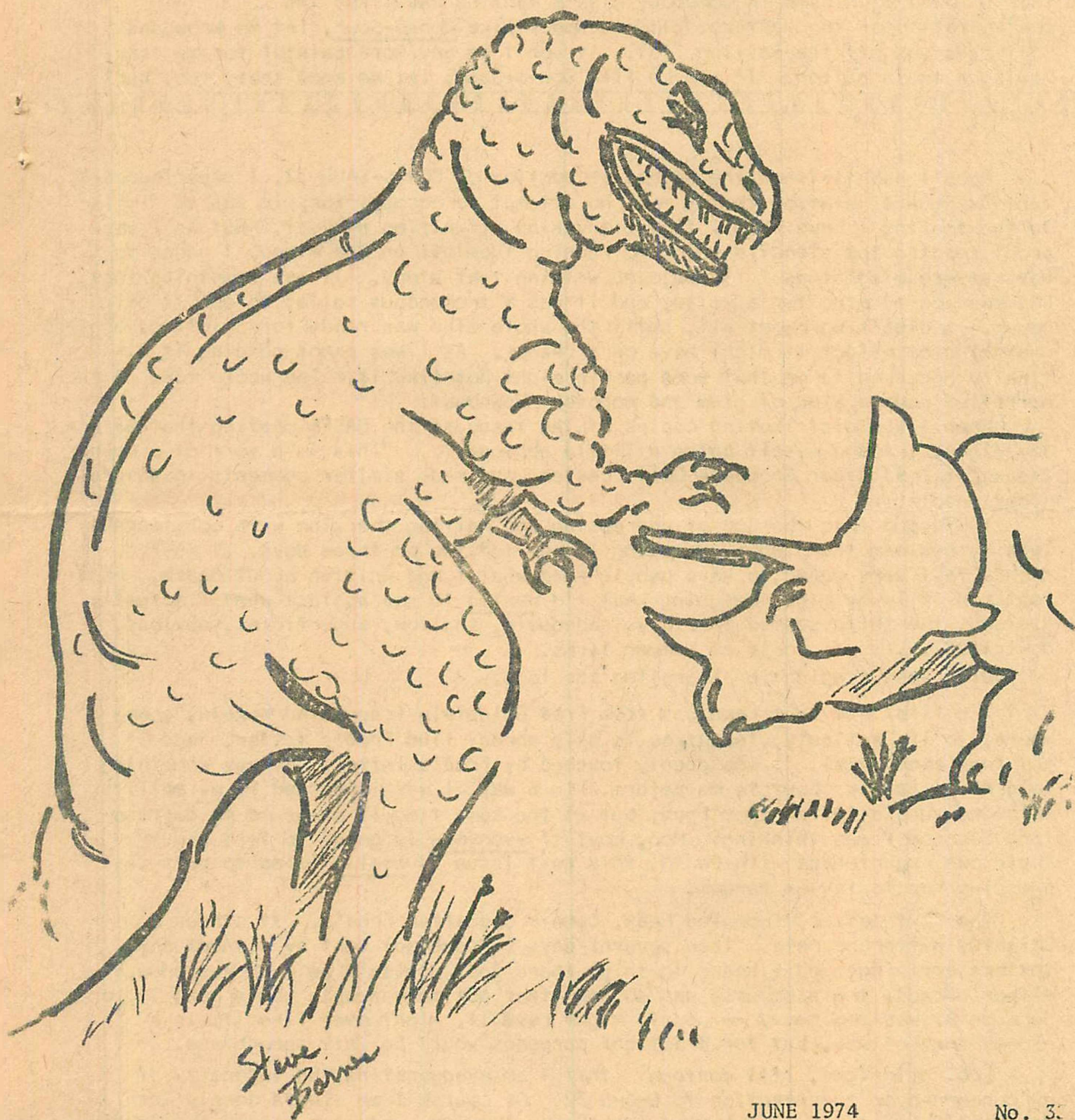


# DON-O-SAUR



JUNE 1974

No. 3

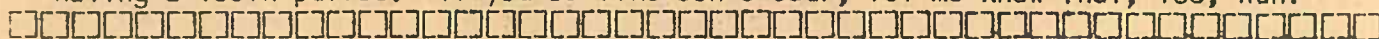


## DON-o-SAUR

33

Published monthly by Don Thompson, 7498 Canosa Ct., Westminster, Colo., 80030. Available for 25¢ per issue or 12 for \$2.50, or in exchange for other fanzines, letters of comment or artwork.

If you don't know what you did to deserve this, it's probably just that I found your name in somebody else's fanzine and liked the configuration of the letters. If you don't like Don-o-Saur, let me know and I'll take you off the mailing list. It won't be any more painful for me than having a tooth pulled. If you DO like Don-o-Saur, let me know that, too, huh?



When I had finished the narrative portion of DON-o-SAUR 32, I experienced a curious glow of elation that I made no attempt to account for, it was so similar to the feeling I have when I finish any kind of writing project. But as I was proof reading the stencils prior to running them off on the mimeo, I began to have severe misgivings. I'd enjoyed writing that story. It was something that had been on my mind for a while, and it was a tremendous relief to get it onto paper. I didn't worry at all, until the whole zine was ready for printing, about what kind of effect it might have on a reader. As I was proof reading it, it finally occurred to me that some people might not like it. The whole tone of the narrative seemed kind of glum and morose. Downbeat.

When I was distributing copies of the issue at the DASFA meeting that Saturday night, I found myself being a little apologetic. "This is a sort of a downer issue," I told Elder Ghoddess Doris Beetem, and made similar comments to several other people.

I plunged into the job of addressing and mailing the zine with considerably less enthusiasm than usual, dragging it out for two or three days. I just didn't feel very eager to have people read what I had written about death. As I replayed it in my mind, weighing what I'd wanted to say against what I actually did say, the thing seemed terribly inadequate, shallow, superficial, obvious, contrived . . . all sorts of bummeo terms.

With vast trepidation I awaited the locs.

The first one that came was from Fred Goldstein (reprinted herein, somewhere, in its entirety; feel free to skip ahead, find Fred's letter, read it and then come back). I was deeply touched by Fred's letter. It was something he'd never talked about to me before. In a way, I was impressed by my ability to evoke such a letter from Fred; but at the same time it deepened my depression, because I was thinking: Hoo, boy! If everyone is going to tell about their own experiences with death, this next issue is really going to be a depressing rap to lay on fandom.

The next letter, from Ted Peak, came a day after Fred's. It struck a slightly different note. Then several days (it seemed) went by without any letters arriving, and I began to think there just wouldn't be much response, either because the discourse was so long that not many people would read it, or because it was too heavy -- people might read it, might even like it, in a gloomy sort of way, but for practical purposes would be left speechless.

[Oh, all right, I'll confess that I am exaggerating the intensity of my concern over the reaction to D-o-S 32. Of course I am always deeply interested in what people think of the things I write, and I am always buoyed a little if they like my writings and depressed a little if they don't -- but the key word there is little].



As the locs trickled in, my spirits rose. My fears seemed to be groundless. Not only were the letters generally favorable, there was also suitable variety in them so I need not hesitate to print as many of them as I had room for.

One thing about the letters (some of them) bothered me slightly, making me realize that my narrative was not entirely successful, even in terms of craftsmanship-- I simply had not gotten everything properly explained, leaving room for confusion or misunderstanding. Ben Indick's letter, for example, says, "I would urge you...not to feel that you personally moved a cosmic revenge." A couple of other letters had similar comments.

Okay, it's my fault, and I know how the confusion arose, and I even know how I can avoid it if I ever decide to rework the story for publication, as one or two letterwriters have been kind enough to suggest that I might do. I even had the explanatory passage written, in a manner of speaking, in my head, but by the time I got to page 12 I was in a hurry to bring the story to a close, and so I left that passage out. It would have explained (I hope) that my major concern was not with my personal feelings of guilt or remorse but with what might have been going through Nicky's mind -- if his mind works the way mine did when I was his age. What I was afraid of was that my remark to Nicky that "you'll pay for this" might have planted the seeds of a guilt complex in his head -- that as a result of that he might then have seen his father's death as God's way of punishing him for starting the fire. I didn't want to make that point too obvious, but I may have been too subtle. If I ever decide to fully fictionalize the story and try to sell it (and the temptation is there, gnawing away), I'll definitely try to improve on the ending.

