

WSFANAC

"At Woolton village fete I met him. I was a fat schoolboy and, as he leaned an arm on my shoulder, I realised that he was drunk. We were twelve then, but, in spite of his sideboards, we went on to become teenage pals.

Aunt Mimi, who had looked after him since he was so high, used to tell me how he was cleverer than he pretended, and things like that. He had written a poem for the school paper about a hermit who said: 'as breathing is my life, to stop I dare not dare.' This made me wonder right away - 'Is he deep?' He wore glasses so it was possible, and even without them there was no holding him. 'What 'bus?' he would say to howls of appreciative laughter.

He went to Quarry Bank High School for Boys and later attended to the Liverpool Art College. He left school and played with a group called the Beatles, and, here he is with a book. Again I think - 'Is he deep?' 'Is he arty, with it or cultured?'

There are bound to be thickheads who will wonder why some of it doesn't make sense, and others who will search for hidden meanings.

'What's a Brummer?'

'There's more to 'dubb owld boot' than meets the eye.'

None of it has to make sense and if it seems funny then that's enough."

—Paul, Introduction to IN HIS OWN RIGHT

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THE SOMETIMES MAYBE LOCCOL A Mr. Alexis A. Gilliland writes: "Re the Disclave Hotel for '82, it isn't clear if the quoted price is a flat rate, i.e. allee samee for 2,3, or 4 people, or only for 1." [It is a flat rate.] He also corrected his memory of when Torcon II took place, which was not 1970.

We also heard from a foreigner named Langford, but as the letter seems to be buried someplace at the moment, it will have to wait. Which is too bad, because it was kinda funny. Additionally, we heard from good ol' buddy pal Buz Owen, who you may remember as the Cookie Monster, and other old favorites.

Anyroad, we'll just fill out a line or two here and carry on to the next page as if it hadn't happened.

SOLSTICE AND ALL THAT I have a dictionary around here, but you'd never know it. Anywait, as I was about to say, we had our annual dinner, with the usual inebriant punch which I had too much of and lots of various foods which I couldn't taste due to the health problem.

Much to my amazement, Ted White and Kit showed up with a bowl of baked onions or something, which didn't seem too bad, but I wouldn't really know because of see above. Later, while we were all sitting around being all fat and useless, Linda dug out her guitar and led us in nostalgia to the verge of deafness, which is OK since Linda speaks Sign Language. Anywaste, we sang some harmonies which ranged from lovely to atrocious, and did the old favorites by the fab four, Simmian and Granfunkle, and those solstice susans we have all come to know and loath. Maybe we'll try them out on the front lawn of the White House if Missus Carter helps Nancy move in early.

 "Hello, this is John speaking with his voice." —Beatle's '63 Xmas message

'TIS THE SEASON Actually, I think 'tis the Republicans. Ever since they started getting loud again, things have been going from worse to worst, and Strom Thurmond is certainly no exception. Then there was Susan Wood, of course, who on the outside at least had been a fine example of the kind of woman who Gets Things Done, one of those feminist role-models we're always hearing about. But when Susan died, I found myself feeling that perhaps the price for that kind of accomplishment is too high. Janis, too, had driven herself into the grave that way, in spite of all she could have had.

All of which left me wondering what the hell I was bothering with school for. I mean, here are the Republicans, trying to make my job illegal anyway, and I've got workaholic teachers and surprise assignments and the pressure is getting pretty heavy, and then I get sick. Two and a half weeks of boredom, unable to get out of bed, work, read, even watch TV. And all this time having anxiety attacks about the work I'm not doing.

I was just starting to feel energetic and start doing some work again when I sat down to work on a take-home essay exam and my life flashed before my eyes...(fade to flashback, music swells).

IN MY LIFE It was 1964, and I was twelve, living in Kensington. I'd always been strange, and it didn't look as if I was about to change. A president had just been shot, and while the nation was still reeling in shock, I was staying up late in the dark with my transistor radio close to my ear, listening to rock and roll.

The verge of adolescence—J.D. Salinger didn't know the half of it. The popular prognosis was that I'd wear nylon stockings, desperately shave my legs trying to look like the commercials, agonize over not being a blonde, and say "no" a lot no matter how I really felt. Then I'd get married and say "yes" no matter how I felt. I wasn't looking forward to any of it, and I was searching frantically for a way out. That's what made the radio so important, I guess. I'd been singing all of my short life, and it seemed to be the only option.

Suddenly it was February, and I was given a gift—a focus for all of that supressed teenaged energy, ambition, and lust. Since December I'd been hearing their songs on the radio, and on 7 February I got to spend the entire day sitting in front of the television watching the news-clips every hour, while my heros descended from their BEA plane. The "TLES" had been tacked on with a banner. My sister and I monitored the news carefully, with the rabio playing loudly over the teddiviscious. I didn't do that again for 17 years.

At first I thought Paul was the cutest, and then George seemed sexier. But as the books and the jokes and the music kept pouring out, I realized that John was the one I really got the most out of. I still lusted after George, but my speech, and even my writing, owed more and more to John Lennon.

