangle in the thing because it never really touches the neck; it's supposed to do the job of being a neck while the real one rests. But I get claustrophobia after two or three hours and have to take it off for a moment. It does help, tho I hate to say it. The neck muscles are more relaxed and all than they have been in months. If I improve, I may get to take it off in a couple of weeks. Goodie! Now all we have to do is get rid of the headaches and the dreams, and I'll be as nood as goo again.

The collar slows me down, and between it and the job, I find that too much fanac and personal contact has gone by the board.

But one must pay the rent, feed the cats, and buy postage for the apazines, musn't one? Wonder what it would feel like to be normal? Bet I wouldn't like it.



I took it off to wear a unicorn costume to the LASFS halloween party - won "sexiest" prize, too. The emerald green leotard & tights did it. Won a set of steak knives - rather have a good sf book!

I have a car, now. It's my aunt's 46 Ford. Beautiful condition, and always well-treated, I know. I've been on most of the trips that old car has taken for the past 7 or 8 years. When I heard that Uncle Sodi was buying Myrt a new Falcon (car, not bird, as I first thot), I asked if he'd sell the old Ford. He would and did and here I am! It snorts up the hill like an old dragon, and charges down the free-way like a waltzing elephant; but it's got a suprising pickup and sound motor, so I've no complaint. It's big as a house, but drives real easy, and is better than an MTA bus any day!

Last week, we went over to the Burbee's for dinner. Ernie, Steve, Billern, John Trimble and I sat and drank home brew and talked and felt that life was good.

Somehow, that feeling always pervades a gathering at Burbee's.

Soon, Isabel decided that we needed a Little Something to tide us over til dinner. She brought out some crackers, Swiss, sharp cheddar, bleu and some Guda cheese. Also some jars of soft cheese spread and a fat jar of tiny Japanese smoked clams. Burbee refilled the beer mugs, and had a salami-and-crackers snack because he doesn't care for cheese.

The talk ranged from sf and fan-pubbing to sex, drinking, fans, sex, people, drinking, cheeses, piano rolls, sex, drinking, and fans. Burbee again complained that he had done his best to make a BNF of me, but if I didn't take notes on the deathless words that fell from his lips, how could I ever succeed in this fannish life I had chosen?

Steve expressed a desire to see Maverick on TV, and Burbee decided that as a good host, he could not very well let his guest sit all alone in the living room watching an interesting western. Johnny Burbee promised to remind Steve when it was time to turn on the set. Then Johnny left with some of his friends, to go over to someoned's house to hear records or something like.

We drank more beer, cleaned up the last of the cheese and crackers, and talked on. Isabel is a good talker, too, and has her own following of fans who admire her outspoken ways and the color of her chili sauce.

There was a phone call for Steve; it was Johnny, reminding him to turn on the TV set.

Isabel put the dumplings in the chicken broth, and the group divided with some of us going in to see Maverick. By the time the show was over, everyone had mysteriously managed to overlook all that cheese, and they were hungry again!

We sat down to a dinner of stewed chicken, parsley dumplings, green peas, hot rolls, summer squash, and other wondrous goodies.

When we left that night, after reluctantly tearing ourselves away, I carried a jar of rich chicken broth and a pan of chicken.

I think I owe Isabel about 15 jars, now, for I've never left that house without taking something, that I can recall. And she sent me some chili beans and spanish rice last winter when I had bronchitis and didn't want to eat anything else. Wonder what I could return in the jars that would half return the joy I carried home?

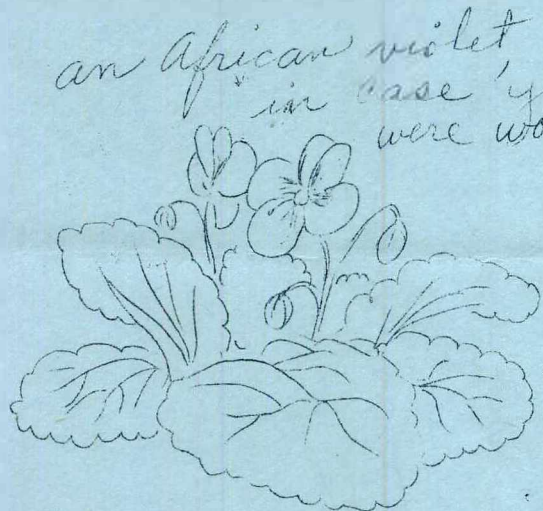
My mother came down from Sacramento to visit me for two days. She had a TV show to do in Bakersfield, and figured that as long as she was only 150 miles away, that she'd come down and see my new apartment.