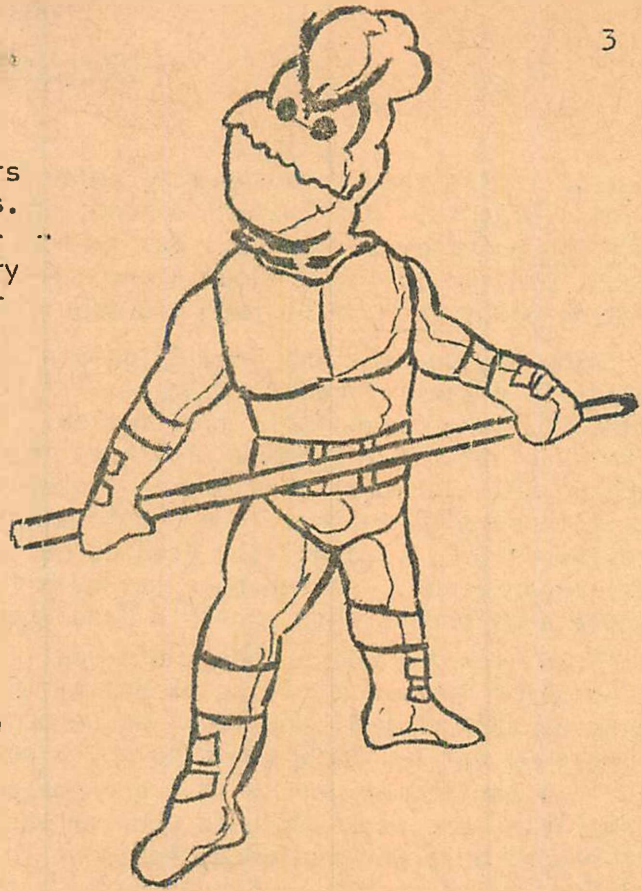
For now, however, I'd rather like to put that whole episode behind me. I intend to print some of the letters I've received about it, of course, but for my section of this issue I am finished with the subject.

\*\*\*\*\*

Originally, for this issue, I intended to use this discourse section to fulfill an obligation. Bob Barthell, Wyoming's S.M.O.F. and editor of Cthulhu Calls, has been badgering me (oh, in a terribly civilized manner--he simply turned the whole thing over to my conscience) to write something for his publication about the science fiction course I teach at Metropolitan State College in Denver. In my heart I have promised that I will do it. And it had seemed to me that now might be as good a time as any to make good on that promise.

By now you are assuming, because of the way I've worded the previous paragraph, that I have something else in mind -- right?

Well, that's right . . . but not all the way. There is something I want to mention, because it is foremost in my thoughts right now, and before





D-o-S 33 is finished I may have to refer to it again a time or two, by way of progress reports. But I still intend, absolutely and without fail, to write something about my SF course. But that requires thought, and this other weird thing I want to tell you about doesn't --or not the same kind. So while I'm thinking about that, I'll tell you about this.

Many of you know who Fred Goldstein is. He's a fan. He publishes GVP (Goldstein's Vanity Press), which I will say nothing more about because D-o-S, after all, is a respectable publication. Fred's also a former student, come to think of it, so I suppose I'll have to mention him again when I talk about teaching SF. Our destinies may be linked--as you shall see.

(It seems to me that in a previous issue of D-o-S, possibly when I wrote a review of GVP, I identified Fred as being at that time a student at MSC. That was an error. He had been out even then for at least a year. I like to correct such errors when possible [and when not too embarrassing].)

Fred recently got a job. He's really an actor but it's a bit difficult for an actor to make a living by acting in the Denver area (and don't ask me why he doesn't move to New York) so he occasionally has to take jobs in order to continue eating (he's a big eater, a bad habit for an actor).

This particular job is in a pornography shop, which I consider supremely appropriate, because GVP, both when it was just another D'APAZine and since it's sought a larger audience, has gone in very heavily for a type of material that Fred calls porn. In Fred's case, I consider "porn" a euphemism. (Honestly, I don't recommend the latest issue of GVP to anyone with even a slightly weak stomach). But shucks! This is not my literary criticism section.

With his new job, Fred dropped from the sight of fandom for a few weeks. He missed the last meeting of DASFA and missed having a zine in D'APA for the first time since he'd joined, causing great consternation among the members. Fred's letter explained his absence, and GVP arrived a week or so later. Then, just a few days ago, Fred called me on the phone. He was as nearly breathless as I've ever heard him. I thought maybe it was just the atmosphere, but that wasn't it.

"This is really a boring job," he said. "When I can even bring myself to look through one of the magazines I find myself looking at the faces."

That wasn't what he wanted to talk about.

"I'm so excited about this, I've got to talk to somebody that I know will understand. I've got a chance to buy an offset printing press for only \$150."

"Whaaaat!??"

"That's right. Only \$150. It's supposed to be in good condition, not very old. Sounds almost too good to be true, doesn't it."

"It sure does," I agreed.

"But you never can tell. Anyway I'm going to go take a look at it this evening when I get off work, and if it's even halfway decent I'm gonna get it. I've been looking for a better mimeo you know, and I figured about \$150 wouldn't be too much for a good one."

"That's exactly what I paid for my mimeo," I said.

"Yeah, I know. And if I can get an offset press for that . . . Hey, there's one thing though. I'm not sure how big this thing is, and what I'm afraid of is that it might be too big for my place. And what I was wondering is . . ."

(Here's what he really wanted to talk to me about)

" . . . is whether I could bring it over and put it in your basement?"

"Oh absolutely," I said. "By all means." And my enthusiasm was unfeigned.

Actually I had no real hope that anything could come of this. It was



too much like the kind of bargain that I'm always being offered. Something sounds too good to be true but I buy it anyway, sometimes without even looking at it, and find out later that it's just a pile of junk that I have to pay someone to haul away. (I often get caught in the reverse of that, too, during my cynical phases -- I'll hear of some fantastic bargain and decide that it can't be for real, so I'll pass it up, only to find out later that it was for real and somebody like Fred Goldstein took advantage of it.)

I happen to know that Fred has a pretty good track record in the field of bargain finding, so I suppose I was hoping for more than if I had found it.

Fred called me the next day.

"I looked at the press," he said in a flat tone of voice.

I said, "Oh," thinking I knew what was coming next.

"It sure is beautiful."

"Oh!"

"I'm gonna buy it."

"Hah!"

"Yup. Only thing is . . . it really is bigger than I'd prefer. Is it still okay if I bring it to your place?"

"Bring it! Bring!" I insisted. "In fact . . . I've been thinking. How about if I bought half interest in it?"

"You know, I was just going to suggest that myself."

I know the very next thing to absolutely nothing about offset presses, except that I am now the half owner of one (or will be when I see Fred Friday night and force a check for \$75 into his sweaty hands). The contraption was delivered here Wednesday night, while I was at work at the RMN, and I have since looked at it many times and from a number of angles, though scarcely daring to touch anything. It isn't as big as I was afraid it might be from Fred's original description. It's maybe five feet long, a couple of feet wide and I suppose four and a half feet high -- a floor standing model. It's an "A-M Multi 1000." Does that tell anybody anything?

I have Thursday and Friday off from work this week (plus Saturday and Sunday of next week [RMN weeks begin on Saturday], meaning that I actually have a four-day weekend). I'm going to use most of it to produce Don-o-Saur and then to start recuperating, but I'm going to spend some of it trying to learn a little about that offset. The fellow who sold it to Fred is coming over Friday night, with Fred, and he's going to help us clean it up and show us how to run it. Fred left me a list of supplies I'm supposed to buy for it before Friday night. They include emery paper, a half dozen sheet separators, and a gallon of Lith-Kem-Ko (DeGlazer). I know what emery paper is.

Oh, I'm also supposed to try to get an instruction manual.

If I'm anywhere close to my usual schedule, I'll have Don-o-Saur pretty much wrapped up by Friday night, but maybe I'll try to save a little space at the end to let you know of any developments. At this stage, I'm not making any plans for the machine -- it still seems much too unreal. I'm sure as hell not making any promises that the next issue of D-o-S that you get will be of any higher quality than this one is. You may never ever see an offset Don-o-Saur, or a GVP either. For all I know that impressive hunk of machinery out there in the laundry room may be nothing but a pile of junk that I'll have to pay somebody to haul away. Emotionally, I am quite prepared for that possibility. I have survived worse disappointments.