All around me, people started getting strange, and I wasn't so wierd anymore. Oh, I still wasn't all that normal, and you could sure tell me apart from the rest of the crowd, but there were a lot of other wierd people dressing the way I was and asking questions the way I always had, and saying that you didn't really have to do all those things that seemed so grim to me. There were people to hang out with and play with and even to protest with.

I remember when SGT. PEPPER came out, we all had a party and got stoned and listened to it. There was a single green lightbulb in an otherwise dark room, where we all sat or reposed as the music filtered into the room while the smells of pot and incense wafted around. To this day, a dimly-lit room and the scent of jasmine or sandalwood still brings it back to me.

By 1969 the changes were hitting closer and closer to home. Women who had worked their asses off for men who were evading the draft suddenly discovered that those men weren't willing to return the favor. Feminism was taking the hardest workers out of "The Movement" as they turned their energies to working against a deeper, more pervasive form of oppression. I went too, and left a crumbling counter-culture behind.

John divorced Cynthia and married Yoko, and by the time SOMETIME IN NEW YORK CITY came out, I was happy to see that the man I had admired for so long was still with me. A lot of people weren't impressed by the direction of John's work by then, but to me, at that crucial time, it was like a letter from an old friend, saying, "I'm behind you all the way."

While the world was begging him to get back into the studio (or back together with the Beatles) and do something "important," John was at home taking care of his son and baking bread. John had become the man I'd always known he could be, thanks to the efforts of Yoko Ono—the woman who'd taken so much flak for "destroying the Beatles."

And then suddenly the radio was playing solid Beatles/Lennon all nite long. Mark David Chapman had killed the thing I loved, and as I sat between the non-stop memorial service on my radio and Geraldo Rivera's shaken face on the television, I remembered how, seventeen years ago, I had done the same thing when John Lennon had first set foot in the United States.

I cried. I saved the papers. After a couple days, I began to wonder if I'd ever wake up without the first thing I thought of being that Lennon was dead. But sooner or later I had to start working on that take-home exam I'd last seen only moments before I'd heard the news, so eventually I pulled out those books and started reading.

I was reading about studies on aggression, how they'd found that men feel better after retaliating violently, but women feel worse. "They oughta string that Chapman guy up by the balls," a guy in the school bar said to me. I looked up, said, "Would that make you feel better?" He allowed as how, yes, it would make him feel a lot better.

"It wouldn't make me feel better. And I don't think it would make Yoko Ono feel better, to see everything John believed in betrayed in an act of vengence committed in his name." The radio overhead was playing "Give Peace A Chance" for what must have been the thousandth time in three days.

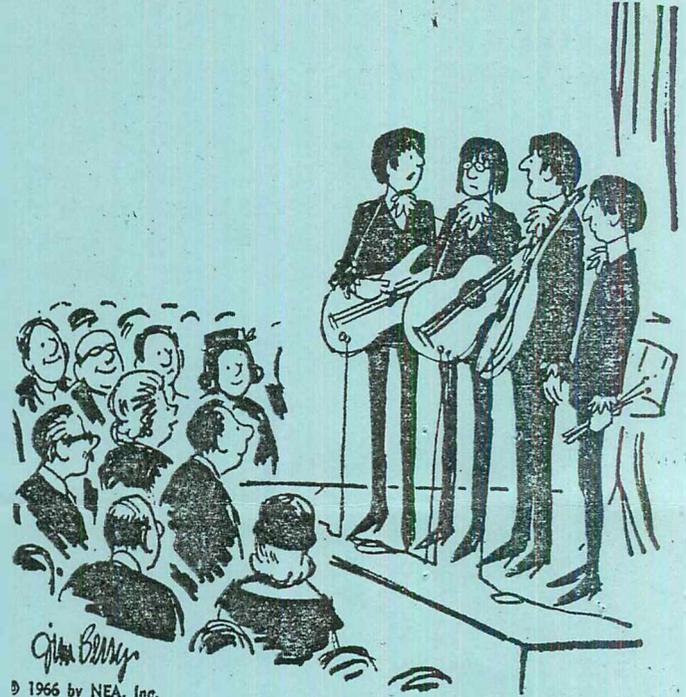
"Yeah. I guess it wouldn't." No, it wouldn't make us feel better to see the world take it's revenge on Chapman and then brush off its hands as if the entire matter were taken care of and we could now forget everything that John Lennon had spent the last ten years of his life trying to teach himself and the world.

BERRY'S WORLD

OH YEAH, WSFA The Washington Science Fiction Association had another meeting at the Oliver's on 19th December. The meeting was mercifully brief and no more weighty business than the rendering of a Christmoose Carol (written by Joe Mayhew, sung by president Tom Schaad and myself) was on the menu, thank Griff. Something about Bob Lovell's sex life, but I wouldn't know.

Anyroad, Rosa had put out the usual nifty veggies and particularly the mushrooms, alongside some hot cocoa and of course, beer and soda. We all hung around the kitchen not talking about anything important really, but it was all friendly and charming and like that, probably because you're all afraid I'll write it down and put it in my fanzine. (Wait 'til you see the film, folks.)

