

NUMBER FOUR

WINTER 1994

BLA!





Nothing lasts forever, except poetry readings.

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CORFLU NOVA This year's Corflu drew a number of criticisms.

While I was (one of the fortunately early few) seated at what passed for a "banquet," Dick Smith ran by, yelling, "This is all your fault, Ted!"

In SAPS Nicki Lynch, one-time putative cochair of Corflu Nova, had this to say: "While we started out holding the con, it was pretty much turned over to fans in Virginia. Unfortunately, it was not the best decision and wasn't the Corflu I had hoped for. I was disappointed the program didn't take into account any of the older fans who attended. As long time Washington fans, it would have been good to have a panel that talked about the history of Washington fandom."

Guess who she is talking about. Yep, good ol' Ted White and Dan Steffan, who were credited with the programming.

As I told Dick Smith, "I'm not on the Committee — I've never been to even one committee meeting!"

Dick's response was, "There *weren't* any committee meetings!"

As far as I know, he's right. If there *was* a committee meeting, I wasn't informed of it. But I've maintained all along that I was not part of the Corflu Nova Committee — and in actual fact, I'm not sure there even *was* such a committee.

I faithfully put in appearances at the monthly WSFA meetings at the Gillilands' house, where I chatted with Alexis and Dick Lynch about a variety of topics, some of them concerning Corflu. But at no point was my opinion asked about anything — with the single exception of the programming, for which Dan and I were indeed responsible.

Dan and I had two responsibilities. Together, we were responsible for the programming, although I was nominally in charge, and Dan was himself responsible for the T-shirt (which tied together the art of the three local fan cartoonists, Steve Stiles, Alexis Gilliland, and Dan Himself). As far as I can tell, the T-shirt was a success and the programming went off without a hitch.

When we put on Corflu 3, the programming was my responsibility and I put together a "living fanzine" for the program. This year I was not a cochair, it was not "my" con, and I felt myself to be under no obligation to strive for an ambitious new concept in Corflu programming. Instead, I turned to that which had worked well in the past — much of it the work of Andy Hooper. Andy put together a new fannish trivia contest, modeled this time on *Jeopardy!*, with a Final Jeopardy wrapping up the afternoon's events. He had hoped to have a new play ready but the press of other responsibilities made that impossible, so we restaged "Jophan, This Is Your Life," which had made its debut

UFFISH THOTS

TEDITORIAL

at Magicon. And Dan suggested fannish readings, reading Burbee's "Big Name Fan" himself. (Steve Stiles read one of his pieces, and I read "A Day With Calvin Thomas Beck," from my Collected Works.)

If there was no "fanhistory" per se in the programming, there was plenty of it in the Fannish Jeopardy game, and to my astonishment I found myself the "Final" winner, fighting a tough fight with Janice Eisen, who kept impressing me with her knowledge



and understanding of some fairly obscure stuff.

No one suggested a "history of Washington fandom" item on the program, at least not to me. But if they had, I doubt I would have gone along with it. The history of "Washington fandom" — which is in fact the history of nearby Virginia and Maryland fandom, few local fans ever having lived in DC — is of little interest even to area fans. Those who participated in the founding of WSFA (circa 1947) are either dead (Pavlat, Evans) or long gaffiated (Derry, Kerkhoff). I've been active in local fandom since 1954 — and I guarantee you that the vast majority of the present members of the WSFA have never heard of me, in either my fannish or professional capacities. (Hell, the entire period I lived here while editing *Amazing* and *Fantastic*, the club actively snubbed me.) Local "fandom" has a minimal knowledge of or engagement with fandom as a whole, lacks any interest in fanzines, and is as a while pretty damned boring. The only "history" lies in the variety of meeting places in which WSFA has congregated over the years — not of much interest, I would guess, to the average out-of-town Corflu attendee.*

Alexis Gilliland (with his late wife, Doll) has been hosting WSFA meetings since some point in the late sixties — more than twenty years, now. (He hosts one of the twice-monthly meetings; the other is held in Maryland. Not since the Gillilands moved to Virginia many years ago has there been a WSFA meeting held in Washington, DC.) In the course of those years, Alexis and Doll cochaired a number of Disclaves — the annual Memorial Day local con which was revived in

* It has occurred to me since I originally wrote this that perhaps Nicki was referring to Washington's pre-modern fanhistory: the period, circa 1940-41, in which Jack Speer and his alter-ego, John Bristol, lived in DC. And I have to agree: getting Jack up on a panel to talk about those days would have been a swell idea. My only problem was that no one told me Jack would be there. "Sigh". . .

1958. There was a time when Disclave attracted a good mix of fans and pros. Recent Disclaves have actively snubbed most of the pros and been snubbed by most out-of-town fans. Disclave now appears dominated by media-types, outstanding among them the sort who wear leather costumes and pretend depravity (they throw the best parties).

It would appear that Corflu Nova was run by Dick Lynch and Alexis Gilliland. My impression is that Lynch did the bulk of the pre-con work, and that Alexis ran the con for its duration. But this is surmise on my part; I was not privy to their private conferences. I can say that it was Lynch who told me that Mark Loney would be editing the *Fanthology*, and it was Lynch who told me that after ballot-counters of his choice (local WSFans) received only half a dozen FAAN Award nominating ballots, he had decided to kill the award. (You'll recall the revival of that Award was a major feature of the pre-con publicity. What there was of it.)

It was Gilliland who decided only one progress report was required, and that it should be sent only to already-joined members. (It was Gilliland who wrote the *entire* progress report — including the portion attributed to me. My original draft was only half as long as the version that was published. I told Alexis when he showed me what he'd done, that "If this was a real fanzine, I'd object and withdraw it or insist my name be removed from it, but what the hell; it's just a progress report." That probably will be the last time I "collaborate" with Alexis: we have sharply differing points of view on what's funny.) It was Gilliland who showed me a menu for the banquet — a menu which did not in any way resemble the collection of carryout food (egg rolls, pizza, etc.) with which we were actually presented. I told him then that it was the worst menu any Corflu banquet had been graced with, but I had no idea that what we'd really get would be far worse . . . and hard to justify for the price paid. (Traditionally, about two-thirds to three-quarters of the Corflu membership fee pays for the banquet. I believe the menu I was shown cost around \$23 a person.)

And it was Gilliland who picked the hotel. I have no idea *why* he picked that hotel. It is located close to the National Airport and does not customarily do convention business, preferring business travellers and airlines flight crews. And it turned out to be actively hostile to room parties — there was no "blocking" of rooms, of course — and one of the most expensive hotels ever to hold a Corflu (room rates, not low to begin with, lasted *only* through Saturday night; a Sunday night stayover was at *much* higher rates — this, despite an anticipated stayover for some Corflu attendees for either "Historicon" during the first half of the week, or Disclave the following weekend).

Worse, the meeting rooms (for programming) were at a considerable remove from the "consuite," where many hung out — on a different floor. Had Gilliland attended the Madison Corflu, where the layout was far better, he might have learned a valuable lesson. But Gilliland did not attend that Corflu — and had already

booked the hotel and accepted the meeting rooms it offered before the Madison Corflu occurred.

In fact, Alexis has attended very few Corflus, and seemed to have little idea of what a Corflu was like or what it would require. "I've put on Disclaves," he'd say, waving aside various objections offered. He seemed to think there was little difference between a Corflu and a Disclave. But then, Alexis Gilliland is not, really, primarily a fanzine fan.

The Lynchs are fanzine fans, and have attended a number of Corflus. One might have expected them to overrule Alexis on some points. But my impression is that they themselves were not very engaged in "their" Corflu: they went home early every night.

Nicki says the con was "pretty much turned over to fans in Virginia," a signal of sorts of their disengagement from it. But as nearly as I can tell, those "fans in Virginia" were Alexis and his new wife, Lee, who was responsible for running the consuite. (It was minimally stocked with refreshments and became the hangout of stalwart fanzine fans like Martin Morse Wooster; most of us avoided it whenever we could.)

The banquet was where it all fell apart.

The banquet is traditionally the center of the convention. One of the many joys of Corflu is that it is small enough that all its members can come together in one room for a banquet. Here the GoH (picked earlier in the con) gives a speech of some sort. Here the past Presidents of FWA are voted upon (congratulations, Jack Speer, on becoming FWA President for 1993!). And here the site of the next Corflu is voted upon.

Imagine our surprise upon entering the banquet room to find tables in the center of the room laden with cold pizzas and similar delights, while small tables around the edge of the room offered seating for only about forty people — less than half of those who were members and entitled to be seated. The hotel had been given the impression (by whom?) that people would be wandering in and out, and no more than forty or so would be there at any one time. When this error was pointed out to them, they brought in more tables — but those who took positions at these new tables had to wait even longer for chairs in which to sit.

Despite all these things, as Nicki also noted in her SAPSzine, "we had a good time hanging out with friends." So did I. It was great to have people like Robert Lichtman, Andy Hooper, the Katzes, and "the Kunkels" here in Northern Virginia, and we managed to enjoy ourselves. We always do, of course, and in that sense Corflu Nova was as "good" as any other Corflu.

But I honestly feel that this is *not* how people should go about putting on a Corflu. From the begin-

ning, this was a "I don't need any help, I can do it myself" convention, put on by people who did *not* know how to put on a Corflu, who lacked experience, knowledge, and any willingness to ask others for

advice or help. The attitude that Corflu is a con like any other con, and can be run accordingly, is flat wrong, and one can only hope that those who held that attitude have learned a lesson.

Next year Corflu will be in Las Vegas. The Katzes and Las Vegas fandom have already demonstrated, with Silvercon, that they know how to run a fannish convention. And, after attending three Corflus in a row, I think they understand Corflu far better than this year's committee did. Good luck to them

— we'll be there.



ED WOOD Ed Wood, the fan, is someone I've known (or, originally, known of) since the early fifties. Short, rotund, pugnacious, Ed Wood has been a fixture in fandom for as long as I've known him. In the seventies he used to tell me every time he saw me (once a year or so, at some convention), "We've had our differences, Ted, but I gotta hand it to ya — you're doing a great job with *Amazing* and *Fantastic*!"

And it was at Suncon, at a fan panel that consisted of Lee Hoffman, Terry Carr and myself, that Ed, speaking up from the audience, informed us all that on more than one occasion he'd thrown away, unopened, issues of *Hyphen* that arrived in the mail. We were stunned, not only by Ed's announcement but by the chortling gleeful pride with which he made that announcement. "But, Ed," we remonstrated (well, Terry and I did; I think Lee was too stunned to speak), "*Hyphen* ran skiffy-crit pieces by Damon Knight — the kind of stuff you wanted to see in fanzines!" Ed seemed unmoved by this information.

But our Ed Wood is not the *only* Ed Wood in the world. One of the other Ed Woods bore the distinction of being one of the worst filmmakers in the history of Hollywood. His *Plan Nine From Outer Space* has been a staple of late-night UHF-station TV for decades, and is considered by many to be the very worst film ever made. I can believe that, based on the ten-minute segment of the film to which I once subjected myself.

So what, I wonder, does our Ed Wood make of the fact that his name — or, actually, the filmmaker Ed Wood's name — is popping up all over the place, media-wise, these days? There's a new movie out, celebrating the filmmaking Ed Wood's unique weirdness, and its name is, quite simply, *Ed Wood*.

How must Ed Wood, the fan, feel when he drives down a street and sees "ED WOOD" on a theater marquee? These are thoughts I like occasionally to ponder. . . .

NAME THAT BIGOT I had a phone call the other night from Teresa Nielsen Hayden. After we'd exchanged pleasantries — she's an editor at Valient Comics now — she told me the purpose of her call:

"I wanted to check this out with you, Ted, because your name is being bandied about," Teresa said. She was talking on-line bulletin boards. "Tom Monteleone is claiming you as his source for the idea that Chip Delaney was ignored as a writer until he showed up at that Nebula Awards Banquet and people realized he was black — after which he was critically acclaimed and lionized." Teresa said Tom's other sources for this item, like Jack Dann, had denied it vociferously. She wanted to know about me.

My initial reaction was "Poppycock!" or some other word of that nature. But then I began thinking, and remembering. "There is *some* truth to it," I told Teresa. "I might have said something in casual conversation with Tom, oh, back in the early seventies, that gave him that idea."

Looking back on it, Samuel R. Delaney's early Ace novels did not receive much of a critical reaction. Few Ace novels ever did. *Nova* was the first of his novels to be greeted with critical hosannas, and that *was* after it had become known that he was black — circa 1966.

I first knew of Chip early on, because Terry Carr, who had become his editor at Ace, had started raving to me about him. Terry liked his writing a lot better than I did. I found both *Nova* and the book that preceded it, *Einstein Intersection*, hard to read, and I never finished either one. Chip had great *ideas* — we used to talk about them often after we'd become friends in 1964 — and his ideas for *Nova* sounded a lot better when he talked about them than the prose in which he embedded them.

As someone who had in the previous several years been an active jazz critic in the New York scene, I had a number of black friends and the fact that Chip was black was so unnoteworthy to me that it took me a while to realize that he was the first black *writer* in science fiction.

At that time the Science Fiction Establishment was about equally dominated by New York professionals in all aspects of the publishing business (writers, editors, agents — and sometimes all three, in rotation or simultaneously) — and the so-called Milford Mafia. The latter group included James and Virginia Blish, Damon Knight, Kate Wilhelm, Judy Merrill, and a few others who lived year-round in Milford, Pennsylvania and who collectively sponsored the annual Milford Conferences — the first writers' workshops for sf professionals.

It seems unlikely to me that most of the New Yorkers could *not* have known Chip was black. Don

Wollheim, his first editor, surely knew from the beginning; Chip had worked in his office. And Terry knew. While I can't imagine either man running about telling people excitedly, "We've got a *black sf* writer!" I am sure that sooner or later it must have come up in conversation at an appropriate moment.

But I don't know about the Milfordites. (At that time they included the three top critics in sf, Knight, Blish and Merrill — the latter was the monthly book reviewer for *F&SF*.) They socialized with Terry (Judy used to stay in the Carrs' guest room whenever she was in NYC), and might well be presumed to know what he knew — well before Chip had made a major public appearance (which occurred in 1966, at both that Nebula Awards Banquet and at the Tricon in Cleveland).

But it is also true that the Milford Mafia were knee-jerk liberals, and the fact that this new rising author was black certainly wouldn't have hurt. The Milford Mafia were also nasty snobs (I was treated as Terry's chauffeur and excluded from conferences on the grounds that I was only a *collaborator* — with Terry or Marion Bradley — for years after I'd been publishing books on my own), cruel in snubbing those they regarded as beneath their notice. That they lionized Chip is not surprising.

But the timing here suggests that reverse-bigotry was not the primary factor. It was in 1966 that Doubleday published *Nova* — as a hardcover book. Hardcover books (in those days) automatically attracted more critical notice than paperback originals. It seems likely that Chip's career would have followed the same curve even if he'd been white (or perceived as white).

I have not seen the on-line comments on this topic. I know only what Teresa told me.

But, as I told her, "to the extent that it's true [that Delaney was lionized because he was black], it reflects badly on those who did the lionizing — not on Chip."

IRONY ABOUNDS or THE TRUE STORY OF THE ORIGINS OF THE FANOCLASTS There's been a lot about mid-fifties and late-fifties New York City fandom in recent issues of *Habak-*

kuk, and I'd like to offer up the following piece as a direct continuation of Donaho's series. What strikes me as most remarkable about the Fanoclasts, looking back now from 1994, is how effortlessly we overcame the usual NYC jinx on club longevity. But then I remind myself that two other NYC-area clubs, the Lunar-ians and ESFA, have lasted even longer. . . .

New York fandom in the late fifties was a fandom in transition. Many of the best-known NYC fans of the fifties, like Dick and Pat Ellington, Danny Curran, and Bill Donaho (who, collectively, had been



part of the Riverside Drive and Nunnery scenes) left the city during 1959 to resettle on the West Coast. Others, like Larry Shaw, moved to Staten Island and were perforce less socially involved with Manhattan's fanactivity. Younger and newer fans like Les Gerber, Andy Reiss, and Steve Stiles had yet to outgrow early adolescence and exhibit the talents for which they would later be known. My first wife Sylvia and I moved to NYC in the summer of 1959 only to find our friends departing from the city. Around the same period Dick and Pat Lupoff, also newly married, moved to a penthouse apartment on East 73rd Street.

The fanclub situation was also in transition: the Lunarians were still under Belle Dietz's thumb (and would continue to be until late 1961) and ESFA was Sam Moskowitz's private turf. I don't believe any of the local university and college clubs had yet been started. The Metrofen broke up in the late summer or early fall of 1959 after a meeting in Central Park degenerated into a dirt-clod battle. That left the Futurians.

The Futurians had actually been in existence for only a short time: around the beginning of 1959 the Fanarchists, after throwing a successful Fanarchon at the end of 1958, changed their name to the Futurians. At that point the club was dominated by "the Nunnery crowd" and met at the Nunnery, at 14 Cooper Square. Larry Shaw provided what was considered to be the necessary continuity with the original (forties) Futurians. At that time Larry lived only a few blocks away from the Nunnery.

But by the fall of 1959, after successfully hosting John Berry's visit to New York City, the Futurians were deserted by their leaders. Larry Shaw, newly married to Noreen Falasca, moved to Staten Island. The rest of "the Nunnery crowd" moved further west. The Nunnery itself fell into non-fan hands.

John Closson took over as the Futurians' host, with a small apartment located south of Houston Street. Meetings there were small, often consisting of John, Perdita Boardman (who was then not yet married to John Boardman and was still Perdita Girsdansky), her toddler daughter Karina, perhaps one or two other people, and Sylvia and myself. The main entertainment was watching Karina chase John's cat into a clothes closet from which it refused to come out. The main area of discussion was the relatively infrequent meetings and poor attendance.

Coming from the DC-area's WSFA, which met twice a month (at that time on first and third Sundays; now on first and third Fridays), I was amazed that apparently without exception each and every NYC fanclub, past and present, met only once a month. (What someone from Los Angeles, where the LASFS has met every Thursday night since some point in the 1930's, might think of NYC's tradition of monthly meetings might be imagined.) I pointed out that the Futurians would never pick up any real momentum as a club until it began meeting more frequently than once a month. In turn other member pointed out to me that This Had Never Been Done in New York City. My impression was that a few fans (very few) liked the

idea of monthly meetings because they attended the meetings of all the area clubs, none of the dates of which conflicted with any of the others. For such fans there were three or four meetings a month to be attended, and that was plenty. If some of us had no desire to attend the meetings of the other clubs, or wanted to regard the Futurians' schedule as something to be considered in its own right, as it effected the Futurians and not as it effected the Lunarians or ESFA, well that was *our* problem.

So the Futurians pumbled along without changing its monthly schedule. Meeting places did change, however. After only a few months at John Closson's fairly neat apartment meetings moved to Tom Condit's less-neat apartment near Essex Street, further downtown. And the character of the meetings also gradually changed as fewer fans attended and more of Tom's non-fan friends took up the slack.

Tom Condit was a transplanted Bay Area fan who had for a while been a part of the Terry Carr/Pete Graham/Ron Ellik/Dave Rike axis. His contributions to fanzines were infrequent but good. Most often they were reports of his hitchhiking trips across the country and to conventions. In the late fifties many of us were under the spell of Jack Kerouac's *On The Road*, but Tom seemed to live that life better than most of us. A member of YPSL (Young People's Socialist League), the IWW, and a bohemian in his lifestyle, Tom fit the "beatnik" stereotype better than most of us. Once Donaho and the Ellingtons had left town and the Shaws were isolated on Staten Island (Noreen pregnant and unwilling to travel a couple of hours each way to socialize), Tom became our closest fannish friend in the city. Once we'd survived the financial crunch of our move to NYC and I revived *Void* ("The Monthly Fanzine") in the winter of 1959-60, Tom Condit became *Void's* fanzine-reviewer.

UPCOMING DESIGNER When I told Richard Bergeron in 1962 that I'd seen and clipped the writeup on him which had appeared in the January issue of *Art Direction* (to which I had a subscription), he asked me not to reprint it in any of my fanzines. I thought that an odd request — it seemed futile to maintain a rigid separation between not only fandom and the rest of his life, but between fandom and mundane publicity — but I honored it.

In 1981 or thereabouts the clipped page from *Art Direction* turned up again. Again, Bergeron requested I not reprint it — although he generously allowed me to share it with Dan Steffan and the Nielsen Haydens. It got more tattered in the sharing.

It's now 1994. Ten years ago Richard Bergeron absolved me from any and all commitments I made to him by including me in his vicious attack on Avedon Carol and the Nielsen Haydens.

So, take a look. The ads have a quasi-familiar look to anyone who knows his fanzines and his fan-published art — and were pretty damned sharp in 1961. So why the modesty? Could the photo be a clue?

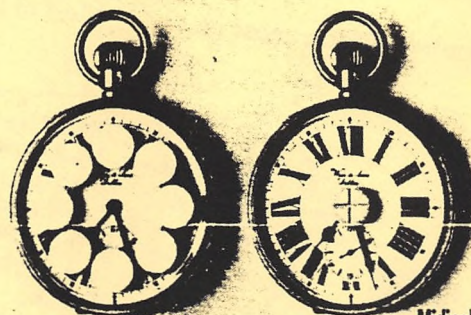


Upcoming designer
Richard Bergeron

Impact plus taste characterize much of Dick Bergeron's work. Oversize watches, pills, ears, big type plus a quiet handling of text blocks give much of his design a combined sense of drama and of careful organization.

Dick has been in the field five years. He attended the New England School of Art, worked with Associated Artists in Boston for a year, has been with L. W. Frohlich for the past four years. He's the designer of Parke Davis' journal, *Therapeutic Notes*.

His work has appeared in the 1960 and 1961 shows of both the New York Art Directors Club and the Type Directors Club.



release from round-the-clock dosage
also tablet per day for modern soft therapy

"cough"
"cough"



quiets
cough

BENYLIN
EXpectorant

Patients with coughs caused by colds or flu respond to BENYLIN EXpectorant. The pleasant, dissolvable tablets of BENYLIN EXpectorant rapidly soothe inflamed throat, loosen phlegm, and relieve the irritation of the throat. BENYLIN EXpectorant is a safe, effective, and pleasant cough remedy.

GERIPLEX



therapeutic notes

What I remember best about Tom, however, was his laugh. It was peculiarly idiosyncratic and sounded more like strangled snorting than anything else. In 1979, sitting in the bar at the Westercon in San Francisco, I heard that same unmistakable snort of laughter and looked up to discover a much older and only barely recognizable Tom Condit seated a short distance away. But I digress.

Tom had a number of bohemian friends, most of them fellow members of YPSL or in some other way political cronies, several of whom also read sf and had fannish leanings. One of these people was a fellow known as Peter. Peter had been something of a folkie and had known Lee Hoffman during her folkie period (Lee launched folk fanzines with *Caravan*; when *Caravan* became too formalized and too much work she passed it on and started up *Gardylloo!*). Peter may also have been a contributor to *The Bosses' Songbook*, a radical-folkie collection of biting satirical song lyrics published in the late fifties by Dick Ellington and the Libertarian League (if memory serves me correctly) to which a number of fans and folkies contributed, among them mystery author Lawrence Sanders.

In the spring of 1960 the Lupoffs got in touch with us, announcing their arrival in NYC. Sylvia and I socialized a good deal with Dick and Pat (although we were painfully aware of the differences of attitude and lifestyle which separated us; the Lupoffs were then Nixon Republicans who lived far better than we did) and they joined the Futurians, eventually volunteering to host the meetings.

The most memorable of these was actually held under the George Washington Bridge, in the park that extends along the Hudson River above the bridge. We had met to picnic and fly kites but were informed after only a couple of hours in the park that we'd best depart before we were caught in the middle of a gang fight scheduled for the same location that afternoon. This event caused consternation among some of us — there were mutterings about allowing ourselves to be run out of a public park by "a bunch of juvenile hoods" — and Walter Breen collaborated with the Lupoffs on a oneshot commemorating the occasion called *The Rumble*.

By this point the Futurians were enjoying a modest revival. The addition of the Lupoffs, Walter Breen (who lived only a block away from them on East 72nd Street), and Pete Graham (who had moved to NYC from the Bay Area and was also a member of the

YPSL, and who was to become a coeditor of *Void*) pulled the Futurians more into the mainstream of national fanzine fandom. Perdita was still attending meetings, as were people like Martha Cohen and Dave Foley. And Tom Condit could be counted on to show up at the Lupoffs' penthouse apartment with at least two or three of his "scruffy friends," among them the aforementioned Peter.

Most of us were typical transplanted New Yorkers, living in apartments which failed to meet the standards we'd enjoyed elsewhere, apartments which were often fourth- or fifth-floor walkups if not out-and-out lofts (as the Nunnery was), and all of which boasted hot and cold running cockroaches. (To this day I cannot help thinking of the housing standards in NYC as at least fifty years behind those of the rest of the country. Where else could you expect to find a bathtub under the table-top in



the kitchen and the toilet down the hall, to be shared with those in at least one other apartment? Doors never fitted well and windows and woodwork were encrusted with scores of coats of sloppily applied paint, most of those layers of paint in hideous colors known colloquially as "Puerto-Rican Blue" or some-such. The rents charged for such apartments — unless one lucked into a rent-controlled apartment which had been lived in by one tenant for the past forty years — were outrageous even in 1960, considering the lack of amenities offered.)

The Lupoffs, by contrast, lived in a posh apartment in a posh neighborhood. Their penthouse was surrounded on two sides by outdoor rooftop terraces on which summertime barbecues were held. They had a working fireplace, in which we toasted marshmallows and roasted eggs in the winter. They had an elevator. And if they had any cockroaches I never saw them. Dick was at that time a well-paid corporation man, a technical writer. As mentioned, the Lupoffs' politics was right of center; they used to point with pride to the fact that both they and the Nixons were "Dick and Pat." (So, ironically enough, were the Ellingtons, and in 1964 when the Lupoffs visited the Bay Area before the Worldcon they became fast friends with the Ellingtons. But by then the Lupoffs were starting to "Green". . . .)

Tom Condit's friends bothered the Lupoffs. It was a clash of styles more than anything substantial; Dick and Pat worried about having such "scruffy" people in their immaculate apartment. They particularly objected to two of Tom's friends. One was a folkie who had

traveled the same circles that Lee Hoffman had; the other was Peter, whom I mentioned earlier. These people lacked the saving grace of being recognized by the Lupoffs as "fans"; they were simply scruffy beatniks who tagged along with Tom Condit. "I don't like them," Pat Lupoff once confided to me. "Do you?" Well, I didn't know them very well, but yes I did. They had a quiet, wry sense of humor. Sylvia and I felt comfortable with them, and had enjoyed a variety of social situations — like chili parties, at which we all worked together to cook a huge pot of chili which we then greedily consumed — in their company. But I can't say I knew any of them, even Peter, that well as individuals.

But Peter and one or two of Condit's other "scruffy" friends brought about the end of the Futurians and the birth of the Fanoclats.

"You know," Dick Lupoff remarked to me one day, "I don't think we're going to host the Futurians any more."

"We were talking with the Shaws about starting a new club," Pat said, "and making it, you know, invitational."

"That way we can control the type of people who show up," Dick said.

"Like Tom Condit's scruffy friends," Pat said.

The Futurians were dumped. Perdita, who was then living somewhere around Washington Heights, volunteered to host their meetings and I believe there were several, although I don't recall attending any of them. This was not because I agreed with the Lupoffs' exclusionary standards (although I did agree with the principle that they had a right to say who they allowed in their apartment), but simply because I had lost what little interest I still had in the Futurians (who still met monthly and at best had little identity or purpose).

If we were going to set up a new club, I had some ideas of my own about how it should be done. Meetings should be at least twice a month. All formal officers, dues, business meetings, etc., should be avoided. The focus should be on fanzine fandom and members should be compatible with each other (to avoid clashes which might develop into the kind of feuds which routinely destroyed most NYC fanclubs within a year of two). Sylvia and I discussed these ideas with the Lupoffs and the Shaws and there was general agreement on them. Thus it was from this positive stance, rather than the negative one of excluding "scruffy" types, that the new club quickly progressed. Tom Condit's friends were forgotten (although Tom was invited to the new club's first meeting) and the Futur-

ians put behind us. The Futurians had been a half-assed club anyway; the new club would have a little more purpose and momentum.

It remained only for Bill Meyers to offer us the club's name, and the Fanoclats were born.

The early Fanoclats revolved around the then-ruling clique of NYC's fanzine fans. In addition to the six founders, Bob and Barbara Silverberg and A.J.

Budrys were early regulars. Another was a fellow Dick had met through Larry Shaw, Bob Shea. Bob became better-known for his part in the *Illuminatus* trilogy and other cult best-sellers, but in the early days of the Fanoclats he was a regular member and put out his own fanzine, *The Scene*, which I mimeoed for him on the QWERTY-UIOPress.

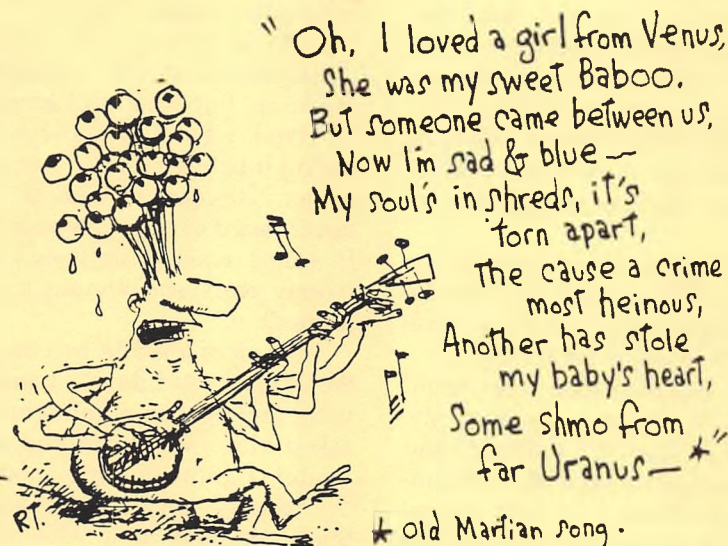
But among all the famous and near-famous whom the Fanoclats can claim as one-time

members, there is one person who was never a Fanoclast: Tom Condit's friend Peter.

Peter went on being something of a folkie and then when rock broke through he became a member of various NYC underground bands. Perhaps you've heard of a couple of them — The Fuggs and the Holy Modal Rounders. By the mid-sixties, when biweekly Fanoclast meetings alternated with biweekly FiSTFA meetings (to create an ongoingly fannish Friday night), Peter's records were a frequently-heard staple of meetings.

Peter's full name is Peter Stampfel, and in the seventies he was a member of the Unholy Modal Rounders. When his band came to DC he sometimes dropped by for an afternoon of chat and smoke. He occasionally attended conventions; I saw him at Nor-eascon in 1980 and the 1981 Westercon. It was, I think, in 1981 that he married Don Wollheim's daughter Betsy. Today he is an executive at DAW books.

The fact that the Fanoclats were born out of a move to exclude Peter Stampfel from the Lupoffs' apartment is a genuine irony, but it is not the only irony of this story, for the Lupoffs have changed at least 180 degrees since 1960, and the kind of people they each turned into is the kind of person Peter Stampfel has always been (for at least as long as I've known him). I've never discussed this subject with the Lupoffs so I have no idea whether they subsequently came to know Peter but I suspect they have and if that is true, I'm sure they are now good friends. Peter remains very much his old self, a trifle "scruffy" (but the latter sixties turned that into a generational uniform), still soft-spoken, his eyes still occasionally twinkling.



I've never discussed this story with him either, but it is pleasant to think that at this point all concerned in the events of 1960 which set the Fanoclasts in motion can look back upon those days without rancor but perhaps with a rueful chuckle for who we all were then.

I was a Fanoclast for the first ten years of the club, hosting it in my Brooklyn apartment for the last seven of those years. When I moved to Virginia I "sold" my apartment to Steve Stiles (a quaint old New York custom in which the seller recovers some of the expenses of the improvements he put in, or appliances he's left behind; Steve never paid me the \$400 he agreed to pay, another quaint old New York custom) and tossed in the Fanoclasts, who continued to meet there.

Steve was a charter member, but he broke the Apostolic Succession and I have always felt that the Fanoclasts died then, although a club using the name still meets today somewhere in New York City.

Steve's first wife, Gail, was someone who could never have been a Fanoclast before, but once she moved in with him she took over the meetings and invited to them any number of unfannish (and unpleasant) people — some of whom had been barred from the Fanoclasts (by mutual agreement of all the members) for years. In so doing, she drove away the remaining regulars.

I still recall encountering at the 1971 Balticon Brian Burley, a prime jackass whom I had held in contempt for almost as long as I'd known him (at our first meeting, a party at a Midwestcon in 1966, he drunkenly tried to demolish our bar in a vain effort to pop the top off a bottle of beer, all the while ignoring the bottle-opener on the wall directly adjacent to him). He waddled up to me with a smug look plastered across his face. "Hey, Ted," he called out. "Guess what? I'm a Fanoclast now!"

I gave him a brief and, I hope, withering glance.

"No you're not," I said, and I turned my back on him.

As far as I was concerned, the Fanoclasts were dead.

NOTES FOR NEVER-FINISHED PIECES "Fandom *really* is only ten years old — Sixth Fandom is an impossible myth — a dream?"

"I was dreaming last night, and Martin Morse Wooster appeared before me.

"I am the ghost of Fandom Present," he said. . . ."

THE TRANSATLANTIC FAN FUND If further proof is required that fandom has become balkanized, it can be found in the 1995 TAFF race.

I'm looking at the ballot sheet, reading the candidates' platforms. Joe Wesson. I know Joe. Saw him at this year's Corflu. I get his fanzine. He's a decent candidate. Dan Steffan. Well, hell, I'm one of his nominators, and together we put out this fanzine. Samanda b Jeude. Who?

The name stops me. It's very unusual, especially the lowercase middle initial with no period. Sounds made-up, but what do I know?

Well, what I *do* know is that I do not recall ever seeing it before. Yet, in her platform, Samanda refers to her "20 years in fandom." Twenty years! And I never heard of her. (I wonder if she ever heard of me? It seems equally unlikely.) I'm not disputing her twenty years; she obviously spent it in a different part of fandom.

I went to a WSFA meeting soon after I heard about Samanda's candidacy. I knew Dick & Nicki Lynch were among her nominators, so when I saw Dick I asked him, "What can you tell me about Samanda b Jeude? I know nothing about her."

"She's a nice lady," Dick said. "We know her. She's confined to a wheelchair. She managed the handicapped-access wheelchairs at Magicon." (Immediately I felt a spark of kinship: those were the very wheelchairs we stole for our infamous Late Night Wheelchair Races! But I said nothing of this to Dick.) "Her husband headed up the bid that lost to Scotland," Dick added. That seemed to be all he knew. When pressed, he repeated that he liked Samanda. And that

she'd asked the Lynches to be among her nominators. (The Lynches have won the fanzine Hugo for three years running. That would certainly appeal to a confan.)

After the WSFA meeting I headed over to the Steffan residence.

"Dan," I said to him as soon as I entered his house, "your TAFF campaign is in trouble!"

He asked me what I meant. I explained it to him: "Samanda is handicapped. That's points in her favor — the sympathy vote. Plus, her husband ran the Worldcon bid that lost to Scotland. Hell, she has that trip *coming* to her!"

"You're not serious," Dan said, staring at me.

"I am very serious," I told him. "You got problems. She can get out the Convention Vote — people who have never



heard of you, or if they have it's negative things, like your association with me. Ol' Laan is another one of her nominators."

Gloom settled over my co-editor for a moment. Then he brightened.

"There's still the fact that every voter has to be known to the administrators — or be able to refer to someone who is," Dan said. "That should choke off a bloc vote at the pass!"

Aye, that's the rub. Who knows whom?

Well, I still don't know Samanda b Jeude. But now I've read her platform. Here's the opening line: "You should vote for me because: I am short, red-headed, busty, and wear VERY low cut dresses. . . ."

How should I take that? She's a sexpot? A vamp? In a wheelchair? Is she exploiting her putative sex-appeal — especially to foreign voters who can be presumed to know nothing more about her (and maybe less) than I? Is this in fact a rather sexist come-on? Or just a jape on one? I have no idea.

Her other reasons to vote for her? "All but one of my magic tatoo's [sic] (the one in a 'private' place) will be available for viewing. . . ." "Magic" tattoos. Really? Are they the kind that wash off? "After 20 years in Fandom, I know lots of Fun Fannish Traditions." We can only wonder what these traditions might be. I hope she's not one of those people who "Sm-o-o-o-the" with bottles of iced tea. "I won the Big Heart for my big . . . hearts." She must have impressive boobs; she can't stop bragging about them. I understand she did receive a Big Heart Award (awarded in the memory of the controversial E. Everett Evans) for her efforts to provide access for the handicapped at conventions. "I am mom to a flying kitten." That must mean something to those who know the woman; it means absolutely nothing to me. "My Klingons will get you if you don't!" Oh, I see. A trekkie.

She follows up that first paragraph (actually all one sentence, separated by semicolons), with this shorter second paragraph:

"The real reason: I will be looking in Britain (and, if possible, parts of Europe) to see how Electrical Eggs Access can help bring ALL fans into fandom."

Laudable, on the face of it, but let us look closer. For openers, this is her only indication — an indirect hint — that she is herself in any respect handicapped. I'm not sure whether the bald statement that she is confined to a wheelchair would help or hurt her gain votes, but I think it's something host-country voters should know in either case. Of course, she may *assume* that this is an already well-known fact, and not something she needs to bring up.

To me, though, the most telling line was about helping "bring ALL fans into fandom."

What is stopping *any* fan from being in fandom? We've had handicapped fans throughout the history of fandom. Indeed, fandom has always had a strong appeal to people confined by circumstances to their homes or otherwise somewhat solitary lives. Ah, but Samanda isn't talking about *our* fandom at all, is she?

A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION DEPT.

"I guess *Idea*, *Trapdoor*, *Mimosa*, and BLAT! are my favourite US fanzines, but I worry about BLAT!. Once again Ted — that's Ted White, the melon desecrator who bites the legs off frogs, — no, really! — is re-writing history and subverting poor innocent Dan Steffan.

"'TAFF is a fine old fannish institution,' (sez Ted). 'It was started as a campaign to bring Walt Willis over here to the Chicago Worldcon in 1952.'

"'I know that,' (sez Dan). 'But technically, wasn't TAFF started after Willis discovered America?'

"'Well, yes,' (humphed Ted). 'Technically you're right. Technically TAFF was created by Willis and Don Ford a couple of years after the success of 'WAW with the Crew in '52.'"

"Don WHO????? Is Ted smoking those strong ones again?

"Listen, son. Technically this is the real and honest. The straight shit. I was there, Meyer. Present at the birth. Eye-witness, co-accoucher. Yes, Me, Chucky Harris, the boy fan who opened the windows in the smoke-filled room, and I tell you Don Ford had fuck all to do with it. This was a Brit thing and he was miles and miles away in the US of A. Walter WAS there, Vincent was there, so was Ken Slater, Eric Bentcliffe and three or four other Brit fans. Don Ford WAS the prime mover in the WAW with the Crew fund and that was obviously a role model, but he was NOT an active participant in founding TAFF.

"So there." — Chuck Harris, *Charrisma*, October 1994

"Coroncon was also the occasion when Camell, during his Chairman's address, made first public mention of a fund that had been started by the Cincinnati Fantasy Group to bring Norman Ashfield over for Philcon, the '53 Worldcon. Ashfield hadn't been active in fandom for some time but he had kept up his correspondence with Cincinnati's Don Ford and this fund had resulted. As it turned out, Ashfield was unable to make the trip so the CFG were generously throwing the fund open to any fan that British fandom felt deserved it. However, since there wasn't time either to organise a trip to Philadelphia or to choose a suitable candidate it was decided instead to use the CFG donation as seed-money for a permanent fund to help US and UK fans to attend each other's conventions. The Willis trip provided the model and the inspiration, and the basics of the scheme — the permanent system of financing trans-Atlantic trips and the organisational structure needed to make it self-sustaining — were hammered out at Coroncon ready for the first UK to US race the following year. Walt Willis was to administer the fund on this side of the Atlantic and Don Ford would be asked to administer it on the other, each to be replaced in that position by the first fundwinners on their side, and they in turn to be replaced by the next, and so on. In no time, Vin Clarke, Derek Pickles, Ken Slater, Tony Thorne, and James White had been nominated for the first race and details were announced in *Hyphen*. Thus was born TAFF, the Trans-Atlantic Fan Fund."

— Rob Hansen, *Then 2*, March 1989

"Don Ford had been named to direct TAFF activities in North America. . . ." — Harry Warner, Jr., *A Wealth of Fable*, 1977

She's talking about the "fandom" where wheelchair-access ramps are crucial: she's talking about *convention fandom*. (And, apparently she wants to test the accessibility of not only Britain/Scotland, but "parts of Europe" as well — on TAFF? Or on her own money?)

When TAFF was set up, there wasn't much division between convention fandom and fanzine fandom:

most of us participated as much as we could in both. Walt Willis was the epitome of a fanzine fan, but his partner in setting up TAFF (the man who, in fact, brought it to him) was Don Ford, a Cincinnati fan who had worked on the 1949 Cinvention, and who was one of the mainstays of the Midwestcon, which followed on the heels of the Cincinnati Worldcon. Don was the epitome of a convention fan.

No one saw that as a problem at the time, and a few years later, in 1960, Don himself won TAFF. (I was a nominator of an opposing candidate, Terry Carr, but that doesn't mean that I didn't think Don deserved to run for TAFF and deserved his win.)

Well, as you all know, things are different today. Nearly every major city (and plenty of minor cities, too) has a fanclub. The majority of the members of those clubs think of themselves as fans, and attend at least the nearby conventions, and in many cases help to put them on. But few of these fans are familiar with fanzines. The "fannish traditions" they know are usually local traditions, unknown elsewhere. The fannish history they know is usually only the history of the local club. Many are even ignorant of prozines, having discovered science fiction in books or the visual media. If confronted about this ignorance, such fans will usually argue that our history, and indeed the history of the sf field, is irrelevant to them, unimportant to them, of no use to them.

Does this matter?

Probably not — unless one of them decides to take advantage of one of our traditions, like, say, TAFF. . . .

Does Samantha b Jeude know *anything* about the history and traditions of TAFF? Is she aware that it was set up so that the people in the host country could meet someone they'd long known on paper — someone they really *wanted* to meet? Does she realize that *fanzines* (along with personal correspondence) are the medium through which this kind of acquaintanceship gets established?

I've heard a certain amount of ugly speculation: That this is another Martha Beck situation, an attempt to wrest TAFF out of the hands of fanzine fandom and turn it over to convention fandom. That if Samantha wins, we can kiss TAFF goodbye. I think that's unlikely, all the way around. Martha Beck was a pawn of other people who wanted to manipulate TAFF for reasons related to the 1984 TAFF Wars. They don't seem to be involved in this race (or fandom itself, anymore). And if Samantha *does* win, it won't be *The End of the World, As We Know It*. There will be problems, largely due to the woman's ignorance of how TAFF is conducted, but no doubt people will help her,



and there is no guarantee that the next slate from this country won't be all fanzine fans again. After all, the British side will remain firmly in the hands of Our Sorts.

Speaking of which, former British TAFF winner (1986) Greg Pickersgill, had this to say in a recent letter to my coeditor:

"The candidacy of Samantha b Jeude is currently stretching my credulity to its breaking point. The good part is that she's done it all on the level with all the paperwork right and so on, though at least one of her UK nominators [Andy Croft] is pretty much a name without a face to almost all British fanzine fans. What's worrying me is that she is a pure and simple confan who has had fuck-all concern with either real US fanzine fandom or — especially — with British fandom

on any level before this all came up, and I wonder whether she'd have been so keen to stand if the Worldcon *wasn't* in Scotland next year. What this is likely to engender is a more public showing of the divide between confans and fanzine fans both here and there. After all she'll probably get a massive turnout of Southern confans (more insular than Tristan da Cunha) and other con-organising cronies who otherwise wouldn't give a toss about TAFF or any other unconventional fanactivity. The confans like Tim Illingworth over here who've got an almost pathological enmity for fanzine fans will all mobilise for her — whether or not they know anything about her — because she's one of Them not one of Us. In simple terms it means the vote is likely to be high and therefore more important to ensure you get your supporters to actually vote. In a more complex way it might mean that some serious thinking about the whys and wherefores of TAFF might be encouraged.

"Like about eligibility for voting, and what elements of fandom TAFF is for, or is it something that is in fact the property of Fandom as a Whole including every damned little offshoot. OK, there are rules and so on but the only one that applies says something woolly to the effect that a voter must have been active for two years or more. The problem here is that when that was contrived it was inconceivable that two years activity in fandom would have comprised only convention going with little or not contact with fanzines. And especially not the outright hostility to fanzine fandom evinced by such as the egregious Illingworth. We may have a situation where scores of people will vote who will be completely unknown to the administrators (or any other prominent fanzine-type fans) on either side but who will actually fulfill the voting requirements absolutely. Supposedly voters who can't satisfy the adjudicator of their genuineness can be discounted, but when there is such an enormous gap as exists between

the fanzine and con fans (in the US more than here, and in the South especially, where even their fucking fanzine fans don't interact much with either the rest of US fanzine fandom or Britain) we have a problem.

"Another aspect is that a large proportion of the voters might be utterly ignorant of the respective merits of the other candidates, making a foolishness of the whole thing. Of course you can contend that we are as equally ignorant of Samanda Jeude but that ignores the whole point of TAFF which is based primarily on the idea that people on one side or the other will have prior knowledge due to fanzine activity, and that is the basic fucking foundation stone of the whole thing.

"I'd like to see some debate on the entire future and continuance of the Transatlantic Fan Fund. I have found it equally easy to find reasons to continue it as is (possibly the least satisfying because in the vague state things are right now it is hard to be truly enthusiastic for something without knowing its real purpose), continue under dramatically changed conditions (which could be either widening it out to a degree that makes its initial intention void, or tightening it all up to exclude participation from all but the 'traditional' fanzine based fans), or having a planned winding down culminating in a final run around 1999/2000/2001.

"I tend to favour the last apocalyptic solution, on the basis that the very idea that powered TAFF in the Fifties has become more divorced from reality as time has gone on, and rather than have it linger on pathetically into the next century we should all be tough enough to admit that its time is near. OK, you might get an outcry from a lot of people who think something is being taken away from *them* — and I am thinking specifically about confans who may now believe, more in the US than here, that TAFF is *theirs* now (I blame the tendency of US TAFF administrators to raise funds from conventions for this) but no one's going to be saying *they* can't set up whatever damned fund they want to swap administrators and gofers back and forth. All I contend is that it *won't* be the Transatlantic Fan Fund and will not have been set up in the first instance for people who knew each other as fanwriters to meet in person.

"This may all seem to you like a sledgehammer hovering menacingly over a hazelnut but I do think something's wrong here and we ought to bite the bullet and do something about it. Mind you not everyone feels this way; of people I have talked to recently Pam Wells and Abi Frost agree with me to varying extents, Tony Berry doesn't think there's a problem at all, and Dave Langford seems to think that although things are awry there's not much can be done about it, thinking that if the administrators now or in the future wound-up

TAFF, even with general approval from the traditional fanzine fans, some public spirited hero would rush in to save the situation and keep it all going, possibly, as he says, 'in safe conrunner hands.' Well, that's one view and in a way not far from my point — I don't give a toss whether the conrunners set up their own TAFF analog for themselves, I just don't accept that it should claim line of descent from something that was actually a noble and wonderful idea."

I think Greg makes a number of good points, although I don't agree with all of them, the most important of which is that this needs to be debated and discussed. It would be nice to hear from Samanda herself, or perhaps her nominators, just to find out what they have to offer to this discussion.

Personally, I'd like to propose another option for TAFF:

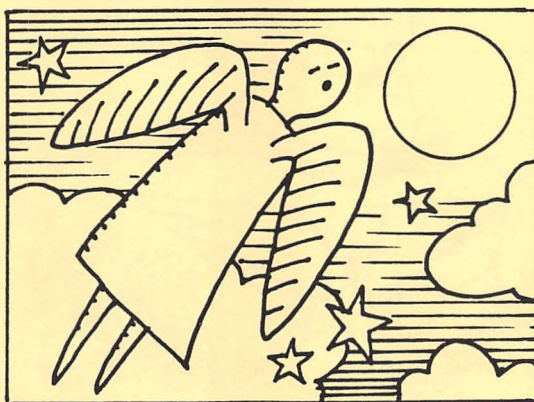
I think participation should be open to all fans whose activities in fandom have made them known to a majority of the fans in the host country. This doesn't rule out conrunners, but it requires of them that they be enough *more* than just conrunners that they have distinguished themselves in a positive way to fans across the Atlantic. I think that even as we in fanzine fandom can trace our lineage directly back to true First Fandom, so TAFF should remain in the hands of those whose awareness of fandom is whole, and not insularly regional. (For instance, he's never been very active in fanzines, but Geoff Ryman's performance of D. West's "Performance" at various British conventions — I saw it at Brighton in 1987 — has been much applauded, and might well make American voters want to see him win a future TAFF race, hypothetically speaking. . . .)

In the meantime, I want to underline Greg's admonition to Dan: *it's important that we fanzine fans vote* — and vote for Dan, of course. He is the hands-down favorite in Britfandom.

KARL EDWARD WAGNER is dead. I'm saddened, but not surprised to hear it.

I met Karl and his then-wife Barbara in 1977, at Suncon. They were a larger-than-life couple, almost literally. Dr. Wagner looked like a biker, or maybe a Viking, with his golden-red shoulder-length hair and full beard, his body looking at once well-developed (shoulders, arms, chest) and out of shape (beer belly). You could easily picture him on some great Hog, cruising down the highway in his leathers. Barbara was a gorgeous amazon, at least as tall as I am, with long straight hair and a dazzling smile. She was, as they say, built.

We quickly became friends. We shared a taste for certain drugs, and Karl and I already had a professional relationship — I'd bought stories from him for *Fantastic*. The Wagners, as I then thought of them,



popped up at many of the conventions I attended, ranging from a tiny Rovacon (the huckster room was one two-bed motel room; the program room was another) to Brighton in 1979. At the 1980 DeepSouth Con, Karl introduced me to a then-local, Atlanta, newspaperman and mystery novelist, Richard Moore. Richard reminded me that I'd published a letter of his in 1976 in *Amazing*. (A few years later Richard moved to Washington to become a senator's press secretary; when the senator lost his reelection bid, Richard stayed on as a senior Veep in a major PR agency. We've become good friends over the years, and I credit that fact to Karl introducing us.)

I began picking up on problems in their marriage in the early eighties; by 1984 Barbara had moved to Los Angeles to live with Dennis Etchison. I was sorry to see that happen. I'd enjoyed Karl and Barbara as a couple — they seemed made for each other — and I didn't like what was happening to Karl. Worse, I didn't like Etchison — and never had — and couldn't feel happy for Barbara in her new relationship with him.

Karl, when I encountered him in the mid and late eighties, seemed morose, doom ridden, given to a certain false heartiness which would fall away from him the instant that Barbara next crossed his mind, as she seemed to do all too often. He'd throw his arm across my shoulder, and confide to me that things were tough, but of course so was he, and he'd damned well see things through, you betchum. It seemed to me that he was drinking more, and doing more cocaine. We'd all done the occasional line recreationally in the seventies, a time when cocaine's dangers were less well known, but even in 1980 Karl was approaching it more seriously. Of course Barbara had matched him appetite for appetite and at the same time exercised some control over him, providing him with a sense of responsibility for her if not for himself, a balance of sorts. Left to himself, there was no control, no balance, only appetite.

Karl died of "liver damage." He was only 48. Far too young.

HONDA NEWS There is no Honda news to report; both our Hondas are fine, thanks.