Mom is a national African Violet judge and is in demand, it seems, because she can talk well about something she is enthusiastic about. She visits clubs devoted to the little potted plants and gives talks on raising the things and getting "show" plants, and how to get rid of nematodes, and like that there. She has a greenhouse (built by mom, Bill and Jim Beam) full of African Violets, and loves every one of them.

I think mom has a pact with the devil, because she looks younger everytime I see her. I know she's 43, but she looks about 30. This is bad for her, because I'm 26, and say so!

They say that a young man should look at a girl's mother to tell how the girl might look at that age; if true, I have no worries.

We visited the African Violet expert in L.A., and I sketched flowers while they talked flowers. I am designing notepaper and informal stationery for African Violet groups. Figure to run off everything on the Gestetner. We tried one design and got a very favorable response. If I can sell the design, maybe I will have a handy bit of cash for, like, a trip to Europe, or something else I'd need mad money for.

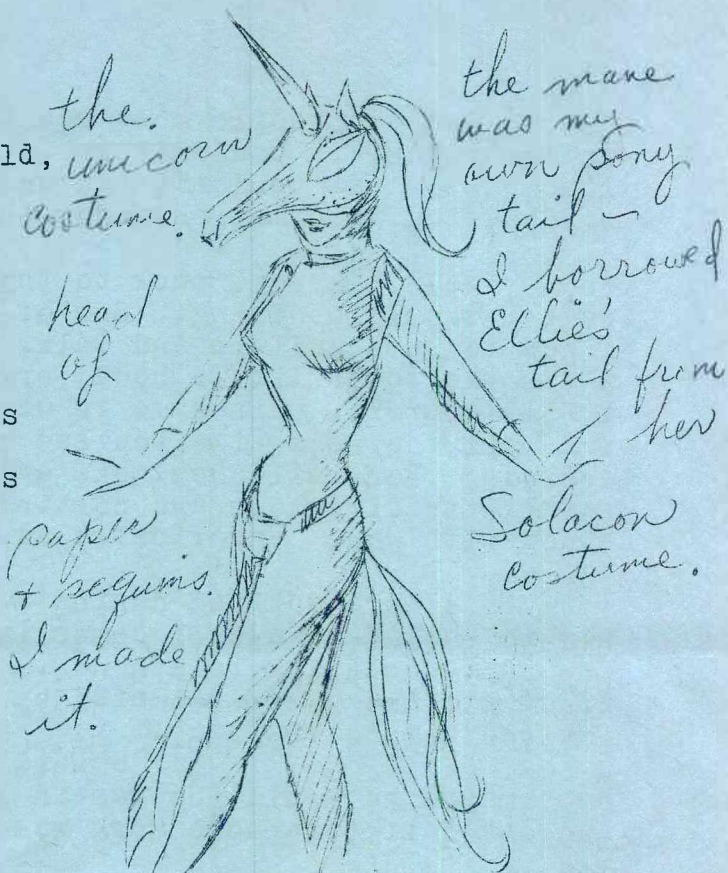


I still have Fritz Leiber's cats in my care; they certainly are lovable little pests. Fanny-puss has a mad crush on our mailman. She follows him around when he's delivering to the apartments, and meows plaintively as he goes on up the hill.

Fritz writes that he will be home about Nov 15, (hooray!) And that the Buck Rogers comic strip he has been writing is finished and will appear around Dec 20 or so. Look for Characters Burr, Piper, Grandolf and Kirstan. Fifteen week episode that he refers to as Buck Rogers and His Electric Planet.

William Rotsler's name is mentioned here as a matter of policy.

info for Janac - except his joke - perhaps would love the "publicity".



Now you people must see that when I get started talking, I go on for pages! I couldn't write individual letters to all of you like this. And wouldn't you be sorry to miss any of this fabulous, fascinating information about the Secret Lives of Bjo?

Well, anyway, back to the old drawing board, which is exactly what I should be doing. One of the guys on the board where I work likes to just call in and talk. He's very nice, tho he usually plays the tough little hood, or the tough little marine or the tough little cowpoke. His name is Gene Collins, and all you guys write in fan mail the next time you see him on TV. (Watch for a Rawhide episode) Fan mail does make a difference, you know, and the name will stick with directors and casting agents longer if they know it has stuck with you. Unsolicited ad for Gene Collins; and here's why.