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"It looks like we're on the way 'out' — our stuff is beginning to appeal to adults!"

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE Just this very morning, we here

at the luxurious WSFanac offices received a communication from good old Malcolm Edwards (a foreigner), whom you may recall from last issue, where he played (and is still playing) the part of a GUFF candidate who is supported by this very fanzine. Malcolm writes:

"Thanks for sending me your fanzine (WSFANAC, that is), but what do you mean, Hegel was right? You must be specific. Was he right, do you mean, when he said that an occasional war was good for your moral fibre? Or do you mean he was right wing?"

No, Malcolm old pal, I mean Hegel was right when he said that we don't learn nothin' from history 'cept that we don't learn nothin' from history. I mean, the republicans and all. About that other stuff, he certainly was a twit, wasn't he?

Mal also had something to add concerning the broomstick thing:

"Interested to hear of the progress of the Astral Leauge (not League, Avedon, Leauge...don't you know the difference?) initiation. It's amazing how easy it is to make apparantly sensible people do extremely silly things. Trouble is, I think you're cheating. Not you personally—but the people doing it with a ten-foot pole. I suspect anyone could do it with a long enough pole, because if you can slide your hands as far apart as you wish it removes an important element of contortion. I haven't actually tested this out—that would mean finding a pole and making a fool of myself—but I think it can be demonstrated. The new test is far too easy, by the way, and doesn't provide the necessary degree of sadistic amusement to onlookers."

There you are.

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TAFF Stu Shiffman, American artiste, won this year's TAFF race, which means we can get rid of him for a few weeks or so next year, I think. Well, good luck, Stu old buddy pal, have a good time out there in England.

STATE OF THE ART Another fanzine or two seems to have fallen thru the old mailslot, in spite of the best efforts of the Post Awful. Anyway, one of them was TELOS, which at this point is edited not only by Teresa Nielsen Hayden and Patrick Nielsen Hayden, but also by Gary Farber and Fred the Traveling Haskell. It isn't bad, either, she said, returning the favor. Good editorial by Gary Farber on the State of the Fanzine. Good editorial by Patrick concerning how writers lie by writing, as well as a nice piece of writing about traveling in the Southwest. Good column by Dick Bergeron, too. Why, I'd even go so far as to say TELOS #3 is a damn fine issue. It's even got an article by Teresa talking about how she got excumunicated from being a Mormon. (Write to: Jumping Jesus Bar and Grill, 4712 Fremont Avenue N, Seattle, WA 98103—and *get one today!*)

 What was your original face before your parents were born?

RECORD REVIEWS Lucky for you, I haven't heard any new records lately, which is in keeping with the book reviews last time around, isn't it? Nice to see someone being consistent in these days of rapid change and confusion, eh? But I *have* noticed a disturbing thing happening on the radio lately. It's all comedy music! "Turning Japanese" and all that. We used to rely solely on Frank Zappa for this sort of thing. I sure wish I still had my long-lost copy of NILSON SCHMILSON.

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BOOKS, EVEN Oddly enough, I've actually read something—*The Barbie Murders* by John Varley. I've always liked Varley's short stories (and you boys in the back who don't like him, just shut up, please), and this collection contains one of my favorite, "Picnic on Nearside," along with a couple of other nice ones. I particularly get a kick out of the concept of "Barbie colonies" due to the usual influences of a commercial American childhood. Murdering Barbies, huh? Right!

I also went through a copy of *New Dimensions 11* (edited by Marta Randall and Robert Silverberg) and found a couple of stories I liked, including Suzy McKee Charnas' "Unicorn Tapestry," which is the best vampire story I've ever read, and is from her book, *Vampire Tapestry*.

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AND ETC Well, I've been trying hard to come up with harsh critical things to say about WSFA for this issue, but it just hasn't been easy. Joe Mayhew has been behaving almost like a real person, Jane Wagner has put out a second issue that I liked even better than the first one, although it was shorter, and everyone has been nicely behaved at the last couple of meetings, which were so frivolous in spirit that the club looks almost like WSFA again, despite the recent absences of certain well-known Baltimorans who'd better get back here fast or lose their credentials.

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MEANWHILE, IN THE REAL WORLD I was comforted to see that I wasn't the only person who was freaked out by the shot heard round the world and all that. What really astonished me, tho, was that radio stations throughout the country actually programmed *ten minutes of dead air* at 2:00 PM Sunday, 14 December. You can't get much less commercial than that. And channel 7, the local ABC station, broke into an important football game to show ten minutes of people standing silent in Central Park. Well hell, he deserved at least that much.

"ABOUT THE AWFUL I was bored on the 9th of Octover 1940 when, I believe, the Nasties were still booming us led by Madalf Heatlump (Who only had one). Anyway they didn't get me. I attended to varicious schools in Liddypol. And still didn't pass - much to my Aunties supplies. As a member of the most publified Beatles my and (P, G, and R's) records might seem funnier to some of you than this book, but as far as I'm conceived this correction of short writty is the most wonderfoul larf I've ever ready.

God help and breed you all."

IN HIS OWN WRITE

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