However, I've changed employment. For the past eight and a half years (with three months off for incarceration) I've been a comics rack-jobber of sorts, maintaining (inventorying, stocking) comics racks in a chain of local record stores, the Kemp Mill Music stores in Northern Virginia, D.C., and Maryland (as far away as Annapolis and Columbia). It meant a lot of driving and is the principal reason for the high mileage

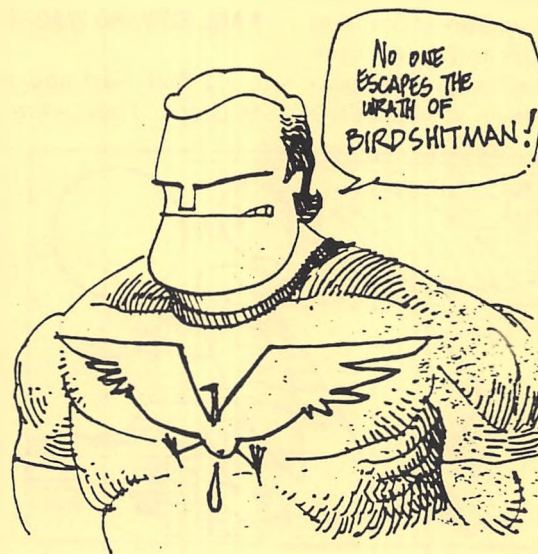
(currently, 189,000) on my Honda — which I bought, new, only a month or so before I started the job. I was working for my old friend, Michael Nally, who owns Hole In The Wall Books in Falls Church, and Cosmos Books out in Manassas — the same J. Michael Nally whose artwork can be found in many old issues of *Fantastic* and *Amazing* from the seventies. (The least enjoyable part of the job was getting up at 2:00 a.m. every Wednesday morning to meet a truck from Diamond Comics — the distributor, based in Baltimore — to pick up the week's load of new comics. I won't miss that.)

In my eight-plus years of selling comics I've noticed a number of trends and changes in the industry. There were high points — can you believe I had, upon occasion, to fit over forty cases of comics into my little Honda? — and low points. But the overall trend was and is down. Diamond used to use a large truck, fully packed, for its Richmond run (the one I met in the wee hours); now a much smaller Econoline van is used, and is often half-empty. I hear stories of recently-established comics shops going out of business. And on my racks the message was plain and clear: sales are *way* down. "Standard" comics like Marvel's Spiderman titles, *Captain America*, *Fantastic Four*, et al., aren't selling anymore. Superman's "death" revived DC Comics for the short-haul, as has the more recent "Zero Time" event, but DC's sales always (in recent times) lagged behind Marvel's. I racked at least three Marvel titles for every DC title. When Image was launched, with *Spawn*, it briefly eclipsed DC in sales, but formula product and many missed deadlines (Image is a "creator-run" comics company) have crippled its sales. And now Marvel is planning to kill its most successful titles, *X-Men* and *Uncanny X-Men*, in a convulsive redo of its mutants' history (involving time travel to rewrite the past). A sign of desperation, I think. The comics industry is in real, deep trouble. Comics aren't selling and retailers are folding. The boom that began in the early sixties has, after thirty years, totally played itself out.

A good time for me to move on.

I lucked into a better job, this time working for another old friend, George Andrews. I've known George for around twenty years, during which time he's been a solid part of our local writers' group, The Vicious Circle. Six years ago his brother Tom and Tom's partner Eric started up a tee-shirt company, Logotel, in a small warehouse in Kensington, Maryland (just up the street from another fledgling company, Common Ground Distributors, which

wholesales nature books and associated materials; started up by Joann Klappauf and Steve Brown in 1986, Common Ground is now quite successful and has



relocated to western North Carolina, taking Steve and Jo out of the area much to my regret). George, a computer mavin, set up the computer systems for both Logotel and Common Ground.

This summer Logotel also moved out of Kensington — to Columbia, Maryland. And George was hired as the company's comptroller. And, in late October, when his Accounts Payable guy quit to start up a furniture store in Ohio, George asked me if I'd like the job.

It's a job for which I had no training and no experience, but for which I found I had an affinity. (Us anal-retentive types are good at such jobs, it seems.) The company is congenial (there is no dress code, and the atmosphere is relaxed and comradly and clearly on the way up, growing enormously every year. (Logotel makes the Far Side, Grimmy, Peanuts, and a wide variety of other nationally sold tee-shirts, and is the major supplier for J.C. Penney's.) In the process of learning the job, I've been forced into computer literacy, to which I had no objection (although this editorial continues to be written on an ancient Underwood). Indeed, the only fly in the ointment is the commute: 95 miles, roundtrip, each day. (Fortunately, it's a three-day-a-week job.) That's around 15,000 miles a year.

I've seen some amazing sights on that commute — like the woman driving a Volvo stationwagon at 45 mph in the midst of traffic going 60 and higher . . . while reading a book, opened across her steering wheel! Then there was the driver of a Lincoln Towncar who grew impatient with the four lanes of traffic heading up I-95 at 80 mph, and passed us all on the shoulder at around 95 mph. (I wrote down his license-plate number, just in case. . . .) But so far only one fool — from Pennsylvania (and, yes, I copped his number too) — has tried to kill me. He decided to cut me off by cutting in front of me (at a high speed) with literally less than six inches between our bumpers. His wife sat calmly in the front passenger seat the whole time, and I suspect he never even noticed I was there when he made his move: oblivious.

This January, Honda will introduce the Odyssey, the new Honda minivan. The auto press is already giving it rave reviews as the best-designed and best-handling of all the current minivans. I look forward to owning one some day.

POLITICS 1994 I wasn't going to write anything about the recent elections. Andy's anguished wail in *Apparatchik* spoke for many of us, I thought, and besides which, the mundane media are full of pundits pontificating on the meaning and significance of our country's recent convulsive surge to the GOP. Since I have been disenfranchised until 1996 (when I will be allowed to petition a Republican governor, who wants to abolish all parole, for the restoration of my voting rights) I have been forced to stand on the sidelines, a non-participant in every election since 1986. So I have watched a Republican — elected because he is

the son of a famous Redskins coach — begin to undo all of Virginia's fiscally conservative policies, in favor of bankrupting the state with the construction of scores of new prisons while cutting taxes, this on top of the deficit he ran up in his first year as governor. (I grew up hearing that Republicans were Fiscally Conservative, but the Reagan years gave the lie to that notion.) And I can only be grateful that Ollie North was not elected our senator. (Indeed, the threat of that eventuality brought out the highest "off-year" voter turnout — over 70% — Northern Virginia has seen in many years.)

But what spurs me to write is the news that Newt Gingrich is writing a book — a novel — for Baen Books. Well, kinda.

The book is not the first of Gingrich's to be published by Baen Books — although it is the first for which Baen is paying the publication costs. (At least one previous Gingrich book, a political tract, was published by Baen, but its costs were underwritten by a PAC, making it in essence a vanity publication under Baen's imprint. Apparently this is the kind of deal Baen cut with a number of right-wingers during the eighties.) It's an "alternate world" novel, set in, and titled, 1945, in which Hitler never "declared war" on the U.S., a premise I'm not sure I find plausible. (Would it have stopped us from joining the war in Europe? What about Pearl Harbor? The Japanese had already made common cause with Hitler. . . .)

When the news of this hit the papers, a scene was widely quoted (from "a draft") in which a slightly kinky seduction is played out. And there was a reference to a kinda "goofy" George Bush as a WW2 aviator. This was followed up in the next day's editions with the news that Newt had asked the publisher to delete the reference to Bush as "goofy," and that Baen Himself had admitted to "adding" that part.

This all sounded a bit fishy to me. Where, in his hectic political and teaching schedule, had Newt Gingrich found the time to *write*? And how did it come about that a publisher could just "add" stuff to a novel by a Big Name Politico?

It eventually came out that good ol' boy Newt hadn't actually *written* this novel. No, he just supplied the concept, and maybe some oversight ("Take out that reference to Bush as 'goofy!'"). Another writer, a Baen skiffy hack whose name rang no bells with me, did the actual writing, including that slightly kinky seduction scene — of which Newt, as putative author, said, "This is just a draft. We'll fine-tune it and tone down stuff like that in the final copy."

I have always regarded James Baen with professional contempt (he stole every idea he ever espoused), and my opinion of Newt Gingrich is no higher (he is a loose cannon and will probably help guarantee a Democratic win in 1996). That the two of them are bound together in this sleezy, meritricious publishing deal has a certain karmic justice to it that I can't help but admire.

— Ted White

The Reaff

Chapter One

The sky outside is the colour of mimeo, printed with the ink turned way down. Its greyness reflects my unease about what I intend to do, but my resolve is firm. Momentarily I pause, the fanspace deck on my lap humming expectantly. Running my fingers over the smooth planes of its bond-quality housing I idly trace the bold, block letters of the corporate logo impressed on its surface and run through the deck's specs. A dual-operator rig, the BLAT-4 is configured as a compartmentalized, multiple unit. It's sleek and beautiful, a top of the line rig to be sure, and more than adequate for my purposes. When you've been a zinejockey as long as I have you're seldom seduced by large and outwardly impressive units, no longer confuse size with effectiveness, but though I'm perfectly happy with the more basic decks it's really nice to have access to one of the top-end jobs occasionally. Enough of this; with a single smooth motion, a hand pass over the surface of the deck, I phase into fanspace. . . .

. . . fanspace, feeling that same exhilarating rush I always feel. Realspace folds in on itself, replaced

instantly by the shapes and forms of fanspace, the inner-spatial landscape that is a representation of the sum total of all fannish activity, the matrix. And not only current activity either. The input of those who have since either flatlined or gone gafia remains, their contributions forming part of the whole even if not consciously acknowledged by those who use fanspace now. The structures in fanspace are analogues of centres of activity in realspace, constructs representing their place in the scheme of fandom. Those glowing spheres to my right are apas, virtual alephs that each

contain fanspaces of their own and are tricky to access, while every unit in that stream of tracers rushing by to my left is a LoC, each one only accessible via the rig it's aimed at but each still a part of the sum total of all the data that makes up fanspace. Up ahead are some of the largest structures in all the matrix: the fangroups. That glowing white pyramid represents the fan-activity of the Madison group, the golden cube the Minneapolis group, and that silver column the Leeds group. Las Vegas fandom is that crimson dodecahedron, Glasgow that azure

torus, while Belfast is the emerald triangle. There are many more.

The way distance works in fanspace is odd. While it brings groups in America, Australia, and Britain as

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Fanfiction
By Rob
Hansen

* * * *

Artwork By Dan Steffan

Information

close to each other as to those in the next city, it also has a distorting effect. Seen from a distance those fan-group structures seem monolithic and seamless, yet up close sub-divisions become apparent and what appeared to be a representation of stability might even be revealed as being composed of warring factions. This is certainly true of my city — has been for many years — and any impression of a single, citywide fandom is largely illusory. Yet, from a distance, we too look to some as a unified structure, a pale pink obelisk, tall and impressive, on the firmament of fanspace. Distance distorts and distance lies, what seems self-evident from afar being anything but when you get up close. This is true for groups, and it's true for people.

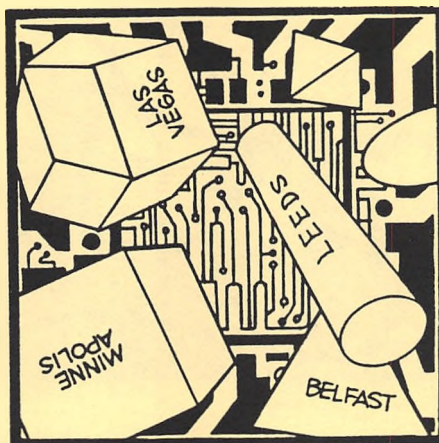
Fanspace is a wondrous construct, a consensus-reality, and there are times when it's easy to confuse the construct and the reality. For in fanspace there are structures that are not only analogues of fangroups but those that are analogues of individual fans. These constructs too are part of the consensus, their realspace counterparts providing most of the input from which they're formed. Most, but not all. Riding the zine stream I'm aware of the currents of data that drive it. The one formed by LoCs I've already described but there are others, the most important being gossip.

Easy to access for data about others it is next to impossible to access for data about you and yours, and the data it carries is always suspect at best. Nevertheless, it too adds to the constructs of the matrix because however dubious its data they are still taken account of. This is, after all, a *consensus* reality.

The part of fanspace that sees most activity these days is the region known as conspace, one that has long since eclipsed that through which the zine stream flows. I can see some of the often ridiculously ornate structures of conspace on the horizon but for the

moment I want to remain here in the decaying inner city of fanspace, in those areas where the zine stream still reaches. Dark and brooding are the myriad smaller structures that form the group analogue of my city's fandom as I descend among them. Levelling out, I finally find what I seek, a level area containing the constructs that represent most of the city's active fans. Some of these bear little relation to the real person I know as the result of that person wishing to establish a particular image in the matrix, while others bear little relation to the real person for different

reasons. Alighting next to the analogue of a close friend, I barely recognise it. It may represent a consensus, but the accretion of false data about it has added up to a distorted image, one I can't see in its entirety



thanks to not being able to fully access the current of gossip that flows through the zinestream. Someone has been busy, it seems, and I have a battle on my hands.

I've prepared a file in an attempt to get through the compacted assumptions, the false data, though it may be too late to do much good. In realspace I slide the disk into place, reviewing it as I do so. It's a quantum package of data designed as a direct assault on the matrix. There's too much ice compacted around the fanspace representation of my friend to attack it directly with a viral program so this way will have to suffice, even though it's going to stir up an immense amount of trouble. Since I still can't access all the data that make up this construct I can't grapple directly with every false input, but have to have faith that it will make itself known with time. Finishing my review of the file it takes no more than a simple pass of my hand to bring it up for insertion into the zinestream, and before my eyes in fanspace, in blazing letters, the title I've given it leaps into being . . . and just as suddenly vanishes in a blinding flash of light that seems to fill all fanspace in an instant. My vision soon returns, and with it comes the realisation that I am no longer in fanspace.

Chapter Two

I was lying in a cornfield. How I came to be there, I had no idea. Sitting up I breathed in deeply, savouring the warm and gentle breeze that caressed my hair and smelled of springtime. It was then that I saw her. She was beautiful, her long black hair framing a pale oval face, eyes concealed behind a pair of aviator-style mirrorshades. Dressed entirely in black leather, her only concession to colour lay in the green jewels hanging from her belt. She smiled at me as I got to my feet, amused by my confusion.

"Who are you?" I asked, "and where the hell am I?"

"If you don't know who I am, I can't tell you," she replied, her voice every bit as thrilling as the woman herself, "and I'm sure you'll soon figure out where you are."

She smiled again, obviously still amused, but somehow I knew that she was not laughing at me, that she wished only the best for me. Her presence was strangely calming, and I began to study my surroundings more closely, seeking an answer to the puzzle.

"The sky is too blue, the grass too green," I began, and the air hasn't smelled this good since I was a kid. Everything is too sharply defined, too perfect. It all

lacks 'gritty realism.' That means this is a simulation, and that I've somehow swapped the virtual reality of fanspace for another, more detailed one."

"Very good. Fanspace is a consensus reality, a construct filled with representations of real fan groups and real fans but it's not the only analogue of fandom and certainly not the oldest. Dig beneath the smooth and shiny surfaces of fanspace and you'll discover an older, and in many ways *truer* fannish landscape. Enter it and you enter the realm of myth and archetype, of potent symbols that still carry great power and continue to influence fans to this day. Years ago, a pair of talented fans explored that realm, imposing order on it in a brilliantly written tale that became a legend in its own right. You know that realm; you've always known it. Know it now."

"My Ghod!" I whispered, trembling in awe. "This is the land described in *The Enchanted Duplicator*!"

"Yes. What you see around you was created from images formed in your mind when you first read *The Enchanted Duplicator*. You may not consciously remember every detail after all this time, but it was all there in your sub-conscious. Now it's all around you."

"But why? What's going on? What am I doing here?"

"That's for you to discover," she said, popping a stick of gum into her mouth, "but I can tell you that only by reaching the Tower of Trufandom — the tower where the Enchanted Duplicator resides — will you be able to return to fanspace."

"Look," I protested, "I don't need to make the journey described in *The Enchanted Duplicator*. I'm no longer a neofan."

"I never said you were. But you *do* need to travel your own path through this land. Not only is there no other way for you to return to fanspace but, trufan though you be, there are yet new lessons for you to learn along the way and, in some cases, old ones to re-learn."

"Okay, okay," I said, sighing in resignation, "I know when I'm beaten. So now what?"

"So now you start on your journey. But first take up your Shield of Umor, and always be careful to keep it brightly polished. There is no surer protection against the perils you will soon face."

Nearby in the corn, where she had pointed, lay a glistening shield. I picked it up, marvel-

ling at its lightness and was suddenly filled with joy. I turned to thank the mysterious woman but she had vanished completely, only the hint of her perfume lingering on the breeze to show that she had ever been there at all.



Chapter Three

Within a few hours I'd reached the great arterial road that ran to the capital city of Mundane. Pausing while waiting for an opportunity to cross, I noticed other travellers boarding luxurious coaches bound for supposedly fabulous destinations such as Wealth, Success, and Respectability. Not surprisingly, none of them were going in the direction of Fandom. Crossing the road during a lull in the traffic, I marched confidently towards the Forest of Stupidity which, I remembered, grew all around the country of Mundane and sheltered it from the searching winds that blew out of fandom. I pondered this as I headed for the narrow path that led through the forest.

The path was no longer the narrow and overgrown track described in *The Enchanted Duplicator* but a full-fledged highway. I stared at it in some confusion, gradually becoming aware of something strange. The path might now have become a highway but no one was using it. A short way along the highway, just before the first bend in the road, was a large and attractive building. I ambled over to it, curious about the flashing lights and strange noises that were emanating from it. The closer I got, the more fascinating it became. Mesmerised, I entered the mall.

On either side of the covered way were shops filled with the sort of books that had filled my mind with wonder when I was young. These days I rarely found a book that could fire my imagination as those of my youth had, a loss I had once regretted but was now resigned to. Next to the book stores were picture-houses featuring dazzling light-shows that retold the stories in the books using sights and sounds designed to delight and stun. Still further on was an arcade on which were an amazing array of screens displaying games and words, every one of them having Neofans in front of them, their fingers running over the keyboards. At the end of the arcade there was a vacant terminal and I somehow found myself sitting down in front of the screen, my fingers beginning to caress the keyboard. What harm could it do to play with the terminal for a short time before continuing? I began tapping the keys.

An indeterminate amount of time later my concentration was abruptly interrupted by the screen going blank. Irritated, I shook myself and gazed around me at the other terminals, where the Neofans still worked away. I frowned, feeling oddly mpty. Some sort of malfunction had obviously knocked out the screen, but how long had I been here?

Judging by the length of my beard, I must have been in the arcade for weeks. Shocked by this discovery and suddenly filled with new resolve, I rose to my feet and strode purposefully out of the arcade and the mall itself, not looking back once. The mall was a bauble designed to entrap the unwary, one of many perils that undoubtedly lay ahead. Only good fortune had saved me this time. I vowed that I would not be so careless again. Ah, sweet idiocy!

Chapter Four

Beyond the bend in the road the path became the overgrown track I'd expected, and in several places I had to cut my way through brush and thickets. By mid-afternoon I'd made my way to the place where I hoped to rest before continuing the journey. The clearing was not what I expected. There was supposed to be an aerodome here containing the fat and prosperous Swift and his beautiful silver flying machine, the Aeroplanograph, but there was no sign of either. In fact the clearing was almost entirely filled by a low, sleek, futuristic-looking building. After locating a door I entered, and was immediately greeted by a tall, thin man with wild hair, who wore thick glasses and a white lab-coat. He looked so much like everyone's image of a mad scientist that I found it hard to suppress a smile. At his feet was a small dog that seemed strangely docile.

"Come in, young man, come in!" he said enthusiastically. "My name is Zerrock. And what can I do for you, eh?"

"Umm, I need to get over the mountains and was hoping you might be able to help."

"And so you shall!" said Zerrock, looking at my backpack. "But my dear young man, surely you're not thinking of climbing those mountains? Why my dog, Orijn, knows a tunnel that will take you under the mountains! With his help, and that of my wondrous copier, we'll have you in Fandom in no time!"

"Your . . . copier?"

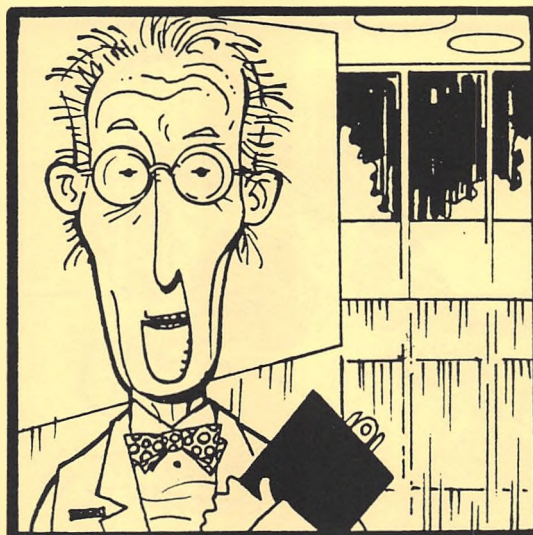
"Why, yes. Follow me and I'll show you!"

He led me into the next room, Orijn trotting alongside him, and gestured expansively towards the gleaming metal and glass machine it contained.

"Well, what do you think of my copier? Isn't it the most wonderful machine you've ever

seen?"

"It certainly is impressive," I replied and it was, but my attention was elsewhere. Two scantily-clad young women had just entered the room through a door on the opposite wall and I couldn't take my eye



off them. With their jet-black hair and clear white skins they were the most beautiful creatures I'd ever seen. Their seductive smiles and come-hither looks produced strong feelings of desire, feelings I would have succumbed to had Zerlocks not rushed over and herded the young women out of the room.

"Who were they?" I asked, still burning with desire.

"My daughters Litho and Ophset," replied Zerlocks irritably. "They're very beautiful, but also very expensive. They'll bleed you dry and then you'll never get to Fandom. No, no, young man, you're far better off sticking with Zerlocks."

The old scientist picked up Orijnl and began smoothing the small dog. I couldn't help noticing there was something odd about that animal. Orijnl had an attractive coat, with clearly defined patches of black and white, but that was not all. On the white areas words had been tattooed, words that appeared to be some sort of dictionary of fannish terms and which had letters composed not of lines but rather patterns of dots.

"Ah, I see you are admiring Orijnl's tattoos!" observed Zerlocks. "They were done by a talented woman who uses nine needles at once. Her name is Dorothy-May Trixton but she prefers the shortened version, Dot-May Trix." Placing Orijnl carefully in the machine and closing the lid over him, Zerlocks explained: "I'm far too fond of my dog to part with him, of course, but my copier will produce a perfect twin of him to lead you under the mountains and into Fandom!"

Zerlocks pressed a button on the copier and there was a whirring sound followed by a flash of brilliant light from under the lid. When the process was finished he lifted two dogs out of the copier, Orijnl and the copy, but though Zerlocks had claimed they would be identical I knew instantly which was the copy. Some of the black areas of its coat were greyer than Orijnl's while others seemed more evenly dark yet fuzzier around the edges. The dots making up the tattoos on the white area had run together somewhat, making the words easier to read, but it was when I looked into the copy's eyes that I got my biggest shock.

"This copy has no soul!" I cried, appalled. I backed away from the creature as Zerlocks, getting visibly agitated, tried to push it into my arms.

"You must take it," urged the old scientist. "It's the easiest way getting into Fandom!"

"There are no easy ways!" I shouted, and turned, fleeing the building and crashing into the forest.

Soon the clearing was far behind me and as the

trees began to thin out and the ground to rise I knew that I'd finally arrived at the foothills of the Mountains of Inertia. Ahead of me was a battered sign on which could still just be discerned the words: *Letterpress Railroad*. Shaking my head wistfully, I set off on the steep path up the mountain.

Chapter Five

The path was steeper than I'd expected, and soon I was near exhaustion. I felt like an old fan and tired, retracing a journey that, in my own way, I had already made once, long ago. Why then, despite the obstacles, had it seemed so much easier the first time? The Mountains of Inertia were well named, it seemed, and I no longer had the youth and enthusiasm to surmount them. Laying my Shield of Umor aside, I sat down on a rock to rest awhile. It was then that I heard the music, hauntingly familiar music. Intrigued, I got to my feet and followed the music to its source, a brightly lit cave just the other side of a nearby outcrop of rock. An elfin young woman in a garish costume noticed me and invited me in. The music, I noted, accompanied a movie being projected on a wall of the cave, and I knew where I'd heard it before. The movie and the music had been playing in the mall.

"Hi, I'm Meeja," said the girl, favouring me with a broad smile, "and I hope you'll join us."

"I'm on my way to Fandom," I said, "and I'm not entirely sure what exactly it is I'm looking for, though a strange man I met a few hours ago obviously thought I was seeking to publish the perfect fanzine."

"Why *this* is Fandom," she said, "and we publish fanzines here!"

I stared after her in surprise as she rushed over to one of the cave's costumed inhabitants and returned bearing a glossy publication, noticing for the first time that she was wearing pointed plastic ears.

"Here," she said, waving the magazine at me, "what better fanzine could there be than this?"

I flicked through the magazine, noticing with surprise that it was filled with photographs of the actors in the entertainment being projected on the cave wall, along with articles and fiction about them.

"But . . . but this isn't a *real* fanzine!" I said, in a voice that did not hide my puzzlement and disappointment. Meeja

reacted badly to this.

"Get out!" she screamed. "Get out! You're a snob just like the others of your kind!"

Sighing, I shouldered my pack, picked up my shield, and headed out of the cave. I had nothing



against Meeja and her friends, and the magazine she had shown me had been perfectly all right for what it was. Unfortunately what it, and Meeja's little group, were just wasn't what I was looking for. Strangely, though the encounter had not been a pleasant one, I felt invigorated enough by it to tackle the rest of the climb, and in a few hours I had climbed over the mountains and was heading down into the gently sloping foothills that marked the edge of the most beautiful country I had ever seen . . . Fandom!

Chapter Six

It was a land of streams and meadows and valleys, over which ran meandering roads, dotted here and there with cheerful cottages. Beyond all this, in the mists of distance, I saw yet another peak, though it was too far away to make out any details clearly. It seemed to have a golden radiance about its summit and I realised, with a gasp of wonderment, that this must be the Tower of Trufandom. Traversing the land between the tower and where I now stood looked to be a daunting task, but it was one I was determined I would be up to. First, I would have to cross the stretch of land that lay immediately before me.

I had expected to face the dangers of the Hekto Swamp at this point, but the land was dry and firm. Any swamp that had been here had long since been drained. This unexpected good fortune put a spring in my step and I was soon covering the ground at a healthy pace. Then it happened. One moment I was striding purposefully ahead; the next the earth had caved in beneath me and I was falling. Reacting at once, without conscious thought, I reached out blindly and grabbed hold of the far edge of the newly-opened crevice, my fall being halted at the cost of my arms almost being wrenched from their sockets. Painfully, I dragged myself to safety and lay there for some minutes, wild-eyed and panting. When I'd recovered somewhat, I crawled to the edge of the rift and peered over it. My nose was instantly assailed by the fetid odour of decay, and I sensed rather than saw that something was stirring in the depths of the pit, something dangerous that would only return to its slumbers if I left this place immediately. That was all the prompting I needed. In no time at all the rift was far behind me.



Chapter Seven

Soon, as anticipated, I had arrived at the Jungle of Inexperience, which stretched all around Fandom. Confident that it presented no dangers to one as experienced as I, I plunged into the thick of it, determined to forge ahead as swiftly as possible. Forcing my way through a particularly dense thicket I burst out the other side and lost my footing on the slippery ground. Before I could do anything about it, I had slid down the short, steep slope and plunged into a mighty river which roared through the jungle and whose waters were as black as pitch. I had fallen into the Torrent of Overinking and was being borne away by a flood far beyond my powers to fight. I would surely have been lost then had not a thrown line landed in the water within my reach. I grasped the line, which was made of knotted sheets (called "slip-sheets," I dimly recalled), and was slowly pulled to the bank by a figure I could only barely make out through the churning waters. Then I glimpsed the tell-tale gleam of a Shield of Umor. Was my rescuer another pilgrim, one in search of the Enchanted Duplicator, I wondered as I finally reached the bank? I lay there for a few minutes, panting and cursing my carelessness, which had almost doomed me again. By the time I had my breath back and raised my head to thank my rescuer, I was alone. My mysterious benefactor was nowhere to be seen.

Chapter Eight

At length, I left the jungle and almost immediately came upon a large and imposing structure. I was greeted at the door by its guardian, a kindly-looking figure with a round head from which most of the hair had long since fled and a wispy grey moustache perched atop large lips about which played a knowing smile.

"What is this place and who are you?" I asked.

"Why, this is the Museum of Fantiquities," he replied, "and I am its Keeper. Come in, why don't you, and I'll show you its wonders."

And what wonders they were! There, in pristine condition and full working order, were examples of every type of duplicator ever made, while one vast room was filled with shelf after shelf of fanzines.

"Every fanzine that has ever been published," said the Keeper, beaming proprietorially at the part of the Museum that was clearly his pride and joy, "or that ever will be. All fully indexed and cross-referenced."

One room contained a tower of beer cans that rose

up through a portal in the roof and reached all the way to the moon, while another — the largest of all — contained a complete hotel with the name "TUCKER'S" over the main entrance. Yet another contained Swift's wonderful Aeroplanograph, mounted on a pedestal and suitably labelled, and a fenced off section of bare swampy ground, stained purple.

"All that's left of the Hekto Swamp that once covered all of this area not covered by the Jungle of Inexperience," explained the Keeper. "As the popularity of hekto waned so the swamp gradually drained away. The same, sadly, cannot be said of the Torrent of Overinking. As the duplicator owned by those fans who still use them get ever older so the torrent's flow gets ever fiercer."

I wandered the Museum's halls for hours, the genial Keeper filling me in on the story behind any item — and there were many of them — that piqued my curiosity. At length, we came to a locked room, the only room I'd seen in the whole Museum that wasn't freely accessible.

"Why is this room locked when none of the others are?" I asked. The Keeper looked uncomfortable and was clearly reluctant to answer me but, at length, he sighed and took a key from his pocket.

"This room is locked because what's inside is dangerous and still has the potential to cause great suffering in Fandom," he explained as he unlocked the door. We entered the room, which was small and airless. It was empty save for a number of shields hanging on the rear wall. They looked like Shields of Umor, but instead of gleaming the surface of each and every one was a dull and featureless black that reflected no light whatsoever.

"What are they?" I whispered, unaccountably chilled.

"Fandom's shame," replied the Keeper. "If you really wish to know more there is a way, but be warned: learning their secret will not be a pleasant experience."

"Maybe not, but I'm as sure as I can be that it's an experience I'm supposed to have."

"Very well," said the Keeper, taking my hand in his and taking a firm hold of one of the shields with his other, "grasp the other edge of this shield and all will be revealed."

I did as he asked and almost at once images of Fandom past flooded into my mind. The sky was dark and filled with thunder, and I was looking at a broad plain on which two opposing groups, their Shields of Umor as dark as night, were hurling crackling bolts of energy at each other. When a bolt thrown by one side hit someone on the other

that person would wince, grit their teeth, and hurl their own bolts with twice the force and twice the passion they had previously. Where the bolts fell to the ground, great cracks would appear and the earth would shake. The sound and fury of the conflict was such that I almost failed to notice the columns of people in the distance, marching into the Glades of Gafia.

"What's going on?" I yelled above the din, appalled at what I was witnessing.

"It's a feud," said the Keeper, his voice filled with a deep sadness. "Perhaps the worst Fandom has ever suffered. It began when two fans disagreed over what they saw as a point of principle, and soon they were throwing Bolts of Bile at each other. Only the strongest Shields of Umor can withstand such a bombardment, and theirs quickly lost all their shine and ability to protect. Soon others took sides and the dispute escalated, plunging all of Fandom into war. The damage done to Fandom was immense and the bile unleashed created great rifts, some of which to this day are only lightly crusted over, as you yourself had the misfortune to discover on your way here. There were those who had no interest in the conflict, those for whom it had irreparably poisoned Fandom, and they were the ones who departed for the Glades of Gafia. Few of them ever returned."

"What was the point of principle that started the feud?" I asked, tears welling at the carnage I was witnessing, at the wilful disregard of the combatants for the damage they were doing to the beautiful land of Fandom.

"No one knows," said the Keeper, gently breaking our contact with the shield and returning us to the present, "but as bad as the feud was and despite all the grief it caused, Fandom recovered. True, the rifts remain, and they're a hidden danger that could always be reopened by the unwary, but Fandom is very resilient. That it's renewed itself in the past is cause to believe that it can do so again if it needs to. Also, and this is a point that should never be forgotten, though the havoc it wreaks is good reason never to enter into a feud lightly, nevertheless there are occasions on which you *have* to take a stand. If you do, however, don't make the mistake made by those we just viewed: always keep your Shield of Umor brightly polished."

We chatted for a while after that, and I marvelled at all the wonderful artwork adorning the walls of the final gallery in the Museum. Then it was time to go, but I found that I didn't want to.

"No, no, you must continue on your way," said the Keeper when I told him. "There are dangers in losing



the past, which is why I run the Museum, but there is also a danger of losing yourself in the past. You're welcome to return here at any time, but it's important that you engage with Fandom in the present."

"You're probably right," I agreed, wistfully, "but it sure is tempting."

Soon, with the fresh supplies the Keeper had given me, I bid him a fond farewell and set off on the next leg of my journey, towards the beckoning city I could see in the distance.

Chapter Nine

It was only as I got close to the city that I realised how enormous it was; a vast, sprawling metropolis. A sign on the outskirts identified it: *Sercon, the City of Serious Constructivism, Welcomes Careful Readers*. So this was the city of Sercon, I thought to myself, wondering just when it had got so big! In a daze I wandered among the buildings of the city, most of which were hugely imposing and not at all the ramshackle affairs I'd been expecting. And yet there was something distinctly odd about many of them. Their complicated geometries and over-ornate surfaces seemed to defy sense and logic and I found that contemplating one of them for more than a few seconds made my head hurt. Strangely, some of them had no way in that I could find.

Sercon was a bustling hive of activity, with new construction underway everywhere and also extensions to existing structures, which usually meant adding layers of elaboration. Most of the buildings appeared to have been built using the same formidable-looking material, and I watched with interest as a group of builders poured a new foundation. Two of their number carried a large vat brimming over with steaming brown stuff which was giving off an incredibly foul smell, though they seemed not to notice. As they poured the horrible stuff into the hole they had prepared, the rest of their fellows rushed forward and dropped flexible hoses into it. Puffing themselves up alarmingly they then began to blow furiously into the hoses, causing the brown stuff to bubble and boil. At length, they withdrew the hoses and the surface of the substance calmed, setting rigidly to become the same material that so much of Sercon seemed to be made of. Curious, I examined it more closely, noting that it was impossible to scratch or chip and that it had no smell to indicate what it was composed of.

"Amazing substance, isn't it?" said a voice behind me.

"Indeed it is," I said as I turned, wondering who this newcomer might be. He was tall and stoutly built, with neatly trimmed hair and beard, and was puffing on a meerschaum pipe.

"It's astoundingly dense and totally impervious, y'know," he said. "Nothing can make a dent in it. It's composed in equal parts of bovine byproduct and hot air and can be moulded into any shape, no matter how ludicrous."

"I wasn't expecting Sercon to be this large," I told him, "or the residents to be quite so busy and industrious."

"That's the Akadeem for you. They've moved into Sercon in every increasing numbers over the years and quite transformed the place. It's been wholesale gentrification, really. I only wish I could make more sense of most of the structures they throw up. Some are very elegant, even illuminating, but all too many seem to exist for no other reason than to call attention to their architect. There are even one or two based on my own writings but, flattered though I was, I can't say that I actually understood them."

"Who are you, by the way?" I asked, somewhat awkwardly.

"Forgive me. I was forgetting my manners. My name is Profan. Not that I'm the first to hold that title and, with luck, I won't be the last."

We shook hands, I introduced myself, and Profan continued to discourse on the nature of the city. Noticing that one group of Akadeem, in contrast to most of their fellows, were actually taking a building down, I asked Profan if he knew who they were.

"Deconstructionists," he replied.

At Profan's invitation, I accompanied him to his mansion in the old part of town. No sooner had we

passed through the mansion's impressive gates, and Profan had locked them behind us, than bolts of bile began hitting the ground near my feet. Astonished, I sought out their source and found it on the other side of the gates in the form of a small, bespectacled man who was throwing bolts at me with all his might while screaming obscenities. I was so stunned that I was rooted to the spot — not that any of the bolts landed near enough to cause me any harm.

"Wh . . . who is that, and why is he attacking me?" I asked.

"Oh, that's just Antifanpro," said Profan, unconcernedly. "It's usually best just to ignore him."

Difficult as it was, I took Profan's advice and followed him into the mansion, turning at the door to see that Antifanpro, having lost interest in me, had



wandered away, though I could still hear his shouted imprecations, carried on the breeze. I felt I should quiz Profan further about this strange creature, but my host had already led us into a large hall lined with kegs of beer and a shelf of fine whiskeys.

"Hmnm. How did that happen?" he asked, taking a bottle from the shelf. "This shouldn't be out here. This is *cooking* whisky!"

Tossing the bottle aside, he pulled me a pint of clear, dark ale from one of the kegs, pulled one for himself, then bid me sit down at the long table that ran down the centre of the hall. No sooner had we done so than the doors at the far end of the hall opened and servants began bringing in platter after platter of food and laying them before us. Profan, clearly a man of large appetites, piled his plate high with meat and vegetables, Smothered the whole in a thick, dark gravy, and attacked it with great gusto. We both ate well — though Profan ate more than me, demolishing a further two plates of food, each as large as the first, before he seemed replete — and then, relaxing afterwards over further pints of ale, we began talking. I was intrigued by a painting on the wall of a tall, bespectacled man wearing an immaculate suit. Somehow, he had achieved the remarkable feat of smiling with the bottom half of his face while frowning with the top.

"Who is that?" I asked, pointing at the portrait.

"Another who also sometimes goes by the name of Profan. We're few in number, but we come from a long and proud tradition."

"So who or what," I then asked, unable to put the question off any longer, "is Antifanpro?"

"A sad case," replied Profan, lighting his pipe. "As someone who started in Fandom I still love the place and do what I can to help those fans I encounter. Antifanpro also started in Fandom, but now that he's achieved great fame in Sercon he repudiates Fandom totally and seldom misses a chance to attack fans. Fortunately, his aim isn't as good as he thinks it is and he rarely strikes his targets, as you have cause to know. Even when he does, he causes a lot less damage than he imagines. He's forgotten so much about what Fandom is truly like that his attacks are of little real consequence. Anyway, enough about him — why give him the attention he demands, after all — what about you? How can I aid you further?"

"You've been kindness itself already. You've fed me, offered me lodging for the night, and helped me learn about the city. If I require anything else it's advice on how I get to the Tower of Trufandom from here and on the dangers I still have to face along the

way."

"Well," said Profan, draining his beer and pouring himself a whisky, "I suppose you'll have no difficulty with the clubfans and hucksters you'll encounter before leaving the city?"

"Hardly. I'm not a club person, and my kolektin-bug died years ago."

"I thought as much. Then the next obstacle you'll encounter is the Desert of Indifference. Even an experienced fan can find it difficult to cross without a sufficient supply of 'Egg o'Bu', the egg of the Bu-birds, which is increasingly difficult to come by these days. The keepers of the birds, the Letraks, were once a mighty tribe, but now they are almost extinct. I think you'll have to link up with one of the groups that still has a plentiful supply, which they keep to themselves, if you're to cross the desert safely. Yes, I'm afraid you're going to have to join an Apa."

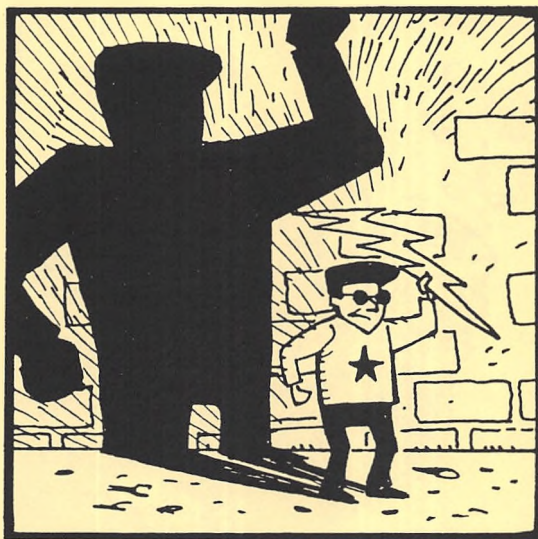
Chapter Ten

Rising early the next morning, I bid farewell to Profan and headed for the Desert of Indifference. Within a few hours I had cleared the city and arrived at the edge of the desert, which was just as bleak as I expected it to be. I shivered as a chill wind blew in from the desert and swirled about me. Over the next few hours a number of the hardy nomadic desert tribes, the Apas, passed by but none seemed interested in having a newcomer join them. Still, my luck was obviously still holding because the head of the fourth tribe to pass by — the Owie, as he was called — decided, after conferring with his fellows, that I could travel with them.

My days in the Apa were firmly regimented, with work being produced according to a strict schedule on pain of your being cast out for lack of activity, to survive alone in the desert as best you could. That the work was rewarded with a steady supply of the precious egg o'bu, was a powerful extra incentive to keep your activity up. The tribe was a closed, incestuous group, and very intense, but close friendships grew up and I was sorry that I would eventually have to leave the Apa.

All too soon, the day arrived. I had enjoyed my time in the Apa and could have comfortably stayed with the tribe for the rest of my days if something

more powerful had not been calling me. The day we reached the far edge of the desert was a sad one for me and for the others in the Apa, and our parting was tearful, yet in a strange way I felt liberated. While the strict routines of the Apa had resulted in me being



more productive than I might otherwise have been, much of the work I had done for it had been rushed and unmemorable. Still, the Apa had provided me with the sustenance I required during my time in the Desert of Indifference, and for that I was grateful. Now, however, it was time to continue with my journey.

Chapter Eleven

No sooner had I set off on the final leg of my long trek than I encountered another traveller on the road. It was a young woman, somewhat the worse for wear from the trials of the road (as I myself must be) but with a determined air about her. Her Shield of Umor was pitted and rather corroded but she greeted me cheerfully enough.

"Hi," she said, "my name's Jofanne and I'm seeking the Enchanted Duplicator so that I may produce the Perfect Fanzine, for that is what I want to do more than anything else in the world!"

"Pleased to meet you," I said, shaking her hand. "I, too, seek the Tower of Trufandom, in which resides the Enchanted Duplicator, though for a different reason. Perhaps we could travel together?"

"Well," she said, giving me an appraising look, "perhaps we can. For some of the way. I have to make a small detour to get my shield repaired."

"What happened to it?"

"It was damaged by the corrosive rains from the Clouds of Condescension that feed the Stream of Sexism."

"Stream of Sexism? I don't believe I encountered that."

"No," she said, ironically but not unkindly, "you wouldn't have. Oh, it's smaller in Fandom than in almost any other place I've ever been, but it still exists even here, as all but the most complacent would acknowledge."

"Uh . . . well you shouldn't have any more trouble with stuff like that if you stick with me. My experience should be invaluable in helping us to avoid the worst that we're likely to encounter on the road ahead."

"Oh," said Jofanne, arching an eyebrow, her voice suddenly icy, "you mean like it helped you in the mall and at the Torrent of Overinking?"

"How . . . how do you know about them?" I spluttered.

"Who do you think pulled the plug on that games machine, and later hauled you out of the river?"

"Ah," I said, feeling foolish, my face red, "um, thank you, I think. So, uh, who exactly is going to fix

your Shield of Umor?"

"A master Umorist, sometimes known as the Shaper. I crossed the Desert of Indifference with an all-female Apa — the Apazons — and they told me about him. I'm quite intrigued by the thought of meeting him, actually, because they'd smile in this really peculiar fashion whenever he was mentioned."

"He sounds interesting, and certainly somebody I ought to meet myself."

"Then," said Jofanne, hooking her arm in mine and playfully poking me in the ribs, "what are we waiting for?"

Chapter Twelve

We knew we were getting close the Shaper's home — a cave set into a small, grassy hill — long before we saw it, because the noise coming from it was incredible. The sound of metal on metal, of hammer striking anvil, became unbearable as the cavemouth came fully into sight, but the figure working the metal seemed oddly unbothered by it. He was tall and bespectacled, with thinning dark hair, a close-cropped grey beard, and a prominent, almost Semitic nose. But what caught the eye immediately were his legs, which were covered in fur and which terminated in small, cloven hooves. These were the hindquarters of a goat!

"My God," I said, appalled, "the man's an aging satyr!"

"Well, I think he looks kinda cute," said Jofanne, smiling strangely.

The Shaper, having finally noticed us, downed his tools and came over. When he caught sight of Jofanne — and I swear I'm not making this up — his eyes almost popped out, bulging right through the frames of his glasses! Greetings were exchanged, introductions were made, and the Shaper invited us into his cave. Behind the forge was a pleasant living area, its walls hung with carefully framed pictures, and Jofanne and I collapsed onto the sofa gratefully. The Shaper brought us refreshments before sinking back into a comfortable armchair.

"So how may I help you?" he asked, pleasantly. "My cave is well off the beaten track and few stumble on it accidentally."

"I was told you could repair my Shield of Umor," said Jofanne, passing it to him. He examined it gravely, frowning at the pitted surface, then carried it over to the rear of the cave, where he placed it against the wall and draped a cloth over it.

"Can you mend it?" asked Jofanne, anxiously.



"Oh, I should think so," replied the Shaper, eyeing her appraisingly. "Fortunately, most of the corrosion hasn't penetrated too deeply. Now then, tell me all about yourselves."

For the next few hours we did just that, and the Shaper kept us amused with tales of his own. Many of his stories were of the sort that, if told by most other men, a lot of women might have been offended by, but such was the Shaper's skill as raconteur, such was his charm and his sheer devilish wit, that Jofanne was completely enchanted by the old goat and laughed as loudly at his anecdotes as I did. We talked all afternoon and well into the evening, having a wonderful time, but all too soon it came time for us to retire for the night. As the evening drew to a close, the Shaper retrieved Jofanne's shield from the rear of the cave and returned it to her. Removing the cloth cover, she was dazzled by the brightness of the firelight bouncing off its flawless surface.

"How . . . how did you do that?" she gasped. "I thought you were going to hammer it back into shape on your anvil but you didn't leave your chair, or touch the shield, all day."

"A very agreeable way of working, don't you think?" he grinned. "No, what was needed in this case wasn't brute force but tenderness and joy. Your shield is no more than a reflection of what lies within. You were the one who needed to be 'repaired,' and fortunately I was able to draw out the laughter that had always been there but which you'd allowed a few bad experiences in Fandom to almost bury. That's something you should never do. Fandom should be fun: that's why we stay here, after all. It's a wondrous place, and large enough that if you're not enjoying yourself in one part you can always move to another. Now, take your shield and don't let it get in such a state again."

"Thank you," said Jofanne, kissing him on the cheek.

"Who says this job doesn't have its perks?" he laughed.

After Jofanne had gone to bed, the Shaper and I stayed up a little while longer, chatting amiably. I was intrigued by the framed pictures adorning the walls of his cave, all of them clearly the work of a single artist and one whose work had been well represented in the Museum of Fantiquities.

"These are superb!" I enthused, "Who drew them?"

"Someone who's no longer with us," replied the Shaper, wistfully, "though his spirit suffuses this land. He was a little man with a big heart and he left his mark on all of us who were privileged to know him." Turning to me, he managed a small smile and said: "What do you say to a final drink before bed?"

I said yes, of course.

I woke early the following morning, but not before the Shaper, who was already firing up his forge.

"Morning," I called, rubbing the sleep from my eyes. "Where's Jofanne?"

"Gone. She set off soon after dawn."

I was crestfallen. "But . . . I thought we were going to travel the rest of the way together."

"She's looking for the Enchanted Duplicator so that she can publish the Perfect Fanzine. That's a search that she has to make by herself, but there's every chance you'll meet our young friend again one day. Now it's time for you to be on your way also. I sense that your journey through Fandom, this one at any rate, is almost done. You're very near to the end of your quest, but before you get there I'm sure there's one more person you need to meet. Some of us used to call him Ghod, but these days we think of him as the Sage. Yes, I'm certain the two of you will meet. Now be off with you."

I thanked him for his hospitality and bid him farewell. Soon the Shaper and his cave were far behind me, and only the distant sound of his hammering remained.

Chapter Thirteen

I stopped at the summit of the pass and gasped at the scene before me. It was absurdly beautiful, the Tower of Trufandom rising out of the grassy parkland and soaring into the sky, bathed in sunlight.

"A wonderful sight, isn't it?" said a man whose arrival I hadn't noticed, so enraptured had I been. "Even after all these years it never fails to move me."

The newcomer was tall and grey-haired. He carried a staff, though he didn't appear to need it for support, and his steely eyes — which twinkled with amusement — suggested a fierce intelligence harnessed by a kindly nature.

"You must be the Sage," I said, making a not-too-difficult deduction.

"I've sometimes been called that, yes, and many other things as well. I've been expecting you for a while, and it's good to finally meet you. I imagine you have some questions for me."

"I certainly do!" I replied, and launched into an account of all I had seen and experienced

on my journey so far. "So who," I asked on finishing my tale, "was the woman in the leather and mirror-shades? This might sound weird, but I think she was the Spirit of Fandom."

"That's right. After reading *The Enchanted Duplicator* you were expecting her to look like a fairy, complete with wand, but the Spirit of Fandom comes to



each of us in a different form. How she appears to us is less important than recognising her for what she is and allowing her into our hearts."

"In the short time we were together I was beginning to allow Jofanne into my heart, but she left to continue her quest without me."

"She had to. The secret of the Enchanted Duplicator is one that each of us has to discover for themselves, and it's a discovery that each of us makes alone. No two fans ever follow the same path through fandom, anyway. You can't have failed to notice that your own has been considerably different to that described in *The Enchanted Duplicator*, and Jofanne's will have been different to both. Which is not to say that we don't meet people on our journeys who become good friends, and that we will travel the same path together for much of the way."

"I'm still not sure why I had to make this trek."

"There are things to be learned from any experience. You consider yourself an experienced fan, and you are, yet it was a Neofan, Jofanne, who got you out of trouble at the Torrent of Overinking and at the mall. Beyond reminding us that we need Neofans, is the less obvious lesson that however experienced we may think we are they can still have things to teach us. *This* has been what your journey has been all about: learning from your encounters and applying those lessons when you leave us and return to fanspace. You were brought here because you were about to do something that would have plunged all Fandom into war."

"Is Fandom so important that I shouldn't?"

"There are those who leave Fandom soon after getting here because it wasn't what they expected or what they were looking for, or because it didn't share their high opinions of themselves. But for those of us who stay, for those of us who found what we were looking for here: yes, Fandom is that important. For all that we're often accused of escapism, Fandom is part of the 'real' world, and as ephemeral, irrelevant, and totally vital as any other. Ultimately, only you can decide how important Fandom is to you. I'm often asked what the secret of fandom is, which is an easy question to answer. The secret of Fandom is love. Most of its greatest works have been produced during periods of loving harmony, and it is always these that we remember most fondly. Yet such harmony is fragile and easily destroyed. To be a cynic and a wrecker is easy and requires little talent. It's something that those who have any feeling at all for Fandom should seek at all costs to avoid becoming."

"How did you get so wise?" I asked, smiling rue-

fully. "Did it come with age?"

"I think of it more as common sense than wisdom, not that age is any guarantee of wisdom, anyway. All too often a young fool grows into an old fool."

We were joined at that moment by the Spirit of Fandom, still resplendent in her mirrorshades and leather. Simultaneously, a golden radiance burst from the top of the Tower of Trufandom and briefly bathed all of Fandom in its glow.

"It looks like Jofanne has just learned one of the eternal truths of Fandom," observed the Spirit, "that the Enchanted Duplicator is the one with a True Fan at the handle. Thus does Fandom continue; thus is Fandom renewed."

"Not that it has, literally, to be a duplicator any more, of course," observed the Sage. "The Perfect Fanzine could even be produced by a True Fan on old Zerrock's copier. The means isn't important, only the spirit behind it."

"As for you," said the Spirit of Fandom, placing her hand on my brow, "I think you've experienced much to think on in the days ahead."

The Spirit then withdrew her hand, and as she did so I felt as if an oppressive weight was being lifted from me. In her hand was a dark green jewel, which she hung next to the others on her belt.

"What is that?" I asked.

"Jade," she replied. It eventually builds up on even the strongest sense of wonder, and only a journey of discovery such as you've just made can loosen it enough for me to remove it. It'll build up again, I'm afraid, but for now you're free of it.

Indeed I was, and I felt a profound sense of liberation as I gazed at everything about me through new eyes. I loved this land, and wished I could stay, but I knew my time here was nearly over, as the Spirit confirmed.

"Your journey is now done," she said, "and it's time for you to leave."

"So how do we do this? Are you going to wave your wand?"

"Wand? What wand?"

With that she snapped her fingers . . . and I was back in fanspace! According to the glowing display near the periphery of my field of view, I had been gone less than a minute.