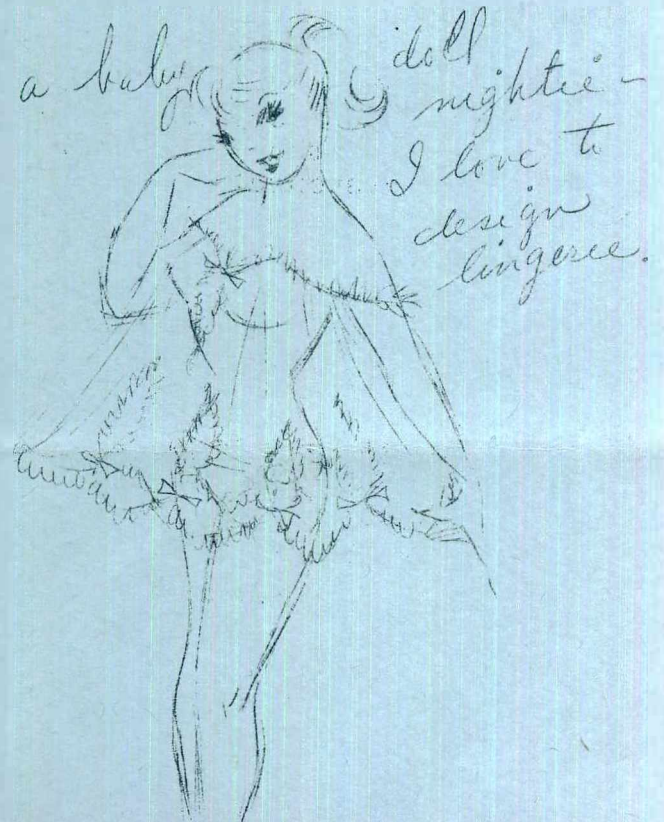
We were yakking during a lull on the board (I always switch him to "hold" if a call comes in) and he asked me what I did when I wasn't answering telephones. I told him a bit of it. Seems he likes sf, and was fascinated by the idea of a club in L.A., so I invited him to visit us.

He said that as soon as he finished this job, maybe he would (he was in one or two episodes of Dobie Gillis) and asked if telephone work was my life's ambition.

I told him of my artwork and love of costume design. And of the impossibilities of showing my stuff to anyone in the studios. He asked if I'd tried the TV studios yet. I hadn't, but figured they'd be as closed as the film folk. He agreed, but said the guy who ran costuming at NBC was a school buddy of his and would I like to meet him and show him some art? Well, I've heard that old story so many times, but I said yes, and waited for the slow curve; "well, why don't I get him over to my place, and you come over and...." And, of course, the friend just couldn't make it at the last minute, but as long as we two are here....

Instead, Gene hung up and I went on with my work. An hour later, he phoned back. Could I have a portfolio ready in a week? He would take me over to NBC and introduce me to his friend. Well!

So now, I am painting up a storm of costumes and ordinary dress to show the man. With the color photos of the fashion show, and some b&w photos of some of my own clothes that I have designed.....well, keep your pseudopods crossed! I won't believe in it until happens, but I mildly hope.



Ann Chamerlain just called to say that she'd bought a ceramic Kwon Yin and painted it with that stuff they use on plaster figurines. She does a fine job on the figurines, too. I have a sexy little mermaid and two water babies that will hang on my bathroom wall as soon as the second coat of paint is on. Saw the same set, all goodied up with fake jewels and sequins, in a gift shop for a silly price. I like Ann's work much better.

She seems to be getting good response to her rubber stamps, too.

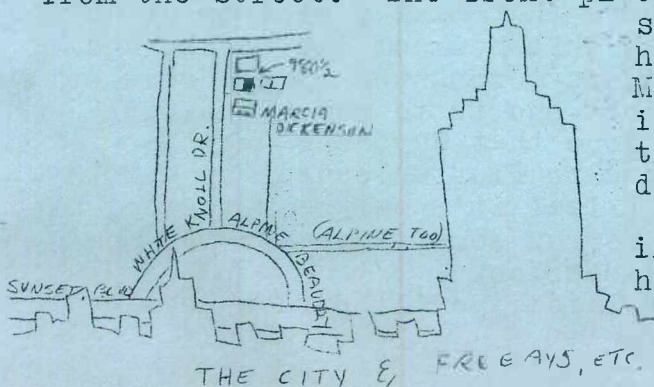
They are fun to use, and we have ordered all sorts of crazy stamps. Most of them make no sense, of course.

