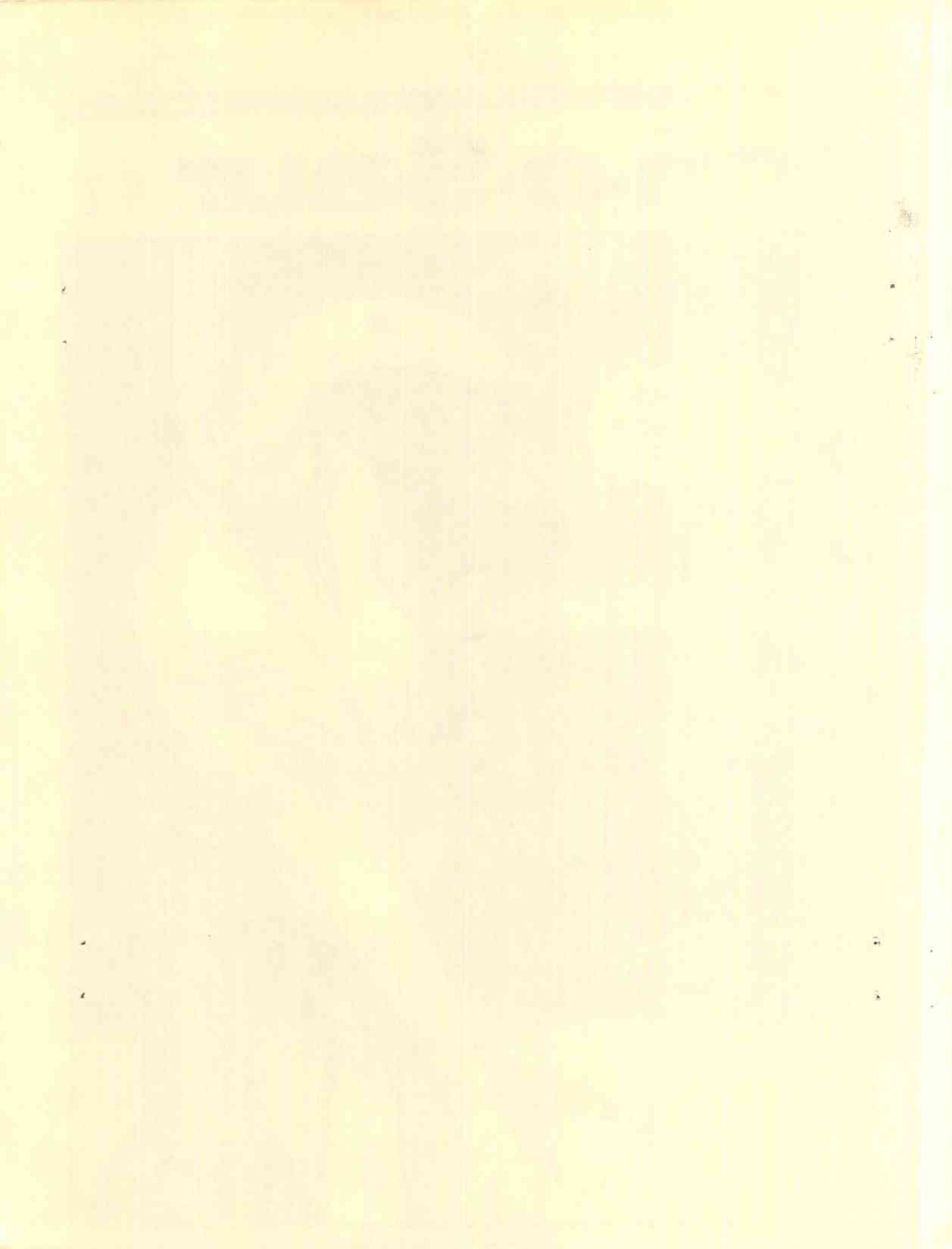


# Don·o·Saur 47







# DON-O-SAUR

47

And about time, too!

I keep trying to remember how, in the olden days, when I was doing DON-o-SAUR almost solely for my own bemusement, unselfconsciously, with no particular feeling of pressure or pulling from masses of eager readers and subscribers, I managed to produce an issue every month. I just can't believe that I used to do that. It must have been two or three other guys.

Except that I remember doing it -- and I even remember how I did it.

At a certain time each month, usually just after I'd finished printing and collating *DASFAX*, the monthly publication of the Denver Area SF Association, of which I am also the editor, I would simply sit down at the typer, inster a stencil or paper offset master, and start tapping on the keys. Words would begin to appear on the page and then thoughts would begin taking form in my head, feeding upon the words my fingers had spewed forth, which in turn after a while would begin reflecting the thoughts . . .

And I would simply continue that process for several hours a day, for several days, until by the Saturday of the DASFA meeting I would have a stack of stencils or paper masters or some combination thereof totaling between 12 and 20 pages, and I would spend all day Saturday toiling over a recalcitrant mimeo and/or offset, always managing somehow not only to get the printing done but to get enough copies collated and stapled to take to the meeting for the small but fortunate segment of the DASFA membership that comprised from 90 per cent to (later) 10 percent of the DON-o-SAUR audience.

Ah, but those were the days of eager innocence and simplicity, and they will not come again -- not for me, not for DoS. I remember feeling downright embarrassed the first time I ran off a hundred copies of a 16-page zine. It seemed incredibly pretentious, as though I were trying to kid myself into thinking I was a real publisher; but I honestly couldn't imagine how I would ever get rid of all those extra copies.

What I also remember about that first 100-page print run is what an enormous amount of work it was. I was so exhausted by Saturday night that I was scarcely able to stay up for the all-night party following the DASFA meeting; and I seem to recall that even then I was starting to pine for the old days of innocence and simplicity and small circulation.

Time does not run backward . . .

\* \* \* \* \*

That statement was so profound that it brought my thought processes to a dead halt (fatally wounded, anyway). Since then, I've been trying to peer ahead along the course that my discourse seemed to be taking, to see if maybe I was building up to some sort of momentous announcement.

It would not have surprised me to learn that I intended to start telling you about my new \$1,000 plate-making device, the Mullen Eliminating device, the Mullen Eliminating

... observe....



ator II(which is a fantastic contraption that I undoubtedly will tell you more about than you want to know), and then, subtly, to work around to the revelation that I was planning to quadruple the size of DON-o-SAUR and go for a ten-fold increase in circulation in a real all-out effort to wrest at least one of those nice Hugos from either Charlie Brown or Dick Geis.

But, while I may not be the most mentally healthy person in Christendom, I am not yet totally insane, either; and I am quite certain that I did not have any such intention lurking in the back of my mind. Or, if I did, I'm glad I was able to intercept it.

No, apparently my opening comments were fairly innocent -- a sincere and uncomplicated expression of nostalgia, mixed in with a philosophical acceptance of the fact that fanzine success carries with it the built-in penalty of an ever-growing mailing list and the attendant pressure to produce.

But no announcements. And since the discourse was destined to dwindle into platitudes, I choose to seize conscious control of it right at this point and forcibly divert it to more pertinent concerns.

Unfortunately, that means I have to stop and think about what my pertinent concerns are for this issue.

But all right. No insurmountable problem. I've done it -- I've thought, and here are my conclusions. These are the things that I have in mind to present for your diversion and edification:

To begin with, I must do a sort of non-report on MidAmeriCon. I am not going to do a regular con report for several reasons, and all of them are that I don't want to do a regular con report. I did two con reports last issue and reprinted an old con report in the issue before that, and even though my con reports have been very enthusiastically received, eliciting more (and more congenial) mail than anything I've written for a long time, I am tired of them, and no one can force me to write another con report for a while. Still, the old peer-pressure principle is operative, and so I find myself yielding partially and submitting at least a non-report.

I want to keep the con non-report brief for another reason: I'm eager to set forth my own ideas on the issue of obedience and disobedience of the law. In doing that I'll be making use of a letter from Don D'Amassa and excerpts at least from a number of other letters; and that could lead naturally and inexorably into a larger-than-usual letter col. And finally, there's a bonus -- the much-heralded and more-than-once-cautioned-against special student fiction supplement. Cautioned against? It's true. The idea did not meet with unanimous and unrestrained cries of delight. There have been those who argue that since fan fiction in general is at the low end of the popularity scale and since it isn't likely that student fiction will be much if any better than the best fan fiction, such a supplement could be construed as a waste of everyone's time. I have no answer to such arguments except that I'm going to print the supplement anyway.

So . . . all that lies ahead, and if I expect to finish it I'd better start.

Oh! But first I must tell you about that plate-maker. The Eliminator II is a contact-print device. What it eliminates is the camera and transparent negative and the stripping process of photo-offset. It works sort of like a copy machine. The original is placed face-down on a contact negative and exposed to a bright light for a second or so. Then the negative is placed against a metal plate and they go together through a developing fluid, and the image is transferred to the plate. The next page is an example.

# to MAC and back

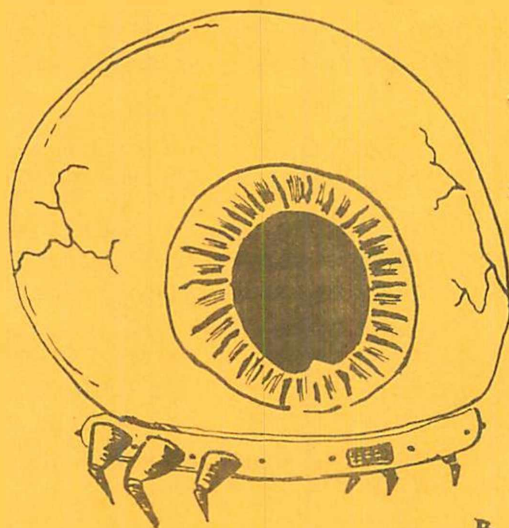
One of the reasons I'm reluctant to do a report on MidAmeriCon is that from a reportorial point of view, nothing much happened -- that I was aware of. What I mean is that I wasn't there, this time, as a reporter, but strictly as a fan. Rather deliberately, I was making no attempt to check on such matters as how well the con was being run, how successful any of the events were, which pros were or were not in attendance, or what the official (or even unofficial) attendance was. I did not even, on a personal and

subjective level, make any attempt to keep track of the number of people I met and talked with, or what we talked about. I took no notes; I made no list of names -- although I came away with a large-ish bundle of names and addresses of people to send DoS to, but that isn't the same thing.

Nevertheless, in spite of what amounted to almost a policy of non-attentiveness, some matters impinged themselves upon my consciousness. Though I attended very few panels or other such programs, I kept hearing unsettling reports that things were starting more or less on time and proceeding smoothly for the most part. And I couldn't help noticing that the art show was large and lovely (and I didn't find the Dorsai much more overbearing than any other security guards, though I got the feeling there was quite a lot of resentment about them); and that the Huckster Room was large and (seemingly) lucrative. I didn't spend nearly as much time, or money either, in the Huckster Room as I have at previous cons, but that was for a variety of reasons (chief among them the fact that I had just immersed myself to the tips of my pointy ears in debt for the fancy plate-maker that's doing this page), and none of them reflect on any characteristics of the Huckster Room itself.

There were some other unavoidable impressions: MAC almost got nicknamed Hospital Con because of the white plastic ("foolproof") wrist bands. There was a lot of joking about them, and a lot of people slipping them ostentatiously off and on, and there was maybe even some real bitterness about them, but in general they were accepted good naturedly and they did seem to be effective in keeping to a minimum the numbers of freeloaders and gate-crashers, even though after about the first day the security guards weren't inspecting them very closely. And if anybody had to pay a \$50 replacement fee, I didn't hear about it. (My wrist band broke -- I can confess it now -- some time Saturday, because I had been ostentatiously slipping it off and on; and I simply sewed it back together, which I was able to do because Carolyn has the good sense to carry needle and thread with her to conventions, and no one ever noticed).

The con was not nearly as big and congested as had been widely feared. I believe the final attendance figure was well under 3,000. It was still too big and too congested to be t tally enjoyable, but I was far more successful at meeting again those





people I would encounter and say "see you again" to than I was at Discon. There were only a few people that I really wanted to meet and talk to that I failed entirely to make contact with. The greatest disappointments were in not meeting Don and Sheilah D'Ammassa or Don and Maggie Thompson, but it's pretty hard to make the con a scapegoat for that, since neither of those couples was there. I heard from separate but equally reliable sources that Don T. had been GoH at a comiCon just the weekend before MAC and was simply conned out, and that the D'Ammassas had developed car trouble not far from home. I was sincerely regretful.

One of those who was at the con and I wanted to meet but missed was Marion Zimmer Bradley. I spent a fair chunk of one evening chasing her up and down the elevators of the Muehlebach, from one party to another, hearing reports that "she was here just a minute ago." The main reason I wanted to meet her was that she's pro Guest of Honor at MileHiCon this year, when I'm fan GoH, and I just thought it would be nice to get to know her a little in advance. But I never did catch up with her, but I understand other Denfen did, so she knows more or less what she's in for.

Andy Dyer was at MAC, and he even called me in my room once, but we never managed to make connections either, and that was a disappointment.

I spent even more time on the trail of Grant Canfield than I did looking for MZB, because I was also helping Alyson Abramowitz track down people that she wanted to meet, and Grant was high on her list as well as on mine. And I don't know if Alyson ever found him or not -- I would guess that she did, perseverance and resourcefulness being high among her positive attributes.