Chapter Fourteen

The almost unrecognisable fanspace analogue of my friend is where I remember it, the title of the file I prepared in order to cut through that accretion of compacted assumptions and the false data, still before me in blazing letters, awaiting only the final hand pass that will launch it into the zinestream. One hand pass. Such a small action for the apocalyptic

reaction it will almost certainly cause. Before my unexpected detour through that other analogue of fandom, the one depicted in *The Enchanted Duplicator*, I had been prepared to accept that reaction and to plunge all of fandom into war, but now I am not so sure. That my friend has been wronged I have no doubt, nor that this is a point of principle that I have to take a stand on, but perhaps there is a better, less damaging way of doing so that will be equally effective.

I review my pilgrimage to the Tower of Trufandom, which I never *quite* reached, noting that in this instance it really had been more important to travel

than to arrive. For all that I had learned and rediscovered along the way, I realise there was one lesson that had been repeated time and again. And then I know with total certainty what my approach should be. In realspace I make the "erase" pass, and in fanspace the blazing letters blink out as the file I prepared ceases to exist. Knowing exactly where I should start, I swiftly make the necessary hand passes . . . and a huge new structure comes into being in fanspace, bathing everything in the brilliant light shining from its flawless surface. I gaze at the shield and smile.

A new era has begun.

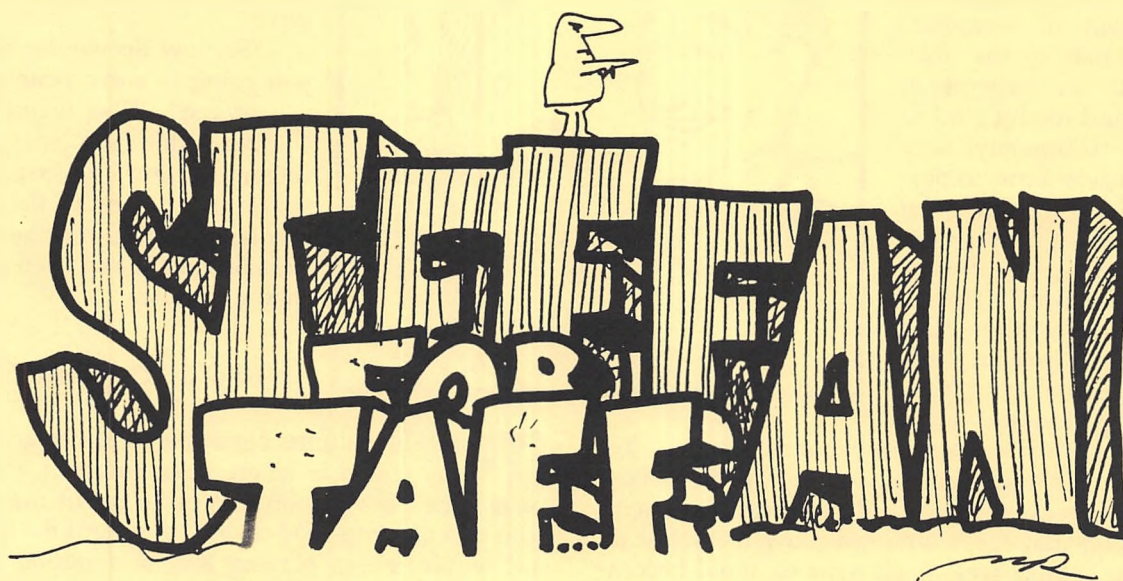
— Rob Hansen

Afterward

According to my diary, *The Reaffirmation* was written between the 5th and 15th of December 1993, but those dates only cover part of the story. Around the middle of 1993, for a whole variety of reasons, I found myself wanting to write my take on what I liked and disliked about fandom, how we seemed to have lost touch with some of the things that had made fandom fun in the past, and also to pay tribute to the London and Belfast fans of the 1950s whose writings had made researching that decade for my fanhistory zine *Then* such a pleasure. Once upon a time I would've sat down and written a serious polemic that covered all of the above, the sort of "Whither Fandom" piece I used to write ten years ago for the "Notions" section of my fanzine *Epsilon*. Then it struck me that it would be better and more effective to let the writing itself be an example of the sort of thing whose loss I'd been lamenting, that I could say most of what I wanted to in the form of an old-style piece of fan-fiction. The William Gibson-inspired opening section of *The Reaffirmation* comes from a personalzine I wrote in 1989 but never published,

and seems ideal to represent modern fandom. The more I thought about the older fandom I wanted to contrast it with the more I realised that the landscape of *The Enchanted Duplicator* was perfect for my purposes. Sometime in the middle-to-late 1980s, purely as a not-for-publication writing exercise, I'd started composing a "sequel" to *TED*. I never got very far with it but one bit that was written at that time, the section with Zerocks, made it into *The Reaffirmation*. When it was complete, I sent about eight or nine copies of the manuscript out to various people in Chuck Harris' correspondence circle, most notably Walt Willis, Bob Shaw, Vinç Clarke, and Chuck himself — for reasons that I hope will now be obvious — as a sort of Christmas card. Response was overwhelmingly positive, with Chuck and Robert Lichtman in particular urging me publish it for a wider audience. I intended to, too, in my very own brand new fanzine, and I would have — if losing my job hadn't put that fanzine on indefinite hold. Which is how it comes to appear in this prestigious zine, and with great Dan Steffan illustrations, as well. If reading it dislodges the jade on one or two senses of wonder then writing it was worthwhile. And since I didn't quite manage to cover all the things I wanted to, there may very well be a sequel one day. . . .

— Rob Hansen



CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT



By Walter Miles

Artwork by Steve Stiles

I've known Walter Miles for at least fifteen years: a quiet guy who has regularly attended WSFA meetings for an awfully long time, good company at a convention or a party, but not the sort to blow his own horn. At a recent Second Friday gathering he almost hesitantly thrust a manuscript at me and said, "When you get a chance, I'd appreciate it if you'd read this and tell me what you think." I set it aside, not picking it up to read it until the party was over and I'd finished cleaning up. Walter had also told me that it was something he'd written for the 1992 Disclave Program Book, only to have it rejected. Their loss is our gain, as I discovered when I read this, a perfect evocation of a Disclave Party Night, every Disclave party night rolled up into one. . . . — tw

I don't go to cons to hear panel discussions of entry-level writing technique, or to gaze at very young women dressed for warm weather. It isn't the used book dealers that draw me, or the artwork, live role-playing games, dead role-playing games, carrot sticks, funnel cakes, rich fruity voices raised in filksong, guys who think ordinary people are mundane, long lines outside restaurants, or "How I one-upped Harlan" told in the present continuous

tense with camera angles.

I'm after the seamy side of human experience — I come for the parties: nights futilely pursuing frenzied instants of conversational exaltation, wandering, like the Israelites in the wilderness, from hotel room to crowded balcony to smoke-filled suite . . .

. . . in a dark corridor with Chris and Frances, who has knocked on the wrong door, sounds of muffled

scrambling, we wait, an unfannish innocent appears, roused from love's labour. "Is John there?" says Frances, oozing the deadpan self-assuredness of a mother of eight. "We heard that John was here." . . . froggering 'cross streets and bridges . . . through a

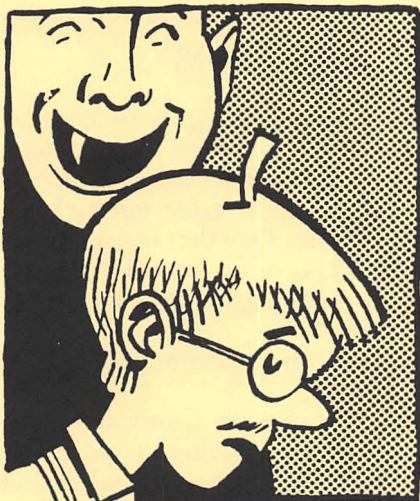


revolving door arm-in-arm with Lucius Shepard and Jack Dann (honest) . . . up freight elevators and back stairways . . . door's open a crack . . .

. . . to the party at last: Ray Ridenour in beard, black bra and panties, officiates at the marriage of Jane Jewell and

Peter Heck (dozens of bridal attendants, including French-maid of honor) . . . Gardner Dozois, that eminence greased, hotly debates Tess Kissinger on the virtue of household appliances as marital aids, as a young man listens attentively, then presents his business card — Black & Decker — watch the stores, folks! . . . garter belts, merry widows, a giant inflatable Gumby (insatiable!) . . . Larry Herman's coy pink pajamas and jock strap, Lovell's moose antlers, Darrell in his B.V.D.s, blissfully unaware that his street clothes have been placed for safekeeping in the refrigerator . . . Gardner again, majesty in boxer shorts, necktie and rose, there are pictures . . . and pictures of me in costumes made in two hours from fruit packing materials or automotive accessories (awarded the prized "all body condom") . . . time to retreat from this lewd temple, the sinner's angst room, a nod to Karl and Janet, he rolls his eyes, she smiles a smile all art and discretion . . . I look back like Lot's wife, Gardner stands with a huge Cheese Curl in one hand, his zipper in the other . . .

Back in the thronging halls . . . Erica waves, a purple flash, . . . ho! Dan Joy, *enfant terrible* (in hindsight, *enfant okay*) of WSFA, I haven't seen him since he played Pissarium in Mayhew's "Urinous Symphony," or hustled *Fanny Hill* with Somtow . . . one editor dressed down by another for misuse of an artist's work . . . Gene Wolfe proves mathematically



that more elevators pass your floor going the wrong way . . . Peggy-Rae and three full worldcon bid committees are holding simultaneous meetings in this elevator, not to mention the board of directors of Captain Morgan's Rum . . . Marty Gear has lost a plastic fang in the top of my head . . . finally, disgorged into the lobby, I hurtle past Takayuki Tatsumi and Mari Kotani, their cameras whirring and clicking like strange aliens, and F. L. Ahsh who slips me some slides of cons gone by, . . . I fall in behind Sweeler, as she whips a gang of Baltimorons down to the dungeons of Discave, dread domain of the magnificent Evan . . .

We shoot the roaring cataract of fannish talk and laughter, five hundred people holding a thousand conversations, a muddy bubbling contumelious noise, a maelstrom of puns, jokes and song, a frothy, discursive soup of Chip Delany on equality, Avedon on the politics of two or two billion, Marianne Petrino matter-of-factly on justice and its imitation, Susan Caspar on things mundane and sublime . . . swirling, bobbing, deafened! Martin Wooster and Jack Chalker hold forth — no that's wrong, Jack holds first, and that's all there is to it. Steve Brown invents "Guy-Knock-ologists," Mongo stalks his weary prey, literature is deconstructed, reputations reconstructed, neofans instructed, and the train of thought obstructed! My ears near bursting in the torrent of banter and argument, I slip behind the waterfall to find the hermit's cave, and here, Mac's wild-eyed peroration done, he struggles to his feet to go (we miss him).



In the center of each spinning world is a science fiction club, and the center of this one is WSFA: Alexis and all, "Why, thank you" we say, way too late, raising our glasses, interrupted by an explosion of song: she's rehearsing Avedon, Alan, Applesusan and others for tomorrow's performance . . . yes, WSFA, hackers, attack lawyers, pagans, military historians, data administrators, dancers, librarians, readers, brewers . . . brewers? Such a pleasant thought . . .

Did you know Alan Huff used to drink with Tarzan? Yep. If you wait long enough, everyone passes through the bar, a kaleidoscopic drift of Falls Church faneds, Cyberpreppies, Somtow followed by a huge swarm of rats . . . Ray and his imitation fly, sitcom themes, tales of his madhouse youth . . . Jack Gaughan drops by too briefly for a roast beef sandwich and a side of blarney. "Mr. Gone" claps Mr. Ridenour

on the back as he goes . . . the Haldemans are back on their old turf, then those loud people from Philadelphia show up, then Charles Sheffield feigning solemn puzzlement, the formidable Yoji Kondo at his side, then Jim Young explaining Phil Dick's gnosticism goes happy-ballistic on hearing of his first fiction sale . . . on Sunday the bar is closed, Michael Shea, Patrice Duvic (husband of "ze famous Dr. Moreau") and I stand in the lobby drinking beers concealed in paper bags.



Remember my big party: "By invitation *only*!" (Invitations available at the door)." Somtow grudgingly accepts this condition and acts as co-host . . . If it's really happening, you can tell by the length of the bathroom line — which line is usurped by a friend, blond vision in evening gown, who claims to be the "fastest piss in the West." Twelve seconds, we timed her . . .

. . . it's getting late: Eva and David insist on fart jokes but my mind goes blank! Where is Tim, to repeat his tale of Gorbachev's explosive state dinner with the Reagans, which story amused Richard Grant within an inch of his life? Where are Somtow's ostentatious apologies? No subject for laughter anymore, since a noted Locus photographer told us of the need to replenish the planet's methane layer!

On a related subject, the Boffo school of writers has rolled in. Who? In the time before some cyberpunk's sycophant labeled these young turks "Boring Old Farts." It was given to Swanwick and Kessel to perceive this as truly the defining feature of their literary movement. Buttons were hastily lettered, and BOFFO emerged from the pressure-cooker of humanism.

I can see them now: Kessel and Kelly, dangerous men, looking for laughter in all the wrong places, Paul Park, eyes of steel and velvet, sly Swanwick, the shade of Sullivan, his body locked in a Somtavian lotus dream in far off L.A. . . . Stan Robinson (called by Gene Wolfe "finest center fielder in Swiss baseball"), new father gone mad, he gibbered "Hey little dudelet" until Lucius took him aside and told him, "Stan, if you don't stop the babytalk, I'm gonna hafta hurt ya." . . . Greg Frost, in his trance-like emulation of Civil War historian Shelby Foote, as John Kessel rubs his hands together like some great spider, where are the deprogrammers? . . . finally, crypto-John Deere-cyborg-ringleader Terry Bisson who pulls the secret strings (Stan revealed him as perpetrator of all those bizarre

acts we blamed on poor school-crossing-guard Lucius Shepard) . . . Warning: these are dark creatures, who are not now Republicans and perhaps never could be . . .

. . .

The inferno of peak party experience is embers now, small groups in sleeping rooms enjoying a stately fatigue, boozy glow and quiet company . . . Dan and Elspeth host a salon where, under Erica's gentle guidance, we catalog the qualities of friends and near-friends . . . in another room we are shown a "To whom it may concern" sexual solicitation written by a major SF industry figure on behalf of an author struggling with writer's block. We all agree it is a marvelous joke. "What joke!" says the writer, "it worked!" . . . conversation's decaying now, Joe threatens to eat his bed, Richard and I decamp . . . in Jim and Rhymer's room several hundred family members have bedded down for another "Night of the Live-in Dead," dreaming dreams of Lee Moyer's birthday picnic (cold cuts spread across two double beds) . . . in the Suchar-itkul suite the "seminar" is over, and my second childhood playmates are cleaning up or hanging out, until we find an unsliced honeydew, and cartoonist Richard shotputs it into the swimming pool!

If it's five a.m. it must be Chris Miller, latest, greatest partier of them all. Hartwell closed down with "Teen Angel" two hours ago, Gardner vanished on the last pass through the lobby, the cigarette machines are empty, the convenience stores closed, the final secret pro-party a myth — they can't have left us like this, just two warm Rolling Rocks and something awful brewed by a guy named Adolf . . . Chris, Paula Lieberman and Janice Eisen shootin' the breeze . . . I don't have two neurons left to rub together inside my skull . . . Frances is flaked out on top of the covers,



"She's not still alive, is she?" "Of course not, the articulated human body is incapable of assuming that position during life." "She's breathing." "That doesn't mean anything."

It's finished, sunup and lights out.

Have you seen us at queasy, gray dawn, with puffy faces and salt-burned tongues, waiting for the sun? Do you know us for the children we are, who won't go to bed and miss a moment of fun? It's daylight and sober thought that make you old, not parties or foolishness, I swear it. Do you know how it feels? Did you get the joke, or . . . will you just have to be there?

— Walter Miles

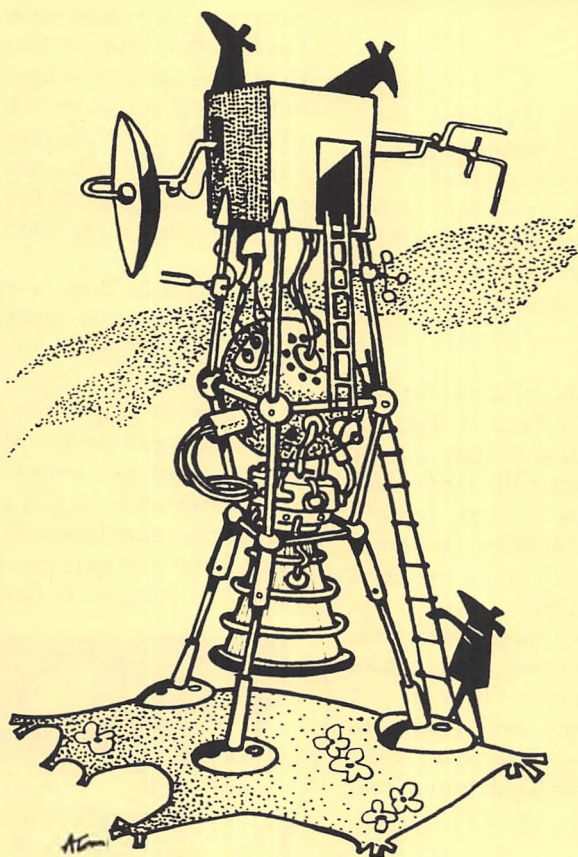
**"Zeitgeist,
Fallschirmjäger, und
Lebensmittelgeschäft"**

One of the less-heralded aspects of being an actifan is that when other fans come into town, they naturally tend to seek you out in search of fannish merriment. They have your address, after all, while many other fans who might also be eager to meet, feed, and chauffeur them around your metropolitan area, will not receive the travelers' attention through simple ignorance of their existence. This is, for some people, one of the perks of developing some kind of notoriety in fandom; an excuse to take some time off and see your local tourist sites, go out to a good restaurant, show off the good points of wherever you live, and presumably shirk your other responsibilities at the same time.

I'm getting to be an expert at this. A parade of fans, from both the U.S. and other countries, have been visiting Seattle since Carrie and I moved here and somehow, even though we haven't even been here for three years yet, we seem to have been appointed to the official fannish welcoming committee.

In the past two years I've taken people to the aquarium, the public market, the Ballard locks, Gasworks park, Woodland Park Zoo, Green Lake, the Mar-T cafe (immortalized in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* as the Double R Diner), the Fremont troll, the Space Needle and Pacific Science Center, Bruce Lee's grave, Klondike National Park (which is located in a storefront in Pioneer square), the Boeing Museum of Flight, the site of the first UPS office, Archie McPhee's junk emporium and Tiki espresso room, and that big apartment building on Capitol hill where everyone lived in the movie "Singles." We also tend to show people Leilani Lanes in the scenic Greenwood district, but they

DON'T START ME TALKING BY ANDY HOOPER



seldom seem to appreciate the state-of-the-art in bowling architecture.

I think that the secret here is that only people who have recently moved here can still stand to visit the "attractions," so we're the ones stuck with the detail. I notice that other fans are perfectly eager to show visitors around to used book and record stores, micro brew pubs and Indian restaurants, and somehow Carrie and I seldom get invited along on the days when those locations are on the itinerary. The reason is simple; we're being saved for tourist traps and mystery spots. Eventually we'll stop answering the phone, and some other fan recently relocated from points east will have the opportunity to point out the crackheads and stew bums of the Emerald City.

Perhaps the process has already begun. A few weeks ago, German fan Matthias Hoffman and his friends Nicole and Frank passed through town, and Mark Manning and Getsu-shin ended up showing them around most of the town. Mark had called me several times prior to their arrival, each time leaving increasingly desperate messages on the machine, warning of MaHo's impending visit and begging me to agree to stagger around behind them as they stared slack-jawed at those guys who throw fish for the tourists. Mark, you see, actually works for a living, and he was unable to get more

than one day off during their visit. He could have left them to entertain themselves with his extensive collection of Asian videotapes, but that would only have filled one day at most; there's only so many Indonesian stand-up comedians and hours of cockfighting from Singapore that a person can be expected to watch.

Things proved to be less desperate than we had feared. Matthias, Frank and Nicole turned out to have just over 72 hours to spend in Seattle, before moving on to Northern California . . . or Las Vegas, they weren't too sure which. Mark and Getz brought them to a Vanguard party on Saturday night, and while Carrie and I assured Mark that we were far too busy

to actually go to the top of the Space Needle with them on Sunday afternoon, we would love to cook dinner for all of them on Sunday night.

Having people come to our apartment every now and then is a great boon to Carrie and me, because if we didn't occasionally have to let fannish acquaintances (whom we presumably would like to impress to at least some degree) into the place, we would probably never clean it, and eventually drown in a sea of fanzines, paperbacks, letters of comment, and other particles of fannish detritus. It had been some months since anyone had come over for dinner, and I was just getting to the point where I could see enough of the carpet to consider vacuuming it when our guests were scheduled to arrive. But I had planned well enough; I was just starting to panic when Mark called and said that Matthias & Co. had only now exhausted the possibilities of the Seattle Center, and they still wanted to ride the monorail and tour the public market before they came over for dinner. So, they were going to be just a little — two hours — late. I managed to keep from laughing long enough to hang up the phone.

They were very nice people. Matthias himself has this quality, he's very — well, I guess I would say *earnest*, which is in keeping with his fannish career to date, which has included publishing a pretty sercon newszine in Germany and helping to put on several conventions, including a Eurocon. But Nicole is very good at getting him to laugh at himself, and Frank is just trouble. I had this feeling that Frank would be a kind of teutonic Burbee-figure, if only we could have conversed in his native language. Unfortunately, my only experience with German was four weeks instruction one semester early in my college career, where my performance was poor enough that it was suggested I leave the course after that brief period to keep from damaging my grade-point average. I was therefore unable to appreciate some of Frank's more raffish remarks.

We had a fine evening together. Out of all the cultural choices open to them, Frank and Matthias were most eager to see an episode of "The Simpsons," so we sat in the living room watching TV, our stomachs pleasantly full. I noticed the Nicole and Carrie share the same predilection for falling asleep as the conversation weaves around them . . .

Everything was going very well until Mark got Matthias onto the subject of what they were going to do the following day. I think he was still slightly sore about my having dodged tour-guide duty that afternoon, and he encouraged me to dig out a map of the Puget Sound region to show our guests the options open to them outside Seattle proper. "I have to work tomorrow, of course," he announced, "but I bet Andy might be willing to show you around somewhere else."

This woke Nicole up. "Ja," she said enthusiasti-

cally, although yawning slightly at the same time, "we are very eager to go and see the mountains."

"Ah, hmm," I offered, "what a fine idea. Of course, one can see the mountains from that window if the visibility is good. . . ."

"No, Andy," said Mark, as if to a rather thick child, "they want to go to the mountains. Right up the side of one, I imagine."

"Right. Well, if they want to see mountains, they may as well go to the biggest one we have on hand . . . Mt. Rainier is only about 80 miles south of here, a pretty easy drive by car . . . of course, there's only room for four at most in your car, so with Getz, Nicole, Matthias and Frank, there wouldn't be room for anyone else."

"Oh, no, we were going to rent a car," said Matthias.

"Even so, there would probably be seats for just four people, so I . . ."

"We would rent a minivan," said Nicole. "It's much more comfortable than in a little car."

I know better than to keep struggling once the hooks have been set. I agreed to be ready at eight the next morning, and act as expert native guide in our trip up to Paradise. Getsu-shin would actually have been more than capable of directing the trip, but she was kind enough to let me act as though I had some important and arcane knowledge, possibly the secret of the Enumclaw turnoff on Interstate Five.

Paradise, I should hasten to point out, is a lodge about 4,500 feet up the west slope of Mt. Rainier. I actually prefer the northeast side, and the lodge called "Sunrise," because it has a better view of the Cascade range and the southern volcanoes, Mt. Adams, Mt. Hood, and Mt. St. Helens, but I was afraid that it would be closed so late in the season. Late September is actually a fairly dodgy time for going up into the mountains; heavy snow isn't common, but the roads we were going to travel wouldn't take much to become impassable. It was just as well to leave early and hope to return before dark.

I overslept. I always seem to on these fannish expeditions. The alarm went off, but I ignored it and went back to sleep. The next thing I knew, Getz was ringing the doorbell and wondering what was keeping me.

I put them off just long enough to get dressed and grab a bag full of tape cassettes for the road. I did my best to grab relatively contemporary music. Frank said he was really into industrial and alternative music. I like a lot of that kind of thing too, but I have to admit that I don't have much of it on tape. Mostly, I buy compact discs; the only time I buy tapes is when Carrie and I are on road trips in rented vehicles far from home, and she isn't really into Nine Inch Nails or Porno for Pyros. I'm afraid my taste turned out to be a little bourgeois for Frank, but he was nice enough

not to make faces until I put on the Austin Lounge Lizards. His command of English wasn't good enough to understand that it was *funny* bluegrass music, and the banjos just seemed to give him a headache.

My pose as wise native guide lasted just until we got a little south of Tacoma and tried to start angling toward the mountain. I had Matthias take the exit I thought was most likely, then felt my underwear start creeping up on me as we approached a security checkpoint in the road. The sign ahead stated that we were approaching McCord Air Force base. It suddenly occurred to me that I was approaching a sensitive military facility in a rented car with three foreign nationals and no really adequate explanation as to why we were there. Naturally, I figured I would let Matthias do the talking.

An air police trooper in an immaculate blue uniform complete with what appeared to be a purple beret waved us to stop. He looked to be about 19. "Yes sir, can you tell me what your business on the base is?" His voice had a twinge of the Texas drawl that everyone seems to acquire in the service, but the flat twang of it marked him as being from points further west.

Matthias floundered for a second or two, then I suggested "Ask him where 522 is."

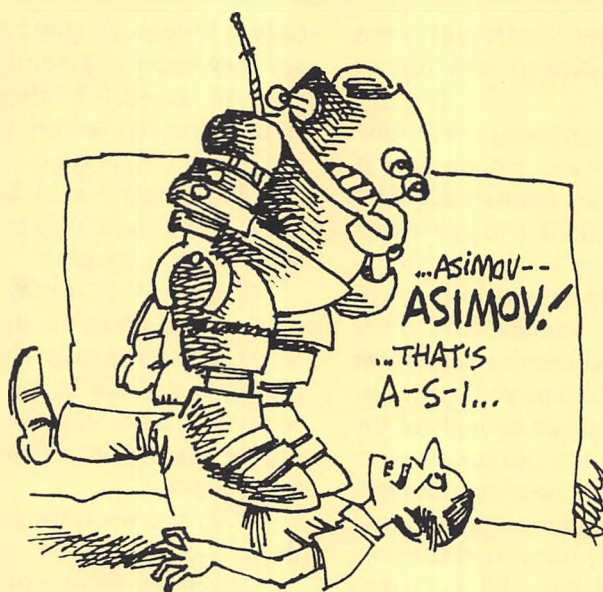
"Ve are lookink for highway five-twenty-two," said Matthias. "This isn't the way?"

The trooper shook his head. "Naw, uh, 522? Naw, you're coming onto McCord here. I'm afraid you'll have to turn aroun'."

"Thank you," said Matthias. We turned around and got back on to I-5.

On the map, it looked perfectly simple. If you go one exit *beyond* the Enumclaw turnoff, you could cut about 15 miles of driving due east before you got to the road that led to the southern entrance to the National Park. And each of the roads that led south seemed to have at least three designations, a state highway number, a county highway designation, and a municipal street name. We got thoroughly turned around trying to make our way south, and I kept proclaiming, "Yes, this is it. This is definitely the right highway," and then five minutes later, "I think we need to turn right here, Matthias, and we'll run into the road we want."

We stopped at a Subway sandwich counter, to lay in provisions for lunch later that afternoon. Privately,



I also thought we had better buy food while we could, in case I was unable to navigate us back out of the maze of mini-malls and second-growth timber.

I felt this sudden twinge of sympathy for Frank and Matthias as they intently studied the menu. Even if you read the language, and understand what you want, trying to communicate with a clerk or waiter in a foreign country is always full of tension. Even the least egotistical person hates the idea of committing a gaffe or sounding egregiously stupid in a public place.

Nicole didn't seem especially concerned, but Matthias and Frank discussed their choice in German before ordering. I purchased a roast beef sub while they deliberated. When it was their turn, Matthias stepped confidently to the counter.

"I'd like two half ham sandwiches, please, with tomato, pickle and lettuce."

The girl at the counter probably assumed he was ordering for both of them. But then Frank ordered essentially the same thing. As we walked back to the car, I pointed out to Matthias that he could have achieved the same result by ordering one whole sandwich and saved seventy cents in the bargain. He rolled his eyes and thumped the palm of his head on his forehead.

"Of course! I'm going back in and demand they refund my money!"

I was going to stop him, then realized that he was joking.

Before too much longer, we started to climb up into the Cowlitz range. Sections of new growth and clear-cut slash alternated along the side of the road. Matthias and I talked about the geology of the region, fans he had met on earlier stops and on his previous trip to the U.S., even a little about science fiction. Because we were in the front of the van, with the engine right in front of us, we couldn't hear much of the conversation in the back. Every now and then Frank would shout something up to Matthias or vice-versa, which would usually lead to a brief stop for a photo opportunity.

As we entered the Park itself, I began to notice that Matthias had something of a cavalier attitude toward the concept of speed limits. The road through the park is not a single-lane track by any means, but it does have quite a large number of very tight and often blind turns, and Matthias consistently made the hair on the back of my neck stand up by taking a line through

them that led the van to cross well over into the other lane. Curiously, while this struck me as unwise, it didn't give me the same feeling of blind panic that I felt when he carefully conformed to the edge of the curve in the face of oncoming traffic, and I foolishly looked out on the right side of the car into several hundred feet of empty space and some very sharp-looking rocks far below.

The only time that I began to feel a little self-conscious about Matthias' driving style, honed through years of open-throttle running on the Autobahn, was when we approached other cars driving in front of us. People sight-seeing in a National Park are not really accustomed to having people approach them at high speed, draw to within five feet of their rear bumper, and stay there even as they increase speed by ten, fifteen, and twenty miles per hour. On several occasions, drivers ahead of us dove for turnouts and overlooks in self-defense, and Matthias would squeeze by them before they were even entirely off the road. As we passed, I looked down at the drivers, their white, sweating faces etched with fear. Now and then I would silently mouth to them "*Call the Police,*" but we were going too fast for them to understand what I meant.

Before long, we had ascended nearly to the tree-line, and cruised up to our destination, first the Henry M. Jackson memorial visitor center, and then Paradise itself. (I had been right; Sunrise, some 1,500 feet higher, was already closed for the winter.)

Unfortunately, the lodge at Paradise, with its high-timbered ceilings, was also closed for the season, and workmen were busy putting wooden covers over the bay windows that would soon be under the snow-line. We hiked back down to visitor center through a very raw and chilly breeze, and sat in the lee of a stone piling to eat our lunch. The German fen were fascinated by the ground squirrels that bounced around at the edge of the paving, and tossed them bits of bread. I thought about mentioning the park prohibition on feeding the animals, but what would be the point? Those squirrels weren't likely to live a sugar-free existence merely because we were good park visitors.

After eating, we all set out on the Nisqually glacier overlook trail. The German fen were pretty overawed by Rainier and its surrounding peaks, even though they had seen sharper and steeper mountains in the Alps. The fact that Rainier is also a live volcano tends to impress people, as does the sheer breadth of the mountain; taken from foothill to foothill, it's more than twenty miles across. Being right there, with the glaciers apparently in easy walking distance, the unspoiled montane meadows and bogs rolling off in all directions, and the snaggle-toothed stretch of the Cowlitz peaks behind . . . it's enough to set your pulse racing when you see it for the one-hundredth time. Our visitors were so high on the combination of

scenery and thin air that Getz and I tried to keep a close eye on them, lest they float away on the wind.

Before we started, I asked her if she thought Nicole and Frank were having a good time. She said they were, but she wished that she could talk to them in German. Frank was frustrated from time to time with his inability to say certain things in English, and Nicole kept having to translate for him. "Mark can keep up with them a little bit," she said, "but I can't understand a word they're saying."

"Neither can I. I can work some things out from inflection, but my German vocabulary is so tiny, I can only understand a few words, like *zeitgeist*, or *fall-schirmjager*. And those I mostly got from reading history books. In fact, there's just one really good German word I can remember from my German course — *Lebensmittelgeschäft*."

"And what does that mean?"

"Grocery store."

She laughed. "I guess that has a limited number of applications."

"Yeah, but I love saying it."

We walked about a quarter-mile up the trail, and found two of the nearly-tame deer that live in the Park. Nicole and Frank and Matthias made a big show of being quiet and trying not to scare them, but the deer have very little fear of humans, who have never acted in any menacing manner toward them. Many photos were taken. We got a little farther up the trail — which was now ascending at a 40 degree angle — and I became aware of the fact that my asthma was starting to bother me. I'm in no shape for alpine hiking to begin with, and I had visions of panting and struggling up hill for the next three miles, continually slowing everyone else down — and I bailed. I admit it. I took Getz aside and told her that I didn't think I would be able to make the whole distance. I said I'd as soon they continued on as they'd planned; I'd take the shorter loop trail below, which had some spectacular views, and meet them back in the parking lot when they were done. So off they went, chattering happily in two languages, pressing resolutely upward.

I took that loop trail, and it does have some great views of the Nisqually glacier, and the valley of the Nisqually river which issues from it. At times, standing on the lip of an eight-hundred foot drop, I thought I could actually hear cracks and groans in the ice a mile away, and once or twice I saw boulders or chunks of ice as big as a Volkswagen fall into the gray water of the river.

Back at the parking lot, the wind was blowing even stronger. Assuming that they pressed on without stopping for more than forty to sixty photos, they weren't going to get back in less than two hours. Even if I stayed in the sun, I figured my body temperature would be down to about 70 degrees by the time they got back. For some reason, I had chosen not to wear

a heavy sweater under my jacket, and the protection it gave me was simply not adequate. I had to go wait inside the visitor center.

When I got inside, it was already going on 3 PM. So much for getting back to Seattle for dinner, I thought; I called Carrie at work and told her to plan on eating without me. I had a book with me, fortunately, and found a very large and comfortable couch near the back of the visitor center to read on.

Arnie Katz had these critical changes he wanted me to make in my manuscript. There was a problem with the chapter on play-calling, and there were big discrepancies between the rosters I had listed for the teams and the guys that really played for them. "You can't have thought you could really get away with this, did you?" he asked. "I mean, come on, Dexter Bussey retired three years ago! Randy Wright got cut at the end of 1991! Gump Worsely was a friggin' hockey player, for cryin' out loud!"

"And what's this business about Vern Gagne?" asked Bill Kunkel, whom, I had never noticed before, looked rather like Markie Post in the right, rather dim, light. "I am for you, Vern Gagne! I, Baron Van Rachske, master of the claw!"

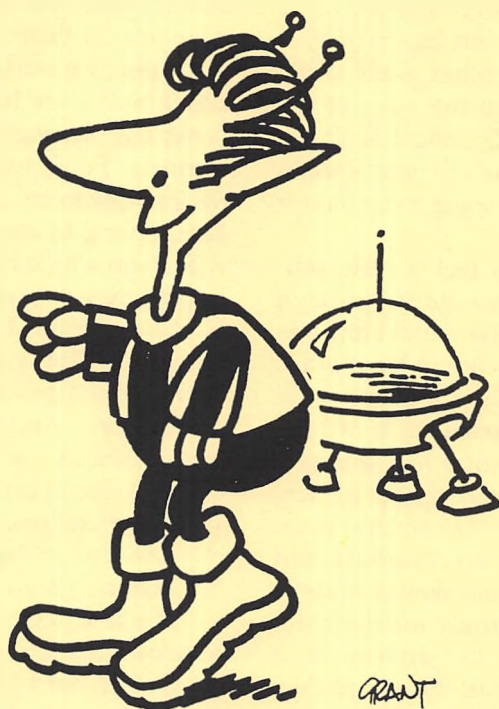
I tried to answer, but I couldn't seem to say anything in English. When I opened my mouth, disassociated words in German came out. "Schnelle-boote!" I pleaded. "Alles Klar! Panzerschreck! Schoendienst! Gotterfunken! Werner Klemperer! Drang Nach Osten! Lebensmittelgeschäft!"

"Andy?" asked Getz.

I came awake in a clammy start, sweating slightly inside my jacket. The vinyl of the couch peeled away from my skin as I sat up. The light outside looked ominously orange and slanted at an uncomfortable angle.

"It's almost four o'clock," she said, "We've been looking for you for over an hour."

I really hadn't gotten enough sleep the night before. The combination of the lunch, the wind and sun, and the history book I was trying to read, had knocked me out cold. Apparently, the four of them had assumed that I would be out in the wind somewhere, and had come into the visitor's center only as the first step in reporting me missing. When Getz asked the woman at the front desk if they made a sweep of the trails before night fall, and if there was



any way of searching for someone who was missing, the woman asked what I looked like.

"Well, he's huge," said Getz.

"There's a real big guy sleeping on one of the couches past the gift shop," said the ranger.

I apologized profusely when I got back to the car. There was time for one more photo-op, with everyone posed against the white brow of the mountain, and then we were back on the Formula One circuit, scattering Volvos and Subarus before us.

Frank, it turned out, was a very big fan of the TV series *Northern Exposure*, which films its exterior scenes in a little

mining town called Roslyn, about seventy miles out of Seattle on I-90. Frank really wanted to see it; I figured it would take about an hour more to go to around the southeast corner of the mountain, over to Yakima, back up to I-90, and by Roslyn on the way to Seattle. Given my previous success at map-reading, I should have known this was a gross under-estimate, but everyone seemed eager to believe me, so off we went.

Past Reflection Lakes — a photo-stop — around the hairpin switch back at Box Canyon, up to Silver Falls, past Ohanapecosh — and that was all still in the Park proper. It was going on five o'clock as we headed up into White pass. Matthias was deeply frustrated by the insistence of the locals on driving at less than 60 mph. For a while he had a nasty little dance going with a semi-truck driver; the driver would let him pass, but ten minutes later we would pull over and take pictures, and the truck would get by us again.

It was going on 6:00, and the sun was dropping toward the distant shadow of the Olympic range. As we passed the reservoir at the Tieton dam, I pointed out how the terrain around us was beginning to change. The land was getting much drier as we came down out of the mountains, and into the rain shadow of the Cascades. The road wound through the valley of the Tieton river, sometimes no more than twenty feet from the tossing water, but all the vegetation around was tawny and dry, a great contrast from the forest we had left. The hills around us were made of huge columnar basalts, black pillars like impossibly huge petrified tree trunks. Matthias and company were stunned by the change in our surroundings. As we tumbled down the Tieton valley, past Rimrock, onto highway 410, past Naches, Glead, Eshbach (and

Evans?) and Selah, the natural ground became scrub-brier by the minute, while at the same time we passed huge irrigated apple orchards. The German fans had no idea that Washington was home to this kind of semi-arid badlands; that fact alone had been enough to make me want to go that way.

I had to admit, at last, that going back to Seattle via Yakima was not, in fact, just as fast as taking 410 back around the mountain, up to Enumclaw and I-5 thereafter; but the drive up through the Chinook Pass is interminable and slightly depressing, with nothing more to recommend it than the aptly-named Mud Mountain Dam. Traveling as we did, I got to show the visitors the remains of the huge batholithic lava flows of the Eocene, the bright lights of Kittitas, Thrall, and Denmark Hall, and the wonders of the Yakima Firing Center U.S. Military Reservation, sprawling for fifty miles to the right of the road as we crossed Umtanum Ridge on I-82. But it was coming on to full dark and nearly seven by the time we turned north from the city of Yakima.

It was then that Matthias really came into his own. On the wide, well-paved Interstate highways, his solid lead foot finally fell and stayed down. We never got below sixty between Yakima and the Cle Elum cut-off, and for much of the trip the needle was scraping eighty miles per hour. There was something actually very satisfying about it; I'm sure everyone who has ever struggled along the Dan Ryan or the Major Deegan or the Beltway can understand the desire to really unwind a large six-cylinder American engine and smoothly blow by all intervening traffic in blatant disregard of the laws of God and man. I was having a good time.

As we came down into the flats around Pump Ditch and Manastash Creek, I slipped in a tape by Neil Young, "Ragged Glory." Despite Neil's newfound status as "Godfather of Grunge," I was nervous as to what the others' reaction would be. He's always had these profound "country" tendencies, and I didn't want a repeat of the Austin Lounge Lizards incident, which had led Getz to whisper in my ear, "I don't think this is Frank's kind of music, Andy. He's clutching his head in his hands and banging it on the spare tire."

But the heavy feedback and mildly thrashing riffs seemed to fit the moment perfectly. There was still the slightest glimmer of light in the west, slipping over the rim of Stampede. The gray-blue twilight falling on the sere landscape around us was oddly beautiful. It seemed like we were surrounded by mountains; the Cascades to the north, the Wenatchee range to the east, the Rattlesnake hills to the south, and the Cowlitz range to the west. All day long there was a low haze of clouds around us, but at dusk, they seemed to dissipate, so that the edge of the peaks were stark lines on the horizon. It made me shiver a little bit, being a life-long flatlander; back in Wisconsin, we were taught

that mountains were where trolls and giants and Rosicrucians lived.

The tape ends with a live cut, titled "Natural Anthem." I found myself quietly humming along, slightly embarrassed by the Neo-Hippie lyrics . . . I could imagine Frank sneering blondly in the seat behind me, as Neil sang:

Oh Mother Earth, with your fields of green
Once more laid down by the hungry hand
How long can you give and not receive
And feed this world ruled by greed?
And feed this world ruled by greed.

Oh ball of fire in the summer sky
Your healing light, your parade of days
Are they betrayed by the men of power
Who hold this world in their changing hands?
They hold the world in their changing hands.

Oh freedom land, can you let this go
Down to the street where the numbers grow?
Respect Mother Earth and her healing ways
Or trade away our children's days.
Or trade away our children's days.

But Matthias and Frank were delighted by the ringing power chords between the verses, and I turned the volume up. As the last fuzzy tone died away into tape hiss, I was glad to hear them express their approval.

"Dot vas cool!" said Frank, from the stygian recesses of the back seat.

"Ja, really, that rocks!" said Matthias, "Fantastisch!"

Wonderful, I thought, I'm going down the highway at seventy-five miles per hour with Von Beavis and Buttkopf. And then we were turning off of the highway, and on to the road that led to Roslyn.

Roslyn was a depressed little coal-mining town on the very verge of collapse when location scouts decided it would make a good stand-in for the mythical town of Cicely, Alaska. If you've ever seen the show, you probably appreciate the authentically bucolic setting. That little street the moose strides down really exists, and various sets used in the film are right there in Roslyn (although the bulk of the interior scenes are shot in a sound stage in Renton, Washington). The mural on the side of the cafe was there before they ever started filming, Dr. Fleischman's office really is the former Northwest Mining company office, Chris the DJ's booth and the Minnifield Communications Corporation office is really there on Main Street, although none of the equipment really works. One feature of the town that doesn't make the screen is a large mural that fills the entire back of a house visible from Main, of Marlon Brando poised above the handlebars of a Harley, as in *The Wild One*. This, apparently,

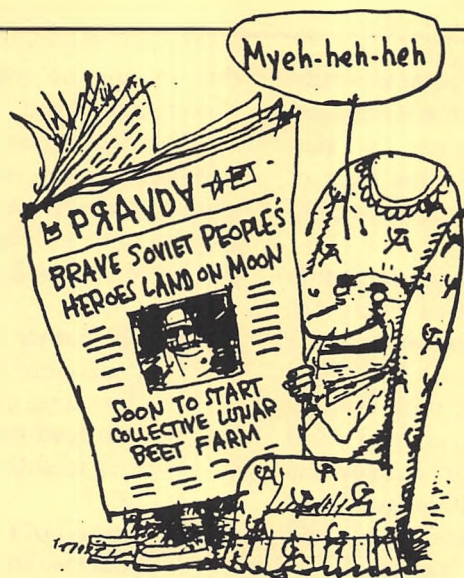
is just a little too quirky for the people who produce the show.

Frank happily pressed his nose against the glass in all of these locations, and regretted only that the various souvenir stores weren't open for business. Nicole, who seemed to be bankrolling the whole operation, wasn't quite as sorry. But seeing Frank's delight, I think everyone agreed that it was worth the three-hour detour to make the stop. We were starving by this time, and I suggested we stop in at "Village Pizza" (as seen on TV!) and have some dinner, to which the others more or less readily agreed.

Village Pizza is a pretty homely place, with modest prices and checkerboard vinyl tablecloths. Everyone employed there seem to be an aspiring neo-gothic enthusiast, with heavy metal T-shirt and numerous holes pierced in their noses, ears and eyebrows. It was a lot like eating in any restaurant in Seattle. The difference is that they don't seem to believe in plates; when the pizzas arrived at our table, they gave us tableware and a large sheet of wax paper, which we were apparently supposed to eat off. While we waited for our orders, we drew questions from the numerous boxes of Trivial Pursuit cards that were scattered around the restaurant. I got most of the questions posed me, which gave the German fans a chance to practice really bad English syntax (Trivial Pursuit questions are notorious for sounding as if they had been directly from the German translated), but the questions were not exactly designed for Europeans to answer.

After the pizza (which Matthias turned down in favor of another ham sandwich, apparently one food item he had found he could depend on across the continent), Matthias and Frank insisted we stop in at The Brick, the tavern that acts as the heart of Cicely/Roslyn, for a beer. I tried to point out that The Brick is not as portrayed on TV, where it is an airy, well-lit eatery and pub, but is in fact a rural biker bar, yet they were determined to check it out anyway. Everyone had one glass of beer, and we played a game of pool, America against Germany. The American team had a lot of trouble with scratching, while the Germans were practiced at thrashing the cue ball around in random patterns, which usually led to at least one object ball going down. Getz and I allowed ourselves to be humiliated in the interest of international harmony.

The drive back to Seattle was not as harrowing as other reports might have led you to believe. By this time, the others had taken to openly jeering at my



map-reading ability, and when we had to transit about five miles of back roads before getting on to the Interstate again, they began telling happy little jokes about our bleached bones being found after the snow melted in the spring. We came up over Snoqualmie pass and down into the outskirts of Seattle in what seemed like no time at all, and in fact very nearly was; as we approached Mercer Island, I pointed out to Matthias that we were entering an area with a lot of polizei, and that he

might want to drop the speed back down below eighty miles an hour, just until we got back onto the I-90 bridge.

The trip ended up taking thirteen hours overall, and I was pretty sore from sitting all that while when Matthias dropped me off at my apartment. Even then, I couldn't go in and collapse. Getz had driven her car along ahead of us (until Matthias drove off the highway into the Westlake area in pursuit of *another* red Toyota, but that's another story) so that Matthias would have a ride back to her house when he dropped off the rental car. When we stopped, the Manning/Getsu-shin vehicle's radiator was inexplicably boiling over. My luck with road trips had not yet left me entirely. I went in to get a flashlight, and Getz spent the next fifteen minutes slowly bleeding off the pressure in the radiator, to keep hot water and anti-freeze from spraying all over us and the street. Finally, the pressure dropped to nothing. And Getz dropped the radiator cap into the bowels of the engine.

Oh, we got it out easily enough. And Matthias was very appreciative of all the adventures, planned and accidental, that I had led them on. They even got to see an alpine marmot, after all. They were fun and entertaining guests, and were nice enough to pick up the tab for dinner, as well as all the travel expenses on the day. Not everyone who comes to visit is that considerate, nor can they afford to be.

And we really enjoy showing visitors around. There's so many attractions to enjoy in the northwest, and certain things around here still tickle my sense of wonder. It's a lot of fun when people are willing to treat you like an expert on your region, even though you only moved there three years ago and get lost on the West Seattle freeway on the way to the Kingdome.

Just don't be surprised if I happen to be under tremendous deadline pressure when you want me to meet you at that section of the market where they fling 40-pound Coho around like wiffle balls.

— Andy Hooper

JUST FOR BLAT! DEPT. —

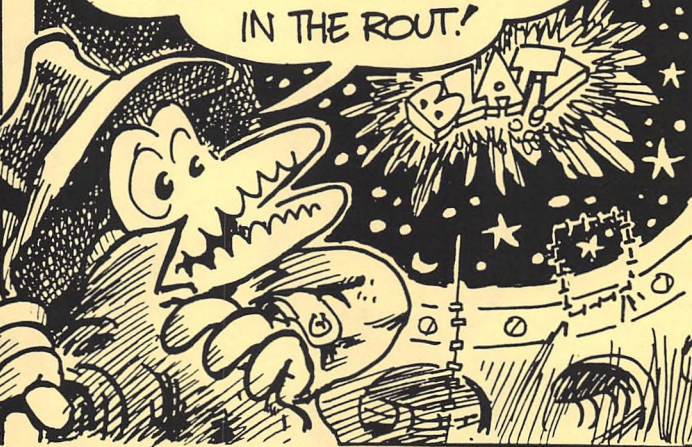
SPECIAL APPEARANCE OF FRANK FROG, BEALE STREET DETECTIVE, COURTESY OF THEATRE BRIXOI

LAUGH IT OUT

JUST LAUGH IT OUT!
WHEN YOU'RE FULL OF DOUBT AND
YA DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S ALL
ABOUT!



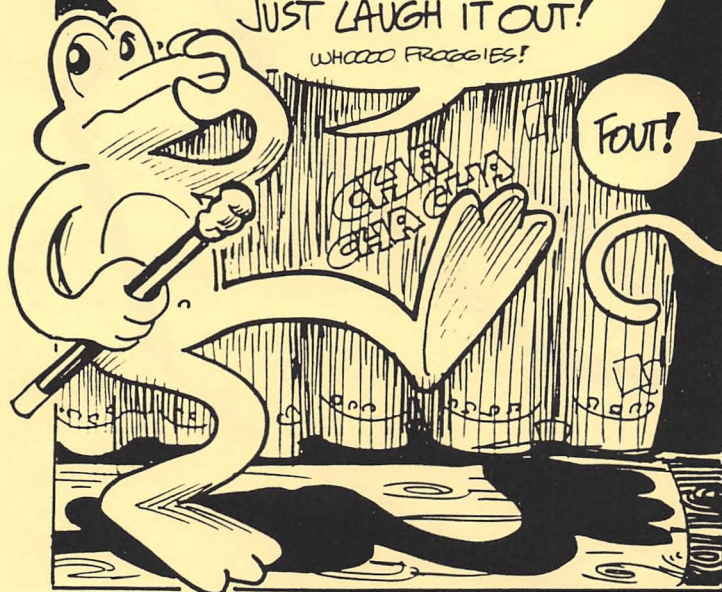
JUST LAUGH IT OUT!
WHEN YOUR PLANET'S BLOWN UP BY
A COSTUMED LOOT AND YER
SQUASHED LIKE A FROG
IN THE ROUT!



JUST LAUGH IT OUT!
WHEN YOUR TEARS KNOW NO
DROUGHT AND YOUR OLD FEET
SMELL LIKE SAUERKRAUT!

JUST LAUGH IT OUT!

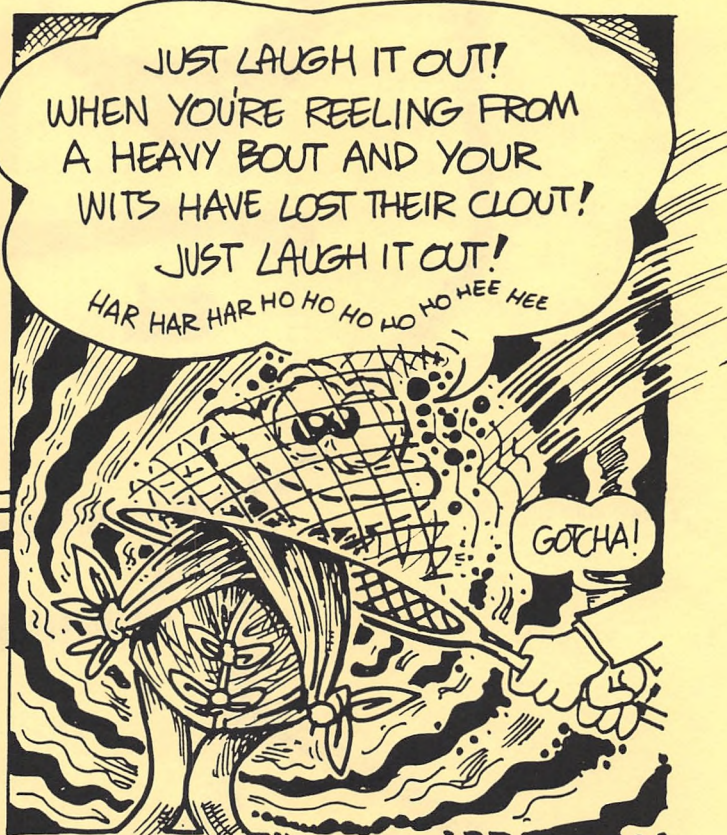
WHOOOO FROGGIES!