The new apartment looks out over the civic center, and I can watch the smog come in over city hall. We don't have smog on the hill, tho it's not because it could not make the climb, as Ted Johnstone suggested. There is a little breeze up here all the time, and the smog never bothers us. Sometimes, the whole city is covered, and we look down on a dirty layer of nothingness, with the city hall sticking up out of it. Several visitors have made quite unprintable comments about that scene.

I have R*O*O*M! A big kitchen (with horrid wallpaper), a bedroom, hall with cupboards, bathroom, living room and dining room (my "studio") with all kinds of glorious light. Also, a dirt cellar in which I hope to set up my kiln soon, and a garage which I'll never be able to use because only a Volkswagon could fit!

Neighbors I have, and interesting ones. The apartments are really duplexes, and I live in the second one from the street. The front place has a lady author and editor of some little California magazine. She has a silver-grey striped cat named Mary (??) and a piano. Luckily, Jean is a very good pianist, for she likes the midnite hours in which to play. I don't mind, so we are friends.

The folks in the next duplex are the Testani's, he's Italian, she's Japanese-Hawaiian.



THE CITY & FREEAYS, ETC.

The Testanis have the cutest 8-year old boy I've ever seen. He's got black hair and bright button eyes, and is very quiet for a little boy. The only noise I've heard from him was when he and his father were playing a sneaking-up game with water pistols, along the walk. They are very quiet, gentle folk. Mr. Testani walks all the way around the apartments if they come home late in the evening. I wonder what incident makes him so cautious about prowlers, now?

It's very comforting to me, too, so I have no complaints about it.

The folks next to the Testanis are the ones I have never met. He is 25 years older than his wife, and is now 67. The woman is a nice-looking blonde, but is convinced that I'm living in sin with all these guys around and hasn't been interested enough to meet me in person. I think I could guess her problem, but I'll be darned if I'll loan her a mountain-mover to help her out. One of them will just have to volunteer for this job! (Ernie, come back here!)

These folks also hate Japs, Wops, Chinks, Frogs, etc. I don't know if the man knows the other nationalities by their real names. They hit the roof when the Testanis moved in, but the landlady said they could shut up or move. They shut up, at least around her.

Above us is a big house that has been divided into apartments. It's full of Italian and Meditterrean (where's that dictionary?) type folk. They are all happy, hearty, friendly and clean. I don't know what else you could ask of a neighbor. Some days the scent wafting from the kitchens is enough to drive you crazy! One of these days, I'll succumb to the temptation, and, fork and plate in hand, casually drop by for a visit!

Their kids and cats are clean, tho a bit noisy. Who cares? They didn't offer one complaint when we threw an all-night pubbing session. And when it's the only thing going, that Gestetner is noisy.

The people in the apartment below us are nice, but she's going to school in the daytime and he goes at night. We seldom see them. The Dickensons, who share that duplex, have two children; Adrian and Dorian (both girls.) Adrian looks like the Gerber baby, all fat cheeks and round eyes. Marcia Dickenson and I are coffee-buddies, and friends who don't find me home when they think they should, go to the house below my apartment to see if I'm there.

We have lots of Italians in the neighborhood; a few Mexican families, and some Hawaiian folk. I feel undressed in my white skin and freckles with all these lovely dark tans around me. ***sigh*** But all the teen-agers wear nice clothes, and drive cars that make a minimum of noise. No dirty jeans and leather jackets in this neck of the woods, and that's a nice sign. The cute teen-agers across the street came out in their fresh cotton blouses and short-shorts to watch the guys help me move in. I didn't get much done that day, because the mountain movers didn't want to get the trailer unloaded too quickly.

After looking over the boys, I feel it's only a matter of time before a cute teen-ager shows up to borrow some flour for her mom's baking, while we are having a Shaggy session.

(Spindrift just came in to be loved; you'll pardon me...)

Boy! What sneaky cat; he waited until I went for some more coffee and stole my pillow. He doesn't want to share it, either. Luckily, I have right and justice on my side; also, I'm bigger than he is.

Well, besides attending to business, wearing collars, and meeting neighbors, I've started a sort of project that I hadn't really intended to start for several months yet. I didn't have much choice, it seems. All I did was suggest the it is a good idea, and everyone leaped up with such enthusiasm that the project simply swept out of my hands. This is a hard thing for such as I to admit; but I've been left behind!