On the other hand, I can't help doing a certain amount of day-dreaming, speculating, indulging in the fantasies of WHAT IF.

What if that thing really works and proves to be within the range of my



understanding and competence? (I'm often astonished at the number of things that do come within that range). The possibilities are staggering.

I'll give you a hint as to the direction my imagination is moving, and at the same time tell you how much and how little I know about this process. I know that offset printing requires a photographic plate or sheet (I don't even know what it's called). Fred says those sheets cost something like 27¢ each. When we get to the point of trying to produce something on the press, we'll have to get the plates processed at a commercial shop. Neither of us knows how much that might cost. Plenty, I'm sure, but that doesn't scare me much. I've already become reconciled to the idea that fanzine publishing is an expensive hobby (and more important, my wife is also becoming reconciled to the idea).

But here's the thought that keeps intruding into my mind, permitted there, no doubt, by the absence of knowledge: Since Fred got such a deal on the press, the logical thing for us to do now would be to buy the rest of the equipment necessary to do the plates ourselves.

Wouldn't it?

What kind of equipment is necessary?

How much would it cost?

Is it, after all, going to break both of us just to run this contraption whether we buy any additional equipment for it or not?

Hey, listen, is there anybody out there who can answer any of those questions, as well as the more intelligent questions that I don't even know enough to ask?

The last time I talked to Fred on the phone he said something interesting (as he occasionally does): "I don't know of any other faned in the whole world who has his own offset press."

Well, I couldn't think of one either, but I thought surely there must be others. Aren't there? Honestly, sincerely, I hope there are, because it will be an awfully lonely feeling if I find that Fred and I are the only ones. I don't

really mind the loneliness. It can easily be nullified by pride in being unique. But what I'm hoping is that someone in fandom has already had experience with offset and will be able to give me and Fred the benefit of that experience. (I'm not even worried about willingness, you notice; I know how willing faneds are to help each other with technical problems. Bruce Arthurs, for instance, has written me two or three times with detailed instructions for pasting in electrostencils. I still don't do it the way Bruce suggests, but I am everlastingly grateful to him for his generosity).

So, please -- if you know about offset presses, or know of anybody else who might, won't you please let me know?

Fred and I are going to need all the help and advice we can possibly get.

For my part, I will try to keep you informed as to our progress with the press -- if any. (I'm still prepared for the possibility of its being nothing but so much scrap metal).

But now I think the time has come for me to talk about teaching SF.





S F

A T

M S C

I refuse to start at the beginning, because that's the mistake I made when I first started trying to teach science fiction.

For that very first course, as I recall, I originally intended to use Sam Moskowitz's Seekers of Tomorrow and Masterpieces of Modern Science Fiction because at the time I drew up the syllabus there were no SF textbooks available that I knew of. Moskowitz came close to presenting the "survey of modern science fiction" that I had intended the course to be.

It might have been an interesting course, taught by SM, but a couple of things happened to shunt that possibility into an alternate universe. One was the unexpected availability of a "real" SF text -- Science Fiction: the Future, put together by Dick Allen (who, incidentally, has now edited a textbook anthology of detective fiction). The other thing that happened was that I unexpectedly acquired a copy of J. O. Bailey's Pilgrims Through Space and Time (a rather battered first edition that I would willingly have paid \$5 for -- I got it for about 35¢). Bailey's book was the really influential one. I had the students buy Allen's, and I made one or two tentative assignments in it and then for the most part ignored it. Pilgrims, however, showed me how much there was about early SF that I didn't know. I found the material absolutely fascinating, and so I couldn't resist relaying some of that information to my students. The quarter was half over before I got up to modern science fiction and the era that I was more familiar with.

There were some good things about that course, which I hope to mention later, but as I say, I don't want to start with that.

Instead, I'll tell first about the course that I just finished a couple of weeks ago and tell how it differed from the previous times I've done it, and conclude with some general observations about what I think a SF course should be (or more likely those general observations will intrude as I go along, so I may have to find some more creative way to bring this to a conclusion).

Spring quarter 1974 was, if my memory is exact (which it seldom is) the fifth time I have taught English 190--Science Fiction. The first time was in spring quarter, 1972. (English 190 designates a "topics" course--something that is not in the bulletin, not part of the regular curriculum, not one of the requirements. It's a course that may be offered only once, or at infrequent intervals). The intent of the English faculty when the SF course was approved was clearly to try it once as an experiment and then when the experiment failed, to let the course die; or, if the class did succeed, to offer it at most once a year or once every two or three years. To the apparent astonishment of all but a handful in the English department, the class had an enrollment, that first time, of about 70--about four times the size of the average "topics" class. (And it has been the top-drawing class in the department every time it is offered). The enrollment figures so impressed the senior department members that I've been permitted--nay, encouraged--to offer the course twice a year since then. There's some pressure now to break the class into two sections and one or two of the other faculty members are doing some cramming so they'll be qualified to teach one of the sections.

The science fiction class has also, by the way, stimulated some imitations or attempted rivals. A Tolkien scholar offers a summer session class in Adult Fantasy. Unfortunately her knowledge does not extend much beyond Tolkien, so last summer the class wasn't spectacularly successful (or so I've heard). I hope it does better this summer. Someone else offered a course in Utopian Literature that for some reason didn't go over too well either. And then there was one in Existentialist Literature, with heavy emphasis on



Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. That class, I understand, had done pretty well, both in attendance and in student enthusiasm.

But I was going to tell about my course, wasn't I? The one I taught this past quarter. All right then, I'll try.

Once again I had it in mind to use Moskowitz's books, since they were scheduled for reprinting by Hyperion, along with a lot of science fiction classics selected by SaM. I'd ordered the books in plenty of time, but when the quarter began they weren't available because of difficulties in the printing operation. So I cancelled the order and decided to get along with no textbook at all this time. It was not a difficult decision, since I'd never made much actual use of the text books anyway. (For the record, I have alternated Dick Allen's book with one called Beyond the Human Landscape [the editor of which I can't remember and the book is at school. If Bob Barthell wants to use this, I'll provide the information for him if he doesn't already have it])

I also decided, since I was throwing away the book, so to speak, to throw away the map as well.

Always before, in my SF course, I have taken the word course literally. That is, I have tried to cover a certain amount of material in the time allotted. Specifically, I have tried to put the literature of science fiction in historical perspective--to show its origins and trace its development up to the present. In fall quarter, last year, I varied that by starting at the present and working backwards. In either case it meant inflicting on the students a certain amount of information that they weren't particularly interested in right at the moment. Maybe they would have been interested in it either earlier or later, in some other context; but largely to keep myself from becoming too confused, I insisted on giving it to them when I was ready, not when they were.

So this time I threw away the map. I decided that I was familiar enough with the territory by this time that I could guide the kids through the woods without looking at the compass every other step (or at note cards every other sentence). I decided that on the journey we would discuss the scenery that they found interesting, and poke into regions they found intriguing. I would try as best I could to answer questions as they came up, rather than long before or after they were asked. Of course I also considered it my obligation to supply background information, to enable them to put the things they discovered in perspective.

I'll try to be more specific about this and to get away from this Boy-Scout-like-through-the-wilderness metaphor that's trying to develop.

I had to find out first how much the class already knew. As always, there was a wide range of knowledgeability. There were a few students who were and had been for years avid readers of science fiction--fans who just didn't know about fandom. (From every previous class I've been able to recruit at least one or two students into DASFA. From this class, oddly enough, not a single recruit, though there were a few who I'm sure would like to become involved). Most students have read a little science fiction. Well, they've read things like Stranger in a Strange Land, or Dune, or one or another of Bradbury's collections -- The Illustrated Man, maybe, or October Country. Arthur C. Clarke and Isaac Asimov are two other names that virtually everyone in the class has at least heard of.

So I found out first that most of the students wanted to find out more about Heinlein and Bradbury and Herbert and Clarke and Asimov, and using these writers as a starting place, I was able, during the quarter, to provide most of the information that I had in any of the previous classes.



A discussion of Heinlein, for example, led naturally and inevitably to his latest work, Time Enough For Love, which in turn led, just as naturally and inevitably, back to his earlier work, which in turn allowed me to establish the importance of Astounding Stories and John W. Campbell Jr. in the development of American SF.