JUST LAUGH IT OUT!
WHEN YOU'RE REELING FROM
A HEAVY BOUT AND YOUR
WITS HAVE LOST THEIR CLOUT!

JUST LAUGH IT OUT!

HAR HAR HAR HO HO HO HO HO HEE HEE



蛙人

©1994 TOM FOSTER ARS GRATIS HALIBUTUM - KA-BOOM!



Drawn from Life, 1961

I realize I haven't been as active in fandom the last few years as I might prefer. And one of the unfortunate side effects of such lacktivity is one's inadvertent failure to respond to comments directed at one's own personal self. (Which is a shade impolite — let's face it.) An example: at least twice in the last two years FAPA members have taken time out of their busy lives to inquire directly of me in their zines as to the present circumstances and/or whereabouts of the sixties fan Harvey Blodgett. I know for sure one of the two who asked was Robert Lichtman and the other I'm less sure about without going back and Looking It Up — Dave Rike maybe or else probably Don Fitch or Arnie Katz — they all knew Blodgett pretty well through the Cult. But who it was who wanted to know is less important than that I never got around to answering and I'm afraid that may have left the wrong impression, either that I didn't know or didn't care to reveal Blodgett's present status and position in the universal cosmos. Well, I do know. Not only were Blodgett's and my fan careers hopelessly interwoven (intermingled, some might even say, to the point where even now I run into people who still have us confused) throughout the decade of the 1960's when we were both at our most active but we kept in touch later on too when neither of us (Blodgett more than me because I was still writing science fiction professionally) had much of anything to do with fans or with fandom.

So where is he? Good ol' Harvey Blodgett? What's he up to anyway? (I'll wager even Harry Warner'd like to know.)

Well.

Let me put it this way: the long passage of years (more than thirty for all intents) has, I hope, given everyone who was around back then (which is a significant chunk of FAPA) much perspective and some detachment and blunted emotions and all that addled shit (and I know it has for me and, hell, I was Blodgett's best friend) and thus I hope I'm not irretrievably spoiling anybody's day because the news, guys, is not good.

Harvey Blodgett is dead. (Molderin' in the cold, cold ground.)

Actually, he died in 1984, the year Reagan got reelected whipping the sad shit out of Walter Mondale, the year of the LA Olympics, the year Orwell's book coincided with reality and we all realized it could have been worse and was. Blodgett was living down there too. (In LA, I mean — we were all living in 1984.) In an apartment near Venice Beach. He was working as a clerk in a record store that also rented skateboards. He lived alone. He looked like an aging hippie. And

he was dead three weeks before anybody found the body and then only because he hadn't paid his rent on time. He'd been murdered. Somebody'd stabbed him in the left arm, right thigh, face, and stomach and he'd basically bled to death as he lay naked on the floor of his bathroom. The authorities said it was probably a prowler looking for money or dope or both. I don't know who buried him, if anybody. Blodgett would have been thirty-nine years old, the same as me.

The two of us had a hell of a lot in common actually.

BLODGETT RECOLLECTED

Fanfiction by GORDON EKLUND

Let's see: We were both born the same day in the same exact year in the same city and state in the middle of the same world war: Sunday, July 24, 1945, in Seattle, Washington. Different hospitals though, and we went to different schools, too, and never met till the fall of 1960 when I walked into my first Nameless Ones meeting and sitting there on a wooden folding chair with a cup of coffee

and two sugar cookies in front of him was Harvey Blodgett.

You couldn't miss him. (Most especially *I* couldn't miss him.) There were probably a half-dozen to a dozen various fans sitting around the meeting room — I think it was in some old office building on Second Avenue downtown — a long metal table and wooden folding chairs and a pot of coffee and the sugar cookies — and the fans were a fine bunch of people — Wally Weber and Jim Webbert and Burnett Toskey and the Busbys — I still see at least some of them now and then. But I was just fifteen years old and the others were all seemingly ancient by contrast — way up into their thirties anyway. For a moment I felt kind of all alone. But then there was Blodgett. Skinny. A nerd. Big thick teeth, big thick glasses, a dumb grin that looked like it had been turned with a pick and a shovel.

My brother in blood, I thought at once.

We made immediate eye contact — Blodgett seemed to be thinking pretty much the same as me, scrutinizing — but during the actual meeting he kept silent. As did I. (It was my first meeting ever after all and as a kid I was shy as a ghost.)

Afterward, though, Blodgett came straight up to me and handed me a fanzine (it was the third issue — out of four total — of his genzine *Ripsnort* and featured an article by Dick Lupoff on the cartoon character Crusader Rabbit) and asked if I was the same Gordon Eklund who was in the N3F and writing letters to *Fanac*. I said I was and he asked who my favorite writer was. I said I didn't know, Heinlein probably I guessed, maybe Asimov. And he laughed and said not that sci-fi garbage. (He always called it sci-fi too — in

that reedy, sneery voice of his that always made me think of a firehose wound too tight — no matter who got pissed off.) He meant real writing, he said. Like what? I asked. Like this, he said. And he pulled out a copy of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer*, Olympia Press edition. I quickly asked to borrow it (I remember Elinor Busby watching us the whole time with an expression as blank as a sphinx and I've always meant to ask her what she could have been thinking) and he said oh sure and get both of us thrown into federal prison for life. Then we went off into a corner together and talked about fans and fanzines for the rest of the night.

Both Blodgett and I were fan crazy in those years when we were in high school — fanzine simple as we used to call it.

For him there was *Ripsnort*, the long delayed fourth and final issue of which finally came out in the summer of '61 just before the SeaCon. There was a funny piece by Willis about an Irish fan who'd drowned and a reminiscence of wartime newspaper life in the forties by Warner but it was the Ted White article that got everybody's attention because in the course of it Ted managed to denounce just about everybody who was anybody in the fandom of the time and then at the end stated flatly that he was quitting fandom for good and joining the Charles Mingus Sextet as an alto saxophone player. The only trouble with the article was that Blodgett had made about half of it up, including the apocalyptic ending — he later told me he'd gotten bored while typing the article onto stencil and begun to improvise. White's supposed to be a big jazz fan, he told me, and he of all people should've understood.

Nonetheless, it was a shitty thing to do and later at the SeaCon Blodgett publicly apologized to Ted and the two shook hands in front of witnesses but they were never friends again and in the early seventies when Blodgett tried his hand at serious "sci-fi" (he was still calling it that) writing and sent a couple short stories to Ted, who was then editing *Amazing* and *Fantastic* for Sol Cohen and publishing a lot of my stuff, they were promptly rejected. I read them myself and thought they weren't all that bad but then nobody else ever bought them either. (If Blodgett ever submitted them elsewhere.)

The SeaCon was a good kick in the ass for both of us, our first worldcon, but more so for Blodgett than me because I was still a neo in a lot of ways and he knew everybody who was anybody that was there (funny in a way, considering how sporadically he is remembered today) but he'd also already begun to drink heavily and was drunk for most of the con and not always a lot of fun to be around. (Yes, at age sixteen, and don't ask me where he got the stuff, especially in alcohol-tight Washington State, but he always seemed to have a bottle of something at hand.

His family was loaded though and maybe that had something to do with it. His dad was a doctor of some kind — a podiatrist, I think it was — and his mother was back east somewhere running a big museum in Boston or New York. His father had remarried, his secretary who was blonde and beautiful and twenty-five, and Blodgett was always sneaking around the house trying to catch a glimpse of her naked. I remember one night in Heinlein's suite when he played poker head-to-head with Harlan Ellison all night long and lost his stupid drunken ass.)

But he stayed fan active. In fact, I'm trying to remember for sure now but I'm fairly positive that at one time or another Blodgett belonged to SAPS, OMPA, and the Cult and was high on the FAPA waiting list as well though he either never actually got in or just did minac for a year or two and then dropped. He may have belonged to CRAP also but was no longer around there either, I'm pretty sure, before it evolved into the original APA X. And he published for all of these groups. Often — usually — invariably — prolifically. (I remember one eighty-page SAPSzine, almost entirely his own mailing comments, and he published a *Fantasy Rotator* for the Cult which was the largest of all time up to that time.) And he corresponded. Often with the biggest of early-sixties BNF's. And he wrote loc's. To everywhere. From *Warhoon* to *Xero* to *Void* to the neoest of neozines. The only thing Blodgett seldom did was write for other people's zines but that was solely, I think, from lack of time — even Blodgett couldn't do *everything* — not from any scarcity of editors willing (and eager) to use his stuff. (He did write something for what would have been *Innuendo 13* — I know because I saw a carbon of the original article — along with a few scribbled editorial comments and suggestions from TCarr himself — it was about 1950's Seattle fandom and Blodgett saw it from a totally different perspective than anyone else ever had — including everyone else I ever knew who was actually there at the time — and it was an utterly *hilarious* perspective too — I mean, you really had to be there to believe it — G. M. Carr as a sort of paleolithic Roseanne Barr. But what became of the article I have no idea. I dropped Lichtman a line to ask if he'd happened to come across it among Terry's papers and he hastily wrote back to deny it. So who knows.)

And then everything changed. For me, for Blodgett, for fandom, for the world. Or so it seemed at the time. I guess you had to have been there but how it went for me was one day it was still Back Then — it was 1962 and 1963 and the only things I had on my mind besides fandom was girls and jazz and the possibility of nuclear war and then there was the Kennedy assassination and the Beatles and the civil rights stuff. And that was when — *wham-o* — it all took place. Suddenly it wasn't just Back Then any more. It was — *tralalala* — it was the Sixties! (Or so it seems now. To

me. The sixties just came into being all at once. One day they weren't there yet, the next they were.)

Was it like that for Blodgett, too?

I guess you'd just have to ask him. (Which — of course — you can't.)

So now it was the sixties.

I left Seattle in July 1963. I'd graduated from high school in June and a month later went into the Air Force. They sent me to Texas and then to Mississippi and then eventually to Travis AFB, which is in Northern California only a short hop skip and jump from what was then fabulous Berkeley fandom. The strange part was that Blodgett was already there ahead of me. His father had enrolled him in Stanford University. (The old man was a graduate of Oregon State, so it was a truly great leap forward for him if not for Blodgett who seemed not to give a shit one way or the other.) We first bumped into each other at a Little Men's meeting at Ben Stark's house where Tony Boucher spoke on the best science fiction novels of 1963 (he especially admired *A Clockwork Orange* as I recall) and after the meeting I went up to Blodgett and tried to talk to him about books, about fandom, about the Air Force, about life. I couldn't get through. It was like trying to talk to the Statue of Liberty. The few words he did utter made no sense to me at all.

I finally assumed he was just drunk (like half of Berkeley fandom in those years) but it turned out he was actually high on a combination of marijuana and dexedrine. (Like half of Berkeley fandom — including me — in ensuing years.) But Blodgett was always well ahead of his time.

Too much ahead of his time for a lot of people. (He was the first junkie I ever knew personally for instance.) I saw him maybe four or five other times in 1964 and once or twice in 1965 and again in 1966 but by then we weren't even trying to talk. And he always seemed to be stoned totally out of his head and after a while so was I (different drugs though — Blodgett was already sampling heroin which I never touched) and that was pretty much that. He boycotted the 1964 Pacifcon (not because of Walter Breen — he had his own personal reasons which by now I've frankly forgotten) and it was as if whoever he'd been in Seattle

he'd left behind and now in the Bay Area he'd become somebody else entirely different only just with the same name. And he had no interest in fandom. *Rip-snort* was dead and buried — and soon enough, alas, forgotten as well — there were just too much good fanzines coming out in those years so that the only ones anybody recalls now are the few truly great ones — and he dropped all his apas. (I remember that Busby proposed him for *lilapa* membership early on but he never got enough votes to get in because we mostly figured — rightly, I guess — that he wouldn't be particularly active.)

He quit Stanford too. (If he ever really attended classes at all. I'm not really sure on that one.) And he moved up to San Francisco, into the Haight, I suppose, though I never really found out for sure. He was around during all the early hippie stuff. I used to run into him and Lichtman and Donaho every time I turned around and we'd smile and wave and then largely go our own ways. Donaho told me he saw a lot of Blodgett too — at the Fillmore and Avalon and such like. One thing I remember: there were always girls with Blodgett. Incredibly good looking girls. Especially at first. Thin and blonde and wearing short flowery little dresses. And tiny bare feet. I was envious as hell. At first. As time wore on the girls got uglier. And dirtier. Their hair matted.

Their teeth yellowed. I think that was probably the heroin factor at work. The last time I saw Blodgett in San Francisco was January 1967 at the Human Be-in Golden Gate Park. And that was only from afar.

Then in the spring of 1970 he called me. He was already somewhere down in LA then. He wanted to borrow \$500. I told him I was a husband and brand new father and trying to establish myself as a science fiction writer and I was lucky to have enough money to keep myself in cigarettes. He said I should quit and he was writing sci-fi himself and he'd send me some carbons and would I let him know what I thought. Then he hung up. A year and a half later he called again but said nothing about borrowing money. Which was just as well. I wasn't any less broke than the year before despite selling three novels in six months. Blodgett just wanted to talk about fandom in the early sixties. So we did. Later he asked me how



Actual photo, 1976

FAPA was and I said boring except for a few people and he said good, that was one thing that hadn't changed. Another time when he called I asked about his parents and he said his mother and father were both dead — his mother from cancer and his father in a car wreck on the Lake Washington floating bridge. He said his little brother was dead too, killed in Vietnam by a land mine, which was weird, because I'd never even known he had a brother. He said his ex-stepmother was now living in LA in the building next door to his. I heard from him a few more times after that as well — always on the phone late at night. (Luckily I never went to bed before one.) I noticed that he had a different way of talking than before. A different tone of voice. Slower. More careful. Cautiously alert. It was as if he wanted to find out what you were going to say in response before he'd willingly risk saying anything himself. One time when I got off the phone with him I turned to my wife and said he reminded me a lot of Nixon.

He visited me once in Berkeley either in 1976 or 1977. He showed up at my door and the first thing I spotted were the needle marks, the scabs and the abscesses. To make matters worse he was wearing cut-off jeans and you could see the tracks even along the veins in his calves and thighs, like dots on a map. I muttered something about calling up Lupoff and the Benfords and maybe all of us getting together for dinner somewhere but he said the only person he wanted to talk to was me.

Then he sat down on the couch and fell asleep.

And I never did find out why he'd come.

He stayed all day, sleeping most of the time, barely saying a word when he was awake, and about ten o'clock he just left. He had some kind of old beaten car and he got into it and drove off and I never saw him again. I think there was a blonde woman in the

car with him. It sounds weird — had she stayed out there all day alone while he was inside the house? — but I think I'd swear to it.

And now he's dead. I don't even remember now how I first found out. I think somebody sent me a newspaper clipping but I can't think of who. Bill Rotsler maybe. If he even remembered Blodgett. Or maybe it was Greg Benford. I know he reads the *LA Times* and I think that's where the clipping's from. It's not very long: *Venice Man Stabbed to Death*. I guess that pretty much sums it up.

As for a point to this exercise in memory, a summation, you're going to have to look somewhere else. Harvey Blodgett was a teenage fan and a talented person and then he got caught up in the swirling winds of his time and they pretty much sucked him in and killed him. It's an old sad fucking tale — too old to dog through seeking a message at this late date.

I can remember a moment in fandom in the early sixties when a lot of us would have told you the very best minds and talents of a generation were concentrated there. We were wrong. None of us that I can think of has done anything especially exceptional since. Maybe we weren't hungry enough. Maybe we got so much adulation in fandom when we were young that we never had the need to venture out into the bigger world seeking it there. Or maybe we all just got caught up each in our own individual fashion in those swirling winds of the nineteen sixties and they sucked us in.

Frankly, I'm not sure that I really give a shit. Maybe we could have done better. But we could have done worse, too. Blodgett did. In that sense at least he is an example.

So farewell, Harvey Blodgett. Rest in Peace.

Hey, you did have to ask.

— Gordon Eklund



**BURB
SEZ**

“ ‘I can handle them,’ said Al Ashley. ‘I can take care of that situation.’ He was referring to the threat made by the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society and Dancing Academy (Walter J. Daugherty Pres.) that they would eject him bodily from the club if he ever dared show up again at a meeting. It seems they removed him from membership some time ago, and since then, he has shown up for meetings more regularly than before.

Hints that he was not welcome bounced off him. When Russell T. Hodgkins, who prides himself on his dignity, so lost his dignity one night that he called Al in open meeting ‘You damned welsher.’ Al merely sat there and stared at Russ with the identical expression he uses for staring off into space. Every so often, too, EEEvans, that most patient of men (he says) loses his patience and addresses some sharp, impatient remark to Al, who doesn't seem to mind at all.

But the other night the executive committee decided that the next time their unwelcome visitor showed up they would, by main force, throw him bodily and with malice aforethought, right out the clubroom door. Ashley, when informed of this decision, made the statement as recorded in the first line of this factual account. He said that if Gus Willmorth (who weighs 220 on the hoof and virtually the same sitting down) were omitted from the Ejection Committee (one wonders why there is no Welcoming Committee) he could handle Cox, Evans, Hodgkins, and Ackerman.

‘Yes, Al,’ said a friend. ‘Perhaps there would be a mighty struggle with you swinging Evans around like a blunt instrument (which is no doubt the mental picture you carry of him), but don't you think that eventually you would end up in the street?’

‘No,’ said Al calmly. He calmly picked up his coffee cup, placed it calmly to his lips and calmly drank the contents.

Trouble was, the cup was empty before he picked it up. ” — Charles Burbee, *Wild Hair #1*, 1947

Another Crate From the Sercon Closet

It might seem strange that my favorite writer isn't an SF author, let alone a great name of literature, but a critic. Criticism in general can seem diluted and parasitical, a form of second generation creativity, inferior to the first generation stuff wrested from life. But reading a good critic you realize that it is first generation creativity, it is wrested from life — the part of life spent immersed in art and entertainment.

Fanzine criticism has always been problematic, its standards uncertain, its audience uneasy. But I don't

Pauline Kael is probably a good place to start — she's everything you're afraid a critic isn't going to be. She's a colorful, propulsive writer with a distinctive voice and persona, perhaps not as vivid as Hunter S. Thompson, but not as mannered and repetitious either. She's wonderfully derisive of everything stuffy and pretentious in art, but she's the opposite of a philistine: vastly knowledgeable about not only film history but all the arts, responsive to honest ambition even when it fails, and genuinely, infectiously enthusiastic about the great films and directors and actors. Her reviews effervesce with intellectual energy; at her

best, watching her mind work on the page is like listening to a great jazz soloist. She draws on a humane, skeptical sense of politics and society, immense powers of evocative description, a speculative shrewdness about people and the movie business, and a caustic sense of humor that veers with witty unpredictably from Oscar Wilde to Mel Brooks. Above all, she responds to art as a whole person, and is self-aware and honest enough to make this, and not some abstract criterion, the basis of her work.

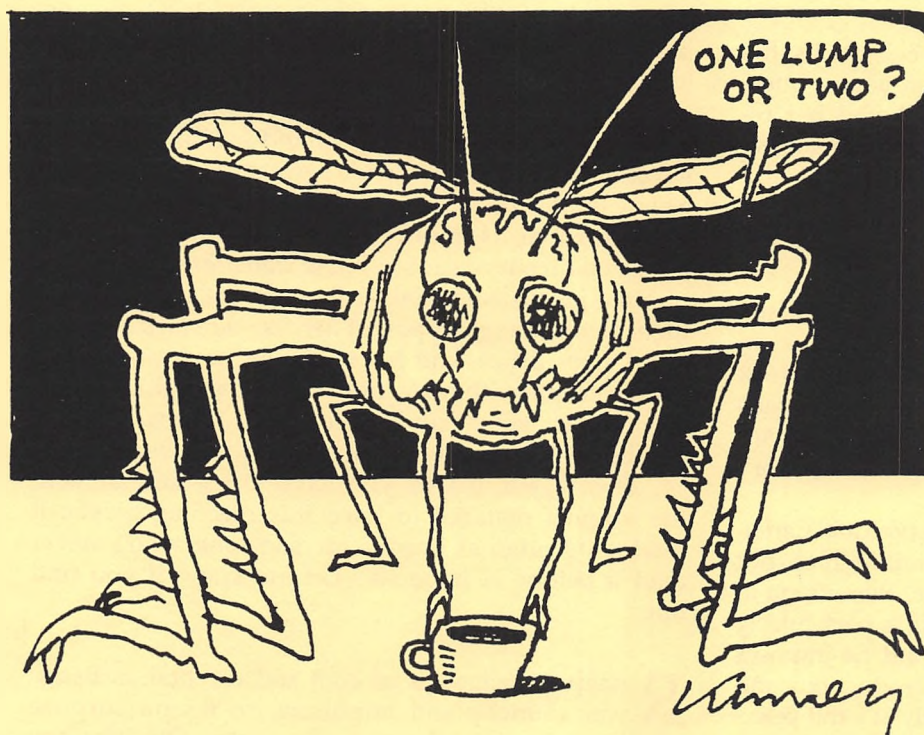
Given all this, it's remarkable how often I disagree with her. It's probably Kael who taught me that what makes criticism good has nothing to do with your own views being validated, but comes from discovering ways of looking and thinking you never would have thought of.

That's a useful lesson. Like all critics, Kael has her strengths and weaknesses. She's at her most brilliant writing about comedians, sex symbols, and those spontaneous, lively filmmakers who center on character and

acting, like Renoir and Truffaut and Altman, but she doesn't get horror at all and she's murder on cerebral directors like Kubrick and Resnais and Lucas — her dismissive review of *American Graffiti* was so brief that the publisher forgot to include it in the table of contents of *Reeling*. She disliked *Forbidden Planet* and *2001* and *Star Wars* and *Aliens* — and liked *Flash Gordon*! Yet her reasons make sense, given her sensibility, and you can see through her eyes for the duration of the review. On *2001*: "It's fun to think about Kubrick really doing every dumb thing he wanted to do, building enormous science fiction sets and equipment, never even bothering to figure out what he was going to do with them." On *Star Wars*: "Lucas has got the time of bad movies down pat: you never catch the actors deliberately acting badly, they just seem to be bad

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think it's ever been as unpopular and controversial as it is now.

Perhaps what it needs is an epic theoretical defense that will rationally convince people that it is a good thing. More likely, though, people need to be turned on to it the way they're turned on to any kind of writing, by reading exciting examples of it that will make them want more — maybe even make them want to write more.

Perhaps I should just follow the example of Andy Hooper's "Out of the Sercon Closet" in BLAT! 1, where he talks about SF writers, and describe some of the critics who have turned me on, my choices when I pick an old or new favorite from the shelf to re-read. After you've read them maybe this whole criticism thing will make more sense.

actors, on contract to Monogram or Republic, their clunky enthusiasm polished at the Ricky Nelson school of acting."

Her first books, *I Lost it at the Movies* and *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, came out in the mid-'60s, and are a mix of capsule reviews and long essays. They made her reputation, and she became the regular film critic for *The New Yorker*. Her subsequent books are all collections of these columns. She's still developing in the first two, *Going Steady* and *Deeper into Movies* (though *Going Steady* is essential for its inclusion of her major signature essay, "Trash, Art, and the Movies"), and dry and listless in the last, *Movie Love*, but in the rest — *Reeling*, *When the Lights Go Down*, *Taking it all in*, *State of the Art*, and *Hooked* — her reviews become absorbing multi-page improvisations. (People who think her style is too much may prefer *Deeper into Movies*; it's the one that won the National Book Award.) Also belonging to the core canon is "Raising Kane," her long, definitive essay on *Citizen Kane*, collected in *The Citizen Kane Book*.

When you first read one of her collections the temptation is to read about the movies you're interested in and put off the rest, but you'll find her reviews generate an interest independent of the subject — which is probably the defining characteristic of a good critic. Now that she's retired, whenever I see a movie I wonder what she would have made of it.

Music sometimes makes me wonder the same thing about Lester Bangs. Bangs, who died in 1982 in his early thirties, was the star of gonzo rock writing in the '70s. He's probably best known to fans in his most distorted and negative form, as a character in Bruce Sterling's patronizing alternate history story "Dori Bangs."

He has one collection, *Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung*, posthumously edited by Greil Marcus, but that doesn't show him at his best, either. Something in Marcus' writing has always put me off, a particularly smarmy flavor of solemn hyperbole, and he imposes this tone as an editor. Partly it's the introductions and pretentious section headings, but partly it's the selection of material: first, Marcus scants Bang's regular reviewing in favor of the longer essays, which deprives his work of coherence. In fact, his regular reviews and articles were not only representative, they were often funnier and more insightful. Probably the only way to experience Bangs in context would be to read through a stack of mid-'70s issues of *Creem*, the adorably sleazy rock magazine that was his main outlet in his best years. There, you'd get not only his regular reviews and articles, but his picture captions, his capsule reviews in "Rock-a-Rama," which often turned into ongoing comedy routines, and his notorious editing of the letter column. But '70s issues of *Creem* are now expensive rarities, alas, and you might have to go back in time yourself to get the right effect. ~

I was reading this stuff in high school, and Bangs

seemed the exact counterpart of two other figures in related media: Steve Gerber, then scripting dark, psychologically powerful comic books like *Man-Thing*, and Harlan Ellison, just then reissuing a whole set of fiction and nonfiction from Pyramid books. Like them, Bangs was passionate, harsh, manic, imaginative, and exciting — and, like them, when his social conscience urged him to play the pundit, the results were mediocre, tiresome posturing. He became a dull, moralistic scold. Marcus favors this side of Bangs, the side that emerged in *The Village Voice* and *Musician* and the book on Blondie after Bangs decided he'd been cheapening himself in *Creem*, and that's Marcus' second mistake. But is it all his fault? He does revive some pieces from *Creem*, a dozen or so of them, the best being the ones comprising Bangs' comic love-hate affair with Lou Reed, especially after Reed released a two-record set of mechanically-generated feedback called *Metal Machine Music*: one of these, "The Greatest Album Ever Made," is like a long, twisted Dave Letterman top ten list, and if reason one is "If you ever thought feedback was the best thing that ever happened to the guitar, well, Lou just got rid of the guitars," then by reason thirteen he's on some surreal tangent where Reed is saving his real songs for 863 posthumous LPs and has had his penis surgically replaced by a horse syringe; as Bangs says of a song on Reed's *Sally Can't Dance*, "Really a specimen of mind rot at its finest." Looking at these, I wonder if they could survive intact being transferred from their original journalistic context to even the most sympathetic book. Bangs' apparent heroes were Jack Kerouac and Lenny Bruce, and his wild first draft prose constantly erupts with rants, put-ons, and anarchic fantasy digressions. He makes Kael look like Thomas Carlyle. Maybe he was simply too spontaneous to be timeless.

Then again, maybe you have to be familiar with the original material to have this reaction; maybe it retains its original impact for someone who's never read it before. I hope so. Let me know if you find out.

Robert Christgau is as cool and cerebral as Bangs was raunchy and impulsive, so it's no surprise that his collection of rock writing, *Any Old Way You Choose It*, solves this formal problem; in fact, he's so astute on the processes of context and medium and consumption, the surprise would be if he couldn't turn this kind of analysis on his own work.

Any Old Way You Choose It was published in 1973 and covers the period 1967-1973, the age of the counterculture; with conscious appropriateness, the first piece in the book is his *Esquire* article on the Monterey pop festival. This is when rock was most enmeshed in politics and society, and Christgau was as ideally suited to the era as Bangs was to the entropic music scene of the '70s. He can articulate the glimpse of the utopian in a Tom Jones concert he attends with his mom (though not Englebert Humperdinck's; as his mom says, "What seemed to be so natural with Tom

Jones with this guy is so contrived.") and find the political in the voice of Joni Mitchell or Carole King, or a lyric by Chuck Berry. That sounds a little silly, so maybe I should quote some passages. "Carole King is genuine. She is beautiful not because her features are ideal — she is the greatest thing to happen to the Jewish nose since Barbra Streisand — but because her face is open, pleasant, honest, warm. So is her piano style — the first widely recognized instrumental signature ever developed by a woman. And so is her voice — not crystalline folky or hog-chomping funky, just a speaking voice that catches and breaks and even quavers as it conveys melody and emotion. Men have been permitted colloquial vocal styles for many years, and by 1970 they were the norm, but women, objectified in the male-dominated culture, were expected to conform to the old instrumental norm or else ooze sex. Carole King destroyed that expectation, perhaps forever. No matter how many I-will-follow lyrics she writes and sings, that ought to be worth a footnote in anyone's history of cultural revolution." "Chuck Berry is the greatest rock lyricist this side of Bob Dylan, and sometimes I prefer him to Dylan. Both communicate an abundance of the childlike delight in linguistic discovery that page poets are supposed to convey and too often don't, but Berry's most ambitious lyrics never seem pretentious or forced. True, his language is ersatz and barbaric, full of mispronounced foreignisms and advertising coinages, but then, so was Whitman's. Like Whitman, Berry is excessive because he is totally immersed in America — the America of Melville and the Edsel, burlesque and installment-plan funerals, pemmican and pomade. Unlike Whitman, though, he doesn't quite permit you to take him seriously — he can't really think it's pronounced 'a la carty,' can he? He is a little surreal. How else can a black man as sensitive as Chuck Berry respond to the affluence of white America?" More complex and explicitly political subjects like the career of Bob Dylan or Altamont and the Rolling Stones get a more ambitious analytical treatment, but with the same lucidity, which I suspect is the simplicity of true intelligence. It's the kind of politicized criticism that develops from an added sensitivity, not the kind that substitutes for aesthetic and imaginative response.

Actually, Christgau's stance in *Any Old Way You Choose It* is complex; he is both inside and outside the subworlds he is writing about, the rock culture and the New Left. With the New Left, he is both sympathetic and mordantly objective ("Q: Why is rock like the revolution? A: Because they're both groovy."). He is part of the rock audience, but he both interprets it for the outside world — most of this book was written for mainstream publications, *Newsday*, *Esquire*, and *The New York Times* — and addresses it from outside, nudging it towards blind spots like AM radio and black music, raising uncomfortable issues it's not facing. Christgau is a rare combination of good journalist and good thinker. Christgau's attention to subculture, his sense of how art is completed by the audience,

makes him the most useful of the critics in this installment for fanzine writing.

I mentioned that *Any Old Way You Choose It* succeeds as a book where *Psychotic Reactions and Carburetor Dung* fails, and one of Christgau's devices is the time-binding interpolation of installments of "Christgau's Consumer Guide," a monthly list of tart capsule reviews in *The Village Voice* that started in 1969. His two subsequent books have been alphabetized, decade-spanning compilations of these, covering the '70s and the '80s. Though they're fun to read, I'm getting less enchanted with his writing. He has always been concise — writing this column, I've discovered that, unlike Kael and Bangs, he can be quoted to good effect at paragraph length — but now he's often impacted and oblique to the point of incoherence. He has also become fearfully Politically Correct, in the old, narrow sense of the term: musicians who ignored the boycott of Sun City got banished from *Christgau's Record Guide: the '80s*. I suspect both tendencies are related to some failure of intellectual self-confidence. There is a striking contrast between his piece about going to the Tom Jones concert with his mother and the modesty and inconclusiveness of a recent piece about going to a Janet Jackson concert with his daughter. I hope he gets over it. The last big piece I had unmixed admiration for was "Decade," his summary of '70s music in *The Village Voice*, and that was fourteen years ago.

Again, the Consumer Guide demonstrates that the pleasures of criticism have nothing to do with agreement. I've never agreed with Christgau's musical taste — at one point he decided that King Crimson "was the worst rock band in history simply because it was the most pretentious" — and this has become acute as the Consumer Guide has filled up with "world music" and been emptied of almost anything I might want to hear: the last "pick hit" that's also in my collection was probably My Bloody Valentine's *Loveless* in 1991. Anyone writing capsule reviews can learn from these, which can achieve the compact ingenuity of a microchip design. An example is the way the school-type grades at the end of each review are never redundant, as they are when other *Voice* writers borrow the format, but always add some punctuation or final twist. Christgau delights in this kind of device. Another example is the lists of artists, the "dozens," that were woven throughout "Decade." (Incidentally, I'm still trying to figure out the mystery category; if anyone reading this knows Bob, could you ask him for me?) Where Bangs was instinctive, Christgau is a craftsman.

That's all this time. Ted White just called and BLAT! 4 is going to press. This will be concluded in the next issue, where I look at such fearsome entities as Camille Paglia and Albert Goldman and, scariest of all, Paul Williams — scary because I've been told he's on the BLAT! mailing list, so he might actually read what I'm going to write about him.

— Barnaby Rapoport

BLOCH was SUPERB!

By Ted White,
Lee Hoffman and
Walter Willis

Robert Bloch is dead. He was a giant among fen.

He was one when I entered fandom in the early fifties, and he remained one for the rest of his life. Never patronizing, never condescending, he towered over the rest of us. He achieved a measure of fame and success after a movie was made of his *Psycho*, was a favorite on radio and television talk shows (of the more civilized, old-fashioned sort), and yet remained completely at home in fandom, confessing once to Walt Willis that "he hated public speaking and always felt nervous, and the way he made out was to make believe he was delivering someone else's speech. Thereby, as it were I suppose, shifting the responsibility."

The 1957 Midwestcon was my first, and it was one of the best, attended not only by all the fifties regulars, like the Toronto Derelicts, but by people from far-off Seattle: G.M. Carr and the Busbys.

Robert Bloch was a regular Midwestcon attendee in those days.

Sunday night a bunch of us were dead-dogging it at poolside. Bloch was there. So was Tucker. And a fellow named Ed Chamberlaine who had annoyed us all with his attempts to be the life of the party and the center of attention. Earlier that weekend he had done his best to get the women present as drunk as possible, using deceptively smooth mixed drinks from his flask — with the result that several women were absent much of Saturday or Sunday, and when they reappeared they bore wan, exhausted, unhappy faces.

His most annoying habit that Sunday night at poolside was to interrupt other people. I was most bugged when he interrupted Bloch.

Because Robert Bloch was expounding theories of con-going. "Which is better?" he asked, "To leave a convention while it is still going strong on its last day, carrying away memories of it



The cover of the 1981 edition of *Science Fiction Five Yearly*

at its best — or to stick it out to the bitter end, and you're one of the two or three who are left, knowing you didn't miss a thing?"

It was a good question, once Ed let him voice it, and it led to a spirited discussion.

But I think we all chose the same answer — and were demonstrating it at the time.

The last time I saw Robert Bloch face to face was at an Archon in St. Louis in 1980. We were both part of a program item and had a chance to chat beforehand in the Green Room. I'm sorry I won't get another chance like that; he was someone whose continued existence I guess I took for granted.

Throughout the years Bob continued to read and respond to fanzines, usually with one of his own distinctively red-bordered postcards imprinted with his name and address. His last card is sitting next to my typer now. "Dear Ted and Dan," it says, "BLAT! arrived with a bang, and I'm thanking you for it in advance — advance of reading, that is. Because it will be my reading this coming weekend, after I have a minor addition to recent hernia surgery — during which time I'll not be typing or doing anything except lying around, and what could be better than 90+ pages of fan-nish annish? A skim-thru of the artwork hints of what to expect. It couldn't have arrived at a better moment, and I do appreciate it. But 40 years? Incredible. Capone only ruled for about 12, and Caligula for even less. I must have lost track after 1953. . . . — Bob" The red-inked scrawl slanted down and was a bit harder to read than usual, but I didn't take the hint.

I asked several people to write appreciations of Bloch for this issue. The only one who was able to was Lee Hoffman, who added, "It's hard to write something about him. My memories have become too fragmented for me to tell anecdotes about my encounters with him. And I feel really stupid expressing the same old clichés of eulogies, no matter how true and fitting they are. But I'm afraid that's about the best I can do. I know this is far too short. He deserves pages. But I don't have the words that are worthy of the subject."

In 1954, Robert Bloch wrote a letter to Walt Willis in which he talked about his fanac (and demonstrated his innate fannishness):

Lee Hoffman

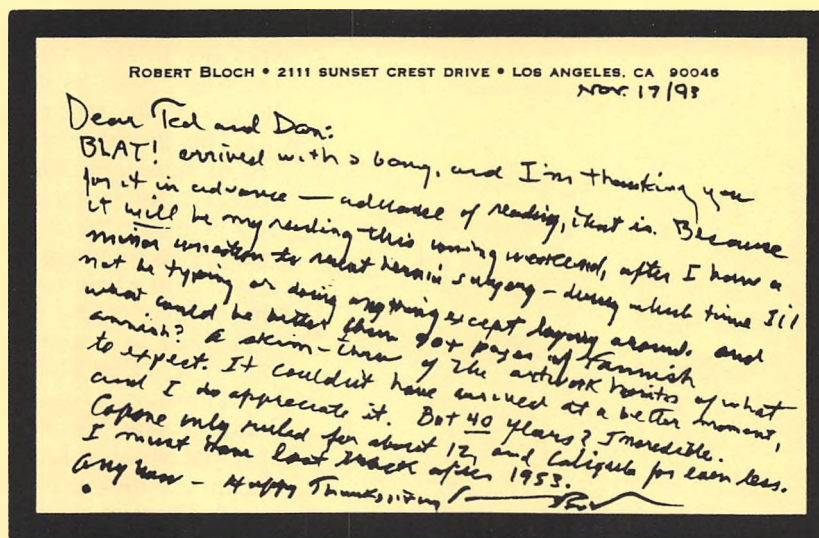
What can I say about Robert Bloch? Everything good that's already been said about him is true. He was one of the Very Special People, clever, witty, sardonic, kind and caring, great company, an exceptional writer with a real knack for traditional horror stories. He was one of the core fans active in various numbered fandoms. He was an expert on films, especially classic horror movies. He was a true friend — the kind who makes life worthwhile.

Bob Bloch was one of the contributors who made my first fanzine a success. He was one of the people who said an encouraging word when I blundered my way into fanzine publishing, and then again when I decided to try writing professionally. Whenever I had a new book published, I'd send him a copy. He was one I sent copies to who *always* responded. And he always made some comment in his response that suggested he had actually read my book. That's the kind of rare encouragement a writer treasures.

Aside from the editor, he is the one person who had something in every issue of *Science-Fiction Five-Yearly*. He was the contributor I could always depend on. No matter how busy he was, or how much of an inconvenience it was for him, he always came through with his contribution — and got it in before the deadline.

A few years ago, Mr. Bloch commented that the worst thing about growing old was not the aches and pains, the waning energy and memory, or dimming eyesight. It was the losing of old friends.

I know now, all too well, what he meant. — Lee Hoffman



Robert Bloch's last postcard of comment to BLAT!, November 1993

As to my fan activity being a secret vice . . . vice it may be, but hardly a secret one. The reason for my indulgence is so basurdsly simple (I started out to write "aburdly simple" but now that I see the neologism I think I'll leave it that way: isn't it a dirty looking word?)

In the words of Ado Annie (a character in *Oklahoma* which is as you know the American equivalent of *Hearts of Oak*) my trouble is that I can't say no. Somebody writes and asks for an article, chances are if the request is at all reasonable I'll oblige. Get roped into all kinds of fanactivity that way, too. (Did I hear some cosher in the back of the house mutter "Egoboo"? Well, it's not that at all. Egoboo is earned by pro activity. Me, all I get is headaches. I spent the whole morning doing an article for Calkins: because he asked me, and because he said he needed something to balance your illiterate contribution. It's just weakness that keeps me in fandom. Here I am, on p. 111 of a slimy little opus about a one-eyed private eye — really — and instead of finding out what happens on p. 112, I am penning random remarks to some faraway Belfastness in the wilderness. Are we still in this confounded parenthesis? Let's get out before we're suffocated.) — Robert Bloch, *Warhoon* 28, pg. 517

But it remains for Willis to do a Blochian roast of Mr. Bloch Himself. This was written for *Warhoon* 19, published in February 1964, and captures perfectly Bloch's own fanwriting style.

Walt Willis

Robert Bloch, who plays a role in contemporary fandom strongly reminiscent of that of Yorick in *Hamlet*, was seen by many at the Chicon last year, and only narrowly avoided by many others. Among the former were Madeleine and myself as you will have noticed from his reference to us, complimentary and otherwise in the last *Wrhn*.

Last issue I wrote about some of the things America can be proud of. To give a balanced picture, perhaps I should now say something about Robert Bloch, as I saw him.

Someone had removed the sharpened popsicle stick I had driven through his heart in 1952, the only stake I could find small enough, but apart from that he hadn't changed. In fact I don't think he had even been to bed. (I hear he is now travelling everywhere by Greyhound, as the only hope of losing the bags under his eyes.) However it wasn't only because of his appearance that he was required by the Convention Committee to do his turn in the dark even to monster fans. The fact is that he is quite proficient at the magic lantern lecture as an art form, having been a lodger in Frieze-Greene's house in London when the latter invented the camera. It was he, in fact, who plunged the Daguerre into his host's back. Leaving Frieze as dead as a dado he absconded to Soho with the housekeeping money and the kitchen knife.

This proficiency later made him eagerly sought after by producers of horror pictures eager to cut expenses. It is not generally realized, for instance, that the film *Psycho* is not a film at all, but 14,735 magic lantern slides. Bloch and Tucker travel about the country from cinema to cinema changing the slides in the projection booth with a bewildering speed acquired through years of dealing off the bottom of the deck at poker. So much for the clever cutting acclaimed by some critics and unnoticed by others. All that happened was that Bloch or Tucker lost his place.

However those of you who were at Chicago will know Old Lantern Jaw Bloch as he appears at Midwest Conventions, the original Missing Lincoln. What I want to tell you about is Western Bloch, the new slim Fatty Arbuckle, the Idle of the Movie Colony.

California is a very arid State, and it is possible to drive about in it indefinitely without finding the Pacific Ocean. This is because most of it has been cut into little chunks and put in people's back yards. In the movie colony these swimming pools are cut into odd shapes to symbolize how the star in question made his money, Liberace's being in the shape of a grand piano, and so on. Robert Bloch's pool is book shaped.

Not knowing about this pool, it was some time before I realized that the only reason we had been invited to Bloch's house was so that he could see Madeleine in her black bikini. We spent some time

in the house itself first, admiring the various *objets d'art* which littered the place. I would have said they were priceless, if it had not been for the presence of price tags on each one, with sterling equivalents hastily added in pencil. There was also a typewriter, in which was a half-page of typing. I was too much of a gentleman to peer at a fellow author's half finished manuscript, though I knew it would probably be published that way, so I tactfully ignored it. Madeleine, however, I am glad to say, is no gentleman, and when after some time she realized the piece of paper was too big for a price tag, she went over and read it. It turned out to be a Hitchcock Murder Drama featuring two characters called Walter Willis and Gertrude Carr. Since I came back home I have been glued to my screen, but it has not so far appeared.

One thing I learned from this script was the reason for Bloch's using those very long cigarette holders. When he is typing, the burning cigarette end is dragged along the paper, this accounting for his reputation among editors of writing searing prose.

The true personality of Robert Bloch the Man, however, emerged when he offered us a drink. We asked for orange juice, and after an intensive search he produced a can from the refrigerator and opened it with a beer can opener, which he had no difficulty in finding at all. He then produced a jug and inverted the can over it. Nothing happened. Frowning perplexedly, Bloch offered the can rather timorously to a terrifying machine affixed to the wall, which deftly removed the lid to reveal an unbroken surface of yellow ice. Bloch held the can upside down, shook it frantically, slapped it on the bottom, and tried to pry out the contents with a knife. All this was to no avail, and he finally just stood there jabbing plaintively a the solid ice with a tea spoon.

The spectacle was too much for Madeleine's warm heart and dry throat. She took the can from him, held it under the warm water tap for a moment, and inverted it over the jug. A cylinder of orange juice clattered out and we left the laws of thermodynamics to complete the operation.

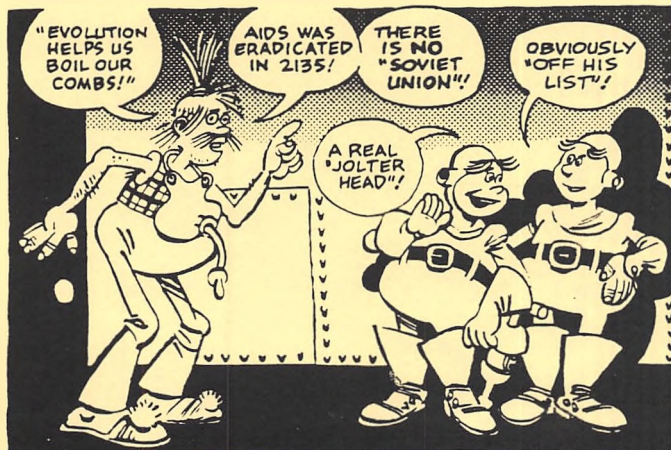
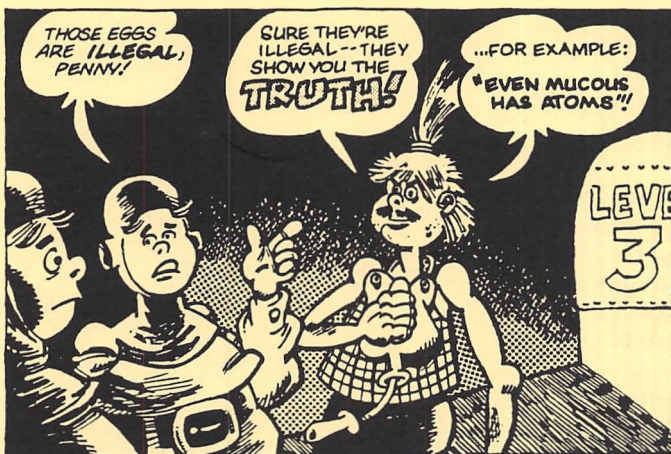
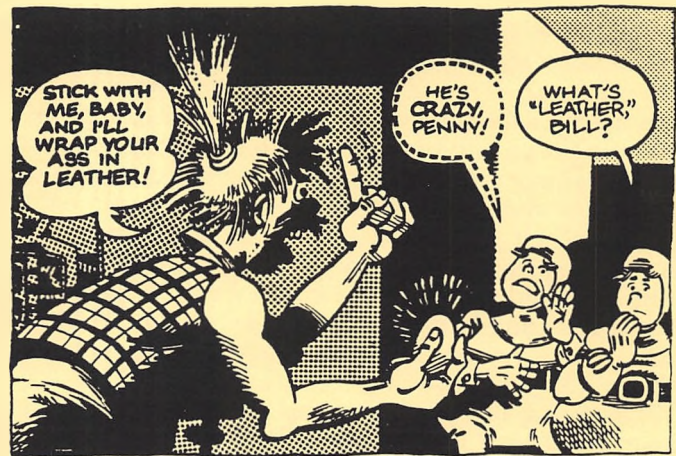
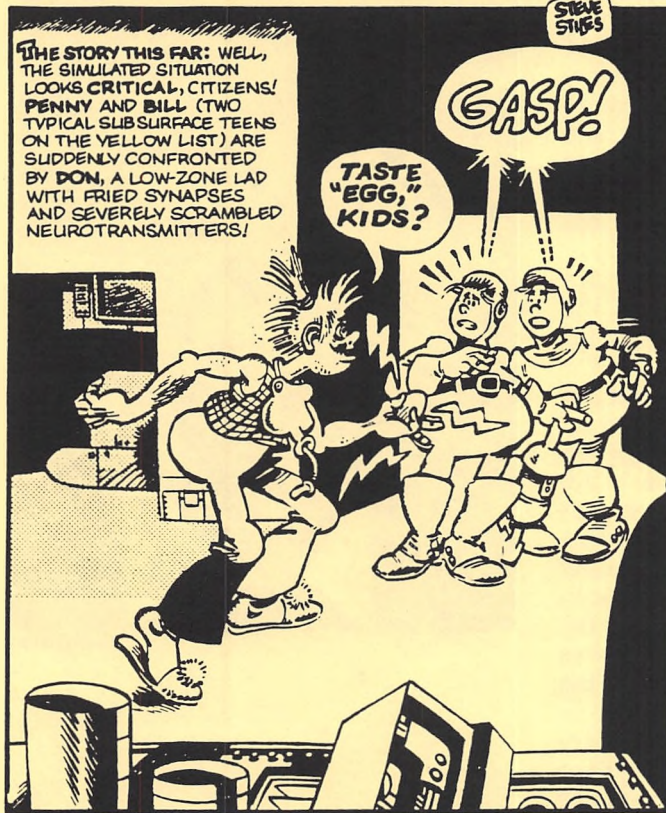
As we went out to the pool, though, I felt I had been vouchsafed a glimpse of the real Bloch behind that sophisticated exterior, a simple child of nature lost in the complexity of modern civilization. Behind that cigarette holder was still the barefoot backwoods boy from Weyauwega.