The Fellowship of the Ring was not a new idea to anyone but me, of course. Lots of folks have suggested that something be done on the order of the Baker Street Irregulars. So I said, well, why not? And everyone said, why not now? and There We Are!

So, with a view in mind to a real study of fantasy and fantasy worlds, and the perpetration of same, the Fellowship of the Ring is forming now. Interested parties can contact me, and find out more details just as soon as I have them.

We have hopes of publishing a literary magazine with studies of fantasy and different author's basis for their particular themes. And other interesting items, like fantasy languages and how to write some of them.

Suggestions, and ideas would be very welcome. We chose Tolkien's books as our main theme, for to measure up to those standards will be the requirement of every other subject under our study. This puts the highest possible standard on the whole thing. At least I think so, and the opinion is shared with several other folk.

Let me know what you think?

Steve, Billern, Ted Johnstone and I attended a local BSI meeting the other week. Mr. Dickensheet, the host, was most gracious and the other members were very interesting people. Mrs. Dickensheet shares her husband's interest avidly, which is nice, I think. The meeting consisted of passing around a few rare papers and magazines that contained Holmsian information, telling the visitors how to join the Baker Street Irregulars, and giving a short quiz that I failed miserably and Ted Johnstone came in second. Then we all told of our favorite character from the stories. There seemed to be an overwhelming vote for the redheaded man and Moriarity. I said that I admired Irene Adler for her good sense in not "catching" Holmes and marrying him when she knew that she could do it. Holmes would be a completely unliveable man for any woman to put up with, you know.

Mrs. Dickensheet served refreshments and everyone listened to a record of Sir Conan Doyle, telling about his efforts in writing the stories. They cut off the record just as he was about to launch into an explanation of his interest in the occult.

After everyone had gone, we sat around and talked while sipping an excellent 30 year old brandy. The visit was delightful, and we were invited back again. I brought home some catnip which a friend had brought for their cat, and Mrs. Dickensheet shared with me.

Stu Palmer, the mystery writer was also at the meeting, but didn't remember meeting me four years ago on a rock-hounding trip.

Mail just arrived, with Mike Deckinger's Hocus with a usual Prosser cover (well done artwork, horrible subject; gargoyle tearing people apart), an ad, The Letter Forum of the Interplanetary Exploration Society of New England, letter from Vic Ryan, comments on Shaggy from Ethel Lindsay, Don Durward (and sub for friend), and Klaus Eylmann, a 2-page fanzine Hungry #1 from Rispins, England. (oop, that's a person's name, not a town; just glanced at it), and a lovely illo from Eddie Jones for our Xmas issue! Wow! Already on stencil and everything. Hope we get response like this from the others! And the type of work that we have on hand so far.

Speaking of artwork, some of you may have heard of the idea of having a fan-art show at forthcoming cons. What do you think of that idea? We are toying with the idea of working out details and trying to do a really nice job of it; maybe even in time for the next con. Would it be of interest? We could show everything from color to black & whites, and maybe sell them or auction them off to fans. Would you pay anything for a matted ATOM, a Rotsler ink, or a Bjo color plate? Ray Capella used to do beautiful color fantasies of thin-necked creatures pulling odd little embossed chariots and with strange cloud formations. I wonder if he does that, anymore?

Ray a letter for over a year, now. I keep losing addresses that I especially want to keep. It's one of my little problems.

Another of my little problems is facing me now; I have an OMPA mailing to get out this week. I think I'll make it. I'm trying. (Everyone agrees to that!)

Who was it asked if I was going to quit fandom after the TAFF bit? Well, I have considered quitting long before it was over. But fandom reminds me somewhat of my mother's old threat, "I'd have a nervous breakdown if I could only find the time!" I leave you to figure it out.

Al Lewis has written a highly prejudiced article about me for Shaggy. (Actually, it's about me for TAFF) (Also me for him) and I don't want him to print it. I can't print a retraction in my own fanzine of all responsibility, tho I wish I could. It's a very nice article. Too nice. I feel sort of silly about it and I know I'll be embarrassed to death if he publishes it. I'm not just scuffing my toe and pulling the old aw-shucks-fellas routine, either. It's just that the article makes me scared that I might really win TAFF; then I'd have to live up to that description. And no one could do it!

I've owed
re my "IF I WON TAFF"
ramblings on the next page
or two: these plans for
seeing Europe would be
after the British + Irish
fans threw me out - I
just figure to get every-
one's money's worth - if
I go, it would tell inter-
ested folk about the
whole trip, of course.