The only person I did not meet a second time after saying "See you again" was Sheryl Smith, whom I had not really expected to meet at all. Our paths crossed at about 3:30 a.m. Sunday, following the Saturday night masquerade show, which was re-shown on TV ad nauseam. I had, much earlier in the evening, abandoned the attempt to watch the masquerade on the TV in the hotel room Carolyn and I had been assigned, on the top floor in a remote corner of the hotel. The black and white picture we were getting was fuzzy and flickering, and it was impossible to tell anything about the costumes. Hearing vague rumors of other areas in the hotel where reception was superior, I wandered off in quest of said superiority; and several hours later I was still ducking in and out of rooms containing clusters of people staring fixedly at the TV sets. Sheryl and I bumped into each other quite literally in the narrow hall-like entranceway of one such room. We found a quiet corner of the main hotel corridor and sat down and talked for an hour and a half, about. Anyway it was around 5 a.m. when I kissed her good night and said, "See you tomorrow, probably." But I didn't.

I did not attend the masquerade, as I mentioned, because I was counting on watching it on TV in the comfort of the hotel room. But I didn't quite totally miss out on the panels and programs. I went to two of each.

The two panels that I attended were actually supposed to be workshops, and maybe they tended more in that direction after I left, which was somewhat before the midpoint of each. These were the fanzine workshops (or panels)-- one for mimeo and one for offset. Since I use both to some degree, I decided I ought to go to both; but as I mentioned, I abandoned both of them rather early on. It wasn't that there was anything wrong with the panels, exactly (though if I wanted to over-simplify I could say that the mimeo panel was too elementary and the offset panel too advanced, but that would

be a gross over-simplification). What I will say about the mimeo panel is that after seeing Jon Singer's dramatic demonstration of what a mimeo is (he hopped up on the table and *became* an operating mimeograph machine), all else seemed uneducational, irrelevant and anti-climactic.

And the offset panel did perhaps go into a bit more technical detail than seemed (to me) absolutely necessary, and moreover it seemed geared more to the Tom Reamy slick professional high quality type offset fanzine than to the Don Thompson shoddy amateur crud product.

Even so, the fault was not so much with the panel and panelists as it was with my receptivity.

It simply was not my con for formalities. The two programs that I attended failed to stir any appreciable enthusiasm in me, either. The programs were the dramatic presentation, "Sails of Moonlight, Eyes of Dusk" on Friday night and the Hugo Awards ceremony Sunday night.

The dramatic production had a lot going for it, based as it was on Cordwainer Smith's "Instrumentality" characters and stories by Gordon Dickson, George R.R. Martin, Harlan Ellison, C.L. Moore, Bob Silverberg and Thomas Burnett Swann. And it was of professional quality -- or as near as matters -- in terms of acting, directing, costuming, lighting, setting, music . . . everything. It was a slick, smooth, competent production, and nothing for anybody to be ashamed of.

Unfortunately, it was also dull. It dragged. At intermission time I slipped out and went back to the hotel in search of parties, and didn't have any trouble finding them.

The play was in Municipal Auditorium, practically across the street from the Muehlebach and had a seating capacity of several million (no, I don't know; four or five thousand, maybe). And that is also where the other major program that I attended was held.

That was the Hugo Awards ceremony, Sunday night.

Robert Heinlein had wanted all the men in formal wear, so they would look civilized, I guess, but you know how that turned out. Fans? Civilized? Me too. I even refused to wear matching jacket and pants (no problem; I don't have a jacket that matches any of my pants -- that's called a suit, isn't it?) or to remove the encrusted armor plate of pins, badges, tags and buttons of various kinds that had accumulated on my torso, and Carolyn was disgusted with me. I argued that I was going to look very formally dressed indeed compared to what many other people would be wearing and that in any case I was most unlikely to have to get up on the stage and have my attire inspected.

Heinlein lost out. Everyone wore pretty much what they damn pleased to the Awards ceremony. Tom Reamy was gorgeous in a 17th-century-looking outfit with ruffles, and Lin Carter projected a certain rustic splendor in his levis, and Ed Bryant looked, as always, like the reincarnation of Bufalo Bill -- which, come to think of it, he may be.

The Awards ceremony itself was deftly enough handled by toastmaster Bob Tucker (a very model of sartorial excellence himself).

But unfortunately the ceremony was followed by Heinlein's Guest of Honor speech.

Would you mind much if I quote myself for a while here? I wrote a sort

METHODS OF  
REPRODUCTION:  
*Lithography*



of con report for the September issue of DASFAX, and it consisted mostly of my reactions to Heinlein's speech. I don't think I can improve on that part of it, so here it is:

Heinlein, attired in full formal dress and standing militarily erect despite his advanced years (well, he's 69), was an impressive figure as he stood at the podium and set an alarm clock to ring in one half hour, at the end of which time, he promised, he would stop talking.

Speaking in a strong, clear voice, without notes, with his hands by his sides except for a rare gesture to emphasize his words, the Guest of Honor delivered the most incoherent, disorganized, disconnected, rambling and pointless speech that I have ever heard from a man of Heinlein's stature.

He talked a little about his childhood in Kansas City and a little about his decision to take up writing. He spoke about his first World-Con Guest of Honor speech, at the Denvention in 1941, and about some of the predictions he made then, including one about a war that the U.S. would soon be in. He started to say something about the different kinds of prognostication and extrapolation techniques that SF writers use, but got distracted by a casual comment about a birthday and spent seven or eight minutes telling birthday jokes, including the one about the man who was 21 before he celebrated his first birthday. When he got back to the subject of prognostication, it was with a prediction that there would be atomic wars and there would be survivors; and he tossed in another portion of his standard Military Academy speech, to the effect that "you can have freedom or you can have peace, but you can never have both!" He seemed as pleased by the boos as by the cheers -- they were about equally divided. Then he said we would reach the stars (applause) and that the primary function of the human male is to fight in defense of women and children (more boos).

Heinlein did stop talking at the end of his half hour, more or less in the middle of a sentence, but I wasn't paying much attention to what he was saying then.

The only thing I left out of my report of the speech, that I wish now I had included, is a reference to Heinlein's calling attention to his stuttering problem. If he had not mentioned it, most people would never have noticed the occasional slight pauses at sometimes inappropriate places as he spoke. It was the one touch of humanity that he projected. Except for that, it might well have been a slightly malfunctioning Heinlein simulacrum up there on the stage.

\* \* \* \* \*

More time has passed. It's been doing a lot of that lately, at a steadily accelerating rate. There's more about MAC that I want to talk about, briefly; I've mentioned the low point of it -- Heinlein's speech -- and it wouldn't be fair to quit until I've said a little about the high point -- the Ranquet. So be assured that my non-report is incomplete. But suddenly, because of the passage of time, it has become appropriate to interrupt with (of all the improbable weird things imaginable!) another con report.

I finally met Marion Zimmer Bradley late Saturday afternoon at MileHiCon, which took place as scheduled Oct. 22-24 at the Sheraton Airport Inn in Denver. I missed MZB Friday night at the meet-the-authors party because Carolyn and I were an hour or so late getting to the party (which started at about 7 p.m.) and, as I heard later, the ProGoH had one drink and succumbed to the altitude. She retreated to her room and was not heard from in civilization again until



some time the following day. I put in a certain amount of time playing the same kind of hide-and-seek that I did at MAC -- asking people if they'd seen Marion Zimmer Bradley and being told, "Why, she was just here a few minutes ago -- you just barely missed her." But finally I caught up with her. She was talking to someone who was just about to go up the stairs into the lobby, and I hovered on the outskirts of the conversation until its termination, and then I pounced, extending my hand as I approached.

"Hello, Marion Zimmer Bradley, I'm Don Thompson; I've been wanting to meet you for a long time."

Marion Zimmer Bradley clutched my hand and spoke warm words that froze my brain.

"Why, hello, Don. How nice to see you again. Is Maggie with you?"

In spite of a lot of things militating against it, MileHiCon 8 turned out to be thoroughly enjoyable. I had experienced very severe misgivings in advance of the event, that I tried to be not too open about because, as fan GoH and not doing any work on the concom myself I didn't want to seem ungrateful or critical of the efforts of others. Nevertheless, I had been worried by the utter absence of any kind of either local or national publicity for the con until less than two months ahead of time, which was just about the same time that a pro GoH designee emerged from a mist of conflict and indecision. There were other ill omens, culminating in the most ominous of all, Friday night, just as the con was starting: A 12 or 13-year-old boy who had been playing with a couple of young friends, chasing around among the con attendees and talking with Jeri Stephan at the registration desk, suddenly grabbed the box containing the money and dashed out the nearest door before anyone knew what was happening. Jeri had taken most of the big bills out of the box, but even so the loss was about \$140. Chuck Hansen started taking up a collection, and before the con was over he had managed to make up about half of what was stolen, but when the theft occurred, I admit that I was just about ready to give up, to write off MileHiCon 8 as a total loss, to go back home and spend the weekend listening to the stereo.

I'm glad I didn't do that.

Except for the identity crisis with MZB ("Oh, then you're not the Don Thompson," she said and hastened away to talk to someone else, and she never spoke to me again all during the con), and one other equally embarrassing incident (emcee Ed Bryant introduced me at the brunch by reading an entry in "Who's Who in Fandom" for that Don Thompson, thereby completely messing up my speech ((which was no masterpiece to begin with)) by making me spend a lot of time with awkward and inept efforts to explain who I really am), things went smoothly and it was a pleasant con.

My fears about the con being under-publicized and therefore under-attended were groundless. More than 300 people showed up, quite a few more than last year, when attendance was barely 250. I had to conclude that the difference was provided by the presence of Frank Brunner as a "Special Guest." He had a small display room adjacent to the art show room, and he was surrounded by comics fans the few times I saw him (I never did meet him).

The necest thing, as always, was visiting with old and new friends. The Dentons were down from Seattle; Bob Vardeman was up from Albuquerque; David Klaus was over from St. Louis; and there were several from Phoenix -- Bill

Patterson, Patrick Hayden, Phil Paine . . . Phil Paine? Phoenix? I thought he was from Canada.

Well, he is, as a matter of fact, but he was with the Phoenix people when I saw him at MileHiCon, and he was still with the Phoenix group when I saw him again at TusCon.

\* \* \* \* \*

**W** (meaning of course I) interrupt this interruption to bring you a special non-report on TusCon IV. There are still several things I want to say about MileHiCon, and I have yet to tell about the high point of MidAmeriCon -- but at least I will promise not to break into the middle of my Tuscon narration with an account of yet a fourth con. Ahem! That is, assuming I can get this issue finished before March 1977. I do not plan to attend any more cons before then, but you know how plans are.

Six months ago I had no plans to attend TusCon, but my most decisive absence of planning can be undone by flattery, as Jim Corrick and Carol Hoag learned when they wrote to me early in June, asking me to be Master of Ceremonies at TusCon IV. "Your chief function," they said, "would be to introduce Theodore Sturgeon, our Guest of Honor . . ."

There was no possible way to refuse such an opportunity, so I accepted, and spent five months worrying about how I could introduce a writer that I have been in absolute awe of for most of my life.

Fortunately, a large number of other events intervened, so I didn't have time to develop any extra nervous twitches, but after my semi-incoherent MileHiCon Goh speech, I promised myself and Carolyn that in preparation for Sturgeon I would actually sit down and write out something so that at least I would know what I wanted to say and would have a fair chance of saying it without stumbling over my own tongue too much.



TusCon was Nov. 5-6-7. As of Friday the fifth, I had scarcely had time to sit down for several weeks, much less get anything written. I wasn't exactly panicky; not even nervous, really, but I was starting to feel very, very guilty about what a rotten job I would have to do of introducing Sturgeon.

Sturgeon's Goh speech, for which I was to do the introduction, was scheduled for about 3 p.m. on Saturday, following a fanzine panel that I was supposed to moderate, so there really wasn't much time left in which to dawdle. Nevertheless, I dawdled.

There was nothing much going on Friday afternoon or evening or night . . . Well, the Huckster Room was open when Carol Hoag delivered me and Carolyn from the airport at about 5 o'clock, and I grabbed up a copy of the 1934 incarnation of Marvel Tales for only \$6 and drooled over the display of pulps that two dealers were offering (one was Bill Crawford, but I have inexcusably forgotten the name of the one I got the MT from). There weren't even very many people around just yet, and it was quickly clear that not very many were expected, but fans continued to trickle in that evening, the El Paso delegation arriving in two waves, with Willie Siros in the first with about half a dozen and Nina in the second wave with another four or five. The other Arizonans arrived in spurts rather than waves or trickles. Patrick Hayden, for one, was already there Friday night; maybe Bill Patterson was too, but I'm not sure; Greg Brown and Curt Stubbs, Linda Westlund and quite a few others showed up Saturday morning; but several, including Tim Kyger and Phil Paine and Teresa Nielsen, didn't wan-

der in until Saturday night. Ah! I remember! There was an auction Friday night, remarkable only for the fact that I didn't buy anything, followed by movies that I didn't attend and a party that never quite happened.

There was one slight problem with parties at TusCon. The con was at the Sands Hotel, but for some reason, partly involving the matter of serving food and drinks, the party suite was in the Sheraton Pueblo Inn, a couple of hundred yards down the road. That worked out all right for the "Supermembership Dinners" (Those were an innovation, unique to TusCon as far as I know, which may not be much. There was no banquet; the GoH speech was an event unto itself; instead there were two gourmet dinners prepared by Bill Patterson, one Saturday and one Sunday, and they cost extra and were sparsely attended and were delicious, but I'm not a gourmet); but for parties, the long trek to the other hotel was awkward.