The afternoon at the pool was pleasant and uneventful, except that Bloch tried to drown me, and the chemicals he had introduced into the water did not dissolve Madeleine's bikini. Undaunted, he waited until we had dressed again and offered to drive her to dinner in his red convertible. This is a large vulgar vehicle, commonplace among Arabian oil sheiks, but rarely seen in Ireland because of our innate good taste, narrow roads and 700 years of exploitation by foreigners. It was obviously Bloch's hope that this flamboyant automobile would turn the head of a simple Irish girl, and had it not been for the Incident of the Orange Juice I would indeed have been at a loss to cope with the situation. As it was, however, I merely asked him if the hood came up automatically. Drunk with power, Bloch pushed a button and the hood rose over the car in what I had to admit was an eerily impressive manner. However as I had surmised, the resources of Detroit did not extend to automatically fastening it in front, and the attempts of Bloch to cope with the complex arrangement of levers and catches were pitiable in the extreme. Once again the thin veneer of sophistication cracked and fell away, to reveal once more Weyauwega, Wisconsin. After this it was hopeless for him to try and impress Madeleine with even the most glamorous artifacts of California, such as the Hollywood Bowl and the LASFS Clubroom. We had witnessed the Decline of the West. — **Walt Willis**



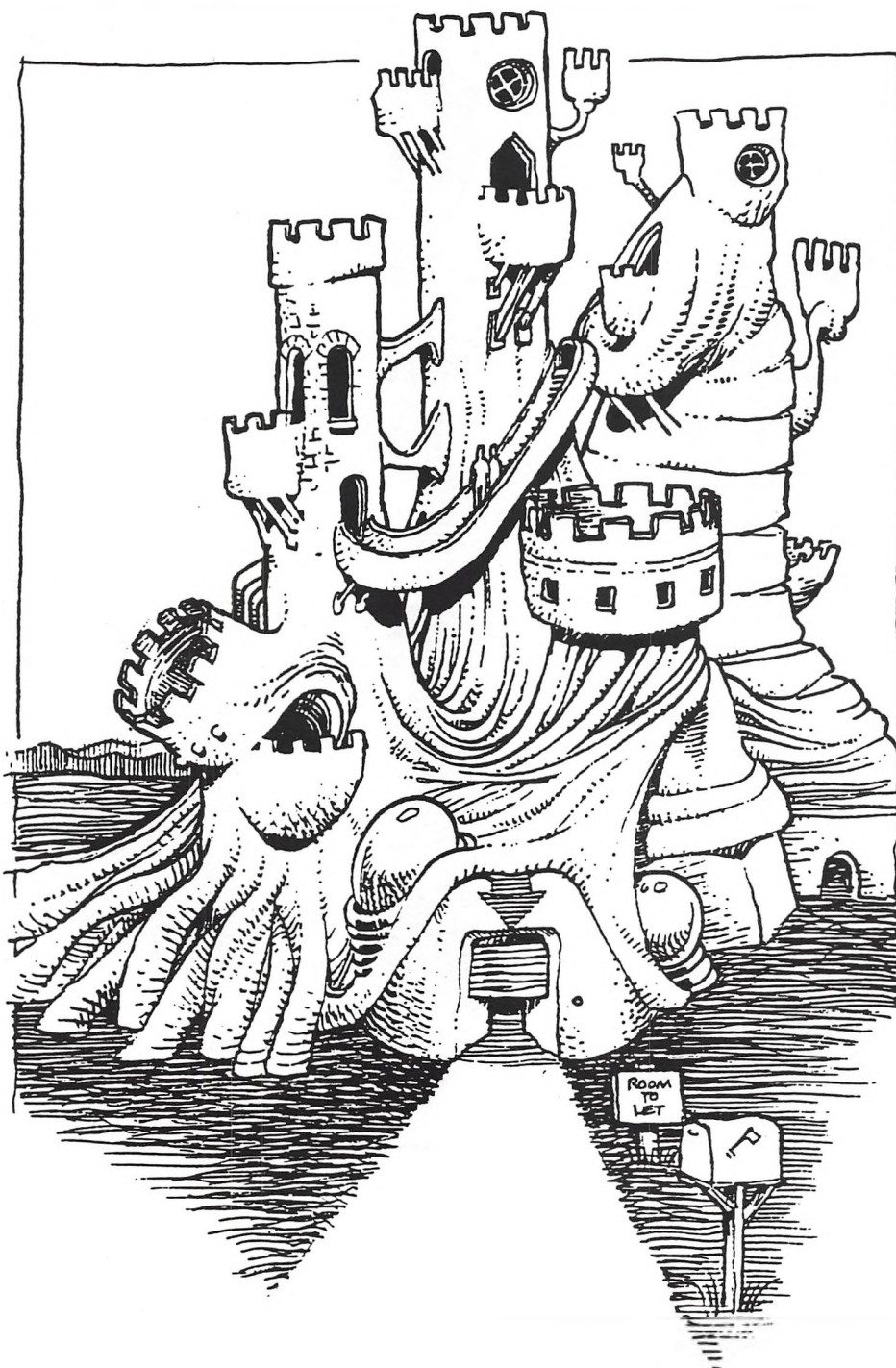
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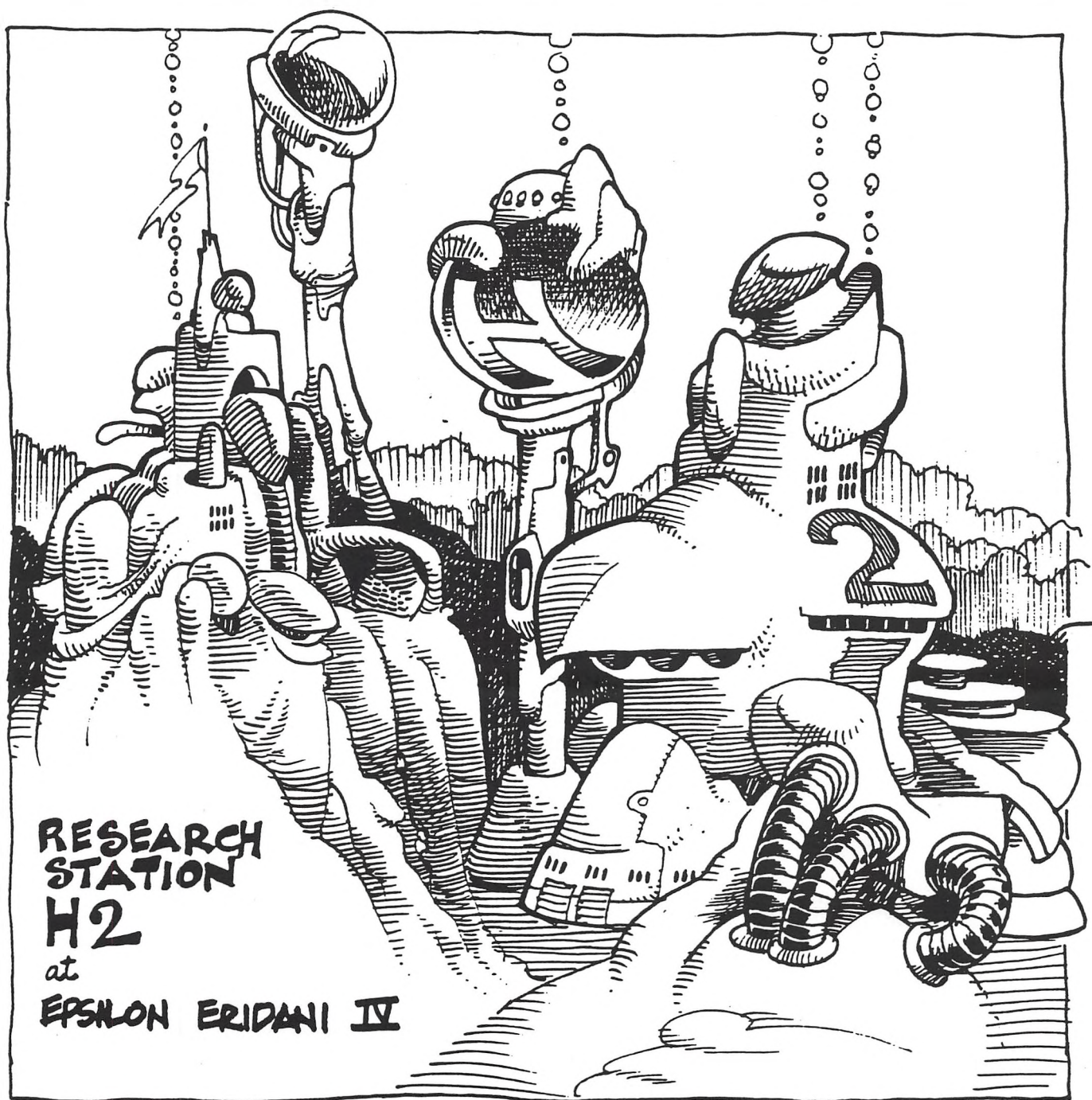
WIDE AWAKE



NARCOTECTURE

a portfolio of recent drawings by
GRANT CANFIELD





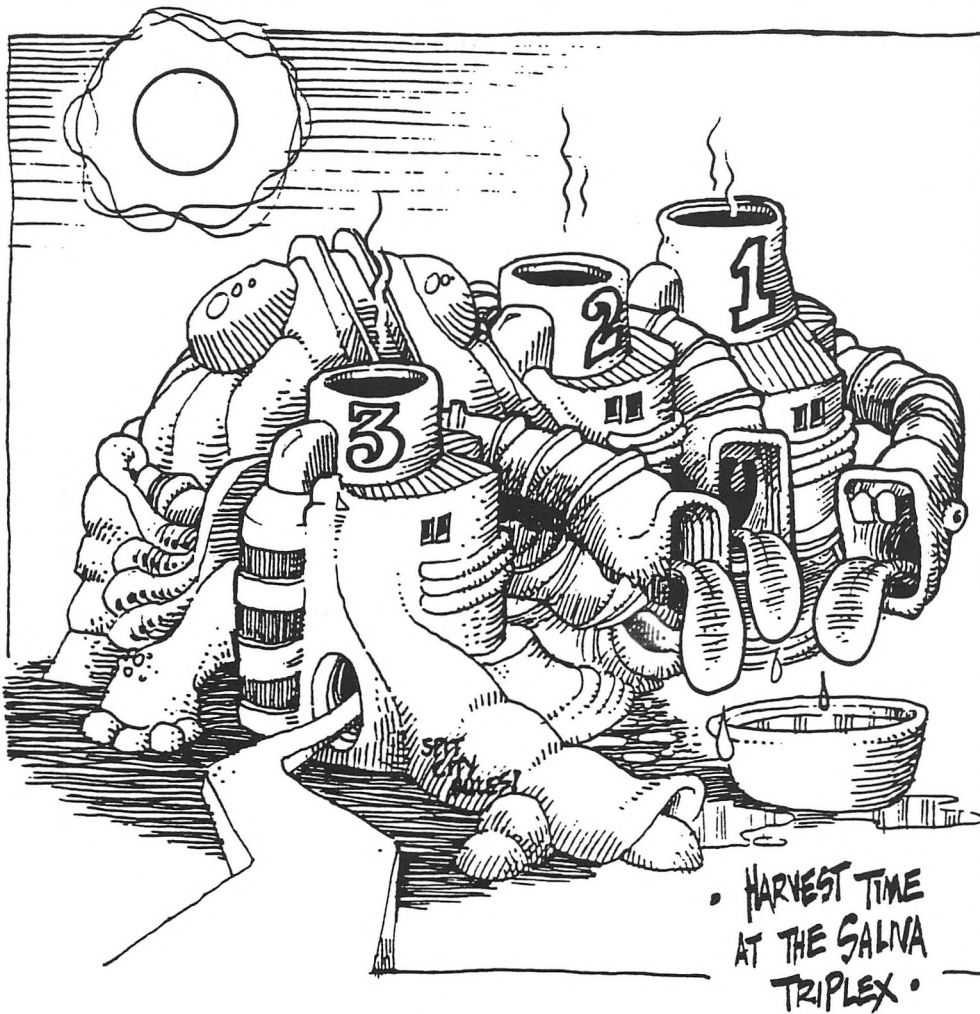
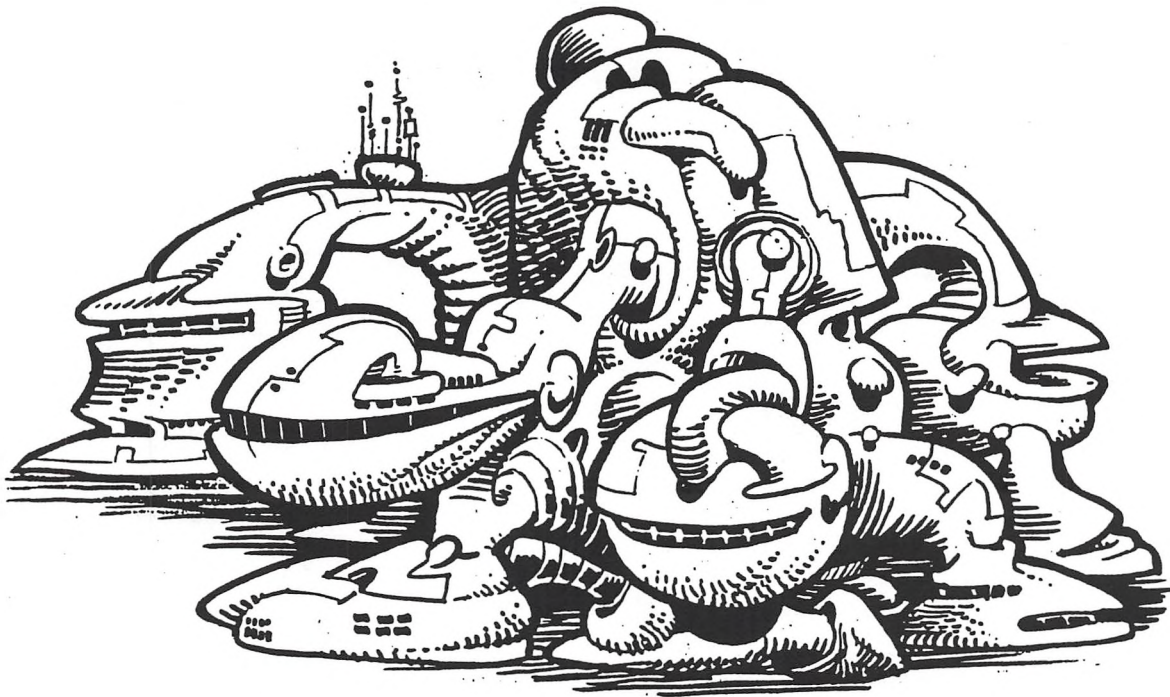
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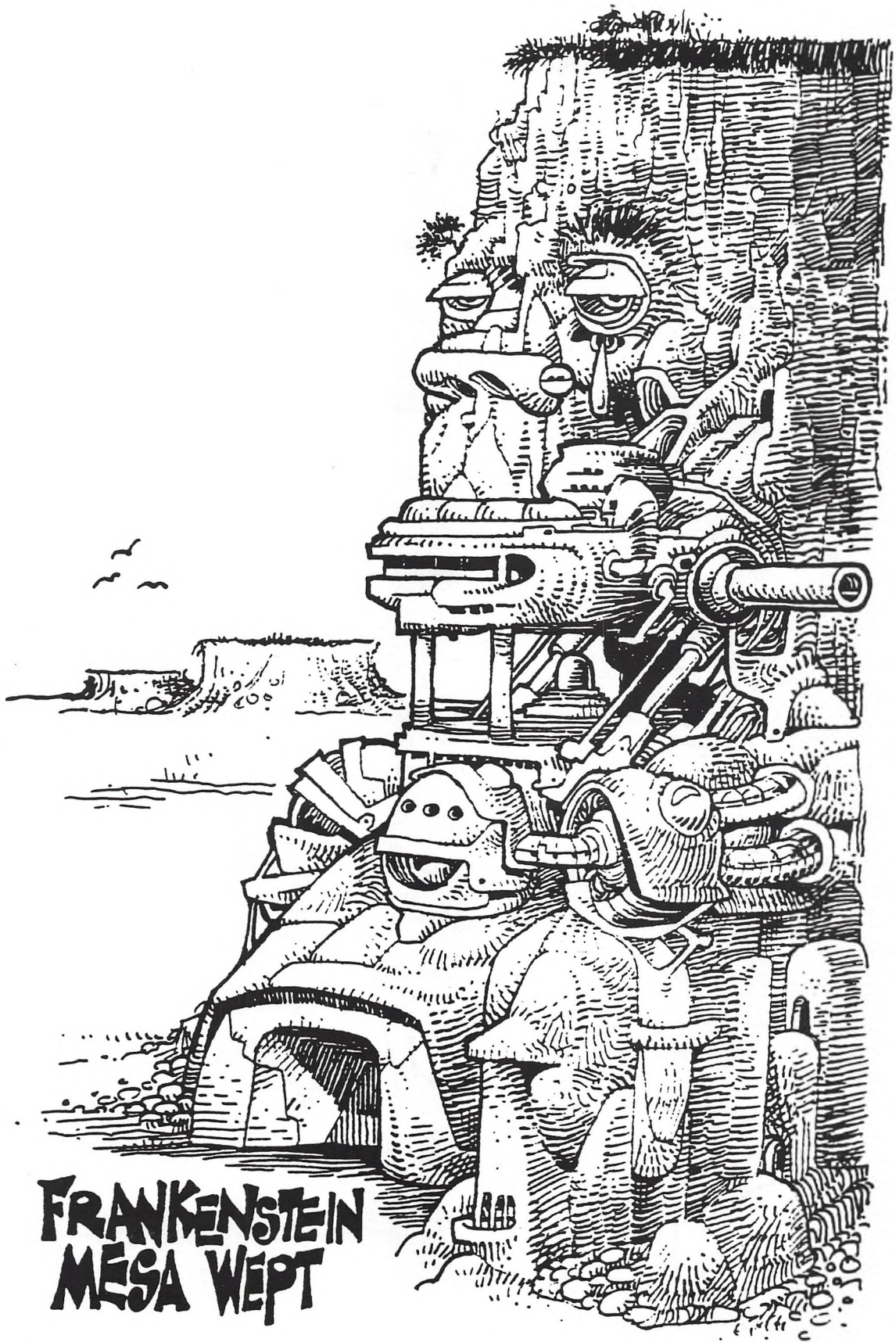
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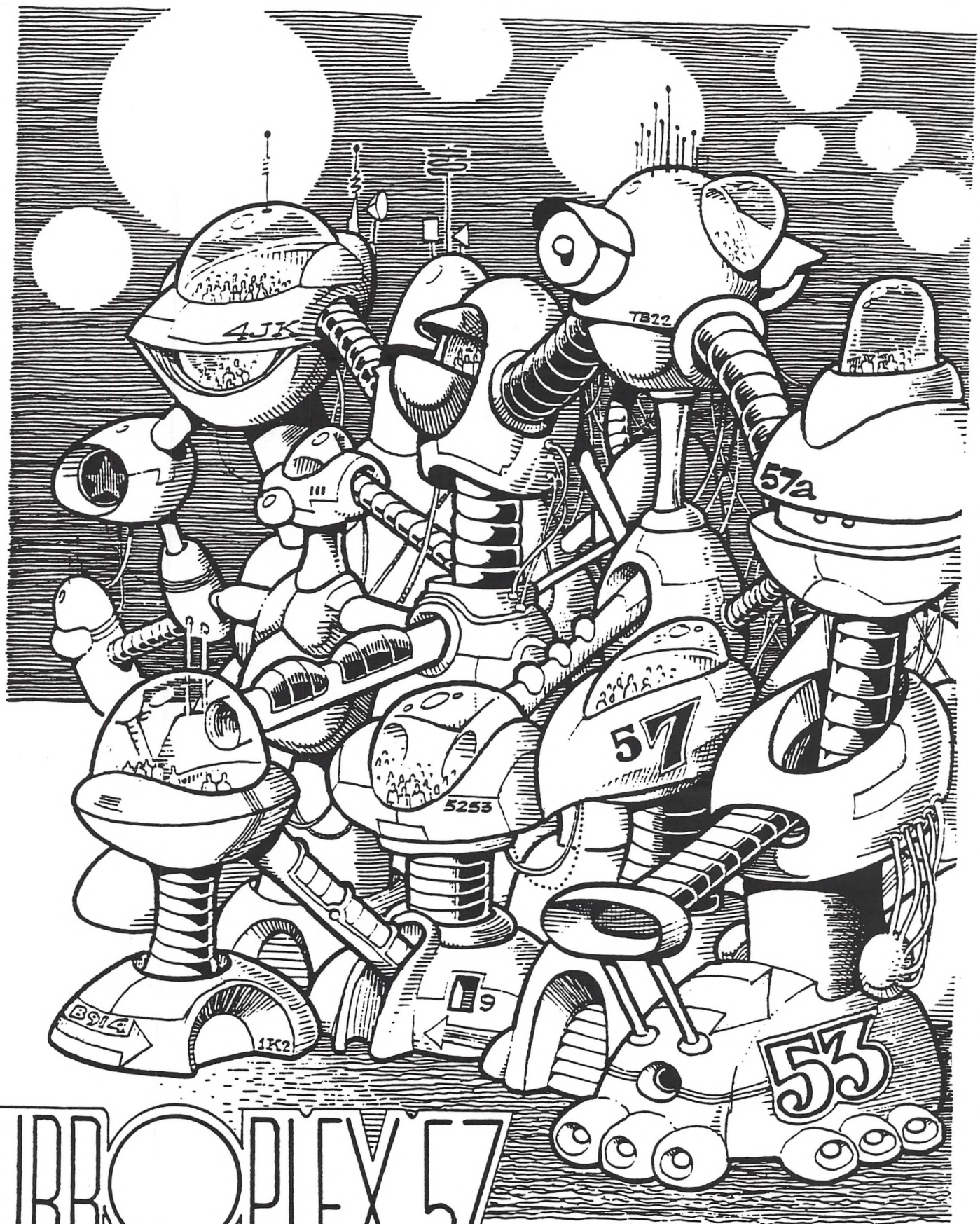
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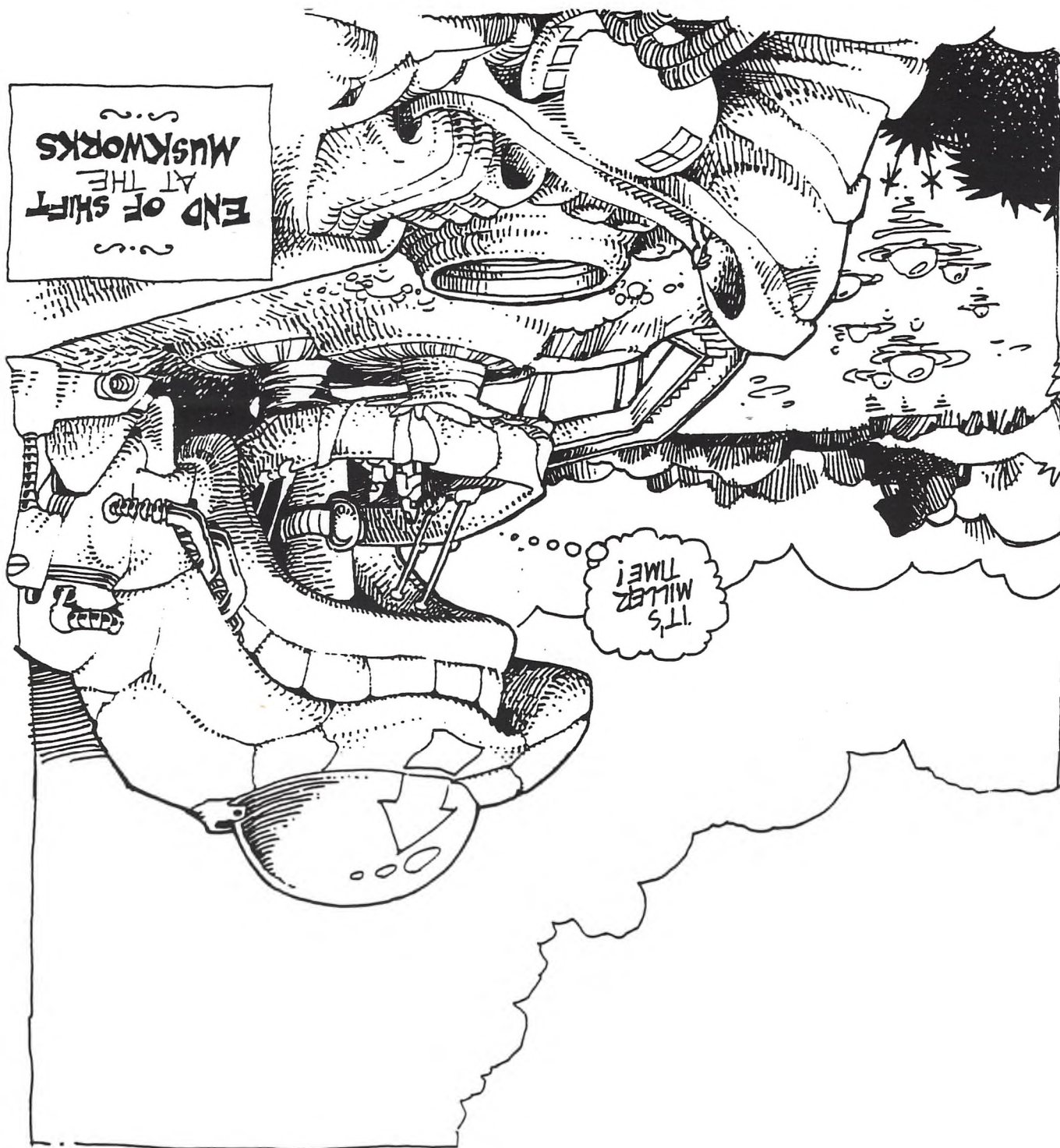
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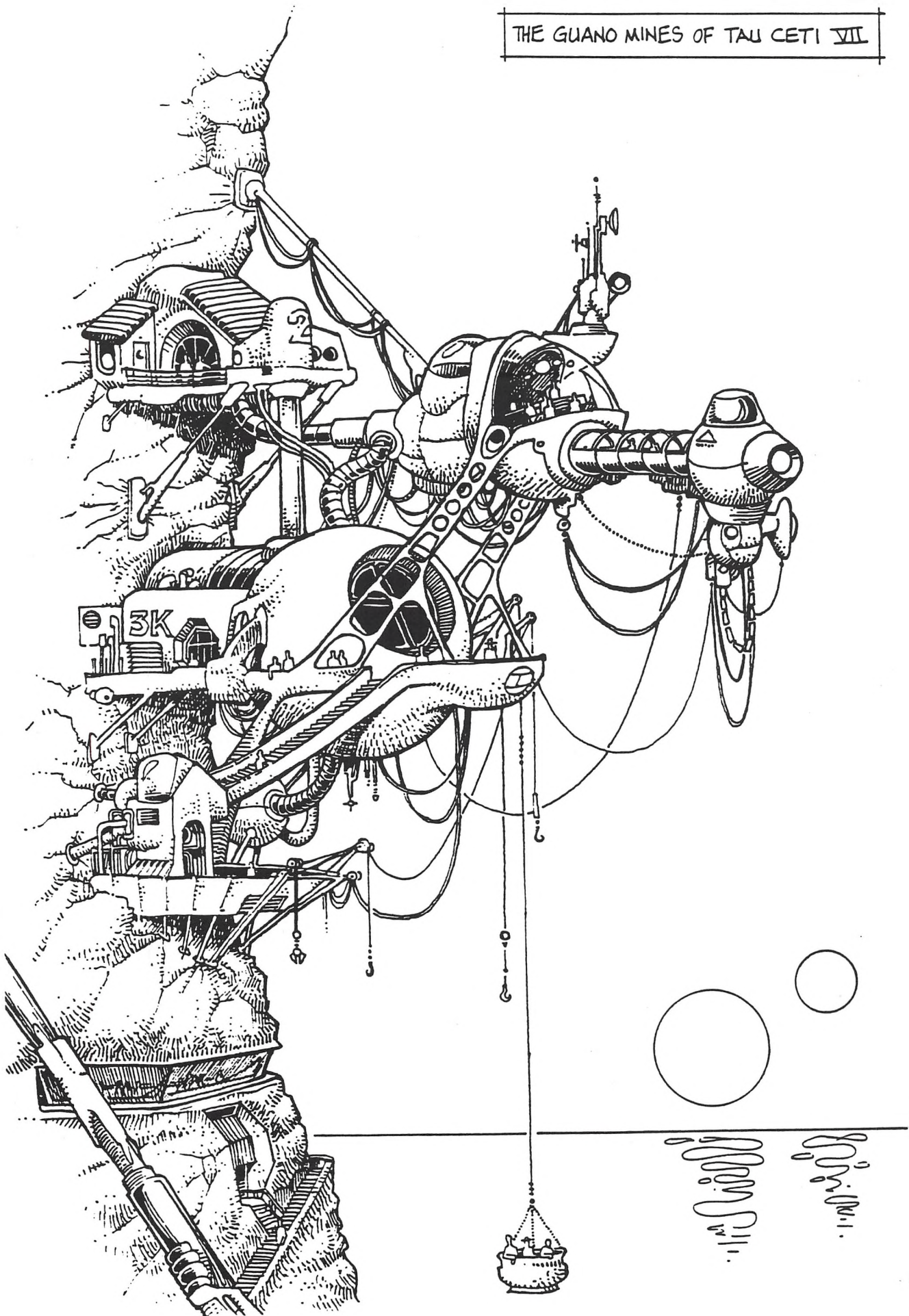
URBOPLEX 57

END OF SHIFT
AT THE
MUSKWORKS

IT'S
MILLER
TIME!



THE GUANO MINES OF TAU CETI VII



The cartoons that decorate this issue's lettercolumn are lovingly dedicated to everyone's favorite art critic, Chuck Connor. The letters themselves start off with two belated comments about our second issue — or, as we like to call it, Number Two. The first is from a famous Hairy Canadian and the second is from a famous Fan In Need.

MICHAEL GLICKSOHN It took me almost a year longer than it took Ted to finally view *Jurassic Park* so perhaps I was better prepared for the fact that it was a totally stupid movie and more able (not to mention willing) to shut down what few critical faculties I have and merely enjoy the incredible special effects. In fact, Ed Bennett (who I'm sure Ted remembers from his early days as a mimeo repair man in the DC area) [You mean as "Captain Mimeo." — tw] with whom I watched the film in a village outside Chicago probably summed it up pretty well when he suggested he'd have been happy if they'd cut out *all* of the scenes that only had people and scenery in them and put the dinosaur footage on a loop.

The parts of your editorial that dealt with Walter, Avram and Lester were fascinating reading, Ted. I never knew Breen personally and much of what I know of his part in fandom's history I owe to reading things you've written about him. I don't think anyone could have written as eloquently about the essential tragedy of his life than you did in this brief postscript. Your awareness of the waste of potential and the pettiness of some fannish reactions comes across keenly.

I never really knew Avram Davidson but I'll always be grateful that he contributed a moving and eloquent article to my struggling fanzine over twenty years ago. Ironically, the article mentioned Avram driving from bookstore to bookstore trying to sell remaindered copies of one of his best books for a little more than he'd bought them back from the publisher for. I thought at the time that the writer of *The Phoenix and the Mirror* shouldn't have been fighting off poverty but I'm often surprised when I discover just how difficult the lives of some truly creative people have been.

(There is no justice in most of this, of course. You obviously think Jack Chalker is vastly overpaid and certainly his writing talent palls beside Avram's but Jack has been cagey enough to figure out what the public wants and what he can get big bucks for. He makes a lot more than many friends of mine who are far superior writers but I can't blame him for being opportunistic enough to cash in on

what the market wants. Is Stallone's acting ability worth fifteen million dollars a film? Of course not, but his market share is. Is Stephen King's writing talent worth several million a book? I doubt it. But publishers know they can recoup the investment many times over. Is any athlete worth fifty or sixty or seventy million dollars for a long-term contract?)

I was saddened to read of your diminished respect for Lester. Since I move at most irregularly on the extreme edges of the professional side of science fiction I hadn't been aware that he'd lost so much of his previous reputation. (Unlike Ellison who manages to erode whatever positive feelings people had for him in an extremely high-profile fashion that even gaffes can follow.) Of

the three people you wrote about, I'd encountered Lester by far the most frequently, always pleasantly, and I'll never forget the grin of sheer honest joy with which he handed me the base of my only Hugo in 1973.

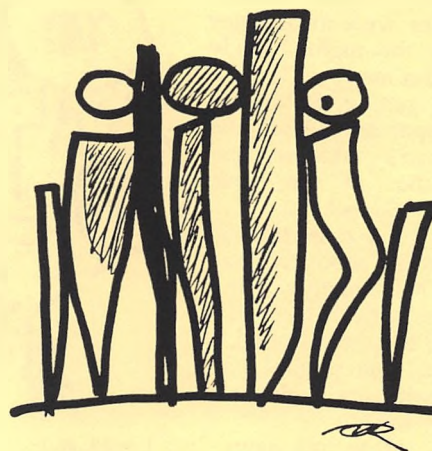
When Joe Sanders bounced the chapter I had written for him from his proposed book about fandom, I figured it was because I just wasn't a big enough name to grace the reduced contents page. To discover that I'm in such illustrious company as Ted White and Bob Tucker is quite a revelation! I wonder who *will* be in the book . . . if it ever appears, of course.

Undoubtedly it says more about me than about Will but I hadn't known/remembered that he was still involved in fandom. Evidently fandom was better represented at the fall of the Berlin Wall than I'd realized. Chicago fan Bruce Schneier hopped a plane to Berlin for the deconstruction but until now I thought he'd been the only fan there. Of course, I suppose it's still possible that Will Straw has become a hoax since his early days in fandom.

Dan's comments about his reaction to Ellison struck a chord. I imagine Dan and I are but two of the many people who experienced this sort of development in our attitudes towards Harlan. After long considering him a friend I too have come to see his current posturing as those of a caricature of the man I once deeply admired for his devotion to what seemed to be decent and right. Perhaps there's some

medical reason for the evident deterioration in his control but whatever the reason, the Ellison I read about nowadays is an embarrassment and a hollow shell of the man I once knew and respected. And the saddest thing is that he does not appear to understand how massively he is now betraying the ideals he once spoke out for so eloquently. [508 Windermere Ave., Toronto, Ontario, M6S 3L6 CANADA]

BLATHER LETTERS



I don't know what to say about Harlan anymore. There is no doubt in my mind that he is a very talented man. At one time I thought his fiction was singularly exciting. The fact that he also had a dynamic personality was just icing on the cake. But nowadays his personality seems to be as big a liability as it used to be an asset — he seems to have become his own worst enemy. Maybe he's having trouble accepting that he is now Sixty. I don't know.

However, I think it is worth remembering in the midst of all of our armchair analysis that Harlan has been (and continues to be) an enormously generous individual. Off the top of my head, I can think of two occasions when Harlan's selflessness and compassion was unequalled, in my experience. There are also, off the top of my head, two other occasions that come to me that I would have to list amongst the cruelest I've ever heard of. Reconciling these two extremes must be a powerful battle for Harlan. It's too bad that, lately, the dark side seems to be winning. — djs

MARLIN FRENZEL Ted, I had heard from Jon White in 1988 that you had been arrested, but I had no idea you had spent any serious time behind bars. You seem to have handled the situation quite well. I automatically assumed you had gotten off. Mike McInerney, his wife Linda, and I were arrested for drug possession in the Seventies. It was three separate incidents and we all got released on technicalities.

In my case, the judge decided that the police had used an improper search warrant. In their zeal to net as many suspects as possible, they barged into our house at 2 a.m. — 24 hours after the warrant had been issued. I opened my door at insistent banging and found myself looking into the sights of an automatic weapon.

Most of the drugs at the scene belonged to Mike and Andy Main, but they didn't get busted. They were in Berkeley for the night. Andy Main made up for this by getting us Michael Stepanian, the Grateful Dead's attorney and author of the book, "Pot Shots."

Our case dragged out for about two and a half months, but I was only behind bars for three days. Still, it was one of the most depressing periods of my life.

More bad news . . . I was saddened to hear about the deaths of Terry Carr, Avram Davidson and Walter Breen. Walter was the only one that I knew fairly well. He was one of the first people I saw on my first day in NYC — the others were Les Gerber, Sylvia Dees and you.

I saw Walter on his first acid trip at Tim Leary's *League For Spiritual Discovery*. Then, he and Marion used to come into Bookmasters when I was working there in 1968. Most recently I saw Walter in Oakland in 1988. We had chocolate ice cream sundaes while dodging cigarette smoke. I warned him about his involvement with NAMBLA — some local members had arrest warrants out on them. It had been on Tee-vee. He told me that the older he got, the more radical he became. We talked about our trips to Europe and Gnosticism. Then we parted for the last time. He will be sorely missed by me. [P.O. Box 127945, San Diego, CA 92112]

Now that the late arrivals have taken their seats, it's onward with the letters of comment about the third issue of BLAT! — or, as it was known in ancient Rome, BLAT! eye-eye-eye:

ARTHUR HLAVATY Lots of good stuff in this ish, including the touching tributes to Catherine Jackson (whom I did not know), Moshe Feder's look at one of the earliest efforts to have a fan track at worldcon, and Mark Kernes' memoir. I had not heard from Mark since the late 70s,

when he sent me a courteous note asking me to remove him from my mailing list, as he did not wish to deal with the writings of someone whose mind had so obviously been warped by the ideas of Robert Anton Wilson. I trust that the more wholesome influences he outlines here have been good for him. He certainly still writes well.

Andy Hooper's review column is thought-provoking as ever, but I would suggest he keep in mind the old saying about not attributing to conspiracy what is adequately explained by incompetence. Throw in sloppiness, and you've got a particularly good explanation for things like the omission of page numbers and dates. (I don't date my zines, except to put in a copyright date, which is usually correct if I'm doing the zine in March or later.)

I don't have anything of interest to say about the Harlan Ellison controversies, except that I think it would be a shame if they distracted people from Ellison's fiction, and Dan's response to Martyn Taylor suggests that they are doing just that. If necessary, let me be the first to say that I think Ellison's best work (e.g., "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes," "Deathbird," "Grail") is comparable with the best short fiction of Aldiss, Ballard, and Dick. On the other hand, I would never compare him with Balzac. I had to read *Pere Giroit* in high school, and while I was subjected to most of the good old Dead White Male canon, I'd have to say that was the single dumbest book I ever slogged through.

Luke McGuff raises an extremely good point about "history as obligation." (Over in Serious Litcrit, they call it "the anxiety of influence.") There's this mountain of stuff that's already been done, and some of us worry about how our work would compare to it, whether we are worthy to add to it, whether we wish to rebel against it, or at the very least, whether we don't have to explain at some length why we are not doing exactly what we perceive all that other stuff to be. I like to think I've become a bit saner over the years in dealing with that sort of thing.

As to Harry Andruschak's letter, while our culture is in a state of blind hatred and fear about drug dealers (usually failing to make the relevant distinction about the drugs in question), it is in an even worse state about child molestation. Some of the current

fear mongering about pedophiles on the net sounds as if its proponents believe that the slimy bastards have somehow figured out how to protrude from computer screens in the faces of innocent tykes.

I like the AFAL Awards. I think I shall award one to *Derogatory Reference* for Conspicuous Lack of Mimeography. And I'm very glad to see someone else not joining in the great orgy of warm fuzzy forgiveness for Nixon. Bury the sumbitch with a stake through his heart, just to be on the safe side. [206 Valentine St., Yonkers, NY 10704-1814]

I agree with you completely about Tricky Dick, however, your suggestion has a fatal flaw — you assume he had a heart in the first place. — djs

What bothers me about the recent wave of pedophile-lynchings in the media (a half-dozen unrelated cases in the DC-Baltimore area in the last year or so) is the never-questioned assumption that the children in question were solely victims of abuse. Perhaps they were, but I can still remember my childhood, and all the kids I knew were each in their own ways sexually curious and sexually exploratory. I met one of Walter Breen's "victims" in 1964, and it was clear to me then that he (and his mother) were exploiting Walter, and if anyone was a victim in that situation it was Walter. From what I've heard about the two cases which resulted in his jailing — each of which lasted several years without complaint from the supposed victim — I strongly suspect that not much had changed in this respect. What most adults fail to realize is that children are not "innocent" of knowledge and opinions about sex; children are sexual beings too. The true crime of the pedophile is that he (or she) takes advantage of the child's curiosity or desire. And in recent local cases, the pedophiles in question have been a scuzzy lot, the sort who definitely give pedophilia a bad name. — tw

LUKE MCGUFF "When does a fanzine stop becoming a fanzine and become a 'zeen'?" Ted asks. Actually, all the time I've spent mulling over this question I thought it went the other way until typing it out (When does a zine become an sfzine?). So I'm not going to answer the question Ted asked but the one I was mulling over.

When does a zine become an sfzine? Put that way, the answer is too simple. Either when it talks about sf or "never." So where is the blurring of lines between sfzines and the mundane zines?

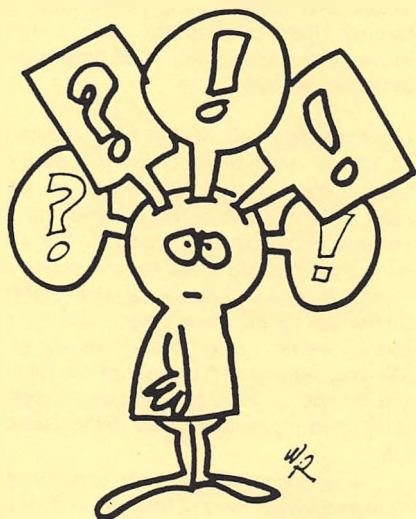
I think the type of mundane zine being done today that's closest to sfzines is the personalzine (a good exam-



ple would be *Permafrost*). For one thing, this type of zine is most likely to want to trade for other zines, and I think that's important. But what all non-sfanzines lack and feel a little self-conscious about is talking to and about each other. There is more of an aspect of performance and not of conversation (I think in *Habakkuk* you said something about fandom talking to itself across fanzines; that there can be an assumption referring in BLAT! to something written in *Spent Brass* or *Trap Door* that your readership has read both those zines). This conversation is an important step in going from social/correspondence network to community. It's been one of the sources of fandom's feuds as well as its life-time friendships. Mail art had it for a while; probably the very earliest punk rock fanzines had it. Litazines of the 80s were a little *too* self-conscious to admit they all read each other's zines and could talk to each other. (Hah!) Riot grrrl fanzines (from what I understand) had it.

Feedback is what turns performance into communication and what the zine fields lack. Most zines are too ambitious; the seduction of being self-supporting is too strong, so they only take subscriptions and go for newsstand distribution (good luck to them).

This brings me to Barnaby Rappoport's comment "the zinesters are still buying each other's zines, a clumsy arrangement fandom sloughed off sometime before the Korean War." I don't know if we will see active zine trading in the non-sfanzine networks.



For one thing, it's more expensive to do zines these days than it was in the 40s and earlier. Even if you can completely steal all photocopying, there's still postage. And even if you have a bulk rate permit (and the time/energy to go through the presorting involved) postage is still higher per unit than it was in KW days. BLAT!

came overnight, \$2.90. Even at my fairly high hourly wage, I only net enough to mail five BLAT!s in an hour.

Another reason we're unlikely to see active trading among non-sfanzines is because in the days fandom began, in those proud and lonely days, fandom was small groups trying to contact other small groups. Trades and the usual were the best available method for establishing communication. This led to fandom creating a gift culture, a potlatch culture. We gave away that which we had most of. In the early days, fans may have been poor by social standards, but we were all certainly a bunch of gabmeisters, and that's what we were giving away.

As much as I might dislike it, selling zines is practical today. A number of the largest punk rock zines from the 80s became self-supporting and now get nationwide distribution. Even zines that don't go for newsstand distribution refuse to trade "because they can't afford it."

Thus, in fandom's early days, the necessity of communication across isolation and the cheapness of production/postage lead to a gift culture. Today, the near glut of zines and the expense of production works against a gift culture. So it's not a "clumsy arrangement" that will be "sloughed off."

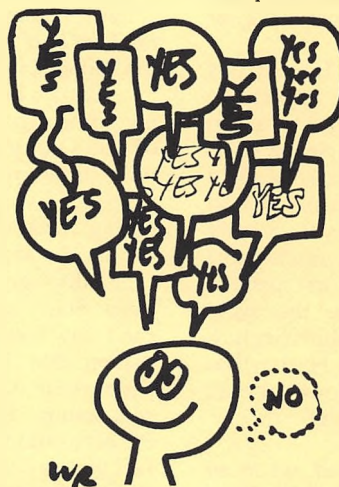
Besides, I really like *Cometbus* and don't mind spending a few bucks to support Aaron Cometbus in his wanderings around the country. Yeah! If he (or his distributors) sold back issues I'd buy them, too. He's so engaged and energetic, willing to go off on a limb and pay the consequences. I've read the two issues I've seen in one sitting.

There are a lot of zines that I pick up on newsstands (well, Left Bank Books in Pike Place Market, which makes a point to carry a lot of zines) and if I really like them, I'll keep an eye out for subsequent issues. And even if I only moderately like them, I try to send the latest minifiction or copy of one of my articles from *The Stranger*.

But arguing over which network has more to offer to the other is a red herring, it's apples and oranges, it's a mistake I've made quite loudly in the past. Yeah, I'd like to see zines evolve a gift culture, but this has to do more with my anarchosituationist/DIY ethics than faanish leanings.

Maybe what we've been seeing for

the last few years is some kind of zinitical Cambrian explosion, where there's just all sorts of stuff popping up all over. And what will happen? What will be the events that sift out the zines? The lesson from ecology is that we can't predict which morphology or survival strategy will best handle catastrophe (I think I'm really begging the metaphor here). [P.O. Box 31848, Seattle, WA 98103-1848]



I think you are correct about sf fandom's development of the gift culture — fandom's need to interact was as strong as its need to publish. However, I make a distinction between gifting my fanzine and trading my fanzine. Traditionally, sf fanzines have gifted their readers with free copies in hope that they will respond with a letter of comment, thereby feeding the fanzine's furnace.

We have also traded with other faneds for their zines because, for most of us, consuming fanzines is as important and stimulating as publishing one. But the two things are not inclusive. Trading fanzines is a form of barter; letters of comment are gifts in return.

We send out over 300 copies of BLAT!, most of which are gifts to our readers. A much smaller percentage are trades. If we only mailed copies to those who wrote letters or traded with us we would be able to get away with a printrun half our current circulation.

I think the mistake the mundane zine publishers make is their assumption that they'll go broke by trading. That's nonsense. The number of trades they could accumulate would, in all likelihood, be only a small portion of their readership — and it would get them all those other zines in exchange. It isn't like they'd be giving them away without something in return. Since they don't believe in gifting their publication, they'd still be getting subscription money from the majority of their readers. It seems to me like they're just missing out on a good thing.

I do, however, agree that selling zines is a practical idea. When I was co-publishing and co-editing *SF Eye* we always tried to expand our distribution through newsstands and bookstores. It was never our intention to publish a giftzine. It was desirable and financially necessary to reach the widest audience possible. Nonetheless, we always had trades and freebies on our mailing list. It just seemed foolish not to. Maybe their reluctance to trade has something to do with their reason for publishing in the first place. They publish to call attention to themselves, while we publish

to interact with others — like you said, the difference between a performance and a conversation. — djs

JANICE EISEN When I visited Oxford, my reaction was, "This is what a college should look like." Well, BLAT! is what a fanzine should look like. It brought back the sense of wonder I had at age 17 when I saw my first fanzine. How do I get back issues?

I have to agree that Harlan has crossed the line, although it appears he never had any plans to write about Andy in that *Penthouse* article, or so he claims. According to what I read in *SFC*, the punch line to his story would have been that Andy was uppity enough to think that he would make Harlan's list of the 25 worst people. Nevertheless, and despite the sycophants who are defending him (including Mike Glycer), I think Harlan has exceeded even the notoriously broad limits of most fan's patience.

More than one person pointed out to me that my conclusion about Harlan's Penthouse article was incorrect. I'm really pleased to be proven wrong and glad that he wasn't silly enough to add Andy's name to his list of 25 worst people. Nevertheless, I think my perception was a valid indication of how far I felt he had slipped in my esteem. I guess I thought he was loopy enough to actually do it — which is almost as depressing as it would have been if he had done it. —djs

It doesn't seem quite right to say you enjoyed an obituary; nevertheless, I enjoyed Dan and Grant's reminiscences of Catherine Jackson. I got the feeling — probably illusory — that I had a sense of what kind of person she was, and though I never met her, I feel that I will miss her — miss the opportunity, however unlikely it might have been, of getting to know her.

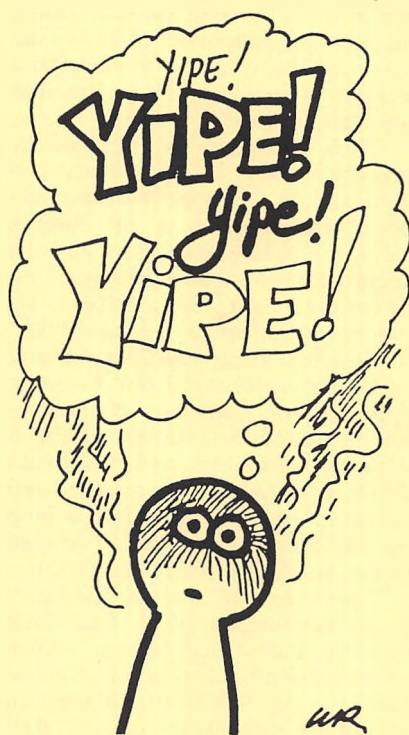
Moshe Feder's article made me nostalgic, as Noreascon II was my first convention. Most of it is a blur now (and was at the time), but I do remember attending the Roscoenian Opening Ceremony and not particularly noticing that it was disorganized. I didn't participate in the Claude Degler Memorial Scavenger Hunt, but I heard a story from someone who did: One item on the list was "a neo." The team grabbed a clueless-looking passerby and asked, "Are you a neo?" Naturally, the reply was, "What's a neo?" Cries of triumph.

I found Moshe's Backstage view fascinating, and the sidebars of contemporary commentary were a great addition. I'm afraid I agree with Moshe — I don't see any way around the increas-

ing fragmentation and fringiness of worldcons. Why, at Noreascon II, as a first-timer (and not knowing what things were Beyond the Pale for tru-fans), I did some of almost everything: panels, movies, filking, videos, parties, more parties, even the WOOF collation. That sort of I'll-try-anything participation isn't possible anymore. Even then, as Moshe has indicated, truly fannish activities were a bit hidden; fanzine fandom had reached out to me before the con, or I might never have found it.

Andy's fanzine reviews interested me, although they don't have the bite of Ted's column in *Habakkuk*. (Just as well; how many death wishes from abroad do we need?) But Andy has a strong sense of what a fanzine should be, and he argues well.

Although I read "My Life as a Porn Star" and found interesting, I can't say I enjoyed it, for the simple reason that I intensely dislike porn. (Important Note: I am 100% against censorship. Please, no one throw any PC accusations at me.) Porn makes me feel the way the Flynt offices made Ted feel. In addition, I am troubled by the



porn industry's attitude toward women, as exemplified by Mark Kernes' comments about Saki.

I must agree with you on the legalization — or at least decriminalization — of drugs. Whatever increase in addiction there might be (and I don't think it would be much; people who want drugs can get them, and I don't think advertising should be permitted) would be more than compensated for by the reduction in crime and misery. Never happen, though. You can't even

suggest studying legalization without being jumped on by all right-thinking citizens. Not to mention, as you did, the entrenched interests that thrive on the status quo. As for marijuana, I'm of the opinion that it's less harmful than alcohol (not that that's difficult; alcohol is a seriously nasty drug), not brain-frying when not used to excess, and the stuff about it being a "gateway drug" is bullshit — except in the sense that kids, finding out that pot isn't the evil substance they've been told, might try the harder stuff, figuring that they were lied to about that, too.

Ted's editorial was brilliantly done, with its vivid description of the Flynt offices as well as its characterization of Althea Flynt. I could see the offices and people, and almost felt I'd been there. It's a damn funny story, too, though it probably didn't seem so at the time.

I blew my top when I found out that there was no mail on April 27th because of Nixon's death. (Sure, if it had been a day of national thanksgiving . . .) I went screaming through the house. Where did they get off giving this disgrace to the human race all the honors due an ex-President? And that bullshit about how he resigned to spare his country a constitutional crisis. What crisis? You impeach him, convict him, and run him out of office. I see no problem here.

The BLAT! Archives is a great idea, and I enjoyed seeing *Egoboo*. I'm glad you rescued it from stencil limbo. The editorial makes me muse on changes since 1973 — no one would think to avoid arrest for drug possession by having open beer in the car. I don't know about Cheerios. [123B Lauretta Lane, Johnstown, PA 15904]

Unfortunately, all of the back issues of BLAT! are out of print. After our Editor's Choice rave in Factsheet Five we used most of our stock of back issues up on curious mundane zine readers. We may have gotten as many as forty requests for copies of BLAT! because of that review. Sadly, out of all those people making requests, we only heard back from one guy. We may reprint some issues in the future, but for now we have enough trouble coping with printing enough copies of this current ish.

I've always thought the concept of a "gateway drug" was utter crap. When the authorities say that "90% of all heroin users started with marijuana" they are only telling us half the truth. The other half is that 90% of all marijuana users never bother trying heroin. — djs

ALGERNON D'AMMASSA Porno culture interests me. Not the cheap titillation of magazines

and movies; that's boring and kind of sad. But strip bars are fascinating places. Amazing stories there, a lot of misery, money, danger, and lice, reeking of blood and hygiene spray: LIFE. I very much enjoyed the two glimpses you offer into the industry — though Mark Kernes' piece felt a bit cool, a bit like, well, a porno story. (Ordinary guy becomes a porno star with his pick of partners, sounds like a formula for wank material to me.) Where is his own *true* sexuality, how did that part of him respond to this situation? This article doesn't even make a nick in the surface!

Despite sounding like fodder for a letter in Penthouse Forum, Mark's adventures were definitely real. And, despite your protest, his sexual response to the situation was revealed at the article's end: "They paid me to have sex! They actually paid me to have sex!" Watch our next issue for a more in-depth look at Mark's porno career — since writing his piece last issue he has, indeed, starred in the feature film that was proposed at the article's conclusion and has promised us a -er- blow by blow description. — djs

Nixon is dead, but not the resilient tradition of skeezy politicking and malicious gossip of which he was merely one prominent master. Meanwhile, everyone has a tirade to share, usually very personal, about how Nixon ought to be remembered, if at all. Doesn't seem to be Nixon's crimes that bother people so much: those are mentioned merely to justify the harsh tone of what is most often a reaction to his personality, not his crimes. I wonder where I might meet someone so simple, honest and virtuous, that they should feel entitled to stand on this man's grave and tell the rest of us what a liar, crook and nogoodnik the President was? Who, being so virtuous, would do so?

Ted, you excoriate Nixon for smearing political enemies as Com-Symp, *immediately after* you attempt to smear Joe Maraglino's worldcon bid for purely personal reasons, and you finish by branding him as a NixonSymp! Have you no sense of irony, sir?

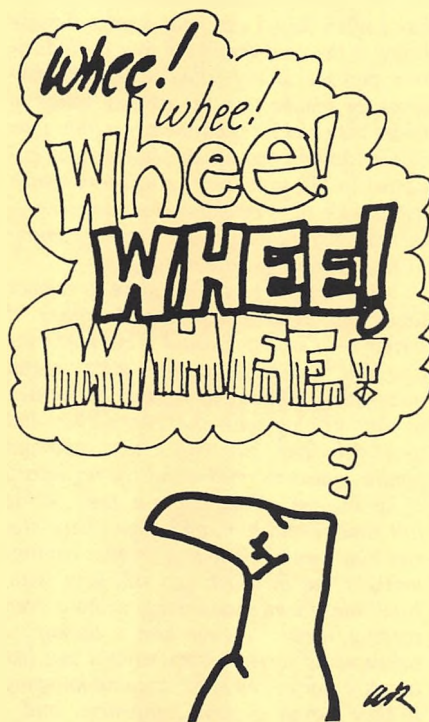
Don't tell me what Nixon was.