The article is so darned nice, I feel moved to take some of the glow off the description by admitting that I squeeze toothpaste tubes in the middle and don't dust under anything I can't see from the middle of the floor. I feel worse about it all because I was supposed to write an article on Al; one of those profile things that Shaggy has been running lately.

I got as far as, Albert J. Lewis is a very stubborn young man. He is 26 years old, has only two decent ties in his wardrobe, got his BA in history last year, and teaches 7th grade now. He is the most stubborn man I have ever met.

And that is all I could think of to write! Boy, don't trust me to write your life history, I tell you!

Actually, I don't have to worry very much about the article, because someone (at a quick guess, I'd say out NY way....) will either get in a snit because someone said something nice about me and will take great pains to quibble about every detail, or will simply make snide remarks in letters to other fanzines. It's a sure bet, so don't make book on it, gang.

I'm not bitter, more amused than anything. People seem to spend so much time finding things wrong that they have very little time to enjoy the things right in this old world.

oh, rats, I'm off on that, again! I'll quit before I start, and make everyone happy.

Billern says that if I win TAFF, I can buy a Porsche for him in Europe. He's not kidding, either. It costs less to import a used car, and if I drove it around for a couple of months before bringing it home, he would save a lot of cash. And I'd have a Porsche to drive! Great? I know what to look for so that we can bring it back, too; safety glass, the right kind of brakes, etc.

Sylvia Hirahara, the beautiful Japanese-Okinawan who sells Capezio shoes, has opened a new shop in the Hollywood Riviera. Very exclusive neighborhood, cute little shop, and exotic Sylvia to dress it up. Even women are fascinated with Sylvia, who is high fashion in anything she throws on. I like to see what she will be wearing each time we meet. One time with olive green leotards, matching eye shadow, and thigh-length black sports skirt, he wore a bulky gold and black sweater. And green shoes. And looked fabulous.

I liked the gold-and-orange tweed jumper that she wore with raspberry pink blouse and hose, magenta purse and shoes, and orange scarf. Stopped traffic, including two guys in a Mercedes Benz.

Anyway, Syl wants me to do a bit of "boutique" shopping for her if I ever make it to Europe. She wants little, not-too-expensive items for her shop; and it is more fun to have a wide leather belt "made in Italy" if you pay only a bit more than for a domestic one. Or an embroidered scarf "made in Spain", or a warm one from England. I would get a commission on things that she actually bought; just as any buying agent. I think it would be fun. And with a car to travel in...

This is, of course, dependent on that big "IF" and I'm not even really counting on it. I'd be a very foolish female to do so. (But, 'way down deep...)

And, of course, I'd have to figure out where to stay and how to live all that time; tho I have some little money waiting in case. I think I could only stay a few months at best; visiting England, Ireland and France mostly, of course. Klaus Elymann said that if I visited Germany, they'd throw a con, so I'd take him up on that, too.

I would like to see Sweden and Norway, but it depends on how much time and money I would actually have to spend.

I will be glad when it's all over, tho. I'd like to give out happy day gifts again without worrying about how it's going to look. I'd like to speak my mind without having everyone ask if I ought to say that and take a chance of losing votes. I'd like to rest a bit.

So, enuff of that. I'm trying to start an herb garden; can anyone help me? It's to be in pots on a not-too-sunny windowsill. I do love to cook up goodies with fresh spices, and after tasting the lovely roast that Elinor Busby fixed with fresh rosemary, it is hard to go back to old dried stuff.

Gave mom a typer for Xmas. She got it early because she needs it now, with all her clubwork. I trade a painting to Billern for his old portable. Mom was pleased, but her last letter was handwritten. She hasn't quite gotten the hang of it, and says that her typing is worse than her writing. She took the typer home from her visit.

Well, I'm about talked out; and I'll bet your eyes need a long rest. So, I'll just point out that some of you are getting this because I owe you a letter, some of you because I think you'd enjoy it, and some of you for a reason you will have to figure out. I won't force another one on you unless you want one; so it's up to you. So, until next time; I leave you with this thot: Never say die; say damn!

Actually, I'll put a glorious stereo finish to this by saying a public thank you to the Grennells who were so hospitable to us weary home-bound convention goers; and to Joann Calkins, whose hostess duties as a non-fan went far beyond the call of duty. We even left there with clean clothes! Watch for conreps where we tell all.

sincerely

Bje

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attitudes from the LA area!

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*Busy, busy! please keep
writing - love to hear from
you!*