A discussion of Ray Bradbury, in addition to leading to his latest works of poetry [a development that seems inevitable itself now, doesn't it, in light of the poetic quality of his earlier stuff?], but also into his past -- to Planet Stories and the whole field of pulp adventure sf that, in its own way, was just as important as Astounding Stories. It also led to Leigh Brackett and then to the whole area of women SF writers and women in SF.

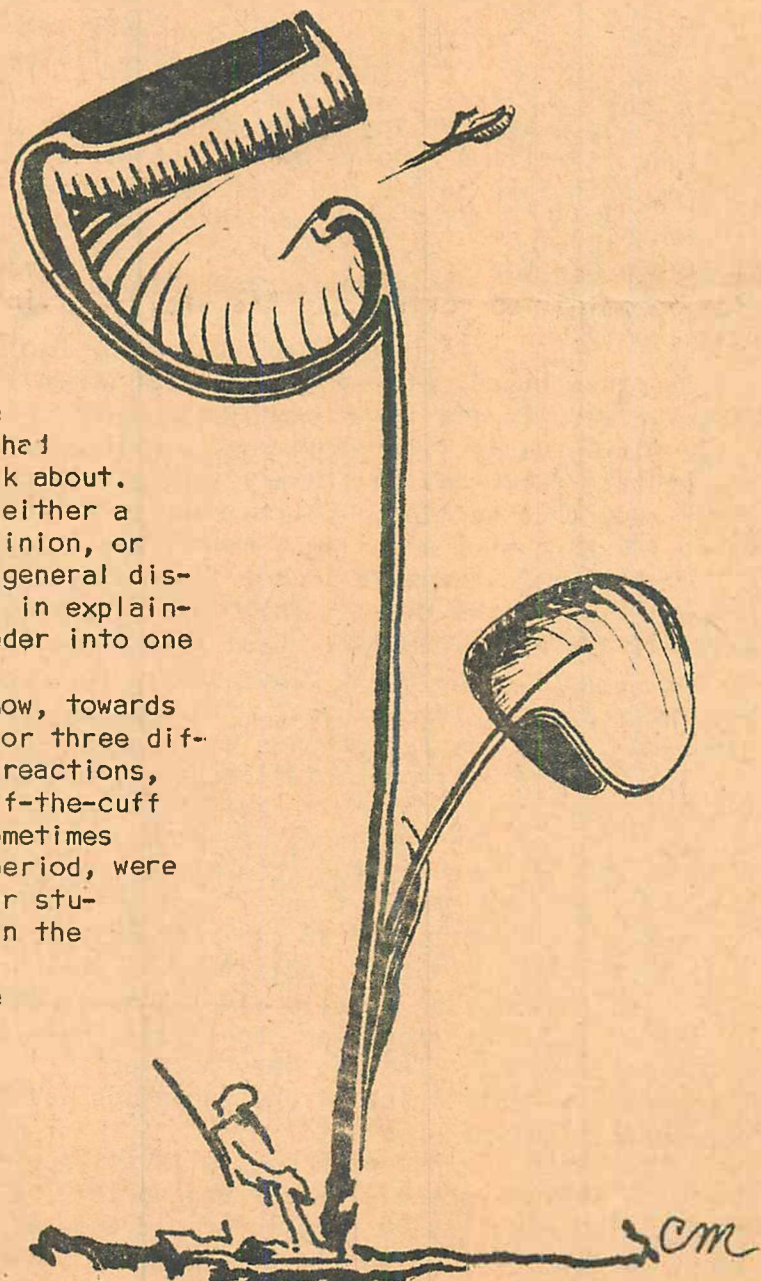
A discussion of Arthur C. Clarke led to the realm of British SF writers, in which I was able to introduce the students to John Wyndham, John Brunner (interestingly, some of them had already read some of Brunner, but didn't realize he was English). Clarke also provided the opportunity for me to introduce the theme of religion in science fiction, and to tell them about James Blish and Lester del Rey and -- above all, of course -- Olaf Stapledon, who in turn led back to H.G. Wells. Aldous Huxley found his way into this same context.

That gives the idea, doesn't it, of how I tried to conduct the discussion or "lecture" portion of the class?

Quite often I would begin a class session by asking if anyone had any questions, or if anybody had anything special he wanted to talk about. As often as not someone would -- either a question or an observation, or opinion, or just some information. Either a general discussion would develop or I would, in explaining the answer to a question, wander into one of my impromptu lectures.

I was somewhat pleased to know, towards the end of the quarter, when two or three different students told me of their reactions, that those spur-of-the-moment, off-the-cuff lectures, during which I would sometimes ramble on for most of the class period, were as impressive (to those particular students, anyway) as anything else in the course.

"It was really amazing," one young man told me. "You stand up there and somebody asks a question and you rattle off information about it for ten or fifteen minutes, with no notes and no book or nothing."





The only time I ever prepared any kind of lecture or lesson was for the very last class session, when I did a presentation of science fiction art -- from J. Allen St. John and Frank R. Paul through Finlay and Bok to Frazetta and Jones--and Freas. This too was done in response to a specific request, but it was kind of funny. I was as nervous at first in giving the presentation as if I'd never faced a class before. It would have been better if I'd had the pictures available on color slides instead of having to put them on the blackboard, but it was well received nonetheless.

Aside from the improvisational nature of the lectures and discussions, the class was run basically the same way it had been in previous quarters.

There was no required reading. I have a huge bookcase full of SF material in my office for student loan. Also I try to tell them about the best places in the area to buy used SF (such places are becoming fewer and fewer), and of the branch libraries with the best SF collections. If a student asks me to do so I will suggest a certain book to read, but mostly I prefer to let them make their own discoveries.

There are several ways to get a grade in the class. I give tests over the "lectures" and discussions in class, every two or three weeks. An attentive student can do nothing but attend class, listen and take tests and still get a good enough grade.

If his grades on the tests don't satisfy him, he has other options. He can turn in written reports of various kinds. He can simply report on the reading he's been doing, and that can be done either as one long report at the end of the quarter or a series of shorter ones. Or the written work can be more ambitious, such as research papers on a certain SF author and his work or on any facet of science fiction itself. I've gotten quite a number of written reports on such authors as Bradbury, Heinlein, Asimov and Clarke; virtually none on Farmer, Niven, Laumer or Dick. And the few reports I have gotten on such subjects as "The Role of Women in SF" have tended to be rather superficial. That's to be expected. Our quarter is only 10 weeks long, so there simply isn't time to be very ambitious with a research paper. Also there's the fact that no library in the area (other than my own) has any kind of SF reference section. Little by little, at my insistence, the MSC library is building up such a section, but it has a long way to go.

I encourage students to get their grades with oral reports or some kind of presentation to the class. This is a crucial aspect of the class; it can make or break the whole quarter. Last fall I couldn't get anyone to give any kind of oral report. The whole class seemed to drag; attendance dropped off. I was glad when the quarter was over. This spring though, for no reason that I can pinpoint, there was far greater willingness to participate, and the quarter was fun. These oral presentations, too, can be simple or elaborate. Some students just read a story to the class and tell a little something about the author. One of the best oral presentations was in that very first class, when Fred Goldstein gave a slide show history of the SF pulp magazines.

In that same class, I began another practice that has become standard. Al Ellis has a collection of SF radio dramatization tapes. Every time I give a test I also have either a radio tape to play or a science fictional movie to show. There's not an awfully wide range of material to choose from in the way of films, from the libraries, so I still rely mostly on those radio tapes that Al Ellis provided. They're very popular.

Well, I can't think of any ingenious way to end this, so here are those general comments I promised.

The major purpose of a course in science fiction should be simply to show and make available the richness and variety of the field; and to this end anyone who teaches science fiction should know as much as possible about the subject. Preferably, he should be a fan.



LOTS A

LOC

[With acknowledgements to Donn Brazier for the heading; he suggested it, perhaps unknowingly, in a letter to me not long ago, and if he has used it a heading himself, then I openly acknowledge the theft].

Mike Glicksohn  
141 High Park Ave.  
Toronto, Ont.  
M6P 2S3

. . . I didn't enlighten you as to Monty Python's Flying Circus because I'd received a pocstard from Sam Long saying he'd do the honours for me although Bruce Townlee has captured the essence of the show in his short description.// Your discourse again rates as one of the

best written fanzine pieces of the month. How often we fervently wish we could erase a hastily spoken phrase that later returns to haunt us. I hope that perhaps writing the incident out has proven cathartic for you.//Sadly, and ironically, my snake died last week and I was saddened by his loss. He was a beautiful creature and I greatly admired him; perhaps one cannot love a snake, but one can certainly miss him. . .