The general disdain for *Jurassic Park* is difficult to understand. What exactly were we expecting, if not an overproduced fantasy with an elephantine budget and a silly story playing fast and loose with our grownup sense of credibility?

I have unfashionably kind sentiments about this movie. For me, a play in which human beings figure out how to resurrect dinosaurs and then run around loving and betraying and

killing each other while the dinosaurs stomp around them is really beautiful. Hardly one of the deeper films to come out last year, but there is a wit and subtlety in it that few fans care to acknowledge. I would like to criticize two general complaints about the film's subtext, complaints that suggest some lazy, perhaps defensive NON-thinking behind some of the critical responses to *Jurassic Park*:

1. The "anti-science" rap is a crock. Spielberg actually re-edited *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* before its home release, because the scientists in that film did seem sinister, and that was not the message he had intended to convey. It is very clear in *Jurassic Park* that scientific knowledge cannot be blamed for the disaster. In fact, what happens is not even a disaster! There is a recurrent image in the movie of rippling water, which kept me from being seduced by the surface conflict (good scientist, bad technician, run run run!) and made me aware of how human stupidity and avarice function as forces of



nature, just as formidable as a butterfly whose motions may cause a storm on another continent. And speaking of chaos theory:

2. We are just being lazy if we dismiss the chaos theorist's speech as a refrain of "don't meddle with nature." Stop knowing everything and listen again. What he says is, "Nature finds a way." All our meddling, for better or worse as

only God may decide, is done *in* nature, not *with* it or from outside it. Any perturbations we make are not only incorporated into it, they are *dictated* by it! The will to control is futile, beyond any living being. Reality does not correspond to any script we may write, nor any of our theories (not even these words I am writing now), no matter how sensible or "right" our ideas may seem.

Resurrecting the dinosaurs is a towering achievement of human foolishness, and I'm pretty sure the film's writer, and its director, would have shared my laughter if they had been with me in the Brooklyn cinema where I first saw their comedy. [134 George M Cohan Blvd., Providence, RI 02903]

You've got an interesting take on Nixon here. Let he who is without sin cast the first stone, eh? I gather you grew up after Watergate, and have no personal experience of the man; only such a background excuses your amazing naivete.

But that doesn't excuse your serious misreading of my editorial on Joe Maraglino, which has virtually nothing to do with his worldcon bid, and everything to do with his approach to editing fanzines — and is, basically, nothing more than a straightforward account of his phone call. It was not I who volunteered the information that he had long been a personal correspondent of Nixon's and still thought highly of that loathsome man. To accuse me of a) "branding him as a NixonSymp," and b) having "no sense of irony," is a pretty tricky move itself.

"Don't tell me what Nixon was." Nope. You've got it down cold.

You're pretty good at reading "smears" into things, too. If I wanted to "smear" Joe, I wouldn't stop at letting him hang himself with his own words. No, I'd pass along all the incredible gossip with which I was deluged, about Joe, after that editorial appeared. And I hardly feel the need to "smear" his worldcon bid, which is, according to SF Chronicle, running a poor third just now. (I seriously doubt that anything I could say in this fanzine would have the slightest effect on a worldcon bid, one way or the other.) But, since you feel you know me so well, perhaps you'll enlighten me on one point: just what are my "purely personal reasons" for "attempt(ing) to smear Joe Maraglino's worldcon bid?"

As for *Jurassic Park*, I have a feeling you'll provoke a number of responses to your evaluation of the film. I'll just content myself with a simple razzberry. — tw

DAVID REDD The size and quality of American fanzines such as yours and *Stet* and *Habakkuk* is as unceasingly amazing as, well, the fact

that you guys are still fresh-and-eager for fanac after all these years. When I write "quality" I mean it — the emotional farewells to Catherine Jackson make me feel I'm intruding on personal family grief. What a contrast to the standard public obituaries I read in say, our *Daily Telegraph*, where like the media reviews, the obituaries — if not hagiographic — are written as light entertainment.

Richard Nixon, ah yes. The man who chose Spiro Agnew as VP, presumably thinking that no assassin would ever dare shoot Nixon for fear of the consequences. C.M. Kornbluth had Nixon's number — look up "Theory of Rocketry" some time.

Actually, Nixon had spies everywhere. He really did. He would strike up a friendship with someone in a foreign country, correspond with them, and get them to write long chatty letters about the state of affairs in their countries. This is how Nixon became so expert at foreign affairs — this, and putting his name on everything Henry Kissinger did. He did do a bit better in Viet Nam than you admit, though. The Viet Cong wanted to win, but he bombed the hell out of Hanoi until the Cong gave up and allowed America to lose. I think in that instance he (or Kissinger) had the right negotiating tactic; a pity the UN today is too liberal and well-meaning to be similarly tough with pushy warlords in modern trouble-spots. But whether Nixon was morally justified in trying to pull out from Viet Nam with the least possible loss of face is . . . well, doubtful. Like everything else he did.

Hang on, there's something I've meant to say for years, to Ted:

A fine editor, Mr. White. Did you ever guess how much your publishing my short story "Warship" in *Amazing* years ago meant to me? To you it was probably something just readable enough to plug a gap in the magazine, but to me it was a lot more.

I had contracted to do a novel for Ace Books, for Terry Carr, on the basis of a sample chapter and outline. My first draft went ahead while I was waiting to hear from him — it was not very inspired, and ran short, ending at about 47,000 words. Then I got the contract, for 55,000 words, within 3 weeks. Now, I happen to be one of the slowest writers in the world, with some pieces taking 20 years to reach publishable form. And on this side of the Atlantic I didn't even have the three weeks the contract allowed — only one to revise, another to get it typed, a third for it to reach New York in the transatlantic mail. What I produced in the one week I was allowed turned out to be awful (although not

worse than novels published by others) and eventually it was bounced by Wolheim. No chance at revision, no kill fee, nothing. Totally rejected.

So, I wrote "Warship," to prove to myself that I could still write. I thought, if this story is going to be my last one — for I was pretty disenchanted with writing by then — I'll write something I care about. But months went by, and it didn't seem to sell. That was the end of the writing, I thought. And then Ted White, and *Amazing* took it. I felt reprieved. I wasn't dead. I even went on writing occasional stories afterwards, although not with the same magic as before. But "Warship" meant that one doorway in my life wasn't wholly closed. Thank you. [48 Cardigan Road, Haverfordwest, Wales, Pembrokeshire SA61 2QN UNITED KINGDOM]

*I think the key phrase is "I'll write something I care about." My experience as a professional editor (with F&SF, *Amazing* and *Fantastic*) tells me that every time an established writer writes a story he or she cares about, it will be one of his or her best. *Amazing* paid the lowest rates in the field, so we tended to see stories last — but I often found excellent stories despite being at the very end of the line, an indication perhaps of my fellow editors' blind-spots, or maybe just the narrow range of tastes they had (at the time when only four editors determined all the stories that appeared in US prozines). Any story which fell outside their established parameters — including story length — ended up coming to me, including quite a few gems.*

*This might be a good place to remark upon my relationship with another sf writer — Gordon Eklund. He made his first sale to *Fantastic*, and, after several more sales, confided to me that he wanted to quit his job with the Post Office and write full time, but with a new wife and family he was worried about the regularity of his income. I made him a deal: Write full time, I told him, and if you have stories that won't sell to any (higher paying) markets, but in which you still have faith, I will buy them, guaranteed, without even reading them. I gave him a backup, a safety net of sorts. I knew what it was like to write stories "on spec" without knowing if they'd find a home anywhere, and I wanted to guarantee Gordon a home for any of his homeless stories. It was an easy commitment for me to make: Gordon was clearly a rising star in the field. Indeed, he was soon appearing in the more prestigious magazines and anthologies, and inevitably getting book contracts as well (I serialized his first novel). Nonetheless, from time to time, he did continue to send me stories, most of which I presume were, for one reason or another, unsalable to those better markets, and all of which I was pleased to*

*publish in *Fantastic* and *Amazing*. I doubt he needed my "safety net" for very long, but if it helped him make the (successful) leap to full-time writer, I'm glad it was there for him.*

Of course, before he began writing professionally, Gordon was a fan, and, as his letter which follows indicates, he's still a fan — as are we all. — tw

GORDON EKLUND Please allow me herein to take keyboard in hand to write and thank you for the third number of BLAT!, a thick and fine and altogether wondrous fan-nish object which probably isn't the best fanzine I've ever seen (memory fogs) but certainly seems that way right at this time.

The only major trouble I can see with a fanzine as big and rich as this BLAT! of yours is how incredibly intimidating it can seem to formulate comments upon, sort of like a cop with antlers and a gun the size of a kangaroo. Maybe it's the double-column format that does it — which, me being a traditionalist, I'd never really cared much for in a fanzine before — that makes the zine seem as long as it does. I know I've made remarks in conversation to people a couple of times recently about BLAT! being a hundred page fanzine when a swift peek at the last page reveals that it barely tops eighty. For years I've kept a copy of the monumental *Habakkuk* vol. 1 #5 around to show to young children when they shuffle diffidently up and ask me what the beatniks were really like and that monster issue seems almost shrunken and toadstool-like in comparison to this BLAT!.

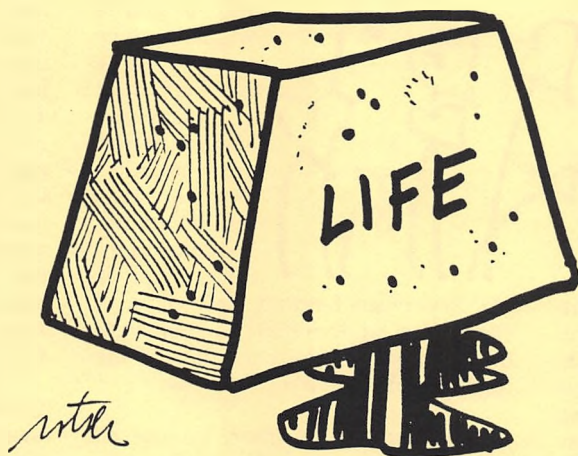
Most of this issue I managed to read through the expedient of keeping my copy of BLAT! on the main end table in the living room by the TV in company with the current issues of *Time* and *The New Yorker* and *Film Comment* and the like ilk and flipping it (the BLAT!) open at random during the intervals and dead moments that creep up in the process of getting through daily life. I found, invariably, that no matter where I happened to open my BLAT! there was something interesting therein to read. Which is more than I can say for most any of the other above magazines resting on that same narrow little table.

And this is not even counting the special *Egoboo* supplement to which I probably reacted differently than most of your readers who were either already familiar with the zine or else it came out Before Their Time. Well, the late sixties and early seventies were certainly part of my own personal prime time but the sad fact is that fan-nishly speaking it was largely a period

of somewhat drawn out leave-taking for me, which I guess explains why I don't think I ever saw a copy of *Egoboo* until now. (You guys were smart not to send me one; the chances of my responding in 1970 were probably about equal to the chances of an egg growing legs, calling itself Brad, and rushing off to join the Navy and fight in Viet Nam. I never saw *Pong* either but I was totally disconnected from fandom by then.) My reasons for leaving fandom were as many and varied and complex as I suppose most people's are — new interests, a professional writing career, a wife who was a non-fan, a baby — but I do regret going away at least to the degree that I appear to have missed out on some things that would have been great fun to be part of. Just getting *Egoboo* would seem to be reason enough actually — and while the seventies were certainly a busy and full time of life for me, one thing they did lack was much in the way of fun. But I do see why I felt that I had to go away because — and this ties in with the specific reasons iterated above but extends them as well — to a large extent fandom by, say, 1968 had served its purpose for me and there was no really pressing reason (except for the fun option which as I said should have been reason enough) for sticking around. And that purpose, by the way, was not to become a professional author. I could have accomplished that (though with more difficulty, to be sure) apart from fandom and being a pro was never a really big deal thing with me as with some other fans. (I like to write and I love to have written but being an Author as such I have often found to be a royal pain in the ass, more than anything. Not quite enough to adopt a permanent pen name. Though I have considered it on occasion.) No, for me fandom's purpose in my life was in turning me from a boy into a man, from a kid into a full fledged grown-up adult human being person. I sometimes see my fannish days for me as a process of growth wherein I learned how to interconnect with other people when before, truth to tell, I hadn't one clue. But, anyway, fandom did do its stuff and by the late sixties after nearly a decade in the microcosm I was pretty well all put together so it was time to wave my hand and say good-bye and get on with so-called real life. Which is what I did. To my gain — but to my loss as well.

The fact that from 1969 on I was writing and selling professional sf did cause me to stay connected with the fringes of fanzine fandom sufficiently

so that a few years ago I got interested again and decided to join a couple of apas and as a result started receiving a goodly number of fanzines again. (The fan writing proved to be particularly beneficial in helping pull me out of a decade long fiction writing slump brought about mostly from self-boredom. Writing fan stuff off the cuff turned my writing into new and interesting directions that eventually evolved into a new stylistic approach



that got me writing fiction again and liking it a lot.)

Some if not all of the above musings were also inspired to a considerable degree by Grant Canfield's superb "Catherine and Me" which I thought was not only the best thing in the issue but one of the best things of any kind I've read all this year and I read a hell of a lot. (I've shown the piece to a number of non-sf friends, who were as fully impressed — and deeply moved — as I was.) [15815 40th Place South #103, Seattle, WA 98188]

GARY DEINDORFER I think I may have met the late Catherine Jackson, your and Ted's and many other people's dear friend. Once, when I was inhabiting a place in San Francisco, Calvin and India Demmon and I paid a visit to Grant and his wife. I didn't remember her name then as Catherine, and I don't remember now what she looked like, but I guess I did meet her that once. I must confess that in my one and only in-person experience with Grant I think I made a bad impression upon him, talking too loud and too much and, in general, acting obnoxious and boorish. Oh well, you can't win them all.

It is clear that she was a great friend to you, Dan, and that there was much fresh spring water under the bridge for both of you. You must miss her.

As for Group Minds, actually I have experienced traces of that in my time, though not in fandom as much; but generally I have been too much of a loner to ever really have had the opportunity to be part of something like that, not that I am all that keen on the idea of that. Well, to each his own. I won't be judgmental here; different strokes for different folks. At any rate, your long account of your deep friendship with Catherine Jackson is some of the best and most heartfelt writing from you I have ever read.

Nice to see a photograph of Catherine on page 13 and the drawing on page 14. Gives me some idea of what she looked like. Now then, having gotten off on the wrong foot with Grant Canfield and his wife Catherine, in that mentioned San Francisco encounter long ago, I am not sure of what to say about his article except that it is well written and also, of course, truly heartfelt, and shows me once again what honest and provocative writers visual artists are capable of being, and add Steve Stiles' writing to that of Grant's and yours. [447 Bellevue Avenue, Apt 9B, Trenton, NJ 08618]

Gary, you ol' spudnut, there is hardly a day that I don't think of Catherine at least once. It is impossible not to — just standing in my living room I can spot a dozen items that we bought in her company or that she gave us as gifts — and I hope I always remember her. — djs

D. DOUGLAS FRATZ I barely knew Catherine (whom I thought of as Catherine Lunney, and therefore seem to have completely missed recognizing any report of her death), but as I read, I began to recall an incident that I had almost totally forgotten over the years, and now makes much more sense to me. One of the few extended periods I spent with Catherine was during ConStellation, the 1983 worldcon in Baltimore. I had just completed my Master's thesis, after two years of night school while continuing to work full time at my incredibly demanding job as a trade association executive. I had been working 70 to 100 hours a week for those two years, and *Thrust* and my other sf and fannish activities had taken even more of a back seat than usual. I spent a lot of the con hanging with Dan and Lynn and Ted, and, of course, Frank and Catherine. I was anxious to see if I could return to sf, and possibly even become a more active part of the fannish scene. It was a difficult con for me, though, because I was just too out

of touch. I spent a lot of time listening to conversations that I didn't quite understand, not only with you guys, but with many other of the circles though which I wandered and of which I sought to be a part. Catherine was more friendly than most of the other fans, but I don't think we really got in enough quality time to more than start to get to know each other.

The result of all this is that although by all objective criteria I had a reasonably productive three-or-four day con, when it ended I was feeling very estranged from the sci-

ence fiction scene. As I read about Catherine in BLAT!, a final incident from ConStellation began to come back to me. I now remember leaving the Baltimore Convention Center that last day, walking down the street with you (Dan and Lynn), Frank and Catherine, and possibly others. When it was time for me to go my separate way to my car, I was wondering whether this might be my last worldcon — though I did not think I was giving any hint of my despondency. As I said goodbye to the group, Catherine unexpectedly came over, gave me a hug, smiled, and kissed me goodbye. It was a mystical moment. That small gesture of affirmation began in me a remarkable transformation. By the time I got to my car, I was starting to feel upbeat. During the drive home, I began to see the weekend in a more positive light, and plan to continue *Thrust* and return to the sf scene.

It was such a minor incident, I'm sure that neither of you (nor Frank) remembers it. I'm sure that I haven't thought about it in many years. I considered it just a random act of senseless kindness, but in the context of Dan and Grant's pieces on Catherine, I now wonder. Could it be that Catherine had that rare and inexplicable gift of being able to detect the exact emotional needs of others, even when they themselves aren't able to do so? [8217 Langport Terrace, Gaithersburg, MD 20877]

Yes. — djs

ROBERT SILVERBERG I had the impression that I had sent you guys a letter of thanks for the very impressive BLAT! number 2, but apparently I hadn't, because I just

found the thing in my write-to-these-guys heap, and now I don't remember what in particular I meant to respond to.

And now number 3 arrived, and is herewith acknowledged very quickly before the same thing happens to it. It's a beautiful magazine, guys. If it spends more time looking toward the past than to the future, so be it: the

past is a bigger place than the future for such folk as you and I, and I would rather read "I Was The Captain of a Spaceship" again than find out what bitter feud is currently roiling Wisconsin fandom, if there is

any Wisconsin fandom these days. I cling to the fandom that once I knew in these strange and barbaric days of the far flung future we inhabit now.

As I'm sure you are aware, we have all been living in the future for ten years now — since 1984. And what a stfnal place it is, too, for a boy growing in the Forties!

— tw

In the new issue I was particularly appreciative of the Catherine Jackson stuff, not only because it was real and moving and elegantly written, but because it fills in a perplexing gap in my own psycho-sexual history. After Terry died in 1987, the dreary task of cleaning out his office and disposing of a lot of correspondence that Carol didn't want to keep fell to me; and while I was in the process of baling up some Very Personal Letters and carting them to the fireplace, my eye fell by chance on a letter of Terry's to (I believe) Susan Wood in which the topic of my affair with Catherine Jackson was under discussion.

That caught my attention not merely because any discussion of your sex life in a letter from one close friend of yours to another (both dead!) is likely to catch your attention, but also because I had no idea who Catherine Jackson was. Lord knows I had as complicated a life during the 1970s as the rest of us, but as a rule I tried to find out the name of anybody I got entangled with. So I did some asking around, and somebody (Marta? Liz Lynn?) told me that she was the former wife of Grant Canfield.

Well, I spent a fair amount of time in and around the vicinity of Grant in the period of 1975-78, and I suppose I

must have met Catherine in his company somewhere back then. But I have no recollection of doing so. Now that I knew at least who the woman in Terry's letter had been, I ransacked my memory for traces of her and came up with nothing, not even any idea of what she looked like. Had it been a love affair conducted during a period of amnesia? No: it had been conducted, I realized, not in amnesia but in absentia. It had never happened. My romance with Catherine Jackson was simply one more artifact of the lunatic Bay Area gossip machine of the 1970s, which was capable of flanging up eleven affairs where only five or six had actually taken place. No doubt Terry had misinterpreted somebody's remark linking me with a woman named Catherine (legitimately, but not Catherine Jackson) and he had passed it on to Susan, and for all I know it got back from her to Grant, or Frank Lunney, and on and on. . . . I might have been the only one in town who didn't know what I had been up to with Grant's wife.

And now I see, from reading Grant's deeply touching piece and your own essay, Dan, that she was a terrific person, clever and funny and beautiful. It makes me very happy to know that in that alternative reality where Catherine and I were lovers, I had involved myself with such a classy woman. On the other hand, I see that in *this* reality she was at the San Francisco worldcon last summer, and, had I but known, I would have had a chance to introduce myself to her and share a chuckle with her over the romance that never was. Which I will now not get a chance to do, more's the pity.

Anyway, thanks for keeping me on your mailing list. Even if my fanac now takes place only in remote eras of the past and most of my sexac seems to occur in alternate time-lines, it's a pleasure to wander your impeccable pages. [P.O. Box 13160, Station E, Oakland CA 94661]

Bob, your skill as a storyteller is only enhanced by this anecdote. I'm sure Catherine would have been very amused to be linked (even on Earth 2) with such a distinguished gardener as yourself. As for the latest "feud currently roiling Wisconsin fandom," I direct your attention to the following letter of comment. — djs

JEANNE GOMOLL It's frustrating that — as a result of Andy Hooper's article and the latest BLAT! lettercol — Corflu 10's committee may finally be recalled more for what it failed to do than for what it actually accomplished. Irritation at Macaron fandom's so-called "political correct-



ness" threatens to displace fond memories of enjoyable programs, tasty beer and cheesecake parties, ideal hotel arrangements, a five-color commemorative Atom t-shirt, and three major publications — including the program book, the reprint of *Khatru* 3/4, and Andy Hooper's *Fanthology* '89, not to mention multiple pre-con progress reports.

It would be bad enough if this image grew out of some official statement or action on the part of the Madison Corflu committee. But the worst thing about this whole situation, in my opinion, stems from the fact that the committee's discussion of possible subject-matter for our publication *should never have been made public in the first place*. Soon after the publication of BLAT! 2 I expressed my anger to Andy Hooper that he had written about a publication idea — a Tucker retrospective — that we had rejected in the course of planning the con.

Telling people who we chose *not* to honor with a publication is like a worldcon committee publicizing the runner-up list of Guest of Honor. Not only would such a revelation offend most people, but it would spark recriminations. Exasperated, I asked Andy how he thought Bob Tucker would feel when he read that even though we invited him to Corflu as a special guest, a committee member is now telling everyone we didn't think a publication in his honor was a good idea?

Andy's only reply was to say that Tucker probably wouldn't notice this short passage in his column. Well, if he failed to notice the mention in BLAT! 2, he certainly can't have missed the many reactions to Andy's piece in the lettercol of BLAT! 3. I would prefer to discuss almost any other aspect of Corflu 10 than this one. But since Andy made that decision public, I feel compelled to respond to those who criticize us for it, and perhaps clear up a few misconceptions.

First of all, I'm really proud of the work our committee put into Corflu 10, and the great convention we hosted. Small as our concom was, all members of our committee put in a lot of work, and in spite of our ambitious plans, we stayed friends and actually enjoyed all our Sunday brunch planning meetings. The Corflu committee was comprise of only seven people: Bill Bodden, Ellen Franklin, Andy Hooper, Jim Hudson, Tracy Shannon, Steve Swartz, and myself. And one of those people — Andy Hooper — moved to Seattle many months before Corflu. As a result, Andy missed most of our meetings and registered his opinion on committee votes by means of phone calls and let-

ters.

The question of a special publication occupied our discussions at several meetings. Quite a few options were discussed, including a Tucker appreciation, a Corflu retrospective, a history of the Madison fan community — and in the end, we decided to include many of these ideas in the Corflu program book. Ten pages out of 38 were devoted to a series of appreciations of Bob Tucker, including contributions by Dean Grennell, Art Rapp, Leah Zeldes Smith, Howard DeVore, Walt Willis, Alexis Gilliland, Art Widner, Robert Lichtman, Shelby Vick, Buck Coulson, Roger Sims, Robert Bloch and Ted White. Andy Hooper put together this section as well as the text of the Corflu retrospectives, which occupied another eleven pages of the program book. The short history of Madison was also written by Andy. I contributed a not very condensed history of Madison fandom, John Douglas gave us an article about our toastmaster, David Hartwell, Tracy Shannon introduced the whole lot, I laid out the zine, and Steve Swartz mimeoed it. I think it turned out pretty well, and we all felt good about the fact that we were able to publish so many of the things we had discussed.

None of these options, however, won the vote of our main, special publication. We rejected not only the idea of a Tucker retrospective, but also the idea of a fanthology, along with several other ideas. None of us on the Corflu committee, except Andy, collects fanzines, so none of us, except Andy, had the resources to compile a list of best fanzine articles from 1989, or to have compiled Tucker's fannish writing. I've always donated my zines to fannish charities, or passed them on to budding fans. (Many years ago, for instance, I gave my collection of *Pong* and other classic zines to Andy. Most of the fanzines I'd accumulated by 1989 ended up as entries in the *JG Taff Catalog*, with which I refreshed the TAFF coffers during my administration.)

It's true that other reasons contributed to our rejection of a Tucker retrospective as our special publication, but I think it's interesting to recall that Andy took on the publication of *Fanthology* '89 partially because he felt left

out of the project which finally won our vote — the reprinting of Jeff Smith's *Khatru* 3/4 from 1975, with its ground-breaking symposium on women and sf. That enormous, 137 page publication soaked up literally hundreds of hours (contacting authors, arranging for updates, re-typing, proof-reading, mimeoing), all work that needed to be done in Madison. Even though Andy wrote most of the contents of the program book, his desire to work on a major publication finally led him to take on the task that — in some fan's opinions — should be a special responsibility of all Corflus. I say it's interesting that Andy published *Fanthology* '89, because he might just as easily have taken on a Tucker retrospective instead, had he felt strongly enough about such a publication. But he didn't. He chose to publish the fanthology.

In any case, we Madison-based members of the concom decided from the outset that if we were going to do a special publication, it would have to satisfy several criteria. And no, we didn't set up standards for "political correctness." There were only two criteria: first, that we wanted to put it together ourselves, and not farm it out to some other fan or group of fans; and second, that the publication celebrate something or someone that we all cared about a lot. We knew, after all, that we would devote a considerable amount of time to this thing, so of course we wanted to make sure that our interest would sustain us through the project.

For those Corflu members who were unfamiliar with Madison fandom's traditional affinity for political topics, especially feminism, and the

historical reasons we link our fannishness closely with feminism, I wrote an overview of Madison fandom's history for the program book. I'm still very glad we reprinted *Khatru* and convinced

its contributors to write updates to their 1975 opinions. That project goes to the heart of my roots in fandom and my continued interest in it. And judging from the frequent requests I receive for copies, many other people also appreciate its availability.

But still, yes, it's true: we decided *not* to publish a Tucker retrospective. We did however, unanimously accept



Andy's suggestion to invite Tucker as our special guest. I shopped for the perfect Guernsey souvenirs for Bob and presented him with a cheddar propeller beanie. We devoted one-quarter of the program book to various Tucker appreciations. We enjoyed Tucker's friendly and gracious participation in Corflu. And, at Ted White's suggestion, I happily nominated Tucker as Past President of FWA. But we did not devote our special publication to him.

Would anyone have noticed if Andy hadn't pointed it out? Probably not. But there it is, and there are BLAT's correspondents (and editors) complaining about Madison fandom's near-sighted, misguided, so-called sense of "political correctness." Robert Lichtman is the first LoC writer who disdainfully mentions the term "political correctness." The term was originally created by the left as a sarcastic joke upon itself. In my opinion, it's degenerated into an irrelevant term used and abused by anyone about any group that passionately defends an idea with which the listener disagrees. Dan thinks we misunderstood Tucker's shtick and assures us that Tucker is in no way offensive. Walt Willis is worried. Vicki Rosenzweig wonders what the fuss is about and rich brown misunderstands Andy's statement altogether — assuming that Madison fandom became offended by something Tucker did as Corflu Toastmaster. (Tucker was our special guest, David Hartwell toastmastered, and both were fine guests.) Finally, Ted thinks "the Politically Correct feminists of Madison blew it." Everyone, it seems, thinks we should have published the Tucker retrospective.

I felt angry at Andy's suggestion that the rest of us on the committee hadn't done enough work, or hadn't done the "right" kind of work — i.e., that which suited Andy. The letters in BLAT!, and Dan and Ted's comments irritated me even more for their suggestion that we treated Tucker unfairly or ungraciously. The fact is that we chose to reprint *Khatru* because we judged that project most appropriate to the Madison sf group, and because it was the project that passionately interested us. If a Corflu committee or some other group wants to collect and publish an anthology of Bob Tucker's fannish writing, that option remains

open to them. [2825 Union Street, Madison WI 53704-5136]

Jeanne, you're absolutely right. Something you didn't do should not take anything away from all the great things you did do. The Madison Corflu remains, for me, the best of all Corflus yet. But, having said that, I remain convinced that you (plural) "blew it," not in failing to publish a collection of Tucker's material, but in the judgment that led in that decision: that Tucker was not Politically Correct by Madison standards.

Should Andy have washed this linen in public? I tend to agree with you that he should not have, and I can understand your anger, and your sense of betrayal. And all of this certainly puts Tucker in an awkward position (if he has been reading all this small type, which he may not have — but surely someone will call it to his attention sooner or later). No one likes having his character batted about. The point I try to keep in mind is that Bob has been a fan longer

than most of us (myself included) have been alive, and, as that section in your program book pointed out so effectively, Bob is the one single fan most responsible for the best aspects of the fandom we're all in today. Bob gave us fannishness and humor. I think we are all enormously in his debt, and I think people — especially those without much of a sense of humor (and I explicitly exclude you from that list, Jeanne) — ought to cut Bob a little slack. That doesn't mean that I think anyone is obligated to rush out and publish collections of his work (although such a collection is a fine idea and is, in fact, long overdue), the Madison Corflu committee in particular.

My sense is that this would have come out, one way or another, in fannish gossip, had Andy not mentioned it in his column. I recall hearing rumors about it during Corflu, and I may, in questioning Andy on the subject, have prodded him into writing about it as he did. The fact that it did appear in Andy's column in BLAT! number 2, and was discussed a little in the lettercol in number 3, has perhaps brought the issue to a head, and maybe your response will clarify it and help bring the topic to an early

conclusion.

In the meantime, I will reiterate that, having attended all eleven Corflus to date, and having put on one (with the Desk Set) myself, the Madison Corflu remains the best for me. Kudos to you. — tw

I think it is interesting to consider the reasons why the readers of BLAT! seemed so willing to agree with the charges of Political Correctness against the committee. Your own statement that "none of us on the Corflu committee, except Andy, collects fanzines," could have something to do with it — especially when you recognize that Corflu is primarily a convention for fanzine fans. I think most fanzine fans are well aware of "Madison fandom's traditional affinity for political topics, especially feminism and the historical reasons we link our fannishness closely with feminism." After all, most of fanzine fandom's link to Madison fandom comes from the years of getting Janus/Aurora. Because of that there is a perception, in fanzine fandom in general, that Madison fandom has a very definite agenda and that it rarely deviates from that agenda. This overall perception is bolstered by the feminist/women's issues/political orientation of the WisCons and other activities like the Tiptree Awards.

I think most fans would agree that the solidarity of your outlook and concerns is to be admired and is fairly rare in fandom, not to mention the world at large. Still, I think that fandom takes for granted that Madison fandom is going to react a certain way and conduct itself in a certain way. It's as if the Madison fans have assumed a strong single personality and other parts of fandom assume that they know that personality the way they may know an acquaintance. There is a kind of certainty about it — a taking for granted, if you will — that may or may not have anything real to do with who the participants of Madison fandom think they are.

So, having said that, I don't think it is really surprising that some fans reacted the way they did to Andy's comments. I'm guilty of it myself. And your decision to reprint the issue of *Khatru* just seemed to reinforce the so-called agenda. It just seems to be such a clichéd example of what Madison fandom is all about. And maybe that's what you intended — but somehow I doubt that the republication of *Khatru* was what most of the fans who attended your Corflu expected

as a convention sponsored publication. Of course, it is precisely what you wanted to publish — it was very important to you and your fannish philosophy — but to the



general fan population, this fanzine just wasn't as important as it was to all of you in Madison.

This sad fact is reinforced, in my mind, by the way several fans at the Madison Corflu reacted upon the discovery of the reprint in their con package. They were nonplussed. They did not seem to care about the re-publication at all. To them, all your hard work was unnecessary and they just chalked it up to the Madison agenda. This isn't a reaction I am proud of. I suppose it shows us all up as shallow poseurs. Perhaps we are all too willing to assume the cliché because it is a lot less work than finding out otherwise — Fans Aren't Slans, after all. Sorry. — djs

HENRY L. WELCH Dear

Ted and Steve: Thanks for BLAT! number 3 which you passed to me just as I was leaving Corflu. It was rather interesting to finally see a copy of your fanzine which I have heard mostly good things about. I can't really say that a lot of the fan history does a whole lot for me. Most of it occurred before I was old enough to even care about reading and writing much less fanac. As such it takes nothing away from your effort it just is not my favorite topic to discuss or see in fanzines.

I must say that I was a little disappointed to read Andy Hooper's review of my fanzine, *The Knarley Knews*. I have corresponded with Andy in the past (in some detail) regarding the purpose and goals of my fanzine and I was frustrated to see that he didn't seem to use any of the positive aspects of that correspondence, but relied on other, less flattering statements. So, if you don't mind, I'd like to take the opportunity to explain myself a little so that the rest of your readers might see me in a better light.

First of all I'm not a big fan of history. Sure I know enough to get by, but none of it has ever really interested me to dig very deeply about anything. This includes fannish and fanzine history as well. Sure I know the names of many of the BNFs of old and am passably familiar with most of the fannish vocabulary and even use some of it at times. But I am a firm believer that a person does not need to know the secret handshake in order to belong. Sure I recall, as a child, a number of

feeble attempts to get involved with secret clubs, but none of it ever really went anywhere. I even refused to join organizations in college that required that I pledge them and jump through their hoops. In retrospect I see that I even went out of my way to befriend those people that would never have been asked to join, but were nevertheless quality individuals underneath

whatever social stigma had been attached to them. If this resulted in a counter-culture of sorts than I guess I achieved my goal of getting people together who didn't have to feel pressured to conform to some artificial social template. They could come and be themselves and meet others who were happy to do the same.

Second, I have no pretensions and have never had any pretensions that I could be a professional author. My writing style, if you can say I have one, is very technical.

I tend to use the minimum number of words to convey my point and not a whole lot more. It is not easy for me to pad an item to fill out my page count. I also have little or no artistic (or musical) ability in spite of having a reasonable imagination. I am also not prone to beating dead horses and would rather say nothing than to continually rehash an old point. In spite of this I manage to generate enough pages for each issue of *The Knarley Knews* so that it has more than just an editorial and a few LoCs.

I was inspired to begin *The Knarley Knews* for two reasons. One, Ray Bradbury made it all seem so apropos at his Guest of Honor speech at Confederation (Atlanta 1986) and two, I had just finished my first year of graduate school and noted the same symptoms of lost friends that plagued me after moving and high school. Thus, I put together my first issue of *The Knarley Knews* largely ignorant of the official forms or knowledge of the right people that Andy Hooper seems to put so much stock by in his review. My goal was to keep in touch with my friends (most of whom were sf fans) so that I wouldn't lose them again. Reviewing my old mailing lists I see that I haven't done so poorly over the past 8 years. I have made attempts in the past to establish trades with many of the BNFs of fanzine fandom that I have encoun-

tered in my many conventions. Some of them have been gracious and acknowledged my existence and still others have never acknowledged one of the many issues of *The Knarley Knews* that they received. I would think that it would be common courtesy to at least say thanks but no thanks. As a result I make it a habit of acknowledging every fanzine I receive with at least a short note saying, yes I got it.

As to whether my fanzine will ever fit into the historical stream that Andy Hooper finds so important remains to be seen. I think there are plenty of people out there who will remember my efforts and certainly enjoy participating. If this doesn't result in a legacy then such are the winds of fate. I will continue to do things my way and not spend my time trying to find the secret handshake. If fandom, noted for its tolerance of others, cannot accept that I worship in a different way then I'm doomed to being on the fringes. [1525 16th Avenue, Grafton, WI 53024-2017]

In the interests of fairness, Henry, we've published your letter uncut and whole. That said, I can't say that I think much of your explanation of yourself, nor do I think you've presented yourself in a better light than that of Andy's column.

Let's start at the beginning: You address your letter to "Ted and Steve," but my co-editor's name is Dan Steffan, whom you've apparently confused with Steve Stiles. I have no idea why, but it gets things off to a rough start, convincing me that you've given BLAT! only a cursory glance beyond the review of your own fanzine. That conviction is buttressed by your description of the contents of number 3 as "a lot of the fan history," which you say is "just not my favorite topic to discuss or see in fanzines." Since nothing in BLAT! 3 was primarily devoted to "fan history" I am left feeling that you simply didn't read what was there.

But then we read on to your admission that you're "not a big fan of history" — any kind of history. This is not the admission of a person of much curiosity. Your statement, "I am a firm believer that a person does not need to know the secret handshake in order to belong," wraps it all up. What do you think that "secret handshake" is? It's a recognition factor, Henry. It's the way people tell each other that they "belong." It's a common vocabulary, and a shared knowledge of the community and its history. It's only through an awareness of history that we avoid countlessly reinventing the wheel.

By your own description, you're an outsider: someone who does not "belong," and who actually refuses to "belong." That doesn't bother me: you can be what-



ever you like, for all that I care. But what does bother me is the way you appear to parade your refusal to join in or take an interest in our community, as a special badge of some kind. You write with barely-veiled contempt of "the official forms or knowledge of the right people that Andy Hooper seems to put so much stock by in his review," but all you really reveal about yourself is your own ignorance, which would appear to be willful. Suffice to say, most of BLAT!'s readers would not recognize their own fandom from your description of it here. — tw

Henry, by saying that you care nothing for history you are ignoring the very fiber of our society. A knowledge of history is vital to all things in life, including, but hardly limited to, fandom. There is the history of your family; the history of your friend's lives, there is the history of your country and the history of the world you live in. The history of our little microcosm is insignificant when compared to all those other concerns, but, nevertheless, without some kind of historical foundation your fanzine, like your life, can't help but seem shallow by comparison.

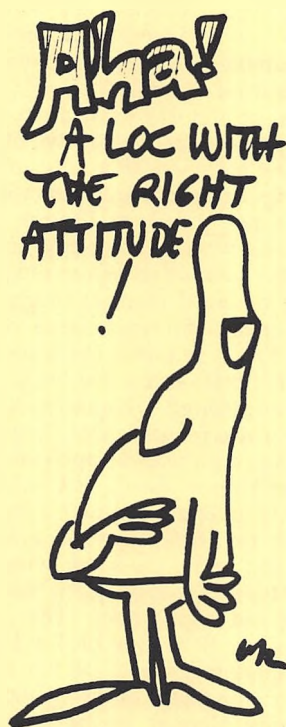
Do you care how your ancestors immigrated to the U.S.? Do you care about the history of mankind's wars? Religions? Art? Without that perspective you cannot come to reasonable conclusions about the future. There is a famous quote that makes my point perfectly: "Those who do not study history are doomed to repeat it." Just look at the resurrection of fascism in Europe, if you doubt the validity of what I'm saying.

Perhaps, your willful lack of historical perspective is what has discouraged "many of the BNFs of fanzine fandom" from "acknowledg[ing] the many issues of The Knarley Knews that they have received." — "Steve"

DAVE HICKS BLAT! is bloody superb, and like *Mimosa* and *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk*, convinces me I chose the right time to get back into fandom. It's like Greg's own comments in *RJC* about *FIAWOL* versus *FIJAGH*, where the best fanzines only come from people who haven't just picked up fandom as a hobby to fill in a few evenings, but have decided it's a worthy arena to exercise their creativity not because they can't succeed in pro fields but because fanzines have something special all of their own, something that you two understand implicitly.

I still haven't seen *Jurassic Park*. I suspect it's a misanthropic tendency but I just couldn't bear to succumb to the hype, I felt it was some small moral victory on my part to not go. Plus there seemed to be no angle, no draw — besides the special effects, I suppose — except that Spielberg had

made it, and thus people went to see it because that's what you do when Spielberg makes a film. In fact, such films are no longer, it seems to me, to be judged as films at all in the traditional sense, they are events, where the key experience is not watching a narrative drama whose value will be judged by its plot, dialogue, acting, cinematography, design and editing, but by merely turning up along with everybody else in order to be to say you've seen it. *The Day The Earth Stood Still*, to name one of my all-time favorites [*Mine too!* — djs], remains a good film because of all the above attributes, but with a Spielberg movie these days the peak experience is not in the key dramatic moments of the movie, but in the hype, the T-shirts, the reviews on breakfast TV and all the bullshit by second-rate pundits about the message that we shouldn't try to play God. Whether the film itself is actually any good or not is irrelevant, and so many of the audience will have invested so much of themselves in the proceeding publicity blitz that they'll be unable to admit it's crap, and anyway, they won't remember the film, they'll remember the hype. Consequently, I have grave reservations about *Schindler's List* as well.



Unfortunately, more and more sf productions are going to go this way until the cost of special effects comes down (which the Video Toaster appears to be hastening) because in the one-thought-per-month minds of Hollywood producers science fiction has become synonymous with an enormous FX budget which can only be recouped

by an equally enormous promotional budget. Subtlety goes out the window and the triumph of modern capitalism is upon us because now they're selling us nothing beyond the experience of being sold something.

To continue regarding Spielberg, is Alexis Gilliland serious, as your reply suggests? His cartoons clearly display a keen sense of irony but all that stuff about sales too chillingly echoes my "triumph of capitalism" spiel above (yes, I am some kind of leftie). We live in a world where an Arnie movie will kill Shakespeare at the box office and the likes of Geraldo Rivera can walk around in daylight, so screw mass appeal, you're right and the great unwashed public are wrong.

As I write we have live on TV a major sporting event of global interest live from the USA. Yes, it's the World Cup. I notice you mentioned it, albeit in passing, and it's nice to see God's Own Game impinging even marginally upon your consciousness. In fact, the game is Ireland-Norway, probably the two most defensive sides in world football, bereft of gifted ball players and both sides consisting mostly of players from the English Premier League who know each other's moves inside out. Ireland already have two fullbacks suspended for this match and another's just been booked (Cat cries from the settee: "A cynical foul — but a good one!"). In the last ten minutes it's hotting up but I slept through the first half and then got up to write this. Never mind, it's Brazil later. What do you make of all this over there? It's been a terrific tournament, and I don't think you have anything like this — playoff seasons aren't the same because you don't get the joyous release of all your jingoistic, xenophobic tendencies that international competitions provide along with sporting spectacle. We're glad in some ways England aren't there this time, the emotional strain would be too much after four years ago in Italy when we came that close to getting in the final. . . .

Calms down. Makes cup of tea. Lights cigarette.

Last night the BBC ran the second part of its 25th anniversary of Apollo 11 documentary. Towards the end they showed Collins, Aldrin and Armstrong standing alongside Nixon as the national anthem was played. Three men stared into the middle distance, erect, clearly moved by a tune that meant something important to them, the fourth hunched his shoulders and looked around with characteristic shiftiness, clearly out of place amongst men who loved their country. The irony, of course, is that the astronauts were the ones who felt honored.

Apart from the quality of the writing, the typography in BLAT! impresses the hell out of me, the first page of the *Egoboo* supplement was a work of art. I suppose having done this kind of stuff professionally means that unlike most fans you don't react like a kid locked overnight in a sweet shop when confronted with DTP. It's certainly made me reassess what I'm doing with the layout on *Moriarty's Revenge* — not drastically, but just taking that little bit more care here and there with my fairly limited system (basically configured for producing chunky line art copy for screen printing). Jay Kinney's quite right; the charm, accessibility and sweat stains of traditionally duplicated fan writing remains. [8 Dyfrig St., Pontcanna, Cardiff, CF1 9LR UNITED KINGDOM]

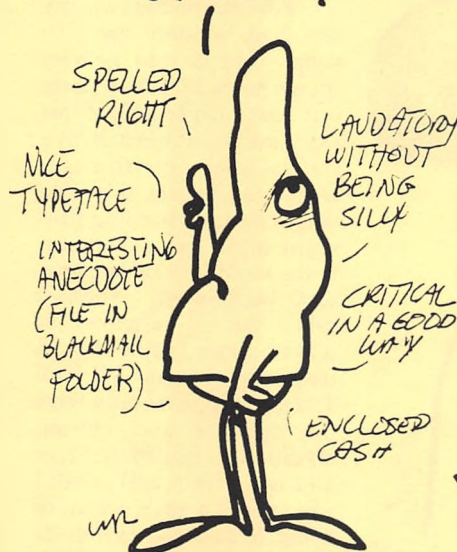
Having The World Cup in the US was a bit like watching Aliens land their ships, play a couple games of extraterrestrial marbles in Central Park, and then leave without ever bothering to talk to anybody. It was fascinating to watch, but I was glad when it was over. Frankly, I am not a fan of most organized sports and always get the feeling that the players could probably be using their time more effectively somewhere else. I know I could. I waste enough time on fanzines as it is, I certainly don't need to waste any more of it watching sports. Nevertheless, I was very interested in the culture of the players and fans. Losing a game seemed to be, for them, a lot like losing a war — the shame the players felt seemed to be way out of synch with the so-called "sportsmanship" of the game itself. And the reaction of the fans was totally unbelievable! Shit, somewhere in South America, the fans actually shot a goalie who missed the ball. IT IS ONLY A FUCKING GAME! Get over it. — djs

ALJO SVOBODA I've wandered in the glades and thickets of BLAT! number 3 since the weekend. Not having locced the previous issue, despite having enjoyed the bloody heck out of it, I had figured myself procrastinated out of existence as far as you guys were concerned. But the arrival of yet another ish put me into quite a fluster. I was spending the break between World Cup quarter final matches doing errands down by the Grand Lake Theatre with my pal Maria, just in from Paris France, and I was so thrown that I was actually starting to explain fandom and its niceties to her. Luckily, the irresistible impending match between Brazil and The Netherlands kept me from divulging any real secrets to her.

And now it's the following Thursday and I've reached that point of ripeness where a loc, of whatever quality, must be produced or it won't happen

at all. I am holding some measure of your glorious and handsome zine in mind, but I won't retain it there long. I've spent a day or two in ginger mental conversation with your august selves or one or another of your correspondents. Moreover, the news has seemed particularly auspicious for being able to address certain of the points you've raised. The first thing I heard on the radio this morning was that a gay bookstore in Cincinnati, Ohio, was being prosecuted for renting out the video *Salome: 120 Days of Sodom*. Then there was the front page story in *The New York Times* about the Pope doing a million dollar book deal. Finally, *The New Yorker* came today and there was this pretty darn bone-chilling, *Handmaid's Tale* type story by Sidney Blumenthal about the Christian right and Oliver North, in your state. The counterpoint of Mark Kernes' bland off-handedness and Ted's encounter with the *Hustler* empire, creative and hyper-entrepreneurial sex industry vs. creative and hyper-entrepreneurial censorship and theocracy industry, both vast and resourceful and both possibly supported by that majority of Americans which consists of a kind of vaporous, poll-produced, nihilistic collective alter-ego hovering cloudlike over my hypothetical individuality.

NOW THERE
IS A FINE,
PROPER SORT
OF LOC!



Sorry, that clause just collapsed under its own weight, and I'd meant to indicate that the whole vision was faintly nauseating and yet had a kind of frisson, the sort of detached bullshit "opinion" only people who've been

brought up on a lot of science fiction are liable to maintain. Having been both a consistent consumer of *Penthouse*-ilk soft-core and for several years a fellow traveller with the New Right, I can only say that no extremes of hypocrisy seem untenable to me. I'd suppose I'm like a lot of people in admiring Ted's unshakable integrity without wanting to find myself within its rigorous purview. I felt a little sorry for Joe Maraglino after reading Ted's bit on him, just as I did for Harry Andruschak in his apparent blithe unconsciousness. I would not hold up well on the receiving end myself, of that I'm sure — and I say this without thinking any of Ted's shots at all unfair. Let alone his evaluation of Nixon, which happily is no longer a voice in the wilderness utterance, as it may still have seemed at the time it was written. Goes to show that while "now more than ever" it's possible for a bright crook to stage-manage his own funeral with true mastery of the obituarial arts, it's still not possible for that hand to extend from the grave indefinitely. For someone like Nixon, death just needs a little more time to really take.

As for reading the loc I myself wrote to *Egoboo* in 1973, it was like watching a kid dressed up as Shirley Temple doing a frantic tap dance for an invisible audience of mysterious grownups. Horrifying, yet fascinating, to think that certain persistent neuronal firings link me to whoever it was wrote that. Matter of fact, though, the inability to put together two coherent statements in a row still characterize most of my writing — that's why I decided long ago to play to my strength and stick mainly to experimental poetry. [P.O. Box 10604, Oakland CA 94610]

BRAD FOSTER I started some notes on Moshe's article about programming for fanzine fandom at conventions — something about not understanding what the big deal is, when most fanzine fans I've read who talk about cons are usually mostly upset because no one at the cons seems to care about them, but then, why should they — but thought, what the hell.

This third issue has struck me as something of a special "Dirty-ol'-man" issue, what with the recollections of both Mark and Ted about their personal adventures in the worlds of commercial naughtiness. Seems like all it lacked was some sort of similar recollections from Rotsler to round it all off. Maybe you could get something from him on those lines, later. (And what is this growing connection between sf fans and the land of smut? A bunch of lonely guys with too much time on their hand?)

Sir, you speak like a man with personal experience in the world of commercial naughtiness. Nonetheless, I think you're mistaken about one matter: I don't think it is time this bunch of lonely guys has in-er- on their hands. — djs

Ted's comments brought up a point I've encountered myself in my own experience of the erotic arts. You don't have to publish anything with sex in it to be a sleazy publisher — and just because you do publish sexual material you're not necessarily being sleazy. The *Hustler* idea, however, seems to definitely combine sex/sleaze into one.

By the by, has anyone else pointed out that the title of this zine seems more food related than anything else? Big "B" and "L," a small "A," then a big "T" — me, I see Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato in all that. [P.O. Box 165246, Irving, TX 75016]

WILLIAM ROTSLER Mark Kernes' porn star revelations were good stuff. I think the first time I met Mark was on the beach where Jim Rockford used to have his trailer, in the series. He seemed to know me and I assumed it was from my lofty state as the "Dean of Porn Critics," as a few have called me. I knew him as the AVN reviewer. We were there to interview people while they made a porno. (I'm even in it, filler in a bar, just as he mentioned, with a couple of ad-libbed lines I don't think made the cut, as they never sent me a copy.) I interviewed the then-newcomers Tiffany Mynx and Lacey Rose, plus one of the real actresses, Ashlyn Gere, and later — at a fantastic house atop some rocks in the San Fernando Valley — Randy Spears.

But the director was slow and unorganized and we never really saw any sex for two days. I went home. But Mark's article, from my experience, is right on. My own adult video reviews (plus another gig with the same publisher) pay my house rent. Total time expended: Maybe a day.

Re Judy Lynn Del Rey: My first book was *Contemporary Erotic Cinema* at Balentine. The second and third, also there, were *Patron of the Arts* and *To the Land of the Electric Angel*. Betty Ballentine was my editor on the first two, then Judy Lynn came aboard. She made a speech to me prior to *Angel*, telling me how the second book had to

be better than the first, the third better still, and so on. I couldn't accept that for I soon saw a dead end, a point where you couldn't possibly top yourself.

When *Angel* was published I got pissed. Darrel Sweet had done the cover, but it was so stupid — the lettering awkward, with red-orange on yellow. When I complained Judy Lynn got huffy and said, "Listen, you write and we'll package." Then I got really pissed. "You are the people who published *Patron of the Arts*," I replied. "Do you think the person who wrote that book doesn't know anything about art?" She got mad and I never sold another book there. She loved power — I knew that — but I had to say something.

I've had 54 books published, plus foreign editions and re-issues, and not one(!) cover I like. (Oh, there was a great, rather amusing cover on *Zandra* in France — armed bugs — but it had nothing to do with the book!) [17909 Lull St., Reseda, CA 91335]

BEN INDICK Anent Mark's porn article and the industry, a friend of mine once said, in answer to my hope that a porn movie could have some good story in it, that "nobody watches the things for drama." The only time I went to a porn show I had a special reason, other than excitement, which I am just too prudish to gain. Or hopeless, as the case may be. It was a double feature, each of which had such insistent background rhythms, no doubt canned and loops, they gave me a headache.