Carolyn and I started out for the Friday night party and met Willie and some of the other El Pasans coming back with word that there was nobody in the con suite; so we all went back to the Sands and had a quiet visit until 10:30 or thereabouts, when Carolyn and I decided to give the official party another try. There were people in the party suite when we arrived, but about half of them were ready to settle down to a bridge game, an occurrence which for some reason always has the effect of negative polarity upon me. Carolyn and I went back to the Sands again and did some more visiting until about midnight, when I decided I was serious about wanting to get my Sturgeon introduction on paper. So we retired to our room (shamefully un-fannish behavior, but I didn't even apologize for it). Carolyn went promptly to sleep -- she can do that at midnight or even before, even at cons; an incredible woman! I found I had no writing paper (I've stopped taking my typewriter to cons; it leads too easily to ill-advised one-shots), so I used the liner paper from a bureau drawer, tearing it into 7½" by 9" sheets, and writing with a ball-point pen.

I knew what I wanted to say; it was just a matter of putting it into the right words -- but it was after 4 a.m. before I had enough of the right words written down to feel comfortable about leaving the conclusion until the next day.

Off and on Friday evening, from various sources, I had been hearing the name Thea Alexander, and it was explained to me that the reason Theodore Sturgeon wasn't visible was that he was pre-occupied with said Thea Alexander, who, it was also explained, was the author of a utopian novel, 2150 A.D., and a light flickered deep in the darkness of my skull and I said, "Oh, that Thea Alexander!" Not that the name really meant anything to me, but I remembered having recently bought a paperback book of that





title, for no other reason than that it was there, in the science fiction section, and was one I didn't have. I hadn't read it, had no idea even of what it was about. Actually, my first reaction to the knowledge that Thea Alexander was attending the con was mild resentment. There were one or two matters that I wanted to talk to Sturgeon about but might not have a chance to if his time was going to be monopolized by an intelligent and beautiful woman.

I don't recall that anyone told me Thea Alexander was intelligent and beautiful. The intelligent part I figured out for myself because, though I have known of some notable exceptions, as a general rule, people who write books and can get them published tend to be intelligent; "beautiful" was an unconscious assumption: to me nearly all women are beautiful, almost (but not quite) regardless of IQ; and virtually all intelligent beings are beautiful, regardless of sex or planet of origin.

Even so, I was not prepared for Thea Alexander's unique blend of beauty and intelligence.

About the only thing on the program Saturday morning, other than the Art and Huckster Rooms, was a panel on "The SF Writer in Utopia." Carolyn and I got to the Windsor Room a few minutes after the scheduled starting time of the panel and found it already in progress. (Several of the cons I've attended lately have had the annoying practice of starting things on time. Is there some sort of revolution going on in con fandom?)

There were two people at the table, and I recognized Theodore Sturgeon immediately because he looked like a slightly older version of the person shown on the front cover of the September 1962 F&SF. Well, maybe a little more than slightly; and he didn't have horns. The woman at the table with him looked sort of like an angel or something.

That's a bad description, I know. I've never seen an angel; I don't even believe in Christian angels, but just the same that was the comparison that came to mind with my first glimpse of Thea Alexander. She has an invisible halo, or an inner radiance; she glows. Her hair is in tight, dark curls. Her face is fantastically expressive, with flashing eyes that crinkle at the corners when she smiles, and her smile is quick, wide and totally unrestrained. And her hands were as remarkable as her face, and as beautiful. Maybe they're fairly ordinary hands, taken by themselves, or when they're folded and still. But when she speaks her hands do a graceful ballet to accompany and illustrate her words.

She and Theodore Sturgeon were engaged in an obviously friendly but still fairly heated argument. It soon became apparent to me that Sturgeon was resisting the basic concept of utopia, on grounds that made immediate sense to me -- that the makers of utopias always insist that since theirs is the perfect society, there's no place to go from there and so everything must stop. And that, Sturgeon was maintaining, is simply not the way the universe works. Thea Alexander seemed to be arguing that her utopian novel did not describe so much the perfect, static society as it was a guide to a process, a method, a philosophy, a means of striving toward perfection.

Sturgeon seemed not quite totally convinced, but the discussion moved on into less contentious areas. I was able to pick up only a few clues as to the nature of the Macro philosophy that Thea Alexander espouses in her novel and in her work as a consulting psychologist in Arizona. (And I still haven't read her book, except a little bit in it here and there, so I can resist the impulse to get sidetracked onto a philosophical discourse at this point).

My meeting with Theodore Sturgeon was in interesting contrast with my

Marion Zimmer Bradley encounter. Carolyn and I had taken seats near the front of the room, and when the utopia discussion was concluded and the panelists started to leave, I was able to lean across a row of chairs and extend a hand toward Sturgeon.

"I have to introduce you this afternoon," I said, "so I'd really like to meet you first."

Sturgeon took my hand. "Oh. And you're . . . ." He squinted at my name tag.

"Don Thompson, but . . . ."

"Oh, I know that name! Let me . . . ."

"But I'm not the Don Thompson. There's two of us, you know. There's the comic book Don Thompson. I'm not him."

"No, no, I know that. But I've read something you wrote. A letter you sent me? I've been so terrible about my mail. Can you give me just a . . . . No, wait. Your fanzines. You sent me about three issues of your fanzine, and there was something in one of them that really hit me. It was about a meeting with someone -- a warm afternoon -- somebody had just died?"

I was nodding encouragingly, but Sturgeon stopped about then and let me refresh his memory about the thing I'd written after my first meeting with Jackie Hilles and Bud Webster when I was in Virginia last year for Polly's funeral.

"Okay, I remember it now, and I know it was one of the most moving things I'd ever read. I meant to write to you. I will write to you yet, but I have really been bad about answering my mail. Anyway, I am glad to meet you!"

"Well, meeting you has been one of my life-long ambitions," I managed to mutter.

Sturgeon had time to introduce me to Thea Alexander and I melted in her smile, and then the swarm of admirers that I had been holding at bay was upon them, and I floated away.

There was quite a bit more to TusCon after that. I was the moderator of a fanzine panel that included Patrick Hayden, Greg Brown and Willie Siros right after lunch that day, and immediately following that I managed a brief but satisfactory introduction to Sturgeon's GoH speech, during which he held the assemblage spellbound for almost an hour and then spent another half hour or so answering questions; he speaks as impressively as he writes. Then there were more auctions (I got three issues of *Weird Tales* at reasonable prices), and the Gourmet dinners, and the autograph party, and the party in Sturgeon's room, during which I actually got to have a serious talk with him about science fiction (following a stimulatingly serious talk with Linda Westlund about music, as a result of which she sent me, soon after the con, a tape of some of the songs and artists we'd discussed and for which I have yet to thank her; I will find a way); and there were more enjoyable visits with more people, but I guess there's no point in merely listing names. Oh, I met the Blue Lady - Evangeline Walton; that's a name worth listing. TusCon IV was a small con, leisurely, relaxing, relaxed. Carolyn and I had decided we'd been leaving cons too early (AutoClave and MAC, particularly) so we had arranged in advance to stay over Sunday night in Tucson to be sure not to miss anything. For a while we were thinking of regretting the decision, because for all practical purposes the con was over with the L-5 Society program at 2 p.m. Sunday. There was really nothing to do but bask in the Arizona sunshine for the rest of the afternoon, and the Dead Dog party that evening was almost grimly quiet for a while, but as time wore on it mellowed, and the farewells at midnight were sweet and sentimental.

\* \* \* \* \*

**M**eanwhile, back at MileHiCon 8, there were still a few things I wanted to mention, and for that matter there's still a Big MAC report of sorts waiting to be completed. But let's see -- what was it about MileHiCon that I particularly wanted to mention? Well, among other things, a few names that I somehow skipped over earlier: Jan Howard FINDER had found his way to Denver from Ft. Riley and was doing some energetic propagandizing for TotoCon and propagation of the Bob Tucker "Smoooooth" philosophy. Bruce Arthurs made it to MileHiCon, and appeared on a fanzine panel with me and Bill Patterson and moderated by Fred Goldstein (though of course the words moderate and Goldstein are contradictions in terms). I spent a lot of time talking with Bruce late Saturday night (early Sunday morning, that is) while I was pretending to be writing my GoH speech. And I neglected to mention the name of Fran Skein, who had come all the way from Vancouver just because she'd heard MileHiCon was a good one. I have a date with her at Westercon next year.

I'm hesitating (you probably didn't even notice) over whether to say anything about the MileHiCon ProGoH speech. Since I've said at least a little about both Heinlein's and Sturgeon's talks, it might seem either conspicuous or discriminatory, or both, if I failed to talk some about Marion Zimmer Bradley's. I could summarize it this way: Heinlein's speech was awful; Sturgeon's was magnificent; MZB's was somewhere in between.

But that isn't fair. It doesn't tell you anything. Probably the only way to be fair is to be specific -- inasmuch as I've already been fairly specific about Heinlein's address. But if I'm going to be specific about Bradley, I'll have to be specific about Sturgeon, which I have not yet been. Hell, that's work; but if I have to I have to.

Sturgeon talked about the "windows" of learning -- using "windows" in the same sense that the space scientists do, to mean the time period within which a launch is possible. There's a certain time period in the life of each human--the first few years--during which the basic language skills, for instance, must be learned, if they're to be learned at all. Once a child is beyond a certain age the windows close, never to open again. Sturgeon speculated that the same thing is true of the human race as a whole, because in the evolutionary process it does seem to be true of other species. Sturgeon's fear was that the window may be open now for some kind of learning that we aren't getting. We have no way of knowing what should be coming through the window; we have no way of knowing how long the window will remain open. Sturgeon seemed to consider it quite possible, but by no means inevitable, that humanity can make a kind of quantum leap toward greater civilization and enlightenment. He didn't dwell on the possibility that the window has already closed on humanity's high hopes, but of course the implication was clear.

One of the remarkable things about Theodore Sturgeon's speech was that while its basic content was a matter of profound and highly abstract philosophy, it was not for one second dull or pedantic. It was enlivened by anecdotes and specific references and illustrations, and it was delivered with the utmost smoothness and fluency but with no text or notes. (I read my introduction, not daring to deviate in the slightest from what I had written down). And of course my summary of Sturgeon's talk comes nowhere near doing it justice; it merely hints at only one of its main points. Sturgeon applied what he was saying to his own writing, pointing out that the dominant theme of his fiction has been not love, as most critics have assumed (and as I went so far as to assert in my introduction) but speculation as to what form optimum humanity might take. Moreover, Sturgeon gave his talk a feeling of immediacy by tying it in with what he and Thea Alexander had been talking about in their panel a few hours earlier. And what was truly impressive about that was the matter of timing.



Thea Alexander had had to miss the first half or so of Sturgeon's talk (including my introduction, and she was beautifully apologetic about it), but she got to it as soon as possible. And it was just as she came in the door that Sturgeon, by a transition so smooth and natural that it seemed like no transition at all, swung his talk into channels that flowed directly to the issue of macro consciousness.

All right, I realize that's a rather vague and general summary, but even so it may be more specific than I can be about MZB's speech, because, frankly, I can't even remember that hers had a central theme. I can remember various parts of her talk, but I can't remember how they all fit together.

She spoke, in part, about her college days, when science fiction was so disreputable that she had to conceal the magazines she read behind text books, and she traced the beginnings of her writing career to that same period. It was a time when the McCarthy "terror" was at its most intense, a time when often the only way to get any kind of social criticism published was to express it as fantasy, setting it in a different time, a different place. (Sturgeon also, incidentally, referred to the McCarthy era and to his feelings of guilt about writing SF instead of open responses to the McCarthy menace, until H.L. Gold assured him that everything he wrote was a response to McCarthyism). In more or less that same context, MZB brought up the relative merits of her writing and that of Truman Capote, awarding herself a clear victory. Her starting point with that, as I recall, was a dispute with one of her creative writing instructors who tried to discourage her from SF, using Capote's *Other Voices*, *Other Rooms* as an exemplar of the new literature.

"And where is Truman Capote today?" MZB asked. "He's a twit. More people read Marion Zimmer Bradley than Truman Capote. He's just a twit."

(I couldn't help feeling then, and I can't help interjecting now, a personal reaction: It seemed to me that MZB could easily have chosen far more vulnerable mainstream writers to deride. Capote's prose, at its best, is unsurpassed in its evocative power and beauty; only Theodore Sturgeon and one or two others in the field of SF come anywhere close to it).

Somehow, from there, MZB worked her way around to an all-out attack on "new wave" science fiction in general, with particular contempt showered upon those "sniveling, whining complainers" who feel that science fiction has become a ghetto, and has treated them unfairly and who wish to escape its stigma.

(There were a few suppressed gasps from the audience, as well as a smattering of applause, and I couldn't help wondering if MZB knew - or cared - what the opinion of Master of Ceremonies Ed Bryant was on that subject).

There was more to the speech, some of it touching on the issue of feminism, but I really don't recall the main thrust of the remarks. They weren't central to the talk, but then neither was anything else.

To generalize even more: It was a strident, militant, aggressive oration but it wasn't clear at the end of it what points had been scored. However, it was well read and it held one's attention.

And now, I think, I have just about concluded my non-report on MileHiCon, so let us hasten back to MAC and see what remains to be said there.



**A**s a matter of fact, not much. I wanted to be sure to mention the Ranquet, but I think I already did mention it. Ah, but did I mention that I was Pro Guest of Honor? If not, I was. That was important to me. It fulfilled a . . . well, not exactly a lifelong ambition, but one dating from two years ago, when I was almost but not quite ProGoH at the DisCon Ranquet.

Bob Vardeman was Fan Guest of Honor. My speech was . . . No, I won't say it was better than Vardebob's, but it was longer. Mine was four words, his zero. That's all I'm going to say about the Ranquet because (though it richly deserves a detailed report) the only way for me to give any kind of accurate account of it would be to paraphrase one already written -- and in fact at one time I had Brian Earl Brown's right here beside the typewriter, but that was so long ago it has gotten buried under an enormous stack of other fanzines, so we'll just have to skip it -- and I wonder if it really was BEB's report that I'm thinking of? Was he at the Ranquet? I'm sure he was, but . . . Oh, never mind.