[I was saddened too to hear about the death of Mike's snake. In a way, it's a loss to all fandom. I have a letter from Sam Long, some of which I'll print in a little while. All he says about Monty Python is that he understands there'll be a MPFC film at Discon. There were other comments in other letters, which I'm going to slip in right here, Donn Brazier style]

From D. GARY GRADY: I had no idea there were Monty Python records out. I'll have to get one. Saw the show (including the argument clinic skit) last time in was in the UK. I intend to watch at least one more episode next time I go. One thing that amazed me was the freedom the BBC gives them. For example, they do BBC2 network id's on BBC1!! They also occasionally run the end credits halfway through the program. Weird.

And from KEN MILLETT: A couple of years ago, a selection of the best sketches from "Monty Python's Flying Circus," the BBC tv program mentioned in your lettercol last month, were put together as a theatrical feature called AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT. To my knowledge, it never got to Denver. One sketch, for example, concerns an outbreak of riots by grannies, who are said to be no respecters of race, creed or sex. Hordes of gentle-looking old ladies are seen running amok, doing improbably athletic anti-social things like carting away telephone booths. Some granny-scrawled graffiti on a wall reads, "Make Tea, Not Love."

[Ken Millett, incidentally, is DASFA's own scholar and authority on science fiction and fantasy films. His column in DASFAx, "FanFilmFan," is literally crammed with fascinating items like the above. I hope I'll be able to give more of Ken's letter, in which he joins in the political discussion that has been going on here].

Richard E. Geis  
THE ALIEN CRITIC  
P.O. Box 11408  
Portland, OR 97211

I swear, Don:

I thought that fire was roasting a person, and THAT was the tragedy... A slice of life, very well written, but poor fiction. I KNOW it really happened... that's why it's poor fiction.

I suppose his heart attack proves you should live each day to the full -- because You Never Know. Either that or never touch a snow shovel after your 35th year.

Thanks again for DON-o-SAUR, I ever enjoy it. When your sub runs out, why don't you n me just Trade? [I can't refuse that kind of offer. Thanks, Dick].



Frank L. Balazs  
19 High St.  
Croton on Hudson,  
NY 10520

I really can't comment on Donny's 31 or 32 though I've read and enjoyed them. You see I started #32 with the loc column; having only a couple of spare minutes to read, I didn't wish to launch into your lengthy discourse. I even read your apology before the discourse.

Thus, it is the final thing on my mind after reading the two issues in the past day or two; I read it in one sitting (#32's discourse). Well, I guess the thing didn't hit me till you repeated it, else my reaction might have been different. Out loud I said "Ohmigod," when I was done with reading it.

[I think that's a compliment; I hope it is].

Jodie Offutt  
Funny Farm  
Haldeman, KY  
40329

I hardly know what to say about your discourse. If it were fiction, I'd say it was extremely well written and I couldn't put it down once I'd started it (which is literally true--I only meant to glance at it, but instead carried it around with me while I finished it).

Fiction or not, it was well written.

I'd say I empathized and sympathized with the people in it--the kids, the parents.

It was well-paced.

If it were fiction, I'd say the ending was bad.

Being a true story, I guess the ending was even worse than bad. It was scary.

Irony is a terrible word to use, but it comes to mind. Pitiful.

The thing is, it all--the sequence of events--is all so normal. (With the exception of the scene where the neighbors asked your wife to punish their son, but even that came from understandable desperation).

How terribly sad it all is. Was.

And you told it beautifully. It makes me want to remember to bite my tongue every time I start to lash out in anger or frustration.

It also makes me want to put it out of my mind.

Your letter column is one of the best I've seen anywhere in a long time. I agree with Don D'Amassa that a lot of people want the courts to make decisions for them and take over their responsibilities. I had thoughts along those lines when there was so much talk in this state about sex education in the schools. I've yet to meet a teacher who I thought was qualified to do the job; but a lot of parents I know aren't either--and worse, don't want to. I also agree with Bob Vardeman: we use different names for different subscriptions and such and I resent our names being sold for the purpose of mailing material to us. Mostly because it overloads the PO with unwanted mail, but it touches on invasion of privacy, too.

[I still don't see how, but I'll resist the temptation to reopen the argument on the question right here].

Fred B. Goldstein  
1962 S. Columbine #6  
Denver, CO 80210

I received DoS and read your death comments. I can't really say I enjoyed them; that word doesn't seem to fit what your discourse did to me...

The comment you made that set me off had something to do with not having a personal relationship with death; not having seen it firsthand, so to speak. This started me thinking about my late younger brother, and how he died. It was a real bummer, and I guess I'm writing this as a sort of catharsis. Because it really hurts when I think about it, and I've never written or said anything much about it before (much, hell. I've never said anything about it).

Sherwin (his name) was (I keep wanting to say is) three years younger



than I. There existed in our family full-fledged sibling rivalry. To tell the truth I guess I never much really cared for him.

He had his problems. When I joined the Air Force, he naturally had to do something similar. So he quit high school and joined the Marines. He didn't like it, so he went AWOL a number of times. Finally they gave him an "undesirable discharge" and a year in Portsmouth Prison. While there he got his GED.

When he got out he got involved with drugs (mainly mainlining speed--it was at this point he sold my entire record collection--I was in Vietnam and knew nothing about it). He also got heavily involved with the SDS, and therefore had an FBI agent as a constant shadow.

Meanwhile I had gotten out of the service and discovered that I too had an FBI shadow.

Anyway, Sherwin kicked the drugs, and left the SDS. He got a job as a night clerk/auditor in a motel, and seemed to be taking to it. It was looking as if he might have found himself. He was twenty-one years old.

During Winter break he decided to take a trip to Las Vegas. He had his plane tickets, I remember. He was going to leave on a Saturday. On the Wednesday before that Saturday, I and some friends of mine planned to go down to Sloans Lake for a game of touch football. Sherwin asked if he could go. I said no. It was sibling rivalry rearing its head again. I never did like him out with my friends. He asked again, and for some odd reason I said yes.

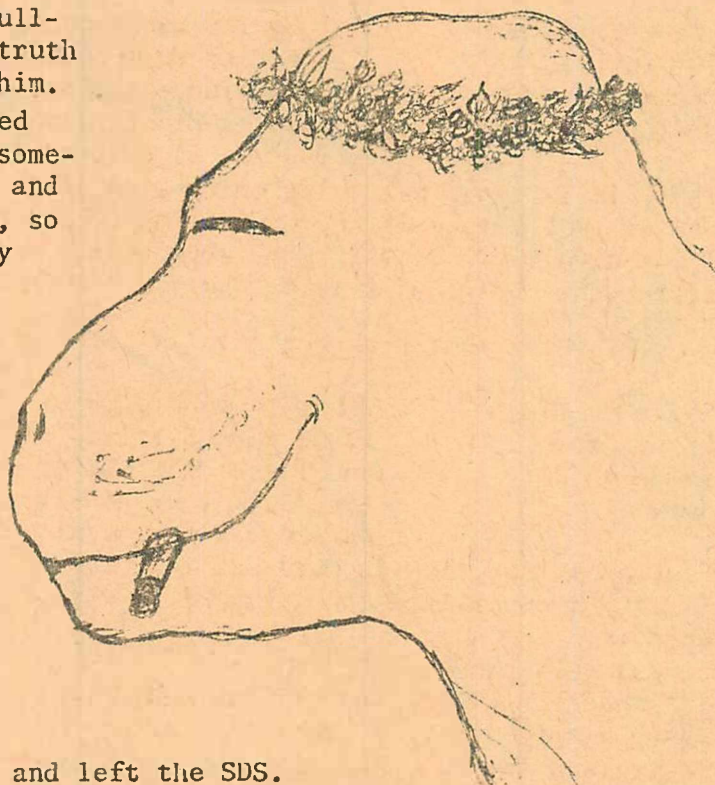
A digression: For some time, Sherwin had been having chest pains. He went to the doctor, and was diagnosed as having ulcers, and was taking Malox.

We went down to the lake, and had played for half an hour when Sherwin seemed to be really out of breath. He went over to the sidelines and sat down. I sent one of us to a drugstore to buy some Malox. We were playing right across the street from St. Anthony's Hospital.