For one of the two my son had written the title song. He is into heavier things nowadays than porn, but inasmuch as he put this story into print himself, in a serious international magazine, I can tell the tale. He was at a music training program, and a guy asked him if he would write a song. \$200 he offered. Michael asked me. I suggested it was no harm but he should use a pseudonym. He did. The song appears only with the opening and closing credits, for *Centerfold Fever* and is a lovely and wistful song about a girl's dream of being Miss some month or

other so she could be on a centerfold. Indeed, it is too darned clean for a porn flick, not a suggestive word in it (he did music and lyrics). Mark Kernes could possibly tell you his song won the award at the Adult Film's variation on Oscar for Best Song of the

Year. My son, feeling mortified by now, would not attend, was brought the award, and buried it in his closet. He had not seen the film yet, but a friend of mine, knowing the story, had given me a videotape of it. Michael, figuring what the hell, it IS part of his career, decided to watch it. Hah. Five minutes after it started he was burned up. Blow jobs follow one another throughout, with deadening regularity, plus straight sex, but cunnilingus is infrequent and only performed by women on women. It has a faint plot but the post-sequence, with his song, is the best, most charming and witty. Also it is harmless, i.e., non-pornographic, and I keep the tape at this point to show curious guests — who always refuse to watch more — although I am not adverse, if that is what they want. Hell, it's only sex; no killing, no blood, no hate. Just sex. No matter which way it is performed, it is human.

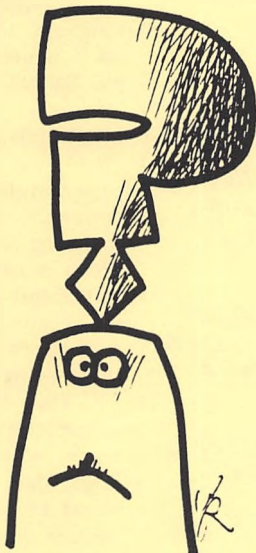
What is my son into nowadays, you may ask? Only having a world premiere of a major opera, in Houston, New York City's Lincoln Center, San Francisco and Germany. It beats porn.

Grant Canfield's memoir could have been banal and mawkish, but his sensitivity won out and it is moving and honest. I shall be honest with him, and hope he will release himself, and try with another person. To her spirit, to Frank, to Grant, I can only offer a hope for Shalom, Peace. [428 Sagamore Avenue, Teaneck, NJ 07666-2626]

In all likelihood, Michael won the Best Song award at the Adult Video News Awards Show, held each year in Las Vegas. Mark Kernes is one of the editors of AVN and reports that the ceremonies are a notorious good time. That is if your idea of a good time is lots and lots of naked, horny women dancing around with their boobs akimbo. — djs

JERRY KAUFMAN I didn't know Catherine Jackson at all well. Dan's piece about her was a fine, rounded portrait and I'm glad he remembered so many details about his friendship with her. Grant's piece was infinitely sadder. He describes himself living a kind of death-in-life resulting from the end of his relationship. I can only offer my sympathies to him, and to Frank, whose loss is fresher, and hope he is not as completely devastated as Grant was.

I'd like to comment on Ted's material regarding his proposed Fanzine Foundation. First, there have been a number of DUFF reports published since the 1984 worldcon, and one TAFF report. The Taffer was Dave Langford, with *The Transatlantic Hearing Aid*.



(The trip took place in 1980, I think, but the book came out in 1985.) The Duffers who published were Christine Ashby (reporting on her 1976 trip), Jack Herman, Terry Dowling, the Cantors, and myself. I'm sure the SCIFI (the LA folks) paid out whatever they promised at least when I published, but you'll have to ask Bruce Pelz for confirmation. (And NESFA pays \$50 to a fan fund when a report is published, as I recall.)

This brings up a sidebar: Why is it that in recent years it's been TAFF that has elected people known for their ability to communicate well in print, yet it's been DUFF that has produced more reports? I've had a feeling that DUFF is to TAFF as Ditto has been to Corflu. TAFF and Corflu are both relatively assured of their importance in the fannish culture, while Ditto and DUFF are more obscure, less *au courant* . . . and perhaps therefore have more to prove to themselves and others. So more Duffers take seriously the unwritten requirement to produce reports. Taffers don't feel quite the pressure because everyone "knows" that they were worth the money spent to send them.

(If you examine the reasons (or excuses) of any particular trip winner for their lack of report, you probably won't find any support for my theory, but it's the sort of blithering that can't be proven: the evidence for or against comes from hints, allusions and suggestions, and generally it's just taking the temperature of the fannish Zeitgeist with a thermometer intended for some other creature entirely.)

Well, it's not that post-1984 TAFF winners haven't started reports. They just haven't finished most of them. But Rob Hansen has published (serially) most of his report. Jeanne Gomoll has published at least the first part of her report. And Greg Pickersgill's announced plan was to collect the reports of others from each area he visited; I did my part, writing up his visit while I was in jail and including it in my "Letters". . . . I must be overlooking other unfinished reports, portions of which have appeared in fanzines here and there. (And then there is that granddaddy of Unfinished TAFF Reports, the one Steve Stiles still adds to from time to time, often on page-bottoms.) — tw

Getting back to the Fanzine Foundation, let me tell you what happened

when we did it. Yep, we did it first again. This was right after the Seattle Corflu, and it was unheralded and not too successful. We had some money left over, not \$100,000 of course, I think we had about \$350, and didn't know what to do with it, having already passed on seed money to whomever followed us. So we thought of passing it out to needy faneds.

Our first problem was getting the word out. I don't recall what we did, but we didn't want to spend major portions of the Foundation's money in a direct mail campaign. We sent notice to *File 770*, but word of mouth ended up being our chief method.

Our next problem was finding someone who was publishing and needed the dough. Most of the people publishing at the time didn't need our help. Once we did find an aspiring and poor publisher, we had to decide if we were giving a grant or a loan. (Since we finally realized we didn't want the Foundation to last

forever, we made the money a grant.) And the first publisher we gave money to included a poem that was a personal attack on her ex-boyfriend's new girlfriend. So we were a bit embarrassed over the use to which our generosity was put. (However, the 'zine in question seemed to sink out of sight, the publisher went on to other fannish pursuits, and no one seemed to notice the nature of the poem.)

Frankly, at this date I don't recall how the rest of the money was spent; I have a vague memory that some of it went to finance some project of my own (probably one of my DUFF moneyraisers). I think the Foundation lasted, all told, a year.

What lessons does our experience hold? One is that it isn't as easy as it seems to get the word out to potential beneficiaries. (Did you know that the Atlanta worldcon had a foundation and gave money away to worthy projects, including small press publishers and an organization that helped disabled fans?

Another is that there may not be much need of large quantities of money: \$50 or \$100 may be plenty. (\$100,000 or more is overkill, I think;

but maybe your hopes are modest.) Any 'zine with a US circulation of 200 or more can use bulk mail, though there's always arguments and circumstances that make first class more attractive.

A third is that 'zines may put the money to unpopular use, or worse. The Foundation, like the N.E.A., shouldn't have to censor or even monitor the 'zines it funds, but it will have to be ready for a few small storms.

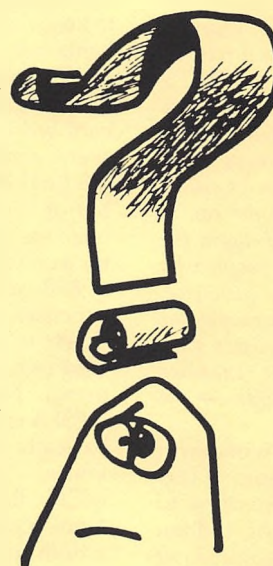
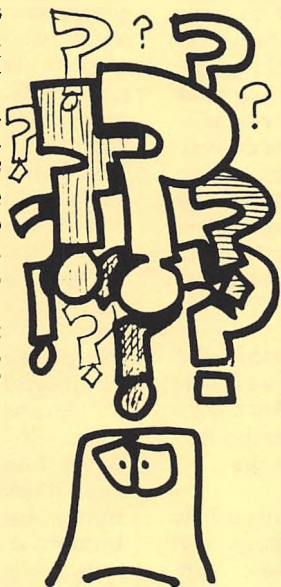
There is much else to comment on, but I don't want to get into the Harlan Ellison thing, etc., except to say how disappointed Harlan makes me. I've seen (and experienced) how nice he can be (and, once, how badly he can miscalculate someone's sense of humor). I believe that much of the time Harlan has been a mensch. Now it feels like he's forgotten that skill, and I want the Harlan back who I once (let's say it) idolized. [8618 Linden Avenue, N., Seattle, WA 98103]

The concept of some kind of a fanzine foundation seems to be gathering steam. It is obviously an idea that appeals to a lot of people. For instance, in Britain, it was decided by consensus to discontinue putting on the annual Mexican — at one time the UK's most fannish con — because it had, apparently, withered away over the years and had become a shadow of its former self. So a proposal was put to this year's attendees by Greg Pickersgill to turn the convention's leftover funds into a fanzine endowment fund that could be used to finance worthwhile fan projects — not unlike Ted's Modest Proposal, last issue.

At present, the committee that is administering the Mexican Foundation are: Greg, Martin Tudor, Pam Wells, Rhodri James and Christina Lake. I don't think they have actually done anything with the endowment yet, but I think it has the potential to accomplish something worthwhile if administered properly. In the meantime, I think it will be interesting to observe their attempts at largesse. — djs

GREGORY RIHN Given the amount of money involved in running a worldcon, the Hugos, etc., these days, I think it is *Long Past Time* that we quit screwing around with the intentional dilettantism of

having the World Science Fiction Association unincorporated. It is getting harder and harder for individual local group and concons to get 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, and so the big groups that already have it (and who



have gobs of money from previous successful cons) have a double advantage in getting bids. I think it is only a matter of time before someone decides there's gold in them thar hills and sets out to corner the worldcon market while turning it into a tasty little racket for themselves. True, the distaste and suspicion Trufans show for professional con runners would be an impediment, but the sheer number of people who attend these things, (and STrek cons, and Whocons) compared with the number of people who actually vote on sites, makes me think that a takeover is not impossible. A real board with some real oversight power is needed before the problem eventuates, and could siphon off some of those profits for worthy causes such as a Fan Foundation, too.

This isn't a new problem — or potential problem — I ran a series of editorials on the subject of worldcons in Amazing and Fantastic more than twenty years ago, addressing the same subject. For-profit conventions were invented by comics fandom in the mid-sixties and eagerly snapped up in the seventies by those who put on Trekcons. We've already lost all the media-oriented cons: they're already put on for profit. But when it comes to worldcons, there are some powerful arguments against a permanent sponsoring body, and most of them are advanced by the actual bidders. I have yet to meet a worldcon chairperson (and I am one myself) willing to take on the headaches, responsibilities, and hard work of doing a worldcon without absolute independence from higher, overseeing, authority (beyond, that is, the rules they agree to abide by when they file their bid). No one likes backseat drivers, I guess. This is what really sunk the WSFS Inc. in 1958. Fans are an anarchistic lot and detest bureaucracy. It's astonishing they can work together well enough to do a worldcon, and the effort often fractures and fragments the group after the con is over. I tend to view with mild alarm the rise of the Con Worker Drone: people who thrive on running cons and do little else. I think it selects for unfannish people, for all that some of my fannish friends have become major conrunners for extended periods of time. Perhaps it's viral. — tw

The BLAT! Archives is a wonderful idea. Fandom is full of rumors of legendary lost issues that never came to press, and the inventory of hidden letters, articles and artwork languishing in the files of faneds who were gafia, fafia, went broke, or just plain gave up must amount to a veritable Lost Dutchman mine of fanac. This is the kind of project that, in a just world, would be funded by Ted's Fandom Foundation. Which is one of the better ideas I've

seen proposed lately.

Mark Kernes' piece was — interesting. I have to say, considering the porn videos I've seen, I think being a reviewer would be The Job From Hell. (My opinions pretty much track Ted's.) So I guess he can't be faulted for taking his thrills where he finds them. But after reading "They paid me to have sex! They actually paid me to have sex! In some ways I have never received a greater compliment," I couldn't help thinking "Oh yeah? I wonder how many hookers feel that way after a job. . . ." I wonder if Mark'd be so elated if it occurred to him that having accepted money for the commission of an act of sexual gratification, he is neither more or less than a prostitute in most states. [4718 W. Cleveland Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53219]

I'm not sure whether Mark's gratification was exactly sexual, but stemmed more from the surprise and satisfaction that anyone would think him worthy of staring in a porn flick, in the first place. — djs

GEORGE FLYNN Ted, with regard to your hypothesis that "Big Buck Worldcons . . . are . . . sitting on over a quarter of a million dollars": Obviously I can't speak for LA, but I can assure you that you're way off with regard to Boston. Let's see, Noreascon II (1980) had about \$28,000 left after paying the bills and reimbursing memberships to program participants, etc. [I, for one, was never reimbursed for my membership and I appeared on two or three panels that weekend. — djs] \$10,000 was donated to the fund to keep ConStellation (1983) from going bankrupt; roughly another \$10,000 went to publish a convention Memory Book, distributed free to those members we could find [Ditto. — djs]; I spent about \$1,000 myself to publish the final *Voice of the Lobster* and a couple of sets of Business Meeting minutes; we donated a couple of hundred for published TAFF and DUFF reports, at \$50 each; and with assorted minor expenses and donations, we were down to about \$2,500 by the end of 1984 (when the Memory Book went to press). None of this went towards the NESFA clubhouse, which was financed basically from the proceeds of Boskones. (Though I should note that MCFI, the corporation that runs the Noreascons, does pay NESFA \$125 a month rent for storage and meeting space; it briefly got up to \$1,000 a month in the immediate vicinity of Noreascon 3.)

I don't have quite as detailed numbers for Noreascon on 3 (1989), but this time the net after bills and reimbursements seems to have been \$80,000 or

so. Now, like most recent worldcons, we signed on to a plan to pass on at least half the profits to the upcoming worldcons (so they'll have cash early enough to do something useful with it), provided that they commit to doing the same in turn. Chicon chose not to participate in this, but we gave well over \$20,000 each to ConFiction and MagiCon. And we published another Memory Book, which cost about \$15,000. The net was thus somewhere under \$20,000 when I left the committee a couple of year ago. Since then, a couple of videotapes of the convention have been produced, and there've been various other maintenance expenses. I just inquired, and it appears that only a few thousand is left. (Meanwhile, another worldcon bid has been launched, but the funds are kept separate: the bylaws in fact forbid using the proceeds from one worldcon to campaign for another.)

Moshe's article was an unexpected treat. (I think I vaguely remember when it originally came in, but apparently it never did make it into the committee apa. However, I have now brought it to the attention of the survivors — producing general crogglement.) As much as Moshe missed, at least he knew more about what was going on than I did. I did manage to hear half of Bruce Pelz's speech; I've always tried to be a "generalist" myself, and sometimes I even achieve it after a fashion. For a while. I have also long campaigned for regarding "fannish fandom" as wider than "fanzine fandom," so I'm glad to see Moshe articulating this argument.

I had LoCs in four of the five zines Andy Hooper reviews; I guess I qualify as one of those "friendly fen who respond to most everything they get" (this year anyway). Speaking of LoCs in general, you know, Joe Maraglino isn't the only editor who leaves LoCs unedited, or nearly so. It does make me nervous. I certainly don't apply equal care to everything I put in a LoC, and I expect that an editor will cut out the random nattering. When I know that this isn't going to happen, I tend to be more reticent in what I say, in effect doing my own editing to include only what I'm sure I want to see in print. It makes for a curious dynamic. [P.O. Box 1069, Kendall Square Station, Cambridge, MA 02142]

Thanks for some real facts. I appreciate the displacement of gossip and rumor with actual facts. I wish I could remember whether my membership fee was refunded (I was on a variety of program items), but I know I never got a Memory Book of any sort. (I assume my membership fee was refunded, though, because I retain a burn-

ing, ranking memory of the fact that Chicon in 1982 did not refund my membership fee to that convention, and, when queried about this later, one highly placed committeeperson said, and I'm directly quoting him now, "Tough shit." This person was not Yale Whosis, who had independently decided I was unfit to interview FanGoH Lee Hoffman, and removed me from that program item. But I digress. . .) — tw

DON FITCH I'm not sure Walt Daugherty entirely deserves the Reputation Laney and Burbee constructed for and upon him; he seems to have, in fact, carried through a number of those projects. Some others failed because he unwisely trusted that the enthusiasm expressed for them by other fans would be translated into actual work. Most, as far as I can perceive, were simply elaborated ideas that neither he nor anyone else actually expected to realize. Maybe Laney failed to understand (or simply despised, as he did so many things) the idea that some people enjoy the thorough planning-out of things; whether or not those things are accomplished (or even undertaken) is immaterial. [I think Laney disliked the man's personality, referring to him, if you'll recall, as "a great bag of wind." — tw]

Ted's idea of getting no-strings-attached grants (and I'm sure he wouldn't consider anything else) from convention profits/surplus may well be more extreme than anything Daugherty ever thought up.

I suppose most of the balance-sheets have been made public, but they're not the sort of thing I'd search out; the figures I've seen make an estimate in the range of "perhaps half a million" in profits ludicrous. Playing around with a pocket calculator and rough estimates of early-purchase membership fees and at-the-door rates, I don't see how more than about five worldcons could have had more than a million dollars for their total budget, and I think I know fans well enough to expect that most of them are going to spend lots when they have control over it . . . though perhaps not spend it wisely.

ConRunners are as cliquish as . . . as fanzine fans, and I wouldn't be at all surprised to discover that many cons have lost money, and been bailed out by the few that have made substantial profits, all pretty much *sub rosa* and perhaps with undertones of "remember this when we're bidding for another con, and support us." It does seem to

me that a more public accounting should be made of these funds . . . but that's not a strong feeling. The people who run a major convention spend several years of their lives' spare time at the job, and as long as they don't obviously pocket a whole lot I'm not going to be picky about what fannish causes they spend the profits on. Nor am I so short-sighted as to fail to recognize the wisdom of The Long View; there seems to be a strong possibility that both the '94 and the '95 worldcons will operate at some (and perhaps much) loss, and if the current downward trends in convention attendance continue, the '96 LA area one cannot, at best, hope to make anything like the profit the previous one here did.

Incidentally, I just discovered (though everyone else may have known all along) that \$500 of the profits from that con went to purchase the photocopy machine Vincent Clarke has

sure, however, that this would take more money to set up and maintain than actual convention profits could supply. Why, I bet there isn't even enough money in the kitty to buy a fannish farm in the Ozarks.

I also liked (in addition to just about everything else) Andy Hooper's essay/fanzine reviews. I must admit, however, to disagreeing with some of Andy's opinions concerning Chuck Connor and *Thingumybob*, but then, I rather like the concepts of "fair play" and (reasonably) "polite behavior." Connor seems to think (like me) that fanzines are more like personal conversation than A Literary Genre, and thus he tends to be more easygoing and not hold to such stringent critical standards as Andy and Ted. Apparently, he just doesn't feel personally offended when someone writes, or publishes a fanzine, in a style he doesn't particularly care for.

Actually, Ted, you seem to have mellowed a lot — unless I missed it, you didn't say anything disparaging about Guy Lilian III's sex life — but it seems to me that you do still get rather carried away by your Powers of Rhetoric. Some of your KTF reviews (and I think they qualify for the "Kill The Fucker" designation) seem to me rather on a par with beating a dog (or child) severely, when it misbehaves; I've found that a milder reprimand, and considerable praise when it does something right, are much more effective. I understand the theory sometimes advanced to justify such stringent reviews, and the idea that they're done To Improve Fandom, but I think they may drive away too many people who might, given a more moderate atmosphere, eventually become reasonably good additions to the fan community. You don't seem to dislike all but the most extremely promising neos (anymore), but I can quite understand that talented new people might read reviews like that and say "I don't believe I care to remain in a place where this sort of thing is done." [3908 Frijio, Covina, CA 91722]

Don, it amazes me how you can say things like how you "rather like the concepts of 'fair play' and (reasonably) 'polite behavior,'" etc., etc., in the same sentence in which you agree with and laud a man whose response to my fanac is to wish me dead! Connor "tends to be more easygoing" than Andy and me? When is the last time you saw anything by either of us that begins to approach the over-the-top bigoted, ill-tempered rant Chuck Connor delivered in *Thingumybob* 10 on the sub-



been using in Britain to duplicate circulating copies of old fanzines — certainly a thoroughly fannish use of the money, though perhaps second to subsidizing new fanzines.

I do see some possibility in an indirect subsidy, with such a foundation owning and operating a publishing business — faneds send them camera-ready copy for their zines, with details about the paper to be used, and sheets of mailing labels, and the corporation duplicates and posts the zine (under their mail permit), and bills the faned for (perhaps) some percentage less than the actual cost. (Such a service would be especially beneficial to overseas fans and branches in the US, the UK, and perhaps Australia and Canada, would be neat.) I'm pretty

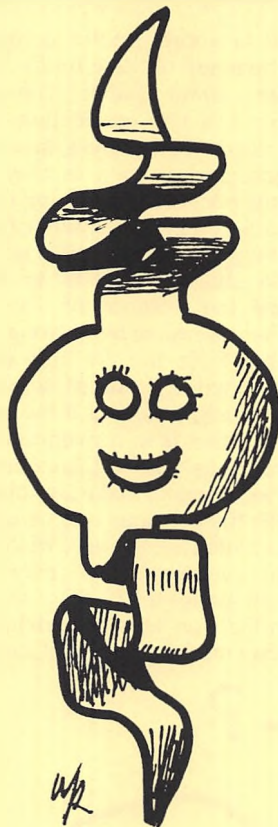
ject of my fanzine reviews in *Habakkuk*? Cite me just one of my supposed KTF reviews (I deny I've ever written a KTF fanzine review, by the bye — but no doubt your definition varies from mine) in which I called for the death of the editor! In your so very civilized way, Don, you do get in your digs: you slip the knife in whenever you can, yer very own self. Like your line, "You don't seem to dislike all but the most extremely promising neos (anymore), but. . . ." That "(anymore)" gives the knife a neat twist, but is of course of a piece with the whole "You don't beat your wife (anymore)" concept, in which you manage to imply a falsehood so cleverly that if confronted on it you can plausibly give me a bewildered look and ask what it was I was smoking when I read it. And what is this business about how I've mel-
lowed, I didn't disparage Guy III's sex life this time? When did I ever? Just what is it you're trying to imply about me?

Sometimes I wonder about you, Don.

— tw

Neither Ted nor Andy need me to defend the criteria by which they review fanzines or the standards they believe apply to fan publishing. But I do think you are missing the point behind some of their criticism. It is my opinion that the creative process is not served when the creator ignores the need to do his best work at all times. It does not serve his audience to present them with material that wastes their time or underestimates their intelligence. Publishing a fanzine may be just a hobby, but what real satisfaction can be gained from hackwork? What pride is there in publishing a fanzine on a rigid schedule if you have nothing worthwhile to fill its pages? How is real growth or real communication to be accomplished if you give your audience nothing to think about or respond to? Is a LoC that says, "Got yer latest ish, haven't got any real comments, but thanks anyway," really a sufficient reward for the time and money spent producing a fanzine? I don't think so. And yet, I get all too many fanzines whose letter columns are filled with such niceties. (And usually, their editorials are full of sob stories about the lack of contributions.)

I believe that a faneditor has a responsibility to his readers to give them the best he can, or else he shouldn't publish until he has something to offer. Sure, when you are just starting out, it is totally acceptable to fumble around and act immature and have fun with your newfound creative outlet, but after a while you have to mature and grow. Without that growth you are just imitating your immature mistakes. I think a faned has to be willing to demand as much from his contributors as he demands from himself. It is part of his role as an editor to instruct and encourage his contributors to do their best. If they don't then it is also part of his duties to ask for



revisions, changes or, when needed, reject material outright. I think that any faneditor who fails to do this is not a true faneditor. He is an assembler of interchangeable bits and pieces that will mean no more to his readers than it does to him. I think any fanzine that is published that way is a waste of everybody's time, both the readers and the editor.

Under such circumstances, I think it is foolish for the editor of a slipshod or mediocre fanzine to whine about any negative criticism they may get. To rely on "fair play" or "polite behavior" as a defense against negative backlash, or criticism of any kind, is absurd. — djs

JOSEPH NICHOLAS "Best fanzine being published today" (or words to that effect), said Rob Hansen as he handed me our copy at the June Wellington meeting (a meeting otherwise notable for the re-emergence of Harry Bond, now separated from Joy Hibbert and openly identifying himself with the politics of Radical Queer). Such considerations generally cut little ice with me: I tend to treat fanzines as I do other publications, to be read as and when rather than consumed immediately, and which therefore have to take their place in the queue behind such necessary reading as the daily *The Guardian* newspaper and the weekly *New Scientist* and *New Statesperson & Society*. (I appreciate, of course, that there's nothing really "necessary" about such reading, but that's just the way matters have

evolved.) So it must be some sort of testament to your pulling power that BLAT! 3 leaped up the queue to be slotted ahead of not just that week's *New Scientist* but also the supplements to that Saturday's edition of *The Guardian*.

The problem, however, is that having read it all — with great enjoyment — I can think of very little to say in response. Two of the articles concern someone I never knew and the other is about a subject (porn movies) in which I have no interest; no possibility for comment there. Those by Moshe Feder and Andy Hooper are interesting, but I've never been to US worldcon (and probably never will) and have seen only two of the five fanzines reviewed; so no possibility for comment there either. That leaves the letters and the editorials, but here again I have problems thinking of anything to say. Firstly, many of the comments are made in response to something published elsewhere, which in turn refers to something published in yet a third location; and if one hasn't seen all the publications in question (as we haven't), one has little more than inferences to go on, which I find inhibits concrete comment. (Certainly, we have sent copies of *FTT* to such as Joe Maraglino and Arnie Katz, but have had nothing from them in return — although I freely admit that *FTT* has increasingly looked less and less like a fanzine, and of course has never been a fannish fanzine.) [Nonetheless, it feels somehow fannish, in its own way. . . . — tw] Secondly, there is the time-lag with which one inevitably has to deal when reading fanzines from North America; apart from those odd occasions when someone returning from Corflu brings fanzines back with them, one will be reading something which can be up to three months old — another inhibition to comment. And, thirdly, there's the fact that much of what is said in fanzines published in North America will be specific to North American fandom, which will necessarily differ in many (often subtle) ways from British fandom: and comment is thus again inhibited.

In addition, and as I remarked in a previous letter, I no longer feel a particularly active fan, so no longer feel able to make cogent comment on the great fannish issues of the day. Indeed, I feel so inactive these days that — apart from publishing the occasional issue of *FTT*; we are working on the next one now, I assure you — more often than not I'm likely to burble on about the garden than anything else. (Just the sort of thing which tends to infuriate Nigel Richardson.) I was doing it again at the June Wellington meeting: going on about how over-

grown it was when we moved in last December — so overgrown that we recovered an entire collapsed rotary clothes line from the grass — and how every time we tried to dig the beds we encountered the remains of a brick path and patio layout, but how we'd since put in lots of effort to demarcate beds and lawn, and trench the bricks as proper edging for them both, and level part of the lawn by removing the sod and digging out the soil underneath, and put up a rose arch to provide an "entrance" from the path to the lawn, and planted some miniature cherry and red current trees, and inverted the rotary clothes line to use as a pea wigwam, and were planning to construct a rockery against the back fence which sloped down to a small pond at its foot . . . and when I'd run down after about ten minutes of this, Keith Oborn looked at me with an expression of some amazement and said that ten years ago he would have never, ever suspected that I would ever talk about something as mundane and bourgeois as gardening. Mind you, ten years ago I would have never, ever have suspected any such thing either.

I wondered, for a moment, whether burling about the garden is a sign of encroaching senility — but then read Ted's closing editorial in BLAT!, where he talks about his azaleas, so it can't be. Mind you, I wouldn't know an azalea from any other plant: I leave that sort of detailed technical and theoretical stuff to Judith, and concentrate my attention on construction and design — the actual physical labour, in other words, some of which was on display this past weekend when we actually dug and filled the pond. It still needs its finishing touches — water lilies, plants in the rockery at the back, proper coping stones on the bricks around the rim — but my gardening, for the rest of this summer, is likely to consist of sitting in the sun (when the sun shines) watching things grow and admiring our handiwork. Or reading. Even reading more fanzines, when we get more fanzines. [15 Jansons Road, South Tottenham, London N15 4JU UNITED KINGDOM]

Despite what I said earlier about letter writers who write only to say that they have no comments, I had to publish your letter, Joseph. You write about having nothing to write about better than almost anybody I can think of. Plus, I couldn't pass up the chance to irritate Nigel Richardson — the bugger has stopped sending me Slubberdegullion. (Maybe I just won't send him that picture of my friend Juliette in her lovely latex dress. That'll teach him.) — djs



PAMELA BOAL Thank you for your full answer to my LoC.

Obviously my early years in fandom were limited to the UK scene so I missed out on Harlan Ellison's fannish years. Though gradually I am catching up with fannish history, mention of Harlan seems to be confined to rather negative tales, such as Ted's story of the bet. I am glad to see someone willing to balance the books. It is all too easy to get half a picture or to miss out on opportunities for contacts and enlightenment. I once spent two weeks in Falls Church (1981) unaware that it was such a hotbed of fannish activity. True I was working every waking hour but I will always regret that I did not have the knowledge to at least find time to say hallo.

I do think the archives a great idea and an important contribution to the time binding efforts that, shall we say, not so young fans are quite properly (in my opinion) making. Frustrating though, *Egoboo* looks so familiar but we only got back from Cyprus in '72 and I doubt that I received American zines before late '73 or '74. Unfortunately I haven't the space to hoard and my zines of that period have long since been passed on to some fannish cause, so I can't check.

From necessity rather than choice my fannish activity for several years has been confined to LoCing zines and writing the occasional (very) article. totally agree with your editorial policy on LoCs, Ted, which I am happy to say

is more usual than Joe Maraglino's. The WAHF column is not so much egoboo as letting the writer know that a letter has safely arrived, that the editor is aware of continuing interest and in my case (and I'm sure for others) that my thanks for sending me your zine have been received. We humble letterhacks like to think we are making some contribution and I for one would feel more like a tedious bore than a contributor if my letters were not edited. What is the point of publishing my letter uncut if others have made exactly the same comments (probably with better style)? No indeed, better for both writer and reader if editorial discretion is used. The only exception to that rule would be where feelings are running high and a strong difference of opinion is being debated, then it should be all or nothing to avoid getting things out of context. Yes indeed the cost of postage is prohibitive, even letterhacking can put a strain on the budget when the majority of zines I LoC come from overseas. Sending a zine the size of BLAT! airmail could be called excessively generous but then if I were able to put out a zine I too would send it airmail. Are you sure your dream is a Daugherty Project? Now you have raised the matter, maybe there are fans out there who can see ways of setting up a fanzine postal fund that avoids the problems you foresee.

Envy is an emotion that I do not indulge in. We all have our blessings and burdens and to be jealous of another's blessing is not only mean spirited but wasteful of energy. Even so I must confess when I read your azalea item I felt a positive twinge.

For many years I only knew azaleas as an expensive pot[ted] plant given to me by the children around Christmas. To be honest much as I love plants I wished they would spend more modest sums on something more lasting. Despite it being generally acknowledged that I have a green thumb — I have a friend with horticultural training who regularly threatens to commit mayhem upon my person because I have plants that thrive when she has given up on them — I could not keep those potted azaleas alive much beyond their first flowering season. One year a deciduous azalea, after blooming and winter leaf loss, showed some signs of life, so (being ignorant at that time of the plant's needs) I popped it into a corner of the garden. Next spring I was rewarded by a blaze of orange colour just at the time when the garden was looking rather dreary and insipid.

Then I started to take a special interest in azaleas but deciduous or

evergreen azaleas need acid soil, ours is very alkaline. Large tubs are expensive, the bags of soil for acid lovers are expensive and if I got two plants for the equivalent of \$25 I would count them as bargains. Thus my collection of 7 azaleas (2 deciduous and 5 evergreen) took 7 years to accumulate. To really thrive they need to be replanted in large (and more expensive) tubs every two or three years so there is little chance of increasing my stock by layering. One bargain I did get was a water butt for only 50p. As our hard tap water is almost instant death for azaleas and my container grown plant needs more water than those in the open ground, I have to be sure to save enough rain water to last through the dry summer. Each winter Derek brought the azaleas in to our little plastic garden lean-to for protection. Last year they were simply too large and too heavy. I thought a sheltered corner and plastic wrapping would be protection enough. I thought wrong! I now have two azaleas, one deciduous, the original blazing orange and one evergreen, a dark crushed pink. I think I can forgive myself that little pang of envy. [4 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon OX12 7EW UNITED KINGDOM]

*Four of my deciduous azaleas did not survive the summer, *sigh*. . . . I think now it may have been a nitrogen problem caused by the wood chips with which I mulched them. (The solution, I learned, was Fish Emulsion Fertilizer.) And thus far none of my attempts to root cuttings from Richard Moore's deciduous azaleas has worked — they are, apparently, much more difficult to root than are the (more common, here) evergreen varieties. Thank you for sending me those gorgeous color photos of a mature British azalea garden. Here our acid rain guarantees an environment azaleas will love. . . . — tw*

LEE HOFFMAN I am impressed. I haven't read it all yet. I don't dare wait to write until I have read it all. That's what goes wrong and prevents me LoCing a great many zines. I read a whole zine and discover I have a whole lot to LoC about, so I put off writing the letter "until I get some other lesser things out of the way." But the lesser things breed beside the computer. Then after a year or two of trying to get them out of the way, I have lost track of the fanzine and forgotten just what it was I wanted to say.

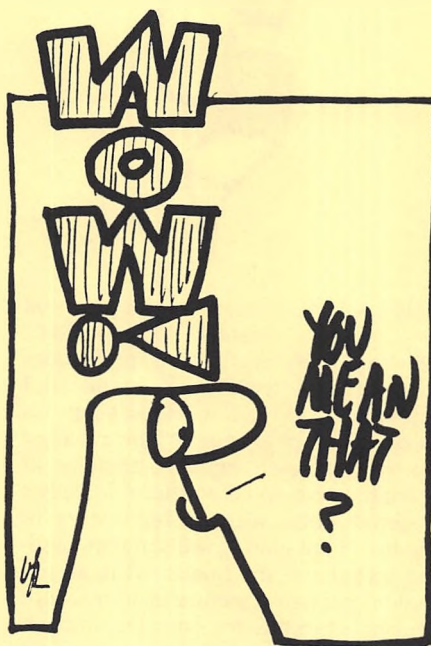
So this time I'm LoCing first, and will read the zine later.

Well, I have to admit that I have read the editorials. Usually I read letter columns first, but this time in view of my faith that the editors would have

interesting things to say, I have postponed that.

Ted, your accounts of your adventures are always enjoyable and often educational. On azaleas, I love them, but if it's possible to grow them here, it takes a greener thumb than even my mother had. Several times, people sent her gorgeous potted ones, from florists, and she set them out. After she died, I took up the scraggly twig that still had some life left in it and gave it to neighbors who have a place further north and inland, where it is possible for them to survive..

Savannah was lush with the things. Years ago, Bonaventure Cemetery, overlooking the Wilmington River, was one of the most beautiful



places on earth when the azaleas were in bloom. It's a very old cemetery, with lots of live oaks dripping moss, and an outlook over the river and marshes. It occupies what were the grounds of a distinguished plantation. (Sorry, I'm too lazy to go in and research the dates and details.) As was customary a century or two ago, the house caught fire. Local lore is that there was a dinner party going on when the fire was discovered, so the master of the house had the servants remove the dining equipment and foodstuffs into the garden, where the party continued while the house withered to embers. Since the area seemed cursed with the kind of insalubrious miasmas that were common in those days, the house was not rebuilt. The grounds became Bonaventure Cemetery.

You'll recall that in times past, before tractor-powered mowers, graves were adorned with ornamental monu-

ments. Bonaventure has a multitude of them, canopied by oaks and surrounded by azaleas. Before Savannah became tourist conscious, the cemetery was neglected just enough to be truly beautiful, especially when the azaleas were in bloom.

How about another equally impossible suggestion as a slight alternative to your Walter J. Daugherty Project? A private postal delivery service that requires its workers to actually do what they're hired to do, and doesn't give its bureaucrats bonuses? That in itself should appreciably reduce the cost of operation. [3290 Sunrise Trail, Port Charlotte, FL 33952]

A fannish postal service? Wotta concept! I can see it now: fans hitchhiking from town to town, distributing fanzines from their backpacks! Yes! Let's do it! — tw

WALT WILLIS I'm overcome with embarrassment over my gaffe in nominating both you and Andy Hooper for TAFF, without telling you. It's obvious I simply forgot having nominated Andy, and thank you both for being so nice about it. The question is how I managed to do that. I know I'm inclined to absent-mindedness these days, but this is an alarming example. The only explanation I can offer is that there was such a lapse of time between the two nominations that I subconsciously assumed they were for two separate TAFF trips. I know that chronologically this doesn't make sense, but we are talking about subconscious assumptions, not genuine decisions. Anyway, I can only offer my sincere apologies. Not for nominating you — I don't see why I shouldn't nominate two people for one election — but for not telling you what I had done.

The whole episode helps to show why I don't intend to be at Glasgow. I am feeling my age these days (75) and MagiCon showed me that I was no longer able to participate properly in a convention, as you must have noticed yourself.

BLAT! 3 is an astonishing phenomenon, 84 pages of concentrated fannish excellence. Not the least of which is your editorial. I share and approve your conclusions about Harlan Ellison, and admire your piece about Catherine. Andy Hooper's fmz reviews were pointed and well considered.

But the pride of place in the issue must go to Mark Kernes' article, for its sheer originality. I can't think of anywhere I could have read an article like this. Quite fascinating.

The letter section shone like a placer gold mine. Bill Donaho's remarks about people who mispronounce

words reminds me of a curious episode from my early life in fandom, when I had a mysterious visit from a seaman who had some contact with fandom and left with me a copy of the original *Fancyyclopedia*, bound with brass screws and containing a distribution list of the publication. At the time I was too ignorant of fandom to appreciate the importance of this, and I don't remember the name he must have given. All I remember about him was his habit of mispronouncing sfal words, as if he was familiar with them in print but had never heard them spoken. He said, for example, galAXY and neBUla.

Egoboo 17 was a sheer joy. The Burbee piece was new to me and deserves inclusion in any Burbee anthology. Roy Tackett's letter reminded me of James White's famous story about Irish Fandom and the Troubles, "The Exorcists of IF," which rich brown once nominated as the best piece of faanfiction ever written. [32 Warren Road, Donaghadee BT21 OPD NORTHERN IRELAND]

CHARLES PLATT Thanks for sending me BLAT! number 3. Much appreciated! Also *Egoboo* 17. What a strange feeling it gave me, turning those fibrous pages. Memories of wrestling with hideous waxy stencils, brushing their detritus from the molded letterforms of the type in my manual typewriter; saving my money to buy a duplicator that had a paper sensor so that if a sheet didn't feed, the ink roller would NOT deposit its filthy cargo all over the stencil. . . . And before that, of course, the joys of "ditto" duplicating, drying the pages in front of an electric heater (to hasten the evaporation of the solvent) so that there wouldn't be too much "show through" in the cheesy British paper that I had to use. . . .

My, how we suffered for fandom! Yet I suppose the current fannish generation will have similar tales to tell. How they wrestled with an underpowered computer that took whole minutes to generate the screen image in their desktop publishing program. . . . How they begged time on a friend's laser printer, and the cheap refilled toner cartridge left dirty streaks down each page. . . .

I assume teenagers are suffering in this way in 1994. I certainly hope so. I wouldn't want to think that the tradition of hardship-driven fan publishing is over.

If there were more fanzines like BLAT!, I might be tempted to return from my state of gafia. (Is that term still being used? It sounds so quaint.) Fortunately there are NOT more fanzines like BLAT! (so far as I can tell), and thus I am able to vegetate here in

peace. [9 Patchin Place, New York, NY 10011]

In 1966, I printed my first fan-like publication — a comic book, actually — on one of the ditto machines located in the teacher's lounge, at my junior high school. I'll never forget the smell that would fill the tiny room whenever we opened up a fresh can of Ditto fluid. Those first "nose hits" were the closest thing we had to drugs, in those days. Woo, I'm getting a headache just thinking about it. — djs

Patchin Review and SF Guide, et al., may have not been quite fanzines, under the strictest definition, but for me they were by far the most lively and interesting of the litcrit/review/semi-prozines published in the eighties — so far beyond, say, Short Form, or the vehicles for Orson Scott Card's lengthy but pointless reviews that

Harris. As you will recall, in the latest issue of his lettersub he talks up getting a grant from the Mexican Leftover Money Fund to get a new copier. Go see Mr. Gibson, Mr. Harris!

With this sort of lead-in, there's every chance that this may well turn into the long awaited (by me, anyway) letter of comment on BLAT! No. 3. Or maybe not. There's something incredibly daunting about trying to do a reasonable LoC on an 84-page fanzine (with its own 25 page supplement). (Well, at least I'd already read Burbee's piece a few hundred times!) This was a Truly Fabulous Issue and deserves more than I'm probably going to give it here.

For instance, Dan, I enjoyed the shit out of your editorial, even the more sad parts about your history with



came and went — and I'm sure they had a subtle influence on BLAT!. If you never quite degafiate in terms of putting out another real fanzine, I'd settle for a successor to SF Guide. (But I'm guessing you burned out on it when you realized how little true influence or effect it had on the actual sf being published, more's the shame. . . .) — tw

ROBERT LICHTMAN After reading in *Ansible* number 84 that William Gibson received an \$850,000 advance for his latest novel, I think Ted might be barking up the wrong tree (in his editorial) in going after convention committees to help finance deserving faneds in pubbing their ish. Unless Gibson has completely abandoned his faanish roots — which I don't believe he has — he probably has more money from just that one advance than all the convention committees put together. (See the ngures in *File 770* No. 103.) I'm going to suggest the same thing to Chuch

Catherine, but nothing leaped out at me demanding my response beyond this except to wish you luck in the upcoming TAFF race.

Maybe Moshe's article would have meant more to me back in 1984, but I found myself curiously disinterested, except for his mention of *Who's Who in Fandom*, which I think would be great if he pursued it. I tend to agree with his assessment that it probably is impossible for casual worldcon attendees to grasp fannishness and get into fanzines from the exposure they received at a weekend event, but I don't think it's hopeless and I believe that worldcon committees have improved on the situation in the decade since he wrote his article. What might help is if worldcon devoted more space in their Fancy Program Book to the history of fandom and fanzines, even going so far as to list a number of currently published fanzines. (But please, dear Ghod, don't list them without giving their cover price, so that long-suffering

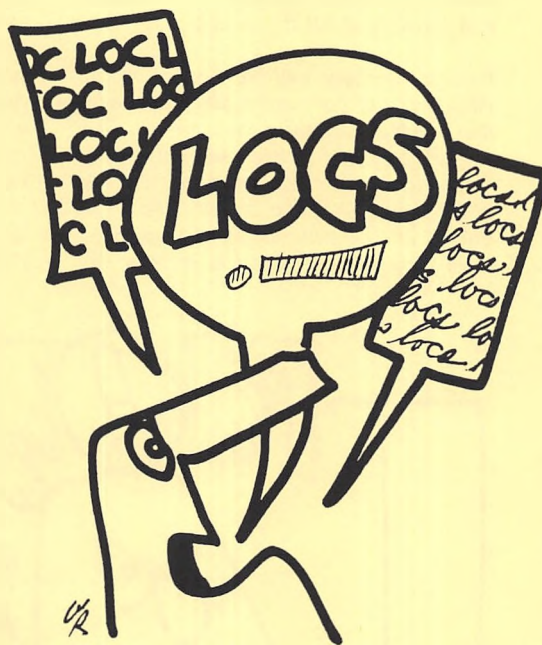
faneds aren't inundated with two-line handwritten notes from people asking for freebies.) As for a fanzine library on CD-ROM, I think that's a good idea — but shudder slightly at the thought of old fanzines having to be unstapled for scanning purposes. I unstapled an issue of *Void* some years back in order to photocopy a Carl Brandon piece for John-Henri Holmberg, who was going to translate it into Swedish and publish it. It made me feel sick as I watched little bits of aged mimeo paper crumble around the staples, despite my being *very* careful removing them. If getting a good CD-ROM image involves unstapling, I suppose it will be worth it for the greater good of preserving the zines in electronic form — but it makes me cringe.

As another fan who's gone through many boxes of old fanzines, most recently those from the collection of Charles Burbee, I can relate to Andy's frustration over those long-gone faneds who failed to sufficiently identify their zines, to place them in time and in context with what was happening around them when they appeared. There were a number of such in Burbee's collection, and it was only through careful research in the Pavlat/Swisher/Evans *Fanzine Index* that I was able to figure them out at all. And that document didn't do a bit of good for anything published after 1952.

Robert, I highly recommend the index of Fapazines that was published by the late Bob Pavlat. I used it extensively during my recent fanzine sort and found it indispensable. (And because of that, I can't find them anywhere — or I'd give you their proper title. Apparently, I sorted the fanzines, but not the reference stuff.) Sure it only covers Fapazines, but it is better than nothing. I have the first five or six volumes, and they definitely reach beyond '52. —djs

Aside from that, I enjoyed Andy's assessment of the fanzines he covered this outing — is he going to review fanzines for you on a regular basis? I hope so — and found that I agreed with him. [No, we're still looking for a permanent reviewer. Greg? — djs] I used to get Chuck Connor's fanzine, found it rather uninteresting, never responded or traded, and of course eventually stopped getting them. But Andy reminded me of one of the small but large reasons I was relieved to get off Connor's mailing list, and that's those gawd-awful envelopes he used to send them in. The local post office is

used to me getting not only a lot of mail, but some pretty strange stuff, but in my opinion the things Chuck Connor put on his mailing envelopes went beyond the bounds of reasonableness — and, not to put too fine a point on it, simply weren't funny. If this were still the '50s and early '60s, when many



active fans were in their teens and lived (as I did) in the homes of their disapproving parents, stuff like Connor put on his mailing envelopes could have resulted in the untimely fafiation of some.

Enjoyed Mark Kernes' article, particularly his thoughts as he approached his movie assignment. Namely, "Could I?" (And secondary consideration: If presented with the same opportunity, "Could I?") Ted's sidebar of observations were interesting. When I visited Bill Rotsler last December, a few weeks before the earthquake, one of the prominent things in his living room was a huge pile of porn tapes near the front door. Bill has been reviewing the things for years, calling them like he sees them, and his assessment of the scene is almost identical to Ted's. As to Ted's comment, "If I had to review these videos, I'd pan most of them. No doubt that wouldn't make me very popular in the porn community." Rotsler reports the opposite, that his reviews are appreciated.

Dan's comment, in the lettercol, to Walt Willis that he didn't send Harlan a copy of BLAT! so that, disappointingly for Walt, there will be no response to your comments on him,

parallels my own experience. I had Harlan on the *Trap Door* mailing list early on, even printing some "rude" remarks about him made by the likes of Dean Grennell and others, with absolutely no response. Unlike some faneds, I never got my zine back with a curt note from his secretary, but after awhile I got the idea and dropped him. I mention him extensively in my latest editorial where I'm fantasizing about the Science Fiction, Fantasy and Fandom Hall of Fame & Museum, but didn't send him that, either. According to Ted, Harlan has his network of spies, and presumably some of them will make sure he sees my remarks. I wonder if he will take them in good humor, as they were meant, or if I'll get an "interesting" phone call from him.

Rich brown had some comments on "Seventh Fandom" and Harlan's involvement in it in a recent issue of his FAPazine, and sent a copy to Harlan, figuring, as he put it, "What have I got to lose?" To everyone's amazement, he got back a pleasant letter of comment from Harlan. Perhaps Harlan is mellowing, and perhaps we should send him BLAT!.

— tw

Unlike Allyn Codogan, I remember her calling the 1986 Corflu from a Third Saturday party. I think I might have briefly spoken with someone during the same call, as the phone was passed around the party.

The most interesting part of the supplement was John's "Not Fade Away (Fandom 1972)," which could have appeared in a more recent fanzine with a little changing of dates and references. It's one of those fannish truisms, I'm afraid, that no matter what era of fanzines one reads, one can always find someone lamenting how it ain't like it used to was. [And they're usually right, dadgumit. — djs]

By way of closing, enclosed is my list of proposed items for *Fanthology '91*. Arnie asked me to work this up during Corflu and last Friday I finally did. Here it is:

Robert's *Fanthology '91* List!

"Two Tales of Decent Friendly Bradford Folk" by Michael Ashley — *Lip* 6

"Mondo Fun: A Speedy A-Z of Mexican IV" by Michael Ashley — *Saliromania* 2

"Sex Never" by Michael Ashley — *Saliromania* 4

"Genealogy: A Convention Report of Sorts" by Linda Blanchard — *Trap Door* 10

"Son of 'Stuff'" by Carol Carr — *Trap Door* 10

"My Life on the LAN" by Lilian Edwards — *This Never Happens* 12

"Extra Innings" by Mike Glycer — *No Award* 1

"Auntie Em! Auntie Em!" by Jeanne Gomoll — *Spent Brass* 3

"Corrugated Confessions" by Jeanne Gomoll — *Science Fiction Five Yearly* 9

"Sisters" by Jeanne Gomoll — *Sisters*

"Mexicon 4, Martin Smith 0" by Rob Hansen — *Pulp* 19

"The Grapes Have Come Home to Roost and the Father's Teeth Are On Edge" by David R. Haugh — *Outworlds* 60

"Love's Heaving Bosom" by Lucy Huntzinger — *Cartouche* 2

"Jay Kinney: Threat or Menace?" by Arnie Katz — *Folly* 7

"Blistering Retort" by Jay Kinney — *Folly* 10

"October Beach" by Eric Mayer — *Groggy* 30

"I Remember Campbell" by Sam Moskowitz — *Outworlds* 61

"A Wobble, A Laugh, A Thought" by Jan Orys — *This Never Happens* 12

"Just Ducky" by Nigel Richardson — *Lip* 6

"Jesus Christ, Neofan" by Dan Steffan — *Science Fiction Five Yearly* 9

"A Tale of Generosity and Fannish Sensibilities" by Geri Sullivan — *Folly* 8

"The Horrors of War and Other Morbid Clichés" by David Thayer — *Mimosa* 11

"Famous Fannish Moments in History" by Don West — *Bob* 1

Just about everything in Don West's *DAISNAID* 7

"The Harp That Once or Twice" by Walt Willis — *Science Fiction Five Yearly* 9
[P.O. Box 30, Glen Ellen, CA 95442]

After typing this list, I pulled out a couple of these articles for a reread. I agree with you that there was some very interesting material published in *Saliromania* and *This Never Happens*. Your list for '91 also includes more stuff from Hazel Ashworth's *Lip*, which makes me even sorer than I was after reading your previous list — I've never seen a copy of this obviously excellent fanzine. I appreciate all the work you've put into compiling these yearly lists and can't help but wonder when some brainiac *Corflu* committee chairman is simply going to ask you to edit one of those damned fanthologies yourself. — djs

SANDY COHEN I found Dan's and Grant's remembrances of Catherine to be extremely moving. I had not known her nearly as well as I wanted to or should have. Indeed, I had not even known she was Grant's ex-wife! I remember numerous get-togethers with Grant at Jerry Jacks' place shortly after the break-up. He was taking it very hard, and I'm afraid (considering his success with ladies)

that I didn't offer adequate consolation for his loss. I now understand why he was in so much pain, and I learned more about him in *BLAT!* than from dozens of (mostly sercon) discussions. Catherine clearly was a special lady, always greeting me (as has Frank) with more warmth and welcome than I deserve. When I called Frank to offer my condolences I could feel his anguish through the phone line. The world just isn't fair.

Seeing a letter from Allyn Codogan also brought back fond memories. I first met her in Vancouver, after the infamous train ride from San Francisco where we were only 6 hours behind schedule before we hit the stolen truck abandoned on the tracks. Because I had been advised (by Jerry) that the con organizers were primarily a group of militant lesbians, I made no advances on Allyn, despite an immediate attraction (which I thought appeared to be mutual, but could have been mere hospitality). In those foolish days of my youth I didn't want to embarrass either Allyn or myself. Since Grant had no such misunderstanding, he asked her out immediately. (See why it was so hard to sympathize with him?) Later I corrected my mistake and also used her as a photo model, at which she was wonderful. After both she and Grant dropped out of touch I kept looking for them at conventions, hoping to see each again. I'm sure the years have been more kind to her than they appear to have been to Grant (with whom I see far too many parallels to my current life to make me comfortable). I always hoped Grant would



continue his artwork, so his gafiation is a double blow.