One of the other "events" that I attended at MAC was, of course, the Aussie-Con reunion party, most of the details of which had been worked out by Jan Finder. It was nice to see again such people as Finder and Bob Tucker and Jackie Simpson, and Eric Lindsay and Ron Graham, but some of the people I would have gone to the party to see -- such as DUFF winner Christine McGowan and my bookish friend Keith Curtis -- I had already seen as they passed through Denver. In fact, Keith's passage through Denver took a detour through my basement, where, with infrequent naps on a leaky air mattress, he spent about two weeks before the con sorting through my books and magazines, interrupted only by occasional forays to some of the area book stores.

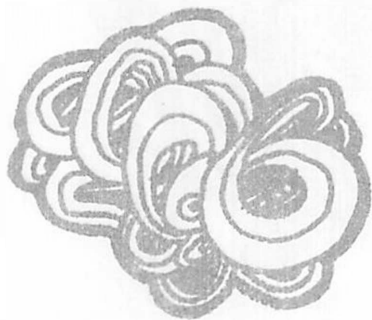
As I said previously, MAC for me was for the most part just a matter of meeting and talking with people, and if I were to write a report on it, the report would consist largely of quiet, personal, sometimes intimate conversations; and since conversations are not only more difficult and more time consuming to report, but also require more space, and since I have already used up this much time, space and effort on non-reports, I'm sure you can understand why I choose not to do a con report.

Even so, I must say at least a little about some of the other people I met and talked to at MAC.

While I was still standing around in the hotel lobby, trying to decide which line to stand in first, one of the first people I met was Chris Sherman. I'd hoped to see him at AutoClave; he wasn't there, so I was very definitely hoping to see him here, and sure enough . . .

Chris introduced me to Bill Breiding, whom I knew from *Starfire* and from locs, and whom I very much wanted to talk to. And in fact, I did have a chance later to talk with Bill, and at some length with Chris, as well as with many other friends that I've "known" for a long time but had never met before -- such as Gil Gaier, Stu Shiffman, Roger Sween, Mike Glyer, Sheryl Smith, Alyson L. Abramowitz . . .

I mentioned Alyson, almost casually, way back at the beginning of this, but I feel that I really ought to say a great deal more about her. She fills a large segment of my memories of MAC and accounts in very large part for the pleasant nature of those memories. I met her around midnight (or 1 or 2 or 3 a.m.) of the first night of the con and fell immediately in love with her bubbly laughter and constant state of perplexed delight -- as well as with her impressive knowledgeability about zine graphics and layout principles. I spent as much time as I could with her during the next



few days, trying to be sure her memories of me would be pleasant and friendly. I repeat: I ought to say much more about Alyson Abramowitz. But if I go into detail about some of my conversations with her and the things we did together, then in simple fairness, for the sake of balance, I would have to give some details of my long talk with Gary Farber, and with Chris, and with Nick Polak, to say nothing of Tim Marion and Jodie Offutt and Jackie Franke and Bud Webster and Don Ayres -- and of course a great deal should be said about all these people and many, many more.

But I am still clinging to a hope of getting this issue of DoS finished this year, and if I were to even start saying everything I would like to about all the people I visited with at MAC, I wouldn't.

So I'm forcing myself to cut it much shorter than feels comfortable, with only a few scattered comments in conclusion:

I shouldn't neglect to mention that I saw a number of Kansas City fans at the con -- Jeff May, Bill Fesselmeyer, Tom Reamy and others. Most of them seemed somewhat preoccupied and dazed, for some reason. I made it a special point to assure them that it was a great con and I was having a fantastic time.

Did I neglect to mention that I attended most of the business meeting? Anyway I did. I voted against abolishing the fan Hugos. Linda Bushyager later implied that I did so for slightly selfish reasons (what she said, actually, was something like: "You mean, as long as you're being nominated . . . ") and I said, "You got it!" But later still I started wondering, and my conclusion is that I would still want to keep the fan Hugos, with all their drawbacks, even if I'm not on the ballot. But I would favor a sharper distinction between fan and pro -- a clearer definition of the terms.

For the first time, "Denver in '81" buttons and flyers were being distributed at MAC. There seemed to be a lot of interest and encouragement. Lois Newman had a Denver in '81 bidding party in her room Sunday night, but all the beer was gone by the time I got there (because I was delayed by a special group phone call to Donn Brazier and Jackie Hilles).

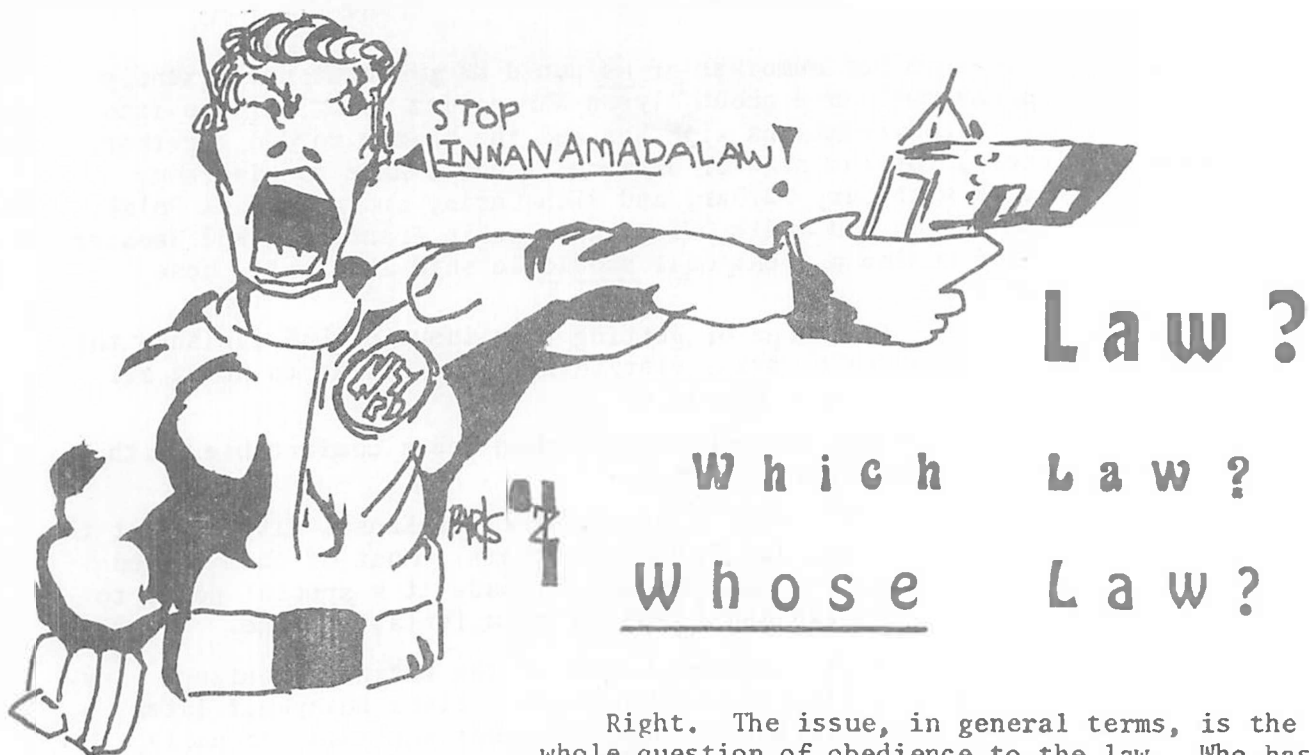
We (some of us anyhow; enough, I hope) are quite serious about DENVENTION II. It'll be just 40 years after DENVENTION I, the Third annual World SF Convention. Total attendance at the 1941 affair was less than 100, and a surprising number of those fans are still around and (we hope) are likely to be still around in '81. At least four of the con's sponsors, members of the Colorado Fantasy Society, are still living in the Denver-Boulder area -- Chuck Hansen, Roy Hunt, Lew Martin and Olon Wiggins, though Wiggins is seldom seen by anyone and only Chuck is in any sense an actifan.

Claude Degler was a member of DENVENTION I; did you know that? So was D.B. Thompson. Well, and Forry Ackerman and Don Wollheim and Bob Tucker and Fred Pohl, Damon Knight, Bob Madle, Gerry de la Ree, Harry Warner Jr., Robert Heinlein (Guest of Honor, as mentioned earlier). I don't know how many of the members actually attended; that's on record somewhere, I assume. Chuck Hansen has a movie that was made of the con. We'll have extra prints made of that and start showing it at bidding parties. We'll get out the nostalgia vote. (Don Brazier? LeRoy Tackett? -- I'm just copying from the program booklet).

And that, since I've pretty effectively changed the subject away from WorldCon 34 anyway, concludes my non-report on all the cons I have attended since DON-o-SAUR 46; so many long months ago that I've forgotten how long.

Something more momentous now demands our attention . . . :





Right. The issue, in general terms, is the whole question of obedience to the law. Who has the right to decide which laws to obey and which to ignore? No one? Everyone? Under what conditions is disobedience of the law justified? If one decides to disobey a law, what is the proper (moral? ethical? right?) way of going about it? And who is qualified to make that decision?

I don't promise that all those questions will be touched upon, much less answered, or that we won't get into some even more complex ones before this discussion has run its course, but I think I have at least indicated its direction.

The discussion began (for the benefit of those of you who came in late and those of us with short memories) in DoS 45, with a letter from Don D'Amassa in which, commenting on an item I had published earlier about having permitted marijuana smoking at my Christmas parties, he said:

"...I think the current laws about marijuana are dumb. Nevertheless if you encourage people to disobey this law, you are hard put to explain why it is wrong for them to disobey another law about which you may personally feel the opposite. And I don't think a society can work in which every individual goes around deciding which laws he shall and shall not obey. . . . it strikes me as hypocritical to break laws by smoking pot or allowing its use in your home or by cheating on postal rates, and then to criticize Richard Nixon's tactics, government snooping or suchlike."

DoS 46 contained excerpts from a barrage of letters, some supporting Don's position, but most of them rather sharply disagreeing. I indicated, both when the original letter was published and when the reactions appeared, that I also was in basic disagreement, but I insisted on postponing a detailed explanation. First I wanted to give other people a chance to reply to Don, and then to give him a chance to reply to them.

Well, I have Don's reply right here. I will print it, with occasional interjections solely for the sake of clarification. Then I'll give my views, and then move immediately into the loccol. Okay?

Don D'Ammassa  
19 Angell Drive  
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R. I. 02914

Well, it certainly seems I stirred something up. . . .

Bruce Arthurs has a very good point that I should have made in my earlier letter. You cannot commit a crime and not affect your friends. I had occasion at one time to visit

a liquor store with a fairly good friend who is also a rather well known fan. We made our selections and were taking them up to the cash register when my friend slipped a half pint of whiskey under his shirt and walked out of the store with it. Now, I probably should have turned him in, but naturally I didn't. I was so horrified, the act seemed so out of character, that I was nearly speechless. When I caught up to him a few minutes later, he said, as nearly as I recall: "It's not that I wanted the whiskey, or couldn't afford it; it's just that I get a kick out of stealing." That single act irreparably damaged our friendship, in all likelihood. Leaving aside the morality of the theft, there is the morality of putting one's friends in a position where they must conceal a theft, might even be considered accomplices to it. Now I'll never allow this person to put me in the same position again, and the only way I can do that is to avoid his company. I find this very unpleasant, but inescapable.

Similarly, I have a rather large and expensive library, from which a number of volumes have mysteriously disappeared during the last couple of months. It is likely that only one of the 20 or 30 regular visitors we have is responsible, but the fact remains that I cannot determine which person is responsible, and have had to place the library off limits. Since all of these visitors are to some extent friends of the others, the actions of one friend has affected the privileges of them all.

I don't see where Brian Earl Brown thinks I believe people should obey the law because they're told to. I believe in a form of social contract. The necessities of a civilization are that we agree to obey the code of laws created, even where they are occasionally uncomfortable or inconvenient. If a particular law is insupportable, then we agitate for its removal.

Richard Brandt makes some excellent points. I second them.

[A clarifying interjection: What Richard Brandt said, in essence, was . . . well, here are his exact words: "...virtually everybody holds by the laws Mr. Nixon ran afoul of, while you happen to disagree with anti-marijuana legislation. ...if scientists came up with conclusive proof that pot was harmful, how many pot smokers would believe it and stop smoking?" (I hope those were the points Don meant.)]

I agree with Robert Whitaker that there should be no crimes without victims. But even in these cases, even where it is perhaps difficult to obey stupid laws, one shouldn't go around openly recommending that people disobey them, again unless it is done for the specific purpose of civil disobedience for the purpose of altering the law.

I cannot believe D. Gary Grady seriously believes it is valid to disobey the bad laws until "they" enforce the good ones. Who determines which are good and bad? Each individual? If so, you're advocating anarchy.

Richard Coad likes to put words in my mouth. And he picks a rotten example. Heroin use definitely is not a crime without a victim. The

large proportion of inner city crime is directly attributable to the need for addicts to raise money for their next hit after their addiction has progressed to the point where they can no longer work. I can think of few laws that I support more than those controlling hard narcotics.

[Rich Coad's words: "Does he really think that the wholesale repression of individual rights can be equated to a person practicing those same rights? And merely because heroin, for example, is harmful to the user, does that warrant the creation of a hundred thousand new criminals at the stroke of a pen?"]