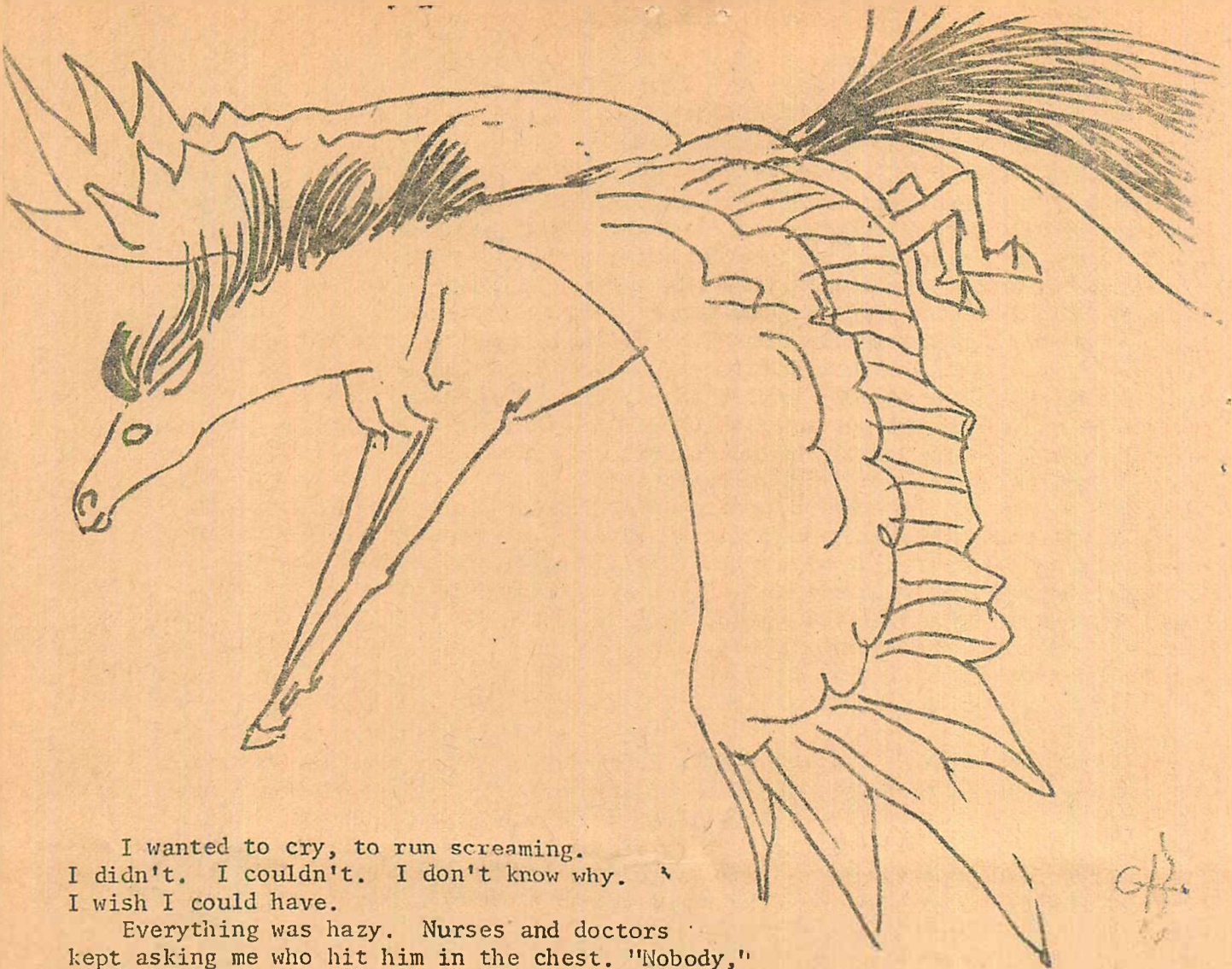
He didn't seem to be getting any better. He was now having trouble talking. He asked us to take him to the hospital. I thought it was his ulcer. But he wasn't getting over it. Finally, we decided we'd put him in a car and take him to the hospital.

While we were driving around the block to the emergency entrance he mumbled something; I couldn't make it out. We arrived at the emergency entrance, and I told Sherwin we were there. No answer. He was unconscious. I ran in and got a gurney, and wheeled it out to the car. I picked him up, put him on the gurney and wheeled him in. We waited forever. Every once in a while I'd sneak into the emergency room to see what was going on (having been a medic, I knew about those things). I spotted, on one trip, a nurse banging him on the chest. It was then I knew he was dead. A 21-year-old does not usually survive a heart attack.

Then a doctor came out and confirmed it. I had to call my parents. I didn't tell them he was dead; I didn't want them killing themselves on the drive to the hospital. I just told them to get out to the hospital now.







I wanted to cry, to run screaming.  
I didn't. I couldn't. I don't know why. I wish I could have.

Everything was hazy. Nurses and doctors kept asking me who hit him in the chest. "Nobody," I kept answering.

And the last thing my brother heard before he died was me telling him he was okay. . . He was 21 years old.

And that's it. I've never been able to talk about this. I find I still can't verbally. I get this lump in my throat, and things get foggy. But it's a Good Thing, they say, to unburden yourself, and now I've done so . . .

[I've already made my comment on this, at the beginning, so I'll move right on to the next letter].

Ben P. Indick  
428 Sagamore Ave.  
Teaneck, N.J 97666

...Your story, about Death, was very well told, even complete to a punch. I would urge you, however, unless you are supernaturally inclined, not to feel you personally moved a cosmic revenge...Although strange things

do happen...

My father, for example, died on the afternoon before the commencement of Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar. My sister, several years later, was expecting her first child...She expected it about August...the baby was late in coming...was it misdiagnosis? Probably. In any event, the baby was well over a month late, and was born on -- the afternoon preceding Yom Kippur. He was named for my father.

Death is something we all get experience with, if we live long enough. [And even if we don't, I can't resist interjecting]. My Dad died at 71, having outlasted a crippling stroke seven years earlier, and had what one might say was a



bonus of 7 good years. He went in one moment, and while my mother has never accepted it, we could see it in some sort of perspective. Much more tragic was the death, in late 1943, of my brother, then 14, of leukemia. For six weeks we watched the process and this fine, tall, lovely boy wasted away before us. For many years he entered my dreams, but all the fantasies of Death taking a holiday were quite ineffectual before the real thing.

In 1965 I had my own brush, as I had a heart attack. I did not know it was such for certain until early in the morning hours (still dark) after many tests, when the cardiologist sat on my hospital bed and suggested I should rest and remain there for about three or four weeks. Suddenly I was for the very first time conscious of the possibility of death, that, indeed, I might see my children and my wife no more. I asked whether I could see the former (my wife was in the corridor). He smiled and said it would only be a few weeks. Before I could sleep, I knew the feeling of emptiness.

Finally, one of the most eloquent passages about Death is in Thomas Mann's The Magic Mountain. In this magnificent novel, the habitués of a mountain sanatorium slowly recover, or try to, from TB. They carry about small X-rays of their chests, much as someone might carry a photograph of a person very important to him. When the young hero, newly arrived, has his photograph taken, and sees his chest bone structure revealed, he knows, for the first time, that someday he must die . . .

Raymond J. Bowie Jr.  
31 Everett Ave.  
Somerville, MA  
02145

Your thing on Death was very interesting. It's hard for me to recall how close it has come to me. Several kids that I knew at the Industrial School for Crippled Children in Boston have passed on, one or two who were extremely close to me. At the time that

I've heard of such passings-on, I've trembled a bit at the thought that I, like those who are gone, am handicapped and that this might mean that I would eventually go. True, it's not too logical; many non-handicapped people also die, but maybe those deaths had more meaning to me because I have faced it every time I was operated on (over 14 times).

Other times I have faced death is when one of the household pets would die. In fact, my sister's finch, which lived in my room, was found on Wednesday night, June 5. I was watching Cannon at the time and I just momentarily winced a bit and then I forgot about it.

The closest time, as I can recall, being really affected by it was when one of our foster babies died at the age of 6 months from meningitis. My mother, for quite a stretch, used to care for foster babies until they were adopted or the mother decided to take them.