I should note that that train trip to Vancouver also started me on a life of crime. Due to the delay, we missed our connecting train in Seattle and had to be bussed over the border. Jerry was promoting the San Francisco worldcon bid and had a bag full of

t-shirts to sell in support. In the rush to get the bus, Jerry accidentally tore apart the bag and scooped the shirts into his arms. He also asked me to put a small foil-wrapped packet, which fell from the bag, in my pocket — his hands were full and couldn't pick it up — to carry across to Canada. I thought little of it until we went through customs and an inspector went through the bus questioning people. I sensed imminent arrest but somehow escaped notice. Later I questioned Jerry (who had advised everyone not to try to sneak anything over the border — instructions that I ignored, which made me very popular for the next few days) as to what fearsome drug I was carrying. It was nothing to worry about, he said, it was just his favorite artificial sweetener, which wasn't legally available in Canada. . . . [17347 Sherman Way, Van Nuys, CA 91406]

That Vancouver convention — the 1977 Westercon, I believe — was my second West Coast con and also the first time you and I met and partied. As I recall, you were heavily committed to the tight-fitting jumpsuit as a fashion statement, while I preferred jeans and t-shirts. When I saw you last year I was pleased to see that you had evolved into a nice suit. I, on the other hand, am still wearing jeans and t-shirts — only now they're several sizes larger. *sigh*

After that con, Jerry managed to get me a free seat on the return flight to San Francisco, where I spent a couple great weeks freeloading off of him and Grant. I was travelling around the country that summer with an art portfolio and a backpack and never anticipated the problems they would present while going through customs. I had gone into Canada by car and customs didn't even speak to me, but because of Jerry's generous offer, I found myself standing in the middle of the Vancouver International Airport waiting to be searched.

Apparently, because of my long hair and general hippiness, I fit the profile of a young smuggler to a tee.

I was asked to step out of line and was ushered to a side area for "inspection." I wasn't too worried, I wasn't holding. I figured that they would have taken me to a private room of some kind, if they really suspected me of anything. (Soon,

however, I definitely wished they had taken me to a little room.) As we stood by the boarding area, the Customs agents asked me questions and looked through my pack and portfolio. They asked their questions by rote and barely seemed to hear my answers, being much too caught up in the joys of exploring my backpack full of dirty clothes. Standing helplessly to one side, as

everyone boarding the plane shuffled past, I watched the agents unpack each and every pair of underpants I owned (all dirty), pausing only to wave them in the air — just in case some contraband might be hidden among the shit stains. They found nothing. They were obviously disappointed and walked away without a word, leaving me to hastily pick up my clothes and board the plane (which, I was told by the ticket taker, wasn't going to wait much longer for me). Boy, those were the good old days. — djs

BILL DONAHO The effect that Catherine Jackson had on the people in her life comes through very clearly in Dan's and Grant's pieces, but I'm left with a very confused picture of her. And this is natural since they were talking about Catherine's effect on them, not trying to present a picture of Catherine herself. And actually my impression of her from Grant's account was somewhat negative. I never met her nor indeed never even heard of her before BLAT! 3, so I've no experience of her. I am reminded of my experience of *The Forsyte Saga*. When I read the books I wondered why anyone put up with Fleur for a moment. But when I saw Susan Hampshire as Fleur in the BBC production — which was completely faithful to the books — I didn't even think she did anything untoward. Catherine obviously had a lot of charm. And she will be missed. I'm sorry I never met her.

Mark Kernes' "My Life as a Porn Star" was interesting and amusing. But if he looks like the illos of him, how did he get the roles? I would as soon expect to see Dan or me in a porn film. In days of yore I understand it was the policy to have the male porn roles played by guys of average — and even below average — looks, just to give the customers the idea "If that guy can do it I sure can." But I read someplace that nowadays the males were just as good looking as the females. And I've only seen a couple or so in the past ten years and it was true of the ones I saw. [626 58th Street, Oakland, CA 94609]

The vast majority of the porn films (tapes) I've seen in recent years have featured men

with at least average "good" looks, well-developed bodies, and organs of near-donkey proportions. As a man of more "average" dimensions, I take no pleasure in watching these studs demonstrate their oversized prowess — a constant reminder that I am not in their herculean league. I for one would welcome more ordinary men in my porn. — tw

Mark does indeed resemble Craig Smith's portrait, which is part of the reason he was

chosen to appear in the film. It was a kind of backlash against the perfect bodies you describe above. Mark's director was tired of the porn boys and went looking for a -er- porn guy, instead.

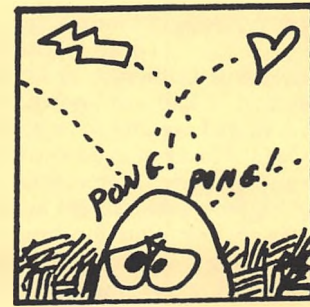
As for Catherine, she will definitely be played by Susan Sarandon, in the film of my life story. Besides looking like her, she seems to have a lot of her spunk and charisma, too. (I've been in love with Susan Hampshire for years — ever since I saw her in *The Pallisers*, on PBS.) — djs

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: Chuck Harris; Ray Nelson; Gregg Calkins;

"Golly, wow, gee whiz, o boy o boy o boy, as I used to say back when I was a young tad and still do upon suitable occasion, the most recent being the arrival of BLAT! and the BLAT! Archives. God but were those mimeographed twiltone pages wonderful, and not in the least the dubious pleasure of finding a letter from my once-and-future self heading the letter column, written in a style I hope I have surmounted but probably will not be able to prove with this letter. No matter; the youngfan still lives within me, little changed by the odyssey. And what a fine typeface that was, for that matter . . . it is to regret that this letter will be printed on a laser printer on plain, white paper."; **Ron Salomon; Grania Davis; Steve Green; Kate Yule:** "BLAT! 3 was keen, *Egoboo* was keen — but will we ever know what the hell the ritual of Moomba is?"; **Catherine Mintz; Bruce Gillespie; Jim Barker; Andi Shechter:** "We here at the Society for the Improvement of Conditions for People with Impossible Last Names sympathize with the plight of hardworking faneds who are trying to decipher handwriting. On snagging Stu's copy of BLAT! number three, I spotted Robert Lichtman's LoC stating in part 'I hope Stu doesn't kill y'all for typing Andi Schechter's name so badly.' You gotta understand, though, what made me snort. See, Robert, dear, sweet Robert — that's not the correct spelling either. I am doomed, do you hear me, doomed. . . ."; **Paul di Fillipo; Lucy Huntzinger; Ned Brooks; Taral:** "I enjoyed Moshe's piece — I had actually forgotten most of that experience lecturing on fanart at Noreascon. Haven't forgotten the Astral League test, though — flashing red underwear at the

crowd while doing it!"; **Greg Pickersgill; Sid Birchby; Sheryl Birkhead:** "Steve Stiles always does a nice job — too bad he has to put his time and talents into such mundane things as making a living. His work is not seen often enough these days and I hope your readership realizes what a treat it is to see his work in BLAT!'s pages."; **Terry Garey; Andy Hooper; Ethel Lindsay:** "I was interested in the mention of the history of fanzines and how its origin is being lost. This year at the Mystery Convention a group of people were touting mystery fanzines; they appeared on a panel to describe their aims and to me they were talking about a semi-professional magazine with the desire to become totally professional. They had previous experience in producing a football fanzine! When I first encountered young male fans all those years ago in Glasgow my main delight in them was because they *did not* talk endlessly about football. What goes round comes around. . . ."; **Vijay Bowen; Brian Earl Brown; Tom Sadler; Murray Moore; Dave Langford:** "BLAT! really does reduce me to stunned, envious silence. . . ."; **Martin Tudor; Art Widner; Teddy Harvia:** "I hadn't realized the similarities between Joe Maraglino and the editors of *Fosfax* until your comments. Not publishing the addresses of LoCers is a pretentious attempt at equality with pro magazines and displays a fear of off-line communication between readers beyond the editor's control."; **Steve Stiles; Frank Lunney; Tom Foster; Tracy Benton; Irwin Hirsh** and a collect phone call from somebody named **Zbigniew Shyneekhar** who insisted that he had proof that *The Dead Sea Scrolls* were really just a Lovecraft fanzine. We refused the charges.

NEXT ISSUE: The Great Cornholio's Quest!



SUPPLY AND DEMAND (ZINE-O-PHOBIA) BLAT!'s popularity has been really gratifying. While it was always our intention to produce an admirable fanzine, we were somewhat unprepared for the vigor of some of your responses. "Best fanzine being published today" was our set goal, to be sure — but I don't think we actually thought anybody else would actually agree with us. Except maybe our wives. But I guess we were wrong. . . .

Inside of fandom, we have been pleased to see some long lost names — like when was the last time you saw a letter from Marlin Frenzel in a fanzine? — requesting copies of our fanzine, on the recommendation of other readers. Even more gratifying has been the unsolicited reminders that BLAT! will be eligible for Hugo balloting after this issue appears. It's like they just can't wait to vote for us. More perplexing, however, are the reactions of those who have expressed total intimidation at the suggestion that they write something for us. "How can I measure up to BLAT!?" they say, refusing to listen to our objections. Not even our sincere reply, "we wouldn't have asked you if we thought you sucked," can dissuade them. Fanac is such a two edged sword sometimes.

Outside of fandom, the response has been of a different kind, though no less enthusiastic in its own way. Take for instance the reviews we have received in the pages of *Factsheet Five*, the bible of the world of Zine publishing.

Our second issue was given an "Editor's Choice" review in *Factsheet Five* number 51, their top recommendation. In that review they called BLAT! "the archetypal sfzine. You can measure all others against it, measure how they rate in their BLAT!ness" adding "this issue of BLAT! would make the best explanation of sfzine fandom anyone could offer."

As a result of that review, we received more than thirty requests for copies, some of which actually bothered to include a buck or two for postage — the *F5* reviewers had neglected to mention our \$3 cover price.

We sent out copies to everyone who requested one, whether they sent cash or not. After all, we ain't in this for the money. When supplies of BLAT! 2 ran out we started sending out copies of our third issue to those who continued requesting copies — though we did up the asking price to ten bucks a copy, to help cover costs. After all, we aren't made of money, either.

Occasionally someone would request back issues, and we'd send them along, if we had them.

Before long we had just about run out of copies of number 3, as well — even though there was still the occasional request. We even went back to the Big Machine once to produce — with great difficulty — a

few extras of the third issue to keep up with demand. But we had a problem. The issue's supplement, *Egoboo* 17, had been mimeographed in a finite edition of about 300 and when they were gone, that would be the end of it. Before long they were gone too.

Then *Factsheet Five* published another rave review for BLAT!, the Wonder Fanzine, in their 53rd issue. Their review repeated some of the praise from the previous recommendation and described the contents of BLAT! 3 enthusiastically and glowingly. (Is reviewer Jarod Pore a relative of mine or something?) The

**BULLSHIT
ARTIST**

DANOTATIONS



review concludes with the suggestion that "if you're interested in sfandom as a phenomenon, BLAT! is *the* zine to get."

Since that review appeared at the beginning of November the requests have been pouring in again — though our hefty pricetag (thanks for mentioning it this time, Jerod) has slowed them down a bit. Of course, the problem is that we have no more copies of our back issues to send out to curious zinesters, and all the requests we have received to date from the second *Factsheet Five* review are being fulfilled with copies of this very issue here. In fact, we are printing 50 more copies of this issue in hope that we can satisfy the requests.

Of course, while it is gratifying to be in such demand, the down side of all this so-called success is the complete lack of response from the Zinesters. Out of all the copies of the last two issues of BLAT! we've sent them, we have received only two replies of any kind. We have sent our chubby little fmz out into the playground to make friends with the other kids, but, alas, they have chosen to ignore him. Their silence has confused our little Snookums and made my co-editor cry. Have they no manners? Apparently not.

As a consequence of this behavior I have decided to take action and address this note to you, the faceless Zine-gobbling masses.

Science fiction fandom has been producing fanzines since you were in diapers — hell, probably since your Daddy was in diapers. Through a long process of trial and error, we have worked out the best and most practical means of producing and consuming fanzines. Sf fandom is a community — diverse and

fractured, to be sure, but a community nonetheless — and becoming part of the community is what makes it all work — it is the Big Secret. There is no dues, no oaths of allegiance, no secret handshake. The key to membership in this elitist sanctuary is simple and direct: Communication.

There is more to publishing a successful fanzine than the act and art of fanzine production. That's just the beginning; the first half of the equation. You have to respond to what you've just read. Forget everything you've learned before now. Fanzine fandom is not a passive activity — being a fanzine fan doesn't stop after you've paid your money and read the fanzine. This is why we prefer to trade for fanzines, instead of selling them. After you've participated for a while; after you've written letters of comment; after you've started trading with other publishers; you'll never have to pay for a fanzine again. Soon you'll know who is being talked about and what their motivations are. Soon you won't be a faceless consumer — you'll be part of club. You'll be in on the Big Secret.

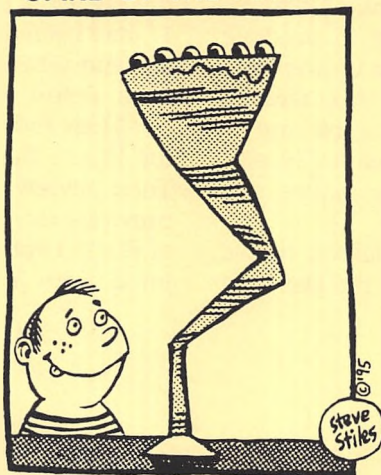
So if you are reading BLAT!, or any sf fanzine for that matter, for the first time be sure to give yourself a chance to absorb all of this information. If any of it speaks to you, write us a letter. If it doesn't, then just drop us a postcard of acknowledgement. Let us know you exist and maybe we'll send you another copy for free next time. But it is really up to you. Look at the other zines you've gotten from reviews in *Factsheet Five* and compare them with BLAT!. How does their layout and artwork look? Are the articles intelligently written or are they really just a waste of time and paper. Do the editor and contributors have anything to say? How do they measure up in their BLAT!ness?

The rest is up to you.

THE RACING FORM By the time you read this the 1995 TAFF race will be at least two months old. There are three candidates this year: Samanda b Jeude, Joe Wesson, and yerz truly. The winner of this year's contest will be shuttled to the United Kingdom to attend Intersection, the Scottish worldcon, and otherwise be the guest of generous Britfans. Winning TAFF is a privilege. And a hell of a lot of work. And responsibility. And time. And I should have my head examined. . . .

Unfortunately, it's too late to be getting cold feet (that's my wife's job). There's no backing out now. I mailed in my official paperwork and money has changed hands. It's time for me to sit up straight and Be A Man — a TAFFman, in fact. No more whining. Now all I have to do is smile and nod my head and say things like, "Mmmm, I just love Haggis" and "You publish my favorite fanzine, Chuck" and the 'er popular, "No, he's really a nice guy once you get to know him."

CAKE OF THE FUTURE



This has given me plenty of spare time to analyze and dissect some of TAFF's quirks and problems. Because of this I have been able to better focus on the Fund's ills, both real and imagined.

Unlike some of the discussions about TAFF's future in various other fanzines — like *RJC*, *Apparatchik*, and *Attitude* — I have come to the conclusion that the concepts behind the TransAtlantic Fan Fund are still valid in, and applicable to, modern fandom. I believe that TAFF can still serve fandom in a positive way, without a significant overhaul or re-vamping. Sure, the Fund could benefit from some modernization, but

those changes are primarily superficial.

I think there are several good suggestions floating around that could enhance TAFF's future, without changing things around too radically. It seems to me that we should try some of them out before we write TAFF off as some kind of dinosaur. There really is nothing to be gained by predicting TAFF's demise. Killing the Fund would only contribute further to the rift that is growing between fanzine fandom and all those other heathen fandoms. (Especially now that One Of Them is a TAFF candidate.) It would be a lot like shooting yourself in the foot. We have to remember that our fandom isn't the big kid on the block anymore — we are the minority. Science fiction may no longer be a ghetto, but fanzine fandom sure the hell is.

Most of the suggestions I would like to propose for discussion are bureaucratic in nature, like raising the voting fee to \$5.00, which should help the Fund support itself in the future. Other innovations include minor alterations in the nominating procedure, like flopping the number of nominators required, to the benefit of the host country. Or the creation of a TAFF Board of Directors to debate topics like offering candidates the option of attending a Corflu, instead of a worldcon.

Changes like these could help TAFF sustain itself. They should also benefit the TAFF delegates, by allowing them a forum where they can personalize their TAFF trip — making TAFF's structure less rigid would probably enhance the winner's trip a great deal. After all, not everyone's idea of a great convention is a worldcon. A fun trip would result in a happy TAFF delegate. And who knows what might result from a happy TAFF delegate? Maybe even a Trip Report! (Let's not get carried away.)

At the very least it would make TAFF seem a lot more attractive to potential candidates — which would solve another of TAFF's problems: Bad Public Relations. Lately it seems to me that TAFF has gotten a bad reputation. All the talk about a dearth of candidates — or as Andy Hooper put it, "the fact that there is apparently no fan in North America that anyone in

British fandom would like to meet" — leads me to believe that TAFF somehow has become a burden on fandom. An Onus.

Has TAFF become fandom's mutant sibling? Are we banishing it to the tower because we don't want the responsibility of taking care of it — while simultaneously defending it from all comers? Has TAFF become The Fanfund In The Iron Mask?

Or maybe it's just us.

It occurs to me, as I've been rereading some of the fanzine commentary about TAFF, that a lot of us have become terribly paranoid and cynical in our fannish old age. If someone isn't proclaiming TAFF's redundancy, they are worrying about the Fund's pollution by outsiders. Others are convinced that TAFF has become obsolete because the world we live in has lost its innocence. Ever since the TAFF Wars happened in the mid-80s fandom has kept a weary eye on the Fund; convinced that corruption is lurking just beneath its surface. It doesn't matter if there was ever any proof of misconduct. It only matters that there *could* be.

We're living in a world where everything and everyone is suspect. You're a fool to trust the government. The Police are *not* on your side. You're no longer safe in your own living room. Your friends are not *really* your friends. The food you eat is gonna kill you. The ozone layer. The economy. Immigrants.

Hell, when you take all of that into account, how could TAFF be anything but an anachronism? *There's No Such Thing As A Free Lunch*, dammit. Anyone who wants to run TAFF must be suspect. Maybe we should start requesting financial statements along with the nominating platforms?

Or maybe we should stop for a minute and recognize how lucky most of us are to be involved in fandom. If you doubt this, just look around you. How many of your mundane friends lead dull and routine lives? How many of your mundane friends even *read*, for chris'sake? Maybe TAFF is an anachronism — maybe fandom is an anachronism, but that doesn't make it any less valid a hobby than, say, *golf*. (Now there is a *serious* waste of time and resources, if I ever heard of one.) The only real difference is that they have special shoes and we don't.

But when you come right down to it, none of that really matters. The only question we really need to address is this: Is TAFF a positive and worthwhile endeavor? If the answer is yes — and I believe it is — then we all should do as much as we can to keep it going. We should do what needs to be done to update the workings of the Fund and make it more relevant to fandom as it faces the millennium. There is nothing constructive to be gained from looking at TAFF's past, shaking our heads, and saying, "Things weren't like this in the old days." Shit,

is *anything* like it was in the old days? Hell no.

To encourage more debate about TAFF, I will soon begin publishing a fanzine to support my candidacy, and TAFF in general. I had hoped to get the first issue out before now, but the BLAT! monster has taken up most of my fanning time of late. Nonetheless, I expect to publish my first issue sometime during January 1995 and continue on a monthly schedule until the race ends.

BLAT! just isn't the right forum for these discussions — coming out, as it does, only twice a year — but I encourage you to respond to the ideas I've proposed here. I will transfer your responses to this new, as yet unnamed, fanzine for debate, or whatever.

The 1995 TAFF race continues until April 29, 1995, which leaves us quite a bit of time to discuss the Fund. It also leaves all of you plenty of time to vote in this year's contest. Your vote is the only thing that will disprove fandom's apathy towards TAFF. Ballots are being distributed with this issue of BLAT! and many other fanzines. This year, instead of ignoring your ballot — it's easy to do; I'm as guilty as the next guy — fill the damned thing out and send it in.

Vote early! Vote often! Vote-eo-dough!

TAFF TIDBITS The encouragement my TAFF candidacy has garnered has been quite rewarding, and just a little embarrassing. The enthusiasm I've witnessed has been unprecedented in my experience and has led me to question my qualifications. But one quick glance at my enormous throbbing ego has put an end to that foolishness. Those of you who questioned my sanity can rest easy — I promise to stockpile plenty of Prozac and Ritalin for the trip.

Thanks to those of you who have offered Lynn and me the opportunity to sleep over during our visit. We would be happy to consider all of your generous offers just as soon as we receive photographs of our proposed lodgings, menus and, of course, a swatch of material from the drapes — so we don't end up staying someplace that will clash with Lynn's hair.

Thanks to Ethel Lindsay for confirming that TAFF "was certainly meant for impecunious fans and also for someone the host country would wish to meet," and sent me scurrying to the dictionary to look up "impecunious." Thanks to Chuch Harris, whose letter included a dinner invitation and an inquiry about my bedtime: "I assume you will be able to stay awake for dinner or do you just retire at 7:30 pm with a glass of warm milk and a cookie?" To which the answer is: Warm milk is indeed my preference — though I understand that coffee makes an excellent enema too.

Smartass Sandy Cohen was "delighted to hear you are running for TAFF, and I'm sure you'll be able to insult and outrage an entire new continent without missing



a beat. I'm assuming, of course, that they won't let you back in once you've left our shores."

Lee Hoffman was glad to hear that Andy Hooper and I had sorted everything out TAFFwise, because "how the devil was I supposed to decide between you two?" Andy's decision to drop out of the race allowed Lee to support my candidacy while providing her with one last glorious opportunity to keep me humble. "Dan does Lil Peepul better'n I do. And he did provide me with a decade of editorial material for *SPFY* by letting the Peripatetic Black Hole swallow most of the 1981 issue. (The other possibility is, of course, that it was routed through the Chicago Post Office and will be delivered Real Soon Now.)"

sigh

However, what Leeh doesn't know is that I have hired a private investigator, by the name of Paul Drake, to finally track down those missing fanzines, once and for all. His most recent report showed a lot of promise, and included direct testimony from an unnamed bus driver who claimed to have seen the zines in a storage room somewhere in the midwest — right next to a couple of aging suitcases from Ireland.

Janice Eisen echoed Leeh's sentiments. "I'm glad that Dan and Andy kissed and made up" — no, dammit, photos are *not* available — "that could have been a fanfeud of legendary proportions." (And pants size!)

Thanks are also due to Dave Langford for his single-minded support in the pages of *Ansible*. I'm not entirely sure how I will be able to repay his generosity — though a new logo should be debuting in *Ansible* Real Soon Now. The cash payments will have to wait until next year.

Other supporters like Bill Donaho and the previously mentioned Andy Hooper have proven themselves loyal supporters of my TAFF candidacy, and promise to continue doing so until I send them the antidote.

Some kind of prize has to go to Martin Tudor, who devoted the entire editorial in *Empties* 14 to me and my candidacy. And if that wasn't enough, he apparently produced and sold "Steffan for TAFF" buttons at the recent Novacon. I was flabbergasted. On the other hand, his *Critical Wave* partner, Steve Green, handed out the latest issue of his fanzine *Gaijin* that same weekend without ever mentioning me — even though he published one of the longest pieces of fanwriting I've ever produced in that same issue.

Oh well, at least he's in good company. Greg Pickersgill did the same thing in the most recent issue of *Rastus Johnson's Cakewalk* — and he's one of my nominators.

Well, I'm sure they were just trying to keep me from getting a swelled head — my beanie fits much better this way. Probably they just know me too well;

like the lovely Ms. Jeanne Gomoll, who concluded a recent letter with her good wishes and a clever observation: "I admired your frankly enthusiastic bid for TAFF, Dan, and note with appreciation the significant omission of a trip report promise."

Whoops! I think I hear my mother calling me. Remember to Vote.

A FRANK DISCUSSION ABOUT THE BLAT! ARCHIVES

In our second issue we published a reprint edition of Ted's one-shot fanzine, *Spung*. Republishing old fanzines was an interesting idea made easy by the availability of a good copy machine. With that in mind, we expanded our concept to include the publication of other great undistributed and *unpublished* fanzines. What a cool idea. Surely there must be many tired, old fans with unpublished fanzines hidden in their desk drawers.

One quick look in Ted's basement proved that we were on to something here. A search of the premises turned up the stencils for last issue's *Egoboo* 17, as well as most of the contents of the next genzine issue of Ted's *Gambit*. A look through my files turned up some of the contents of my 70s fanzine, *Lizard Inn*. Then we started asking our friends about *their* fanzines: Terry Hughes had the printed, but undistributed, final issue of *Mota* floating around and Frank Lunney had the contents of the fifth issue of his fanzine, *Syndrome* hiding in a box. We were *definitely* on to something here.

Last issue's artifact, *Egoboo* 17, was very well received and many people have encouraged us. We hope to continue publishing and distributing old fanzines for as long as we can afford it — after all, it is a bit like publishing two fanzines — or until we run out of things to offer our readers. This issue's BLAT! Archives presents the publication of Frank Lunney's final issue of *Syndrome*, originally intended for publication in 1976. Next issue we hope to have that last *Mota* for you, and then, after that, maybe *Gambit* — unless we turn up some unpublished issues of *Oopsla!* or *Light-house* or maybe *Tappen*.

So, if you happen to have spent the last ten or twenty years sitting on your own little fanzine nestegg, thinking, like Frank Lunney did, "I'm gonna pub my ish Real Soon Now," I suggest you contact us here at the BLAT! Building and we will arrange to pick up those crumbling stencils and yellowing manuscripts before they are lost to the ages. We will then publish them for you as part of the massive and sprawling BLAT! Fanzine Empire — *at absolutely no monetary expense to you*. (The emotional and psychic expenses are your problem. BLAT! accepts no blame or responsibility for any damage that publication of these items may have on your peace of mind and bladder control.)



Remembering the 60s, they say, means that you weren't there. So here's a little history lesson for all of you who weren't there, those of you who were there and don't remember, and for those of you who do remember, but wish they didn't — or, as we like to call it here at BLAT!, *Context*. . . .

Frank Lunney found his way into fandom during the mid-Sixties and became well known as the publisher and editor of *BeABohema*, a controversial science fiction fanzine modeled after *The WSFA Journal* and *Science Fiction Review*. Taking a feather from Richard Geis' cap, Lunney filled his fanzine with opinionated and volatile writers — like Piers Anthony, Leo P. Kelley, Ted White, Perry A. Chapdelaine, Dean R. Koontz, Robert Moore Williams and a couple pseudonymous rabble-rousers known as "Faith Lincoln" and "Paul Hazlett" — who did their best to turn it into one of fandom's most notorious fanzines.

The results were explosive and generated a huge response from the readers. Within just a couple of issues, *BeABohema* went from being a slim neozine (*BAB* number 1 was only 18 pages) to being a fat genzine — with a page count in excess of 100 pages. This was due primarily to the aptly named letter column, "Cum Bloatus," which had quickly swollen to near-epic proportion.

BeABohema's first Annish (number 5, published in August 1969) weighed in at 101 pages — 40 of which were letters of comment. The rest of the contents included articles and columns from Piers Anthony, Ron Smith, Dean R. Koontz, Joe Hensley, Leo P. Kelley, Gary Hubbard (the first appearance of "The Cracked Eye"), and others — including (gak!) fiction from Janet Fox.

Fortunately, the fanzine's truly controversial personality had yet to make itself known and the issue's contributions are amazingly diverse. Piers Anthony writes a lengthy article about his love of indexing, which (incredibly) turns into a bunch of fanzine reviews at the end. Dean Koontz writes disgustedly about Hollywood's discovery of the earning potential of sf films like *Planet of the Apes*. And Leo Kelley put forth the concept that being an sf writer is probably one of the few careers where being schizophrenic isn't necessarily a handicap. The lettercol was full of comments about Piers Anthony's previous column and reviews written by "Faith Lincoln." Many readers thought that Anthony was whining too much and that "Lincoln" had been too tough on the books she reviewed. (This toughness led to unpleasant exchanges with authors like Phil Dick — who apparently threatened a law suit — that forced Frank to admit that she was actually a hoax, which effectively ended her career as a fearless reviewer.) Added to that were 12

pages of book reviews that pretty much set the standard for, at least, the *next* five issues.

For example: *BeABohema* number 6 (October 1969) was a 112 page issue that featured articles and columns by "Hazlett," Anthony, Gary Hubbard, Dean R. Koontz, Leo P. Kelly, Al Snider, and reviews from Ted Pauls and Hank Davis. Another 40-page lettercolumn included appearances from Lin Carter, Michael Moorcock, James Blish, Anthony and Koontz, Harry Warner Jr., and our own Ted White, among others. But this time the tone of the letters had changed. The participants all seemed to be on edge about something or *someone*, making this issue's lettercolumn the first in a long line of contentious letterhacking. Lin Carter was pissed at Piers, Blish was pissed at Ted Pauls, Moorcock was pissed at one of Hank Davis' reviews, Our Ted was pissed with Piers and Robert Moore Williams, Piers was pissed with Lin Carter, Koontz was pissed with Piers and Robert Moore Williams, etcetera.

The next several issues continued in this vein, firmly establishing *BeABohema* as fandom's premier battleground for cranky pros. "Hazlett" attacked Harlan Ellison and the SFWA — generating two lengthy articles of reply from Ted White. John J. Pierce went after Justin St. John. Perry Chapdelaine righteously defended John W. Campbell against all attackers.

Everybody seemed to have gotten up on the wrong side of bed. And the letters of comment were no exception; following the pros' lead they became increasingly pissy. The readers' malaise fed the writers' dissatisfaction, and vice versa.

Reading one of these early issues of *BeABohema* was an emotional roller coaster — like eavesdropping on a psychiatric group session, where most of the participants just happen to be struggling sf writers. They were all proud, angry, paranoid, egotistical, territorial, and just a little bit fragile — a parade of neurosis. At first it was all very entertaining, in a voyeuristic way, but it soon started to take its toll on *BAB*'s readers. Exposure to so much intense irritability started to cause a backlash. But not before *BeABohema* was nominated for the fanzine Hugo in 1970.

By the time Lunney published his second Annish (number 10, August 1970) *BeABohema* was showing signs of a breakdown. The page count was half its normal size and the contributions seemed listless and weary. Only the letters showed any signs of life. Nevertheless, Frank's audience was obviously getting tired of all the arguing and name-calling. Mike Glicksohn's letter of comment seemed to speak for the readership: "While I certainly cannot deny that *BAB* is a most interesting fanzine, there is something about it that is almost depressing. To see so many people



whom one has respected attacking each other so often and so violently with such mutually contradictory statements sure takes the fun out of fandom."

Apparently Frank agreed and began making changes in his fanzine's personality. In his eleventh issue — produced just a couple of weeks after the tenth — Frank began his editorial with the words, "This issue of *BeABohema* will undoubtedly look a little different from past issues. And hopefully it won't look at all like the last issue, which has to rank as the all-time worst *BAB* I've ever put out." That issue, according to the editorial, drew only two letters of comment, both negative.

But the real catalyst for change came in the form of other fanzines, fannish fanzines, that Frank began getting in trade for *BAB*. After the arrival of fanzines like Jay Kinney's *Nope*, Greg Shaw's *Metanoia*, *Focal Point*, and *Egoboo*, Lunney's fanzine would never be the same.

This meant, among other things, the end of the giant issues with giant lettercolumns. From that point on, *BeABohema* never made it over 40 pages in length. The next change was one of editorial personality: for the first time Frank began to express himself at length. Prior to this time his editorials were usually limited to comments about the fanzine's contents.

The stable of writers changed too. Most of the high profile arguers, like Koontz and Williams, were pushed out to make room for more fannish writers, like Greg Benford, Greg Shaw and Terry Carr. Only Piers Anthony, and one other writer, remained from the original *BAB* hardcore.

That "other writer" to survive *BeABohema*'s big changes was Gary Hubbard. He and Lunney had met each other as a participants in a mid-Sixties round-robin letter, which then led to Hubbard's first published fan writing, in *BeABohema* number one. Hubbard wrote regularly for *BAB* for its entire run, but it wasn't until Frank decided to publish excerpts from Gary's letters that he really found his true voice. Dubbed "The Cracked Eye," Hubbard's writing now took on a more personal tone and exposed fandom, for the first time, to Gary's hilarious outlook on the world. "The Cracked Eye" became one of *BAB*'s most popular features, especially after Frank paired Hubbard's writing with the cartoon illustrations of New Orleans artist, Dany Frolich. "The Cracked Eye" survived its adolescence in *BeABohema* and later appeared in the pages of *Mota*, *Boonfark*, *Raffles* and others. In the 90s, Hubbard's "Eye" can be found in issues of Robert Lichtman's *Trap Door*.

After publishing his 20th issue at the end of 1971, Lunney decided to fold *BeABohema*. Despite the fanzine's many changes, much of the readership still chose to remember *BAB* for its youthful

excesses and couldn't accept the more fannish material that had dominated the latter half of the fanzine's life. They seemed unable to reconcile the writing about rock and roll, the "Entropy Reprints," or the graphic experiments — like the brilliant final issue that was illustrated entirely by Richard Flinchbaugh — with their leftover expectation that Piers Anthony was going to fly off the handle *Real Soon Now*.

Frank Lunney's next fanzine, *Syndrome*, didn't have to worry about all that excess baggage. The last vestiges of the old *BAB* — Piers Anthony and the review column — were discarded in favor of material that was distinctly fannish and eccentric. From the beginning, it was clear that *Syndrome* was a fanzine that was as interested in humor and rock and roll and the counter-culture as it was interested in science fiction — probably more.

Even though Frank had become, by this time, firmly aligned with the New York fanzine fans known as The Brooklyn Insurgents, the contents of *Syndrome* remained idiosyncratic. In the first issue, published in early 1972, Frank used Gary Hubbard's "The Cracked Eye" as his core attraction and surrounded it with articles by Calvin Demmon, Justin St. John, and a wild fugitive from the rock ghetto named Richard Meltzer. This was definitely a fanzine of another color.

Syndrome was much closer to Frank's ideal fanzine. The rabid, adolescent contrariness that had characterized *BeABohema* was gone — though many old readers found it hard to appreciate Meltzer's gonzo ravings — replaced, for the most part, with Frank's own brand of smart-ass humor. It featured a much more sophisticated personality — the tone of voice was no longer that of a teenaged high school student. Despite that, *Syndrome* didn't really get its bearings until the second issue was published, in the final days of 1972.

By that second issue, Jay Kinney's influence on Frank's fanac had become more obvious. Frank was the perfect sounding board for Jay's twisted dadaist ideas and together they presented fandom with several new forms of fannish humor. Kinney's infamous "oh-oh, Dry Scalp!" cover on that issue was such an innovation that it left some readers completely dumbfounded, while others (like myself) were rolling in the aisles.

The next issue's lettercol recorded the audience's lack of comprehension. Tim Marion wrote that he enjoyed many parts of the issue, but "Jay Kinney's cover was not one of them. The lettering at the top is nice, and so is the idea of having red on white offset for a cover. But 'oh-oh, Dry Scalp!' — is that supposed to be hilariously funny?" Bruce D. Arthur's response was a bit more creative than Marion's, but betrayed no more understanding. Nevertheless, his comment, "Oh-oh, bad cover!," can still raise a guffaw even today.



That cover wasn't the only Kinney contribution worthy of attention in the second issue. He was also trying to cause trouble in the lettercolumn, where his surreal, prose-style letter of comment attempted to subvert the very nature of such responses. Fortunately, his attempt to corrupt was so subtle that most readers passed it right by without realizing its true significance. Nevertheless, Jay continued his attempts to fracture fannish tradition until the fanzine's demise, much to the delight of the Fanboy Elite.

The issue's contents included another fine installment of Hubbard's "The Cracked Eye" and the first (and only) appearance of a column by Bill Kunkel. This column — contrasting Bill's interest in fandom with his career as a rock musician — is an excellent example of the clever language (and cultural references) that made Kunkel one of the most interesting, and overlooked, fanwriters of the Seventies. A uselessly out-of-date fanzine review column by Jerry Lapidus, and a very serious article about the middle eastern mysticism of Sufism by Alexei Panshin, rounded off the issue and left the readers with the realization that there was more to this fanzine than surreal humor and dope jokes. *Syndrome* was becoming a fanzine full of new ideas and a great deal of potential.

Unfortunately, whatever momentum had been gained was lost when it took Frank another whole year to publish *Syndrome* number 3. He was in his senior year at Lehigh University and fanzine publishing had slipped way down his list of priorities. But attending Torcon, the 1973 worldcon in Toronto, got his fannish juices flowing long enough to actually pub his ish during the 1973 Christmas holiday.

Kinney's Spam cover started the issue off on a typically bizarre note. There was no telling what you might find in a fanzine that featured flying meat on its cover. (At this time, few American fans knew who Monty Python was — most of us had just discovered them at Torcon, where we saw their film, *And Now For Something Completely Different*, for the first time.) But then, Frank always did like to keep his readers guessing.

The lead article marked the return of R. Meltzer to the pages of *Syndrome*. By this time Meltzer had gotten quite a reputation in some fannish circles after he had been kicked out of an apa called RAPS because

he sent in apazines that included cum stains and strands of his pubic hair. But professionally it was another story. Meltzer was producing a lot of interesting writing for rock mags like *Creem* and *Rolling Stone* — who also published a collection of his writing called "Gulcher" — and had little use for the nerds he'd encountered in fandom.

"It All Started with Pud, Part One" was Richard Meltzer's final appearance in a fanzine. ("Part Two" was scheduled for the pages of Bill Kunkel's *Rats!*, but never appeared.) Surprisingly, it is a very fannish article about the wonders of boyhood collecting. There is no anarchy here; just a fond memoir of childhood stuff like baseball cards, comic books, coloring books and, of course, those little comics that came with your bubble gum. Written, in all likelihood, to prove to his detractors that he possessed other skills besides his ability to produce seminal fluid, "Pud" stands on its own as an excellent fanarticle and, surely, as Meltzer's

reward for Frank's loyalty. (It was also profusely illustrated by a young hack named Dan Steffan, but that's another story.)

Jay Kinney's "How I Got Here From There" follows Meltzer's piece and chronicles, in a very straightforward fashion, a harrowing trip across country from the Bay Area to Chicago. Taken from a private letter, this article contains little if any of the author's usual shenanigans, though it



THINGS COME OUT OF DAN'S MOUTH BEFORE HE HAS A CHANCE TO THINK

is no less enjoyable. A portfolio of collaborations between Kinney and Grant Canfield follow this article, which seem to wrap things up nicely.

Unfortunately, there was one more article in the issue. "The Difference Between Men and Women," by Darrell Schweitzer, has the unique distinction of being *Syndrome*'s only clunker. Obviously inspired by Gary Hubbard's agonizing tales about virginity, Schweitzer fails miserably by comparison. Frank has always maintained that he published this article because he thought it was funny. But for me, the distinction is obviously between laughing with someone or at them. If read with the latter in mind, Schweitzer's article is indeed funny, but still ranks as Frank's worst editorial faux pas. (The fact that I did one of my worst cartoons of the period as an illustration for this article — including misspelling Darrell's name in the title — has nothing to do with my opinion.)

The fourth issue of *Syndrome* was published in August 1975, more than a year and a half after number

3. But it was worth the wait — the new *Syndrome* was the closest Frank ever came to (finally) publishing his ideal fanzine. All the elements are there: high-quality contributors, a strong editorial personality, top-flight fanart and excellent layout and repro. It was an auspicious return that signalled great things to come. Too bad it turned out to be the final issue. . . .

Syndrome number 4 was a significant addition to the Lunney lexicon for a lot of reasons — the most significant of which is Frank's own contribution to the issue: his editorial. Throughout most of his publishing life, Frank appeared more as an MC in the pages of his fanzines, than as an editor. His editorials were usually very short — due, probably, to the comments he received in the *BeABohema* days that accused him of having nothing to say — and dealt with the issue at hand. But this time his editorial (at 12 pages) was the largest single contribution in the issue.

"Was Jose Silva Really the Inventor of the Tequila Sunrise?" was an intelligent and entertaining memoir about Frank's experiments with Silva Mind Control (a 70s self-help fad). Written as a series of day-by-day commentaries, this editorial revealed a side of Frank's personality that hadn't been seen in his fanzine before — but was well known to those of us who were in a private apa with him. Frank Lunney was endlessly curious about new ideas and new experiences and pursued them fearlessly. He believed in testing himself and his friends whenever possible. And his dalliance with Silva Mind Control was no exception. He went into it with genuine curiosity and his editorial let us follow him on his expedition, fueled by his rare combination of naivety and cynicism.

"Was Jose Silva . . ." was a sarcastic collection of opinions and observations that *actually* let the reader share some of Frank's experiences. What a surprise for anyone who'd taken him for granted in the past. What a great indicator of things to come. What a disappointment that he never wrote another editorial.

Following that was an article by Grant Canfield, called "Work Is A Four-Letter Word." The Working Stiff's lament is universal: everybody I work with is an idiot! And Canfield's situation was no exception. This article was one of his best pieces of fanwriting, with *real* laughs on every page. The wonderful cartoon illustrations depict the characters — like Slick Dick, the neatnik and Bernie, the farter — in all their glory and made this the perfect item to follow Frank's editorial.

Next was "Mental Strip Mines" by Jay Kinney, which can best be described as, well, hehe. . . . How about Stream of Consciousness Prose? Or maybe

Conceptual Fiction? Found Noir? Whatever you call it, it is brilliant. "Mental Strip Mines" is word-sculpturing; it is phrase-whittling. It is unlike anything ever published in a fanzine before and can be enjoyed, as Gary Hubbard notes in his letter of comment, backwards as well as forwards. (Try *that* Mike Glycer!) I have no doubt that this Kinney piece is as close to real art as fanwriting gets. Here's a paragraph at random:

"Effeminate English musicians singing high-pitched odes to ambiguously-gendered frosty love-objects, colored spotlights slowly converging in reddish gleam as electronically raw sound impulses rise in aesthetic climax to threshold of pain. The fathers of the audience drinking with co-workers in inebriated chumminess of shared mind-dulling labor put out of mind until the morrow. Bombs dropping on technologically naive Asians to the rhythm of darts hitting dartboards in sawdust floored Birmingham pubs."

Well, maybe you had to be there.

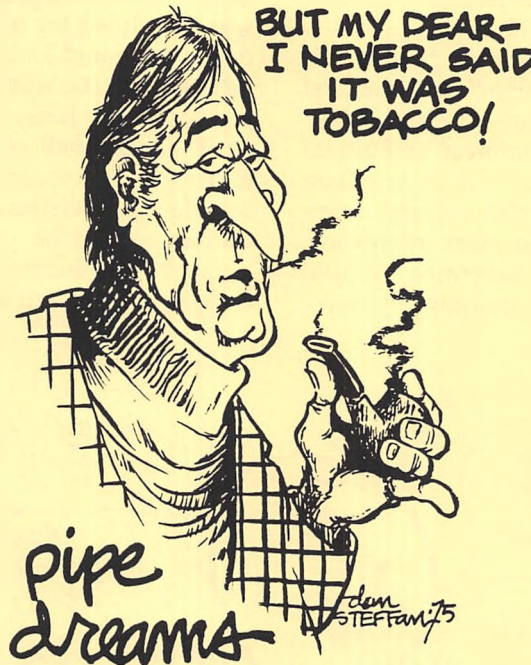
The issue's final contribution, "Dylan" by Alex and Cory Panshin, brought together one of the other elements of the perfect

Frank Lunney fanzine: Music. He had tried getting music writing into his zines as far back as Greg Shaw's "Whiter Rock" in *BeABohema* 12, but had trouble getting regular contributions. For a while it looked like Bill Kunkel's column in the second *Syndrome* would do the trick, but he gafiated after the first installment. Finally he got Alex and Cory involved and they wrote an essay/review of *Planet Waves*, the then-new Bob Dylan album, for his fourth issue.

It was an celebration of Dylan's first decent album in several years, providing Alex and Cory with the perfect opportunity to praise one of their personal musical gods. It is authoritative and articulate; discussing their reactions to the music with wide-eyed enthusiasm. The only problem with the piece is the way it takes so much for granted about *Syndrome's* audience — I suspect that those with a lot less gusto for Dylan's records found it a lot less interesting than the rest of us did. Oh well.

The issue is rounded out by a healthy lettercolumn that — despite Frank's feelings in his interview — is full of meaty and humorous letters of comment.

Syndrome number 4 left its readers feeling like they just had a fine meal with many varied courses. Everything from soup to nuts. I remember how I felt, back in 1975, after reading the new issue of Frank's fanzine — I was excited by the words and pictures and anxious to maintain my spot on the contributor list. I immediately sat down and drew a fresh batch of cartoons to give to Frank the next time I saw him. Both



Grant and Jay had turned in such great cartoons that I knew I had to work a lot harder on my own drawings. Jay and Grant had always accepted me as their fanartist peer — for which I am ever grateful — but I knew better than that. I felt that my efforts had stunk like old socks, by comparison. So I tried a little harder to meet Frank's standards of excellence and turned in a fresh batch of cartoons for his next ish. It took me another five years before I was convinced that they would probably never see print. (One of them is finally being published this issue, as the heading for the lettercolumn.)

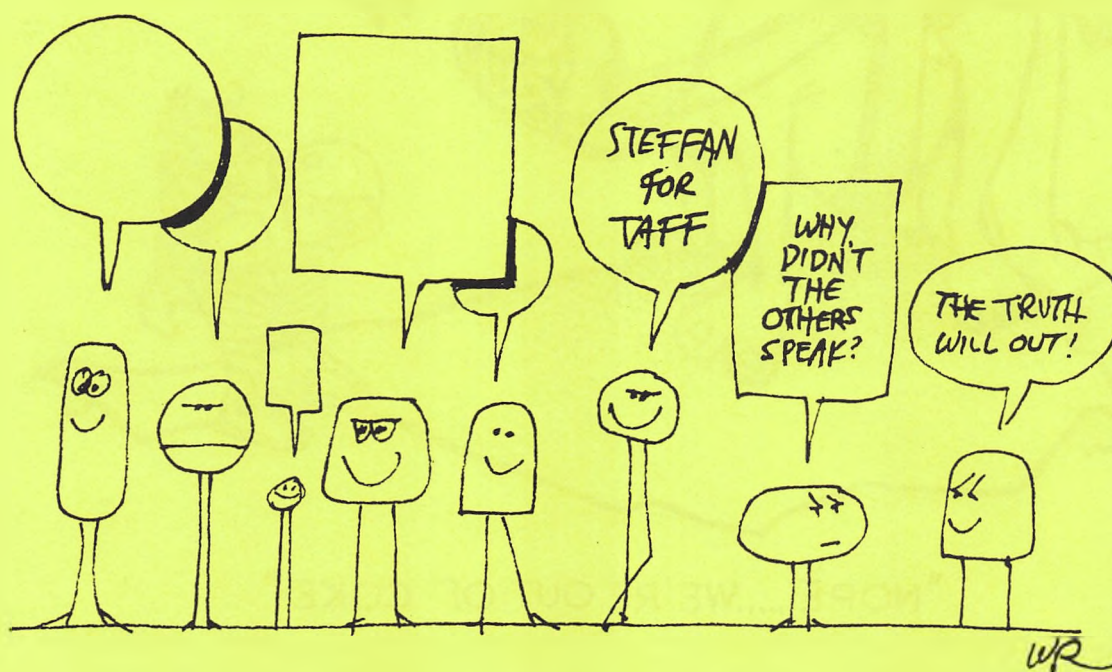
Rereading *Syndrome* now, twenty years later, I feel disappointed that *Syndrome* 4 was the end of a long run, instead of the beginning. It was definitely a fanzine with a strong and positive future. One look at the contents of the BLAT! Archives confirms that. Frank Lunney's ability to put together a great fanzine

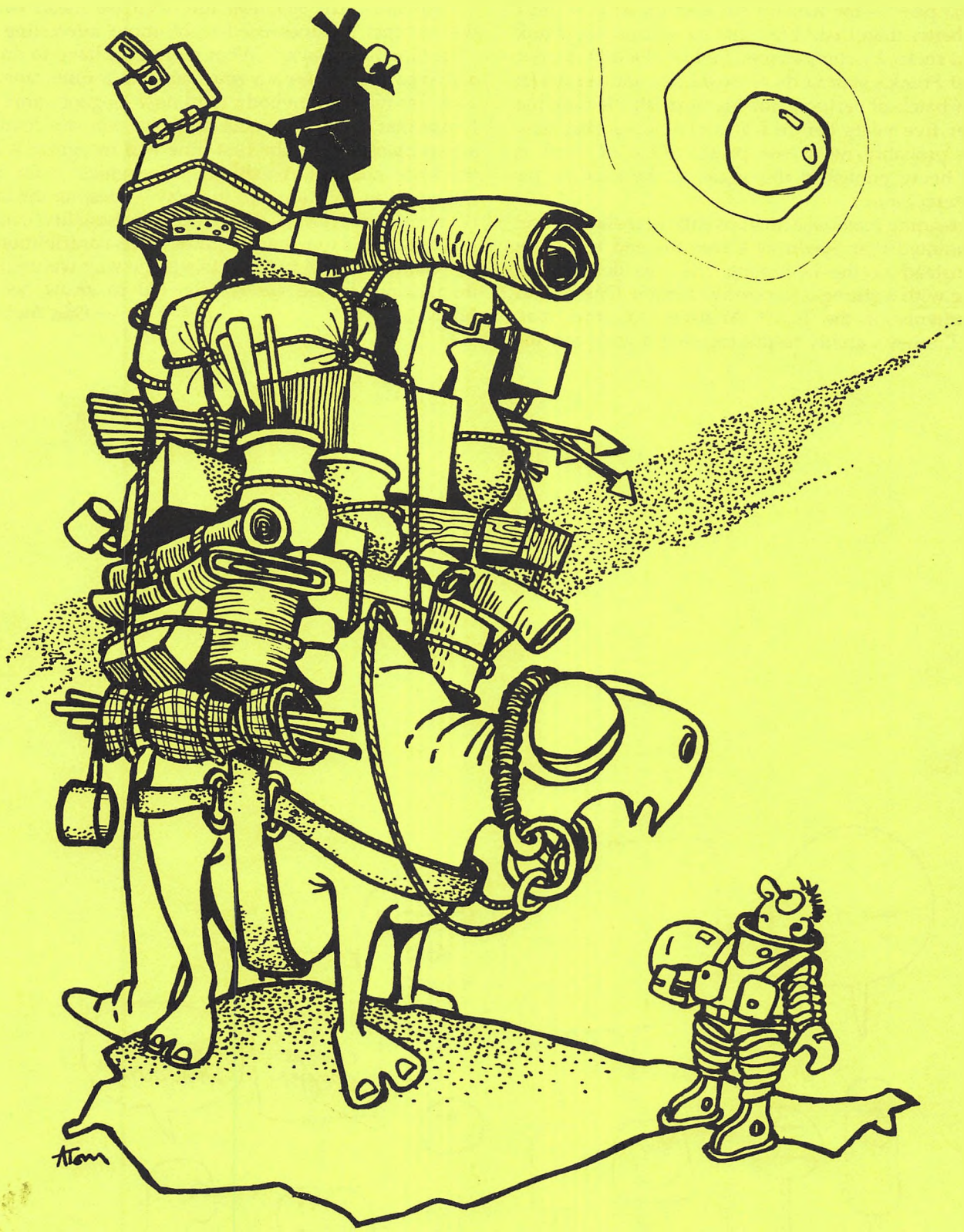
is not in question — Kinney, Hubbard, Nelson and Benford are proof of that — not even after two decades in a desk drawer. This is the real deal.

Fanzines like *Syndrome* are what we mean when we say that fanzines used to be more interesting in "The Good Ol' Days." What more do I have to do to convince you? Here's a zine found in a time capsule — never read by anybody until now — good, ain't it? I hope that those fans in our audience who are coming across *Syndrome* for the first time will recognize it for the style and wit it exhibits. Recognize it for the quality of the writing and the way — despite the lack of a real editorial — the editor's personality comes through in the tone and attitude of his contributions.

Gather around kiddies, this is the way we used to do fanzines before we got too old to know better. Enjoy.

— Dan Steffan





"NOPE.....WE'RE OUT OF COKE"