To Ken Josenhans and Tom Digby, who are so interested in my sex life: Of course there are examples where we all break laws; none of us are perfect. As I recall I even admitted to breaking the speed limit occasionally. But I don't go around bragging about it, I don't engage in such conduct in such a way as to encourage others to follow suit, I don't recommend clandestine law breaking to my friends and guests, I don't condone it, and I'm embarrassed by it. So sue me. The answer to the stupid sexual laws is to change them. Many people, I might add, break these laws through ignorance, which is probably why they have never been changed.

[Here's the segment of Ken Josenhans' letter that I assume Don is responding to: "I would suggest that Don check to see if he is scrupulously obeying the sexual laws of his state. I don't know about the particulars in RI but in nearly every state the only type of legal sex act is that best defined as husband-on-top-hurry-up-quick-get-it-over-with. . . Now, should we copulate on the courthouse steps as a public protest or should we restrict the expression of our affections to the legally approved manner until such time as a more realistic law takes effect?" And what Tom Digby said was this: "Does Don D'Amassa's policy of obedience to the law extend to the laws regulating sexual activity in private among consenting adults?"]

Brett Cox finds nothing wrong with theft. His arguments are depressing. Even if we assume that incompetency is a crime -- and that we can therefore steal from the post office, and that power and phone company officials are crooks -- thereby somehow moralizing our dropping to their level, the fact still remains that we don't steal from them, we steal from ourselves and the poor. Additional costs due to fraud and theft are just passed along to the consumer, Brett, in the form of higher rates. What you're doing is stealing from me, and I don't like it. More significantly, you're forcing old people, poor people, and the like to lower their standard of living so that you can get your kicks "ripping off" the big corporations. I'm disappointed in you, Brett. I thought you were too smart for that kind of doublethink.

Neither was Nixon solely responsible for the deaths of 20,000 men. A large portion of the U.S. public condoned his actions, and for a long time a majority of the other elected officials in this country. I think Nixon is a despicable and possibly mentally unbalanced man, but making him a scapegoat for the sins of the American people is an easy way out.

Finally, Dave Szurek asks me what I'd do if reading were made illegal. On this point, I'm completely consistent, I think. Depending

on the circumstances, I'd either read publicly with the intent of showing how stupid the law was and getting arrested, or, assuming a totalitarian government, I'd become an outright revolutionary. I'd assume an honest approach to law-breaking.

## Now, my turn!

(Not that I'm really all that eager to plunge into this fray; I just get carried away by the typography the new platemaker makes possible).

I certainly envy Don his ability to give such an unhesitating, unqualified answer to the hypothetical question: "What would you do if books were outlawed?" (Oops! I just checked Dave Szurek's letter, and the question is if reading were made illegal; I guess it amounts to the same thing). I put the same question to myself, and my answer was extremely hesitant, highly tentative and endlessly qualified, and not only was my whole approach to the question quite different from Don D'Amassa's, I found myself emerging pretty consistently at quite the opposite end of the answer spectrum from him. So, even though I have an intrinsic distrust of hypothetical questions and their answers and consider them absolutely useless in terms of predicting actual behavior, in this particular case the question might be a useful starting point for discussion, simply for illustrative purposes.

Still, it's an almost impossible question! What would I do if reading were made illegal? How the hell do I know? It would depend so much -- almost totally -- upon the circumstances, wouldn't it? What degree of illegality are we talking about? A total ban, strictly enforced, with entire government agencies devoted to tracking down and prosecuting violators? Or just casual illegality, with very light penalties and few prosecutions? I see no need to postulate a totalitarian dictatorship as a precondition for outlawing books and reading. Our freedom-loving democracy, for most of its 200-year lifetime, imposed a total, and popularly supported, ban against certain types of reading material, and it seemed to me when I was growing up, thirsting for smut, that a society capable of outlawing pornography was fully capable of outlawing any other kind of reading. It still does. The more I think about it, the less far-fetched Dave's hypothetical question seems and the closer I come to being able to give an answer to it.

So what did I actually do when porn was illegal? Did I read the stuff publicly and flagrantly with the intent of getting myself arrested and showing how stupid the law was? I most certainly did not. And I am almost certain that I would not take that course of action if reading as such were outlawed. I am no martyr. I am no bloody hero. And even if I had some sort of martyr complex or heroic impulses, they would be kept in check by the practical realization of family responsibilities. Get myself thrown in the clink, lose my job, my reputation, my hopes for a career on a matter of abstract principle? Not me; that's some other Don -- D'Amassa, maybe, if he says so -- but most certainly not me. I am a coward, a selfish, sniveling, sneaky coward, and so I read pornography very, very surreptitiously, being just as careful as possible not to attract the attention of the authorities, either when I was buying the filth or while reading it. I didn't even join in any of the agitation for repeal of the porn laws. I never wrote to my congressman about it, signed no petitions, joined in no protest marches, and I don't recall that there was even any of that kind of agitation going on as regards obscenity.

It's interesting: The change in American mores during my lifetime from a total taboo of pornography to its virtually total acceptance should provide a



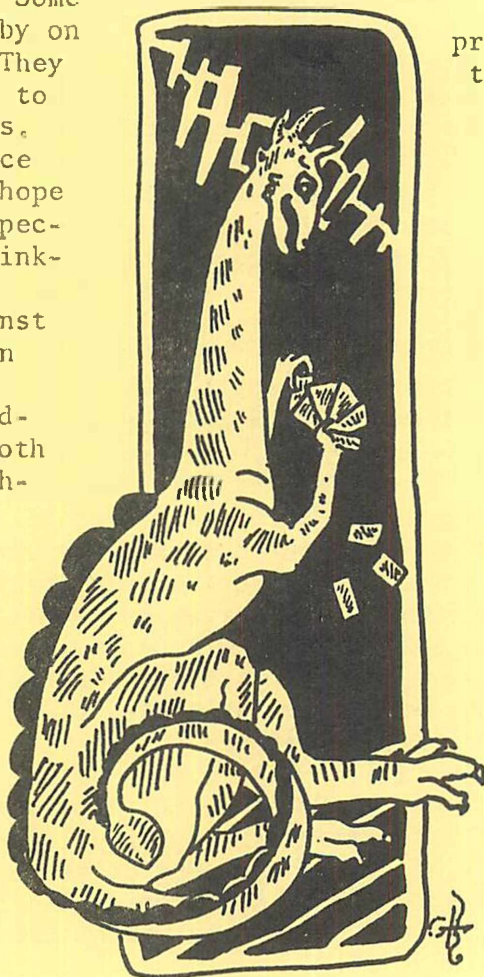
classic case history of how stupid laws are changed, but (and I was paying fairly close attention) I'm damned if I can put my finger on how it was done. It was not so much a matter of the passage or repeal of legislation as it was a series of increasingly vague Supreme Court decisions, either in response to or coincident with a gradual change in public attitudes. I cannot say for certain that Don D'Amassa's recommended technique of open disobedience for the sake of calling attention to a bad law was totally absent as a factor. After all, Ralph Ginzburg did end up doing prison time, but I am not convinced that he published *EROS* and advertised it in an allegedly obscene manner solely for the purpose of getting himself arrested. I'm willing to give him full credit for fighting the courageous free-speech battle that I didn't have the guts to wage myself; but I strongly suspect that the profit motive was an operative factor as well.

Have I answered the question of what I would do if reading were outlawed? No, not entirely. Because there's ~~an~~ a difference between the real ban on porn and the hypothetical ban on any kind of reading, and I haven't taken that into consideration.

I was never exactly addicted to pornography. I bought it, read it, and enjoyed it (all illicitly; partly I'm sure because it was illicit), when it was available. When it wasn't available, I did without, and I suffered no mortal agonies as long as there was plenty of other stuff to read.

However, I am addicted to reading. I am a book/magazine/fanzine junkie. Deprived of any kind of reading material, I would quickly descend to a state of gibbering dementia. I would go to extreme measures, resting neither by day nor by night, to find the local pusher, and I would use whatever means came to hand, including (probably, but please remember that this is all hypothetical) holding up liquor stores and gas stations and mugging little old ladies to raise the exorbitant sums needed for my daily fix. And I have only a small habit -- no more than 20-30 pages a day. Some of my friends can't get by on less than a book a day. They would have no choice but to become dealers themselves. This sounds like a science fiction scenario, and I hope it's no more than idle speculation, but a little thinking will reveal that the same arguments used against hard drugs can be used on reading:

Both are extremely addicting, for starters. Both breed disrespect for authority; youngsters rebel against their parents, adults become defiant of law enforcement agencies. Both are basically solitary, anti-social activities, leading the user to become detached, withdrawn from reality and unhealthily



preoccupied with his own fantasy world. They'll rot your mind. The user will claim to be gaining increased awareness, with all sorts of marvelous insights, but it's very difficult for him to communicate these insights to other people. Prolonged use often leads to insanity and/or suicide.

Speculation aside, and returning to harsh reality -- I disagree with Don that Rich Coad's citing of heroin use as a situation in which the law creates more victims than the crime is a "rotten example." On the contrary, it's the perfect example. And yet I fully agree with just about every-



thing else in that paragraph: Heroin use definitely is not a victimless crime. Most inner city crime is attributable to addicts. And I would strongly support laws controlling hard narcotics.

But that's the catch. Laws outlawing hard narcotics are not control laws! They are abdications of control; they turn control of the drug traffic over to the Mafia and assign the police to a silly, pointless game of hide and seek.

Inner city crime could be cut at least in half very promptly and painlessly simply by legalizing heroin -- for addicts only -- and establishing drug maintenance and treatment centers throughout the addict-infested areas. If the junkies can get their fix free or at only nominal cost, they won't need to mug little old ladies. Many addicts can hold jobs, contributing to society and the economy instead of being a burden. Many addicts, too, once the stigma is removed, would voluntarily submit to treatment aimed at curing the addiction.

Wouldn't they? Hell, I don't know-- we don't know, in the U.S., because no one seems willing to try such a program. The League of Cities meeting in Denver recently had an opportunity to pass a resolution urging just the type of program I'm talking about, and the mayors voted it down overwhelmingly. I wasn't even surprised. Heroin is EVIL; it is illegal; and it is probably part of the Communist Conspiracy. No mayor with half an ear tuned to the nuances of public hysteria is going to take any kind of public stand even on decriminalizing marijuana, let alone legalizing heroin. But if anyone were to satirically suggest outlawing diabetes, for example, and imposing harsh penalties for the sale and use of insulin --applying the same methods to a currently socially acceptable disease as we apply for the socially reprehensible one -- I'm afraid the mayors and their constituents wouldn't see the relationship.

There's a lot more I could say about the American tradition of confusing diseases with crimes (it's a matter that does vex me), but it's almost peripheral to Don D'Amassa's argument, so I'll try to get back to some of his major points.

Don's statement in his earlier letter, that you must have "a damned good reason to break a law, and transitory personal pleasure is not a good and sufficient reason" embodies another great American tradition -- one that I despise on a conscious, intellectual level, all the more so because I am a hopeless captive of it on the subconscious, emotional level. The principle was instilled in me at a very early age -- so early that I have never been able to outgrow it -- that pain, hardship, privation and suffering are good and ennobling, while pleasure, relaxation, enjoyment are unworthy and somehow despicable, even if not downright sinful.

That principle is built into a great mass of American jurisprudence still, despite the dramatic shift in public attitudes. Examples? Well, let's take heroin again. Methadone, from all I've read, is just as addicting and just as destructive in its side effects as is heroin. But methadone maintenance centers do exist. The only significant difference between heroin and methadone is that heroin makes the user feel good and methadone makes him feel shitty. Terminal cancer patients can be legally treated with just about any kind of pain-killing drug you can think of -- except heroin. Because heroin would not just diminish the pain, it would make the patient feel good, and a dying person is not supposed to feel good.

Or, better still, take those archaic sex laws that Tom Digby and Ken Josenhans mentioned. (I didn't think they were expressing any morbid curiosity about Don's personal life and I was surprised that he took the remarks personally). All the laws prescribing when, where, how and with whom sexual activity may be engaged in are based on the premise that sex is a necessary evil. The laws are to ensure that it's no more pleasurable than it has to be.

Living in the enlightened state of Colorado, where (again more because of court decisions than any specific legislation) almost any behavior involving consenting adults in private is permissible, I have no trouble with the sex laws.

But dammitall, if I lived in a state with the repressive laws still in force (I'm delving into hypothetical depths again, remember; I might not do what I say I would), I think I would make a special point of violating at least some of those laws at least some of the time. And I would do it for a damn good reason -- and that reason would be "transitory personal pleasure!" (Well, if arrested and brought to trial my defense would be that the state has no damn business prying into my personal life. That defense would be no more effective, I'm afraid, but it sounds better).

I'm in open conflict with Don D'Amassa on another point here. He says that if I do disobey even a bad law, unless I do it for the sole purpose of getting myself arrested, I should not go around bragging about it and urging other people to break the laws.

Maybe this is just a matter of wording, but I fear not. I don't actually go around "bragging" about breaking laws, nor do I exactly "urge" others to do likewise; but what I do do is probably pretty close to what Don means.

Let me say a few words about hypocrisy and consistency. Don considers it important to be consistent in his approach to the law and lawbreaking. He'll obey most laws, except when he has "a damned good reason" not to, or when . . . well, I don't think Don has clearly defined the other circumstances under which he does not obey the law, but apparently they do exist; he says he sometimes goes over the speed limit. "None of us are perfect," is how he puts it. Okay, then, when Don D'Amassa breaks a law it is a matter of deliberate policy or else a matter of human imperfection. (God, what a temptation to open a debate on the issue of whether perfection really consists of obedience to human laws; I would argue that a perfect individual would have no need of laws and would pay no attention to them; but let it go). He would break some laws openly and defiantly, for the purpose of getting arrested. He would break other laws almost accidentally but would be very quiet about them, so as not to encourage anyone else to follow his bad example. Don considers it hypocritical for me to smoke pot and/or condone its use in my home, and at the same time to criticize Nixon's violations of the law or things like the FBI snooping on private citizens.