Kathy, when she died, created a void in our lives. Through the months before, as the disease was progressing, she became very close to all of us. In effect it was almost like she was ours because we had her during her entire life. I did not attend the funeral or the burial. I can't really say why. Someone defended my refusal saying that I wanted to remember Kathy as I saw her in life. I have little good to say about most funeral practices. I can't see having a dead body on display as they do in wakes -- extremely morbid. Why do we have to view something that was once living as if it held a certain feeling-emotion-whatever for you. When someone's dead, he's dead. If there's a vale beyond, it'll be a long time before we know of it. ...

Carolyn D. Miller  
6120 Gray  
Arvada, CO 80003

. . . The method you used to write the story was very effective. There is nothing so clear as hindsight; there is also no view as unreal. At any given time you are reacting to all the things around you and

within you. It is so complex a thing that you have to do it automatically.



You are unconscious of most of the things you are reacting to. It is impossible to look back on a situation and know all of the factors that made you act as you did. You handled the situation with all the experience you have gained in a lifetime.

I think you should have more faith in yourself as a well functioning being. You do function well. You continue to think and learn. You seem to enjoy living and you keep your sense of humor in good working order. In short you continue to pursue the art of being human. What more can even the Gods ask? I think you acted as you did through more experience than you can be aware of, with more skill than you know.

Since I don't know Nicky Scheidt, what I say about him consists of rough guessing. What I know of Nicky through your story makes him sound like a kid going through the trial of adolescence. He was pushing everyone to see how far he could go before getting pushed back. He was finding his boundaries. He was pushing you, or Carolyn, or your son and his friends by building a fire. True he hadn't intended to make a battle of it by burning down the place, but it was his act. His own guilt wasn't enough. He needed someone to push back. I suppose you could have pushed in any number of ways. But would they really have been right for the situation? I don't know. Probably not. You probably understood that Nicky needed some help, counseling and understanding too. But it wasn't the kind of thing you should have done. That kind of support should come from his family. The people who know him best and can really help him.

I guess I can't just leave it at this because your feelings about what happened are so strong. Did your reactions bother you because they don't fit your self image? Do you think the person you are learning to become wouldn't have reacted that way? Maybe you are limiting yourself too much. If a human being is anything he is variety. Infinite and infinitely variable.

This should turn into some good discussions about guilt. If we ever get around to discussing death -- well, I've got some ideas on that, too.

[Carolyn Miller is another DASFan, a fairly recent member. She showed up just within the past year and immediately joined D'APA and has been contributing a lovely little zine called Full Moon, in which she displays her considerable artistic talents (evidenced here on page 9) and the kind of perceptive and incisive commentary that she demonstrates in the letter above. And following is another letter from another DASFan. Ted Peak is also a member of D'APA, in fact a former OE. His zine, KATANA, filled with wit, humor, occasional fiction, intelligent discussion and with Ted's own fine Japanese-style drawings, is generally acknowledged as the best zine in D'APA. And last month he launched a brand new Denver area genzine--FANITY FARE. It includes a short history of Denver fandom (following an illustrated introduction to the editor), a short story by Ted Peak, and finally an absolutely inspired parody of LOCUS. It's a nice zine, available for the asking].

Ted B. Peak  
1556 Detroit #1  
Denver, CO 80206

. . . Your anecdote touched me, Don. Even if you did convolute the story almost to agony, you said something that touched me deeply. I have felt the way you must have felt; I also have wished that angry words could be taken back. I seriously doubt that your remark killed Paul Scheidt. But I know how you feel that you may have added an element of pain to Nicky's grief. It's a terrible burden, and one I can see needed to be salved to some degree. I cry with you, Don.

...one reason I avoid drugs, to include marijuana, is that my one way to hide from the world is food. I eat to kill real pain the way some others



drink or smoke grass. I don't think we should argue for abolishing drugs because people use them to hide, but I think we should be aware of the causes for people escaping and work to correct that problem. Perhaps the other would take care of itself.

Don D'Amassa hit the nail on the head when he said "the single largest flaw in this country, and the world, is that most people just don't have the courage to accept their own personal freedom." Right. It's hard to say "this happened because I failed in my duty to care about my society." It's a hell of a lot easier to say, "It's their fault." Perhaps that's what made the revolution (in 1776) work. People were willing to take the responsibility. Although, I know there was a lot of recalcitrance on the part of many, enough cared to make the difference.

...I am glad that I wrote you a letter, because I've been wanting to for some time. Hope you find time to do all that you want to do, and I hope that part of that is writing fiction. You have a real feel for people, and that is a mark of a fine writer, such as Ed [Bryant]. Do try to fit it into your schedule.

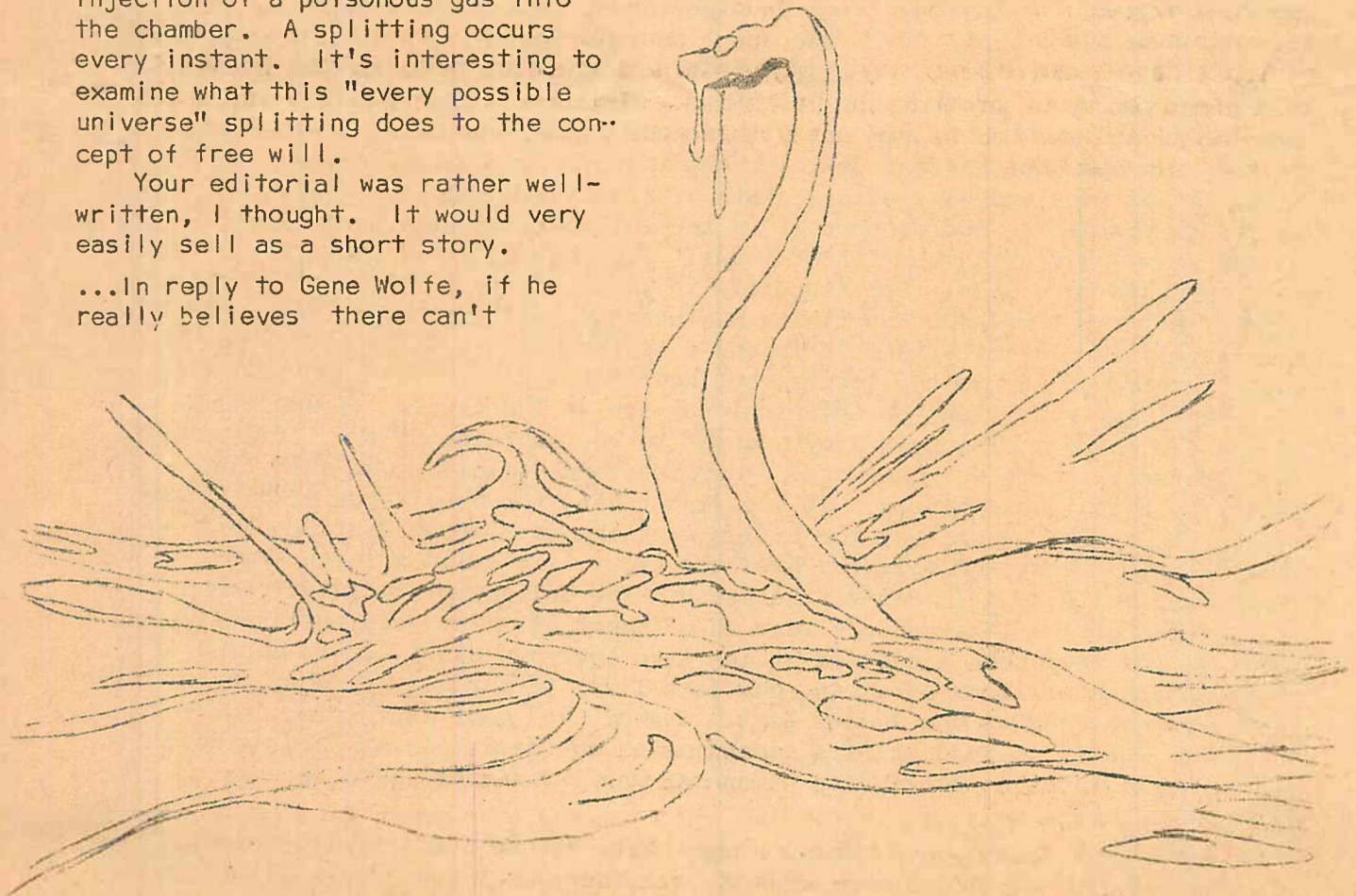
D. Gary Grady  
Box 25 AFRTS  
FPO New York

"How We Pass the Time in Hell" sounds like it sprang from a hypothesis by (I believe) P.A.M. Dirac. The original paper speculated that quantum mechanics implies a splitting of reality and gave as an example a

kitty cat in a gas chamber. The decay of a particular nucleus will cause the cat to kick off due to the injection of a poisonous gas into the chamber. A splitting occurs every instant. It's interesting to examine what this "every possible universe" splitting does to the concept of free will.