Those are Don's views on consistency and hypocrisy; at least I hope I have reflected them accurately and fairly. I'm trying to stick strictly to what he said in his letters.

My views are somewhat different. In the first place I don't even care whether I'm consistent or not. I like Walt Whitman's *Do I contradict myself?* *Very well then I contradict myself.* It may be very inconsistent

of me to commit/condone some crimes and to condemn others. I don't even think it is, particularly, because I don't think all crimes are equally heinous. But IF it is, all right, so I'm inconsistent. So sue me. Maybe it is even hypocritical of me.

MY idea of hypocrisy, however, would be for me to break some laws, whether deliberately or accidentally, carelessly, through "imperfection" and then to pretend that I hadn't (or don't), or to pretend to be shocked when I see someone else breaking the same law.

Don't take me too literally there; I haven't said exactly what I mean. As far as the police are concerned, I am a hypocrite as well as being an inconsistent coward. The speed limit is 55; my normal driving speed is between 60 and 65; but the instant I see a patrol car I'm down to 54, and why officer I just wouldn't dream of going any faster than that. That is hypocritical, and it doesn't bother me any more than my inconsistency does. But if, when I'm talking with friends I trust and who trust me, I were to pretend that I never exceed the speed limit or that I never have smoked pot, that too would be hypocrisy -- and that would bother me.

So, to avoid that kind of hypocrisy, that kind of bother to my conscience, when I know I am among friends I don't try to make any big secret of which laws I violate.

And that behavior (which I would call simple honesty), I am afraid is what Don D'Amassa means by "going around bragging" about breaking the law and "encouraging others to follow suit."

In a DNQ portion of the letter of Don's that I printed at the beginning of this discussion, Don asks me, in effect, whether I don't feel ashamed of myself for expressing my lawless attitudes so openly and for setting such a bad example to the youth of fandom. He says I should feel guilty when I hear young people expressing similar views because I have an inordinate influence on them and I ought to be setting a good example for them.

I sincerely hope that I'm not violating the spirit of the DNQ request. I'm trying not to, but if I am, I apologize. But I do feel that it's necessary to bring up Don's main point, because my reply to it contains the kernel of my entire philosophy, such as it is, vis a vis the law.

First of all, let me dispose of the question: Don't I feel guilty about being a bad example? My answer is: Yes, of course I feel guilty, but that doesn't necessarily mean anything. You suggest something for me to feel guilty about, and I will promptly feel guilty about it, whether I should or not. That's just my nature. I feel guilty about things that most normal people would never even think about. I carry a heavy burden of guilt just by being a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant middle class American member of the human race. With more specific reference to Don's question, I do feel guilty about being in a position where I can be taken as an example of anything by anybody. But having recognized those guilt feelings and realized that there's not much I can do to remedy the condition that brought them on, short of ceasing to be what I am, then it becomes possible to analyze and deal with the other tendrils of guilt.

And I find that, on balance, the kind of example that I set -- not just for fans, but for students, friends, my own children, anyone who might ever take me as an example -- doesn't disturb me nearly as much as Don might think it should. One reason is the simple realization that no matter how atrocious an example I am, I'm only one of a vast multitude of influences on any individual's life. Anyone who observes my behavior is at the same time observing the behavior of many other people while also being shaped and molded by personal experience, by reading, by television . . .

In addition to which, anyone who observes my life closely enough to be influenced by it is not observing just one aspect of it, surely. Or put it this way: The person who looks at me and notices only that I have admitted occasionally violating the marijuana laws, and uses that as an excuse for indiscriminate use of any and all drugs, is just as likely, in observing Don D'Ammassa, to notice only that he admits to sometimes exceeding the speed limit, and to use that as an excuse for habitually driving at 90 m.p.h.

My disdain for certain stupid laws is by no means all there is to my life and character, and I am fairly certain that anyone who notices my lawless tendencies must also notice that I exercise at least a little caution, discretion and selectivity in my lawlessness.

I believe I'm ready now to try to summarize my conclusions regarding laws and disorder.

Laws are among the facts of life. They are part of the environment. They cannot be disregarded. I will even go along with the idea that they constitute a sort of social contract. But I have the same reservations that I have for any other contract I have signed -- it is subject to interpretation; and if some clauses of the contract are so badly written that they seem to require pointless absurdities of me, I am damn well going to use my own judgment as to how closely I should abide by them. Most laws -- the important ones, the big ones, the generally-agreed-upon ones, those we're most insistent upon -- make sense; the reasons for their existence are obvious. Some laws are obviously silly and can be pretty safely ignored. It's against the law to wear a mask in Denver. But I doubt that even Don D'Ammassa would consider it necessary to agitate for repeal of that ordinance before accepting an invitation to a Halloween party in Denver. Some laws must be obeyed whether we agree with them or not, if only because enforcement is strict and penalties for violations are severe. (I am pretty careful about filing my income tax returns, even though I seldom approve of the way my tax money is being spent). Some laws must be defied by persons of conscience -- the fugitive slave laws, the Jewish extermination laws under Hitler, for example. (Whether the defiance is open or surreptitious is a matter of circumstance and strategy -- or survival).

I accept the principle of rule by law. But in my daily life I must deal with specific laws -- some good, some bad, some irrelevant, some vicious, some simple, some incredibly complex.

Anyone taking me as an example is asked to notice that as I thread my way through the legal maze I exercise care, discretion, judgment, a modicum of intelligence. Note too that I am guided far more by a merciless personal conscience far more demanding than law; by love, by friendship, by concern for people as individuals, than I am by principle or legal niceties.

Tom Jackson  
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Tulsa, OK 74135

My friend Brett  
Cox is all wrong;  
nobody deserves to  
be ripped off, and

justifications for stealing are cheap and unethical. Next to the rights of life and liberty, property rights are the most basic. It is a violation of those rights to say that he is fair game because he is "incompetent" (which is no sin) or because he is a "thief" (the pot calling the kettle black, no?)

The principle remains the same when one is stealing from large, impersonal organizations like the post office or the electric company. And the economics of the thing guarantees that individuals are getting ripped off -- you are stealing from the owners, you are stealing from the workers whose salary comes from money taken in from consumers, and you are stealing from people like me, who have to pay a higher light bill or higher postal rates in order to make up for the losses caused by dishonest people. (And the taxpayers, who are being ripped off already by virtue of having to pay taxes, have to pay more taxes to make up for the people who steal from the postal company -- as was pointed out by Robert Whitaker.) Tanstaaf!, and the honest people wind up having to pay for the free lunches.

Of course, Brett's comments on pot and Nixon were right on.

[Does anyone, I wonder, have any statistics on this -- specific data? How much of each 13¢ stamp goes to pay for citizen cheating? In principle of course it doesn't matter; theft is theft, no matter how large or small the sum involved. But it matters to me -- and the law itself makes a clear distinction between grand and petit theft. And I feel like I'm being ripped off on a grand scale by the incompetence and stupidity built into the Postal Service and relatively little by scoundrels who send personal notes with fourth class shipments.]

K. Allen Bjorke  
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At the present time, I can see no better way of protesting the mail service than by having some large company caught cheating on them with some mass mailing and getting parts

of the trial into the news media. I would bet that the company could escape the penalties, and that the end of it would be quite a furor in the USPS -- and this time none of their usual crying will help them. For just catch these examples, pulled from a Business Education text published this year:

- No one but the USPS is allowed to deliver first-class mail (violations punishable by law) and no one but the USPS is allowed to put anything in your mailbox (even though you paid for it and it's your own private property).

- Twelve years ago it took an airmail letter 19 hours to get from L.A. to Chicago -- today it takes 52. From Chicago to Miami in 1961: 23 hours. Now, 58. Despite increases of 100% or more in various mail prices.





- In 3rd class mail, the USPS doesn't have a monopoly, and competitors have appeared with lower rates and better service. The Independent Postal Service of America recently offered to deliver a million Christmas cards for the USPS at two thirds the cost the USPS was charging if they received them at least 48 hours before Christmas. The USPS turned them down, losing the first major profit they would have made in decades.

- In parcels, United Parcel Service (which is not part of the USPS) outdelivers USPS and made a profit of \$77½ million in 1972, without government subsidies, while the USPS lost money, even with higher rates and poorer service.

- The USPS has a \$1.7 billion deficit which is underwritten by the U.S. Treasury, but pays no property or Social Security taxes.

The thing is, the USPS isn't supposed to be part of the government -- it's supposed to be a corporation, but it has become, thanks to the fact that they know they'll get a government bailout every time, a barely tolerable burden on the taxpayer. So, cheating on postal rates isn't a victimless crime -- and it never could be -- but it cheats a lot more people than it should, yes?

[Yes.]

*Jim Lang*  
162 Fifth Street  
Hicksville, NY 11801

Although in the abstract I agree with Don D'Amassa, in actual fact I find it impossible to carry through. Thus I'll try to justify my real position. In addition to the other things said in #46, it should be remembered that we have a long tradition of disobeying the laws that we disagree with. The American Revolution was an example of such disobedience, and I think most of us would agree that it was, overall, and in the long run, a good thing. Similarly, if the government suddenly decided on censorship and suppression of the press, I would stock up on mimeo supplies in order to resist this. In Don's own zine, MYTHOLOGIES, there has recently been some discussion as to the real nature of courage. The definition that I would be bound to agree with is: "doing what you think is right, regardless of the consequences." Disobeying an unjust law seems to fit in very nicely.

[Don's statements make clear provision for revolutionary activity in response to conscience. A point I was hoping to make in my discourse but never got around to is that (in actual practice), as often as not, bad laws are changed, not by the courageous individuals ritualistically being dragged off to jail, but by masses of slobs casually, sneakily, selfishlessly disregarding the law. The classic case that I'm surprised no one else has brought up is the repeal of Prohibition. Prohibition was brought about in the first place largely through the tactics that Don has mentioned -- people of courage and conviction smashing up saloons. (The passage of Prohibition is an inspiring story in a way, if you can stand it, and it says a lot about idealism -- its power, and its blindness). Prohibition was repealed not by dramatic and heroic gestures but simply because the law had created an entire nation of lawbreakers. Ordinary citizens, with no special concern for principle, simply refused to give up the selfish personal pleasure of getting smashed].

(On the next page is a loc from :

*Jeff Kapalka*  
129 Lowell Ave.  
2 3 Utica, NY 13502

The discussion continues on page 30.



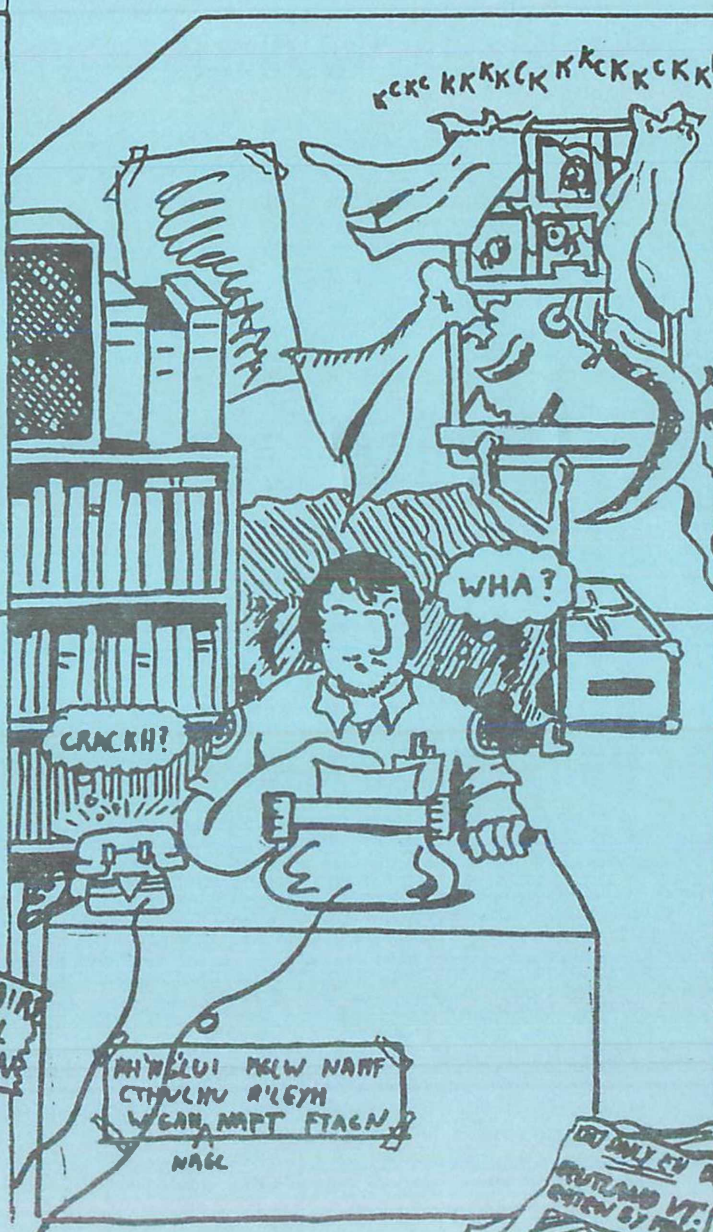
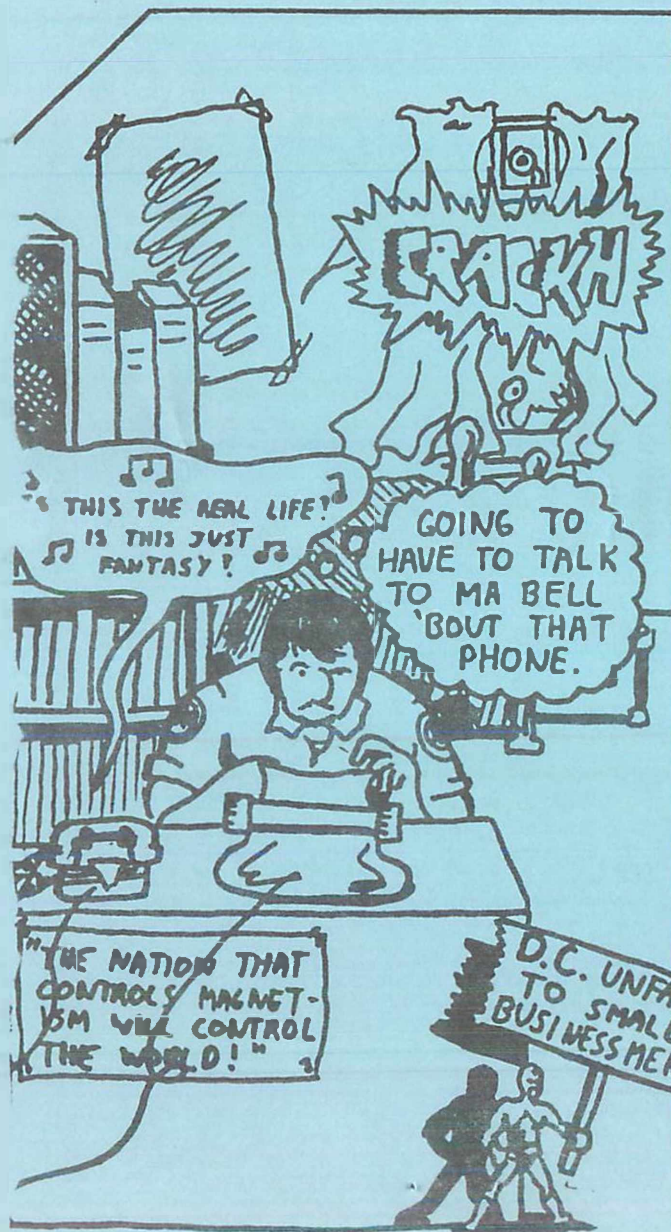
Dear Don,

Sorry I haven't been writing you lately. Really. I'm feeling rather guilty about getting Don-o-saur without sending you back any feedback.

But no more! I've actually gotten my act together enough to knock out at least one illo for you, and am finally sitting down to write a letter.

It hasn't been easy. What with college and work...

...every time I try to write one something always manages to interrupt me





JERRY POURNELLE  
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Studio City, CA 91604

I do find the current attitudes on legal obedience both curious and uninformed. There is quite a long history of thought on resistance to tyrants, but most contemporary rebels seem thoroughly unaware of it. They may quote a few selected passages from "Civil Disobedience" but they do not seem to have read the entire essay; and almost none seem acquainted with Aquinas on the subject.

The classic doctrine of resistance to unjust laws posed a number of requirements on the resistor; among them being a willingness to suffer the consequences of such action (one reason I have little respect for Ellsberg was that he used legal technicalities to escape); another is that the law breaker should be in a position to endure the consequences (no family dependent upon him, will not endanger unwilling innocent parties). Of course there is also a long tradition about tyrannicide and armed resistance to tyranny too, but that's not, I think, what's under discussion here.

[Somehow it doesn't surprise me that few law breakers realize that there are rules to the game or that those who should know, such as Ellsberg, decline to follow them. And I strongly suspect that the classic American slob who brought about the repeal of Prohibition neither knew nor cared what either Thoreau or Aquinas had to say on the subject].

KATHI SCHAEFFER  
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Ah, yes, the old, "Well, if you have no respect for the law in this area, how can you expect others to respect it in that area?" argument. A nice Kantian argument, but full of holes, I say pompously. Turning to our Blackstone's Commentaries, we learn that there are some crimes which are *mala in se*, evil in themselves, and others which are only *mala prohibita*, evil because they are forbidden. By this nice distinction, we differentiate between things like murder, rape, and assault, and things like income tax (before the Sixteenth Amendment), marijuana smoking, and tax evasion. I have great respect for the laws governing crimes which are *mala in se*, as do, I believe, most people; I have more than minimal respect for the civil code which attempts to maintain an orderly society by setting up standard forms and rules for commerce, administration of public trusts, regulation of traffic, and the maintenance of property rights (I must regretfully agree with Locke and Blackstone that in a state of nature there is no property, meaning that I must accept that theft is only a *mala prohibita* and as such belongs to the civil code. But I digress). I have no respect at all for laws which, if they must exist at all, belong in the civil code yet have found their way into the criminal code. Drug laws, blue laws, censorship laws, laws against barking dogs after sunset, all belong in that last category.

The state has a right to make laws in some areas, or at any rate this state has that right because it was given it in its Constitution. No state has the right to make laws in the area of private morality.

I think.

[And I agree wholeheartedly. In fact, Kathi has managed to say, in one succinct paragraph, pretty much everything I was trying to say in my whole long wandering discourse. I'm tempted to shut down the discussion at this point because it's on the verge of becoming repetitious, but I can't resist including just two more comments (and then adding my comment of course) before moving on to other concerns].

STUART GILSON  
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What Don A'Amassa says about the subjective scale by which we grade legal offenses makes sense, but I think he's making the mistake of not considering the actual consequences of overstepping the law. In some cases,

breaking the law can have serious results, as in the case of murder; when someone spits on the sidewalk, however, even though the violation may have been motivated by a similar disregard for authority, the harmful effects on others are nonexistent, and therefore the act in itself is pardonable. Laws, remember, exist to protect people, and thus they should be weighted on a relative scale according to how much protection they afford the public. If the violation of a law means someone must suffer in the process, then that law should be enforced; on the other hand, however, if a law exists that serves little purpose in terms of protecting others or guaranteeing them their rights then it shouldn't matter whether or not it is obeyed. Of course the line must be drawn someplace, and the means for doing so are arbitrary (except in those instances where historical precedent has been set), but for the most part, people are capable of exercising their own judgement where there's doubt over whether or not a law should be respected. True, if we condone one offense, then we should condone all because there's no way of telling which is the more serious; most people, however, are smart enough and sensitive enough to realize when overstepping the law will harm someone, and will refrain from doing so. Those who are going to break the law anyway won't be deterred by everyone else obeying it, and they'll go ahead and do their stuff regardless of the prevailing attitude.

[Stuart, I think, has more faith in the intelligence and sensitivity of the average human being even than I do, and obviously a lot more than Don D'Amassa has. Don says it's advocating anarchy to insist that everyone has the right to choose for himself which laws to obey, and that no society can function on that basis. I don't know. My idea of anarchy is a society with no laws, which I think is a fine idea but not practical just yet. I do think that the alternative to individual judgment is mental slavery; and to that, I prefer anarchy even in the sense of total social disorder. Harry Warner in effect replies to Stuart Gilson on one important issue:]

HARRY WARNER JR.  
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Hagerstown, MD  
21740

I feel the urge to say a lot more about the question of breaking laws. But I'd better refrain, except for mentioning a couple of non-central issues. One is the assumption that it's possible to break a law without harming anyone except possibly the transgressor. That is as shaky a belief as the assumption that a time traveler could go into the past without changing the course of events, no matter how he tried. The individual who drives faster than the speed limit in a nearly deserted highway may inspire one of the few drivers he encounters to imitate his speed, and that other driver may have an accident he could have avoided at a legal speed. The person who smokes marijuana occasionally is encouraging the individuals who are procuring and peddling it, perhaps causing them to branch out into more dangerous drug traffic. His marijuana smoking may change for the worse the life of a relative with high blood pressure who worries about his behavior. There are countless other possibilities.

[And Harry is absolutely right. I'll go along with the contention that there are no victimless crimes. Even Stuart

Gilson's hypothetical spitter-upon-the sidewalk is not committing a victimless crime. Even though his action may have no direct and immediate effect, he may be encouraging someone else -- someone with tuberculosis or some other highly infectious disease -- to spit on the sidewalk and he may thereby, indirectly, be responsible for an epidemic in which many lives are lost. If I have said anything previously that would lead anyone to think I am not aware of this truth, I apologize for it, because I am aware, constantly, sometimes painfully, that my actions have consequences. This is part of what I was talking about earlier-- about my guilt feelings -- but I didn't go far enough. It's more than the pleasure-pain response; I manage to feel guilt about everything I do -- or don't do. And that, strangely enough, provides just the consolation I need to keep functioning. Harry's time-traveler reference is beautifully apt. We are all time travelers, and our very presence here affects the future. Every caterpillar you crush wipes out untold billions of future butterflies, one of which might, in 500 or a thousand years, flutter at a crucial moment and distract the thoughts of a potential dictator from his dreams of world conquest -- or might not flutter, since you have prevented the existence of that butterfly. On the other hand . . . well, I'll leave it to you to consider the dire possibilities if you don't crush that caterpillar.

I'm sure you see my point: There are no victimless crimes; true, in the sense that Harry is talking about. But in that same sense, there are also no victimless laws; there are no victimless actions, of any kind. Anything you do (or do not do!) is likely to hurt someone or some thing, somewhere, sometime.

Once encumbered by this kind of awareness, there are several ways of dealing with it. One, I suppose, is to become a total Taoist and strive consciously to achieve or maintain an equilibrium of being. I think effective Taoism requires many years of training and self discipline, and I haven't had it. An alternative--one that I am capable of-- is simply to try to see things in perspective. I am a pebble in the sea, and the ripples from my plunge extend in ever-widening circles through eternity. But it is one hell of a big sea and I am a very small pebble and only one of billions, each of which also sets up ripples that extend eternally.

It's the same conclusion I came to in my discourse, basically: I don't send out just one ripple in one direction, but a multitude in all directions, and each one is capable of a multitude of effects upon many individuals; but at the same time each of my ripples is being modified, magnified or even nullified by the waves of nature and the billions upon billions of other ripples.

I live in a highly pluralistic universe. I do take responsibility for my actions, and I can't help feeling guilty for the possibly harmful effects of many of them; but it's a comfort to realize that each action also has the potentiality for good. And it's even more of a consolation to realize that I don't bear sole responsibility for the fate of the universe.

Now that should be the end of the discussion on law breaking, but it isn't, because Arthur Hayes brings up a point no one else has mentioned:



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Canada

. . . Actually, the criminal is more capable than the majority of borderline law-abiders. Read your SF and you will find that in a hell of a lot of stories, the plot is: A despotic government or ruling class is faced with a few malcontents who can't abide living in the controlled areas, so head out to the bush or the ruins of a city that was destroyed by atomic warfare. We are sympathetic to these renegades, because the story is slanted to make us sympathetic to them, and the rulers are portrayed as the antithesis of what we, today, hold (in most of the western world) as worthy of retention. But, what is considered wrong by us is not necessarily considered wrong by the others, since, as a good example, no country ever conducted a war without rationalizing their side as being in the right. But, in the stories, the renegades who are just major lawbreakers and who most of the time are no more sincere than those they oppose, finally miraculously find a way to overcome the rulers.

Still it is the law-breakers who achieve things, not the sheep of the majority. Punishment of these law-breakers has to be done carefully, because you are more likely to snuff out one who will make advancement; be capable of saving lives, doing good, in the long run. The problem, and it is a problem with present psychiatric knowledge, is how to re-direct these activities to conforming just a little more, and to place their energy where they can do good, rather than extreme damage by their nonconformist attitude.

GEORGE FERGUS  
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Schaumburg, Ill. 60195

. . . I don't care what people smoke, as long as I don't end up trying to breathe in their exhaust. Was John Thiel joking when he professed complete ignorance of why many people object to someone's smoking a cigarette in their vicinity? People don't stand upwind of their barbecue grills because they are afraid of being burned! Anybody who doesn't have a tendency to cough and secrete tears on entering a smoke-filled room is damned lucky, but that is no excuse for making things miserable for the rest of us. I'd much rather have a smoker dump his ashes into my drink than pollute the air and make it physically uncomfortable for me simply to be nearby.

BRENDAN DuBOIS  
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Dover, NH 03820

John Thiel says: "Why they (non-smokers) object, I don't know." Well, perhaps I can give him an answer for that. Whenever I am in a situation where there is a room full of smokers (or if I'm sitting next to a smoker), I invariably walk away within the next few minutes literally reeking of smoke. Since I am a non-smoker, having my hair and clothes stink of stale cigarette smoke leaves a lot to be desired, not to mention the possibility of the smoker passing whatever harmful effects cigarette smoke has on to the non-smoker. People can debate for hours whether or not cigarettes are harmful to your health, but one thing they have to agree on is that it's a dirty, smelly habit.

RICK STOOKER  
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I can only assume John Thiel got his taste buds switched around at birth. Cigarette smoke is a foul substance and we nonsmokers are non-smokers because we hate it. Yet John can't understand why we object to smokers blowing their smoke into our faces. I object because it gives me a sore throat, headaches, and makes my eyes run. Mari-

juana, whatever else you think about it, does smell and taste good, unless you've got some really harsh dope that's not worth the effort of smoking anyway. And John has yet to give it an adequate trial. One puff is hardly enough to get a first timer off. Would John complain about not getting drunk if he had only one sip of beer?

MIKE KRING  
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Sometimes I wonder about you. You seem to get upset at some of the stupidest things. Take the business with Gale Burnick you described in DoS 46. What the shit is sexist about saying "my brother". By im-

plication with other things you said were "taboo" to "aware" women today, like "my sister," "my wife," etc., that makes "my brother" sexist too. Why? Hell if I know. That's playing little ego games with words. Whose sister/wife/brother/sister is it? It's surely not Randolph Scott's!