Your editorial was rather well-written, I thought. It would very easily sell as a short story.

...In reply to Gene Wolfe, if he really believes there can't



DAVID



be "the slightest doubt that Britain, today, is better governed than the United States," he must be an incurable Anglophile or not too well informed on English society and politics. I suggest he subscribe to PUNCH for a while. I like the UK and I like the English, but let's not ignore the fact that hereditary power is still very much alive in the House of Lords and that Queen Elizabeth gets paid far more for being born into the right family than Tricky Dick was able to rip off. ... I'll grant that British police are generally more competent than their American counterparts, but in almost every other area, from public education to racial attitudes to freedom of the press, Britain is behind the States.

. . . Bruce is dead right about the crying need for volunteers.

And Jodie Cffut is dead wrong when she says marijuana isn't a drug. It most certainly is. She probably means it is not a narcotic. By the way, there is far more evidence that grass is addictive than there is to the contrary. But, since Coca Cola and coffee are addictive, I can't see what that would have to do with anything. I'm sorry to hear that Jodie smokes Belaires. I find it difficult to understand why people take such delight in these practices. I think I'd choose a quicker way of doing myself in. . .

C. William George might be asked to come up with a single example of a libertarian utopia that has actually worked. Anywhere. I might like to hear who finances pure research and takes care of the helpless, bearing in mind what Bruce pointed out concerning volunteers, in such a society.

Robert J. Barthell  
Northwest Community College  
Powell, Wyo. 82435

...the last issue of Don-o-Saur was something of an experience. The article on Nicky was the one I'm referring to. As it happened, I had just finished a letter to an old friend of the family whose brother had just died. He was a person I had known for many years and who had helped out with school money, etc. when I was a young fellow. He had done a great deal for me, and I liked him. I never told him that. I had received news of his death at school and had just finished a letter in the office and dropped it in the mail box. At the same time I picked up my mail with your latest issue. The feeling I had about my letter was expressed more openly and sincerely in your article. This sort of thing happens all the time--but the timing was uncanny, and disturbing. I sent the article in your zine to this friend's sister because it seemed to say what I wanted to say in the letter, but couldn't.

Regarding your views on universal service -- I disagree. I would like to see the concept of a paid army brought to the extremes of the 17th and 18th centuries where war was waged by professional soldiers who sold themselves to the highest bidder. If you didn't have the bread--you didn't start a war. This also meant that the nation with the most money would conquer everything, because the military held the clout. To build a large army would mean building a threat to the state. The delightful formalities and rigid rules of the 18th century were an offshoot of this: soldiers are expensive, and they need a code of ethics like everyone else. It is when a government has millions of cheap, obedient lives to throw away, they go on butchering as long as the bodies last. One of the most depressing aspects of modern war is to read Grant's commentaries on the Battle of Cold Harbor. The man calculated he could keep using men until the enemy gave up; the lives were cheap. . .

To believe that a professional army would become a danger is correct, and that limits its size. But when the military has large groups of people to control, it moves in for complete control of the society. One need only witness the rather ruthless extermination of the Vietnamese and the amused



American view of the Asian taking off a day or two of fighting for a New Year's celebration. Frankly, I prefer the days off. This type of response to a holiday or religious festival is unknown in our own military circles. The concept of alternate service in a draft system (work in hospitals, etc.) is merely the exploitation of the only people who could effectively oppose war by being taken into the army, where their talents can be exploited by the government, and at the same time they will be freeing someone else to do the killing. It is up to the individual to protect himself, and if he can't see that need for self defense when the time arises, he certainly belongs wherever he ends up. To have a son or daughter dragged off to empty bedpans in a hospital ward is no less a violation of their freedom than putting them on a firing line. I don't like it.

### S H O R T     T A K E S

ROGER SWEENEY: ...in determining government policy, the only objective stand, i.e. action true to the nature of reality, that can legitimately be taken is a stand that recognizes the primacy of individual rights. Nothing is more sacred than the individual, and the good of the individual must not be sacrificed to any other consideration.

SAM LONG: It's a debatable point whether individual liberty such as we of Western Civilization have or desire is a trait tending toward the survival of the species or not, the survival of the species being Nature's chief good, and the extinction thereof being the sign that that species has been found wanting. In other societies, survival of the clan takes precedence over survival of the individual; psychiatric 'identity' problems are non-existent there.

ROY TACKETT: Do you want a discussion of death in DON-o-SAUR? Why not. It is a subject nobody wants to talk about. There is an unofficial taboo because we don't like to think about it. Despite all the reassurances of religion that we are immortal...we all have the sneaking suspicion that death is indeed the end. And that is the hangup. Our egos rebel at the thought that a time will come when they no longer exist. Which is why we all try to leave some sort of monument behind--so that we will be remembered.//Despite all the reassurances of religion--and the fervent belief of millions--serious investigation--serious scientific investigation, make that--has not come up with one shred of proof of continued existence of the ego beyond death. Many have actually died on the operating table and been revived. What do they remember of being dead? Nothing.

DAVE SZUREK: I do believe that there is life after death -- of a type -- that the person's consciousness exists in shall I say another dimension. I also believe in reincarnation after a spell, but don't find it particularly relevant, for "total" amnesia has obviously occurred, and it's merely the recycling of whatever material makes up the soul. I do not, however, believe in a system of rewards and punishments-- of heaven and hell, and I'm glad I don't, for if I did, I'd find the prospect of life after death more of a disturbance than a comfort. Isn't the idea of "just sleeping" a lot more appealing than that of being "eternally hassled" for having been human? I can never understand why believers consider this a blessing, but we're two separate mentalities, I guess. Hell (no pun intended) the concept of merely being relocated to a different dimension is no bowl of cherries if you want to be somewhere else, i.e. back "down here."



And Now For Something Completely Different. . . here's part of a letter from :

George Beahm  
13 Gainsborough Place  
Newport News, VA  
23602

Australian fan Eric Lindsay dropped by here last year and sat up 7 hours and discussed a project he was kicking around. He wanted to look at fandom at a sociological perspective and show that (a) most fans are male, (b) most fans are more introverted than extroverted, and (c) outside of fandom, most male fans have little social life. I thought about this, considering the exceptions, but on the whole, I think his thesis is a valid one. Can fandom, as one prominent North Carolina fan once said, provide as a social outlet? Can it replace mundane social obligations? For younger fans, lured by the promise of meeting new friends enthused about SF or comics, I can see how their activities would be funneled into fandom. Instead of dating on any regular basis, they would write locs, publish fanzines, go to conventions, and correspond at great length. Naturally, I can think of fans who demolish the stereotype--and is there one?--of the shy introverted fan, who is extremely intelligent, dresses conservatively (eschewing fancy clothes such as one sees in the pages of PLAYBOY or ESQUIRE), probably wants to go to college (or is in it already) and wears glasses. But it is all very interesting to me. I'd like to see you raise the topic in a future issue of DON-o-SAUR and see what reaction you get.

Okay. The issue has been raised. Let's see what kind of reaction we DO get. Ohhh! I've had to leave out an awfully lot of fine letters. I may have to run a special supplement sometime, to get some of these in.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Don D'Amassa, Dick Patten, Dr. Fredric Wertham, Eric Lindsay, Ruth Berman, Brett Cox, Brad Parks, Randall Larson, Hank Jewell, Mike Kring, and Jerry Kaufman.

ART CREDITS: Cover, Steve Barnes; P. 3, J.C. Kapalka; P. 6 & 14; Gail Barton, P. 9, Carolyn Miller; P. 13, Jim Hyatt; P. 17, David Barnett

DON-o-SAUR  
Donald C. Thompson  
7498 Canosa Ct.  
Westminster, CO 80030



THIRD CLASS MAIL

Printed Matter Only

Jerry Kaufman  
622 W. 114th St.  
New York, NY 10025