And as for the terms you used to tell about sexism, oh come now! You don't really believe that bullshit, do you? The reason there is a word "cowboy" instead of "bovine person" is simple. When the cattle drives were starting they drove cows to the train stations. And the hands were, for the most part, young boys (aged 10-13; and that's a boy to the rest of the world). That's why they are called cowboys. Nothing sexist about it. It was a simple, descriptive word.

The English language (American version) has survived all sorts of attacks, and has changed over the years. But this attack on all words denoting anything about sex is the stupidest, most ignorant thing I've ever heard about.

Like, take the word "chairperson." 99% of the people who see or hear that word immediately think of a woman. Why? Because only women want the word. Look in the dictionary, Don. "Chairman" is a non-sexist word. It means a "person" who does such and such. People who try to change a language merely to further their own political or ideological aims disgust me. They also alienate me immediately from anything of importance and real worth they might have to say. It takes a lot on my part to listen to them when they insist on attacking what I say, even though the words are perfectly innocent.

This trend as far as "consciousness-raising" goes is sick. If the women's movement would get down off their high horse (or soap-box) and try to talk sense instead of impassioned rhetoric, they might accomplish something besides alienation. Sure, it takes radicals to start a movement, but it also takes moderates to get things done. The radicals seem to be the ones still in the fore, making all the news, and doing silly things. That doesn't bode well for the objectives they may be striving for. Let's face it, when this world starts getting really nasty in 10-20 years from now, what the hell are words going to be good for? Nothing. If they are sincere, they should leave off playing with language, and try to get something accomplished. Like getting the ERA passed. That would do a lot of things. Good or bad, I have no idea.

[I don't want anyone to think I don't have any reaction to Mike's letter, but (with tremendous restraint) I'll withhold comment until I've printed a couple of more letters along this same line, and then respond to all of them at once. I decline, this time, to just stand back and let everyone else have a shot at the topic first.]

MICHAEL T. SHOEMAKER  
2123 N. Early St.  
Alexandria, VA 22302

Frankly, people like you scare me.  
Your preoccupied worrying about the use  
of possessives to express relationships  
sounds one step away from wacko to me.

I don't see any connection whatsoever with sexism in this matter, nor does it infringe upon anyone's rights, since the usage is entirely reciprocal: "my husband," "my uncle," "my father," "my boyfriend," to cite counterexamples. Furthermore, you seem to be under the delusion that such use of possessives is inaccurate. The fact is that it is thoroughly accurate. When, for example, you say "my son," you are stating that you possess the father-son relationship with that individual. When you say "my friend" you are presuming that he is indeed your friend, but if this is true in fact, then what you possess is the friendship. Unfortunately, I suppose there are lots of people like you who are so materialistic that they cannot grasp the reality that a person can possess something non-material, such as a relationship.

Most of what has been written about sexism in language has been a process of setting up straw men to knock down, perpetrated by people who obviously know damn little about language. Take the whole category of job designations, for example. "Man" as in Chairman, mailman, etc. does not mean male except to the ignorant. It is derived from the German indefinite pronoun "man," which means one. Thus chairman is the one who chairs the committee, mailman, the one who delivers the mail, etc. "Man" also means "people" in German. Thus, "mankind" means peoplekind; and the English "man," meaning humanity, is merely a synecdoche of mankind.

[No comment yet. Roy Tackett is next, then Jessica Amanda Salmonson, and then I will have my say]

ROY TACKETT  
915 Green Valley Road NW  
Albuquerque, NM 87107

I get the general impression that femlibbers are somewhat akin to those people in the portions of the political spectrum way out on either end. Just as the ultra-conservatives see a red under every bed and the ultra-leftists see the grasping hands of the capitalist pigs everywhere, so do the femlibs find overt sexism in every shade and nuance of language and attitude.

Well, sure, I'm not going to deny that the examples you give, for example (mailman, busboy, etc.) can be so considered but consider that these labels became attached when those were exclusively male occupations and nurses and the like were exclusively female occupations. We tend to use the old labels because they are handy--and frequently far less cumbersome than the new ones. Consider that we still refer to the post office instead of the postal service station and it is still the weather bureau even though it is officially the weather service. Should I refer to the woman who puts the letters in the box at 915 as the "mail delivery person"? (Maybe we should make that "mail delivery peroffspring?") Ridiculous. Too cumbersome.

The labels will change in time. As more and more people of either sex begin filling jobs that have "sexist" labels, they'll change. As it should be. Both men and women should be accepted into any job they are qualified for regardless of what the "tradition" is. If my mailman is a woman what's the big deal about the label? Trouble is that some people get so concerned with labels that they lose sight of the main point -- that the barriers are coming down.

Ah, Don, consider the alternative to your introducing Carolyn as "my wife." Would it sound any better to introduce her as "the wife?"

You yourself point out the uncertainty involved when, as in the case of Martin and Burnick (sounds like a new comedy team), the relationship isn't made clear.

Methinks, ol' Don, you worry too much about trivia.

[Jessica now answers the central points that have been raised]

JESSICA AMANDA SALMONSON

Box 89517

Zenith, WA 98188

It is encouraging to find someone who realizes the power of vocabulary dynamics. Some people are convinced that changing "chairman" to "chair-

person" is one of the clues to the frivolity of feminism. How anyone who reads and understands language can fail to see the impact of language on our very thoughts, is beyond me. A few years ago, "chairperson" did sound odd, but to me at least, it no longer does. Chairman and chairwoman should refer to specific people holding the position, whereas general references to the office should be "chairperson." If everyone adjusts to this sort of logic unconsciously with every word ending previously with "man," we'll be on our way to a whole different way of thinking of the sexes -- as equals.

That says it all, really. There shouldn't be any need for me to add anything at all, but I'm going to anyway. For one thing, I want to apologize for my own failure to make clear the exact nature of my concern with possessive pronouns. I did not mean to imply that I consider them automatically or necessarily sexist or that I am in favor of abolishing them. They were simply a usage that I became suddenly conscious of in the context of a suddenly increased awareness of the sexism of language, because of Gale Burnick's calling attention to it. My unexpressed conclusion about the possessive pronouns was the same as that made in many of your letters -- that there really are no workable alternatives, and that as long as you realize that the possessive refers to the relationship, not the individual, no harm is done. However, a point that I consider worth explicating because apparently I didn't manage to make it very strong or clear implicitly, is this: Because we have to use the possessive for relationship, it becomes very easy for us to think possessively of the person involved. You've heard parents say, "He is my son, and I'll do whatever I want with him!" haven't you? And I'll bet you know husbands who think they own their wives, and wives who think in terms of my husband. The concept of possession is built into the language, and it takes a conscious effort sometimes to realize that "my son" does not mean MY son. Any truly egalitarian and propertyless society, in order to exist at all, absolutely must first reform the language -- as in Anarres in Ursula LeGuin's *The Dispossessed* (which, Roytac, is somewhat more than just a Communist tract).

It's clear enough to nearly everyone, isn't it, that thought and language are at least closely related? It's universally acknowledged, I should hope, that what and how you think determines the words you use. It is equally true, but apparently much less obvious, that the words you use determine what and how you think. Or, let me rephrase that so it doesn't sound quite so dogmatic and absolute: The words we use affect the way we're able to think about things. That's better. Sometimes the process is very, very subtle, sometimes very obvious.

One very obvious example is wartime propaganda. It is much easier to hate and kill the enemy if you call them gooks or hunks or yellowbellies. Conversely, it is much easier to have respect for fellow human beings and to think of them as equals simply by avoiding such terms as "n-----," "Jewboy," "Jap," "queer," "broad," "jock," . . .

There is nothing trivial about the business of labeling. Pin a derogatory label on something, or someone, or some idea, and it automatically becomes more difficult to see and to think clearly about the reality.

SF fans, if anybody, should be aware of this problem. Mainstream critics and readers of serious literature aren't ever going to take science fiction seriously as long as it is referred to in the media as "sci fi" — right? Isn't that why a large number of fans have been quietly campaigning to discourage that usage? I have been active in that campaign myself, and I just happen to have a letter here from a media friend that touches on the issue.

PETE CHROEIS  
o/o Rooty Mountain Ems  
Denver 80402

Coming into contact with various groups makes you aware of their sensitivities\*  
If you listen to women who are concerned with liberation long enough, you soon

begin to use phrases such as "spokesperson" or "chairperson" when you write. Because you have become AMARE of their feelings in the matter, and, all right, dammit, somewhat sympathetic.

The same thing holds with science fiction aficionados. I muth of the un-enlightened world, used to employ the expression Sci Fi, until Don Thompson set me straight (Is that even the right word/)

If you really think about it, sci fi is a most inappropriate term. What is a sci-fi? It sounds like something you buy at Fred Schmid's and plug in:

"Oh, yeah, I bought me a new sci-fi. Real nice little jobber-do. Put out by North American Veeblpfetzer. Two hunert 'n twen'y-five watts. Flat blow the holy bejeezus outta Colorado Springs. Me an\* the missus really stone dig it.

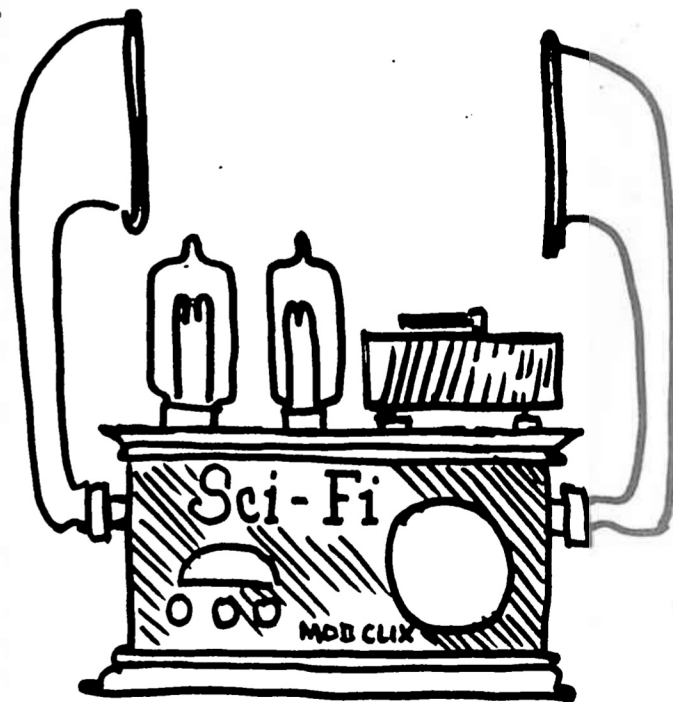
"Say, I gotta ideal Why'n't you an Amy cove on over Sa'rdsy night an we can listen to the sci-fi.

"We got some really great time-warp stuff, and I got me a vintage copy of "Lost in Space.

"Oh, not your bag, huh? How's about a little bit of R&B — regeneration and bionics, ya know? Don't like that either, huh?

"Oh, well, I suppose we could light a far in the farplace, guzzle a little bourbon and listen to the pornograph . . ."

[So I have apparently won the battle on Sci FI, but I have not yet been able to persuade Pete to call us "fans" Instead of aficionados. I'm working on it. One thing at a time.

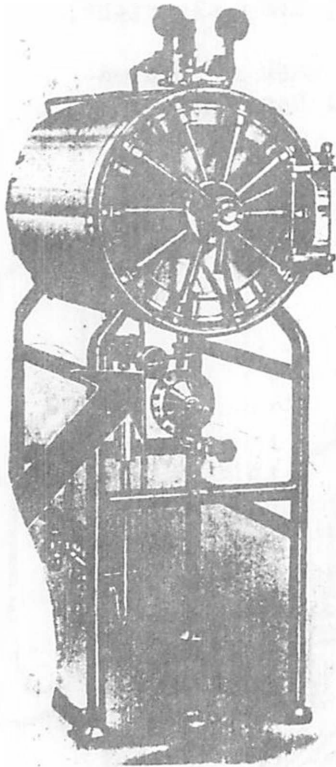




[In the interests of space and in hopes of getting this issue in the mail before the end of the year, I am not going to deliver a lecture or discourse on semantics. But in the interest of fairness, so you won't think that I arrived all on my own at the conclusion that words and labels are not just a lot of bullshit, I would like to mention the two books that gave me most of the information and insights that I possess on the subject. They are *Power of Words*, by Stuart Chase, published in 1954 (which is about when I first read it) and *Language in Thought and Action*, by S.I. Hayakawa, first published in 1940 but revised and updated several times since, most recently in 1972, which is about when I read it. Both books are basically popularizations and elaborations of the pioneer theory of general semantics developed by Alfred Korzybski as outlined in his 1933 book, *Science and Sanity*. I'm sure there are more recent works available, but I'm not sure there are any that present the subject any more clearly and excitingly.

[Judy Tockman's letter deals with semantics, too, sort of . . . ]

JUDY TOCKMAN  
1241 Prospect St. #16  
La Jolla, CA 92037



Here is an antique mundane autoclave. This 1936 Castle was last seen on a dealer's lot between a 1940 Prometheus and a 1935 Bramhall Deane.

I was impressed and touched by what you had to say about loving people, and about falling in love with Carolyn all over again at AutoClave. (What a delightful

con that must have been! All the autoclaves I've had anything to do with produced, in the course of their operation, sustained pressure, intense heat, and resultant sterility. I'm glad this one was different!)

Society has so brainwashed ("love and marriage, love and marriage, go together like a horse and carriage . . . you can't have one without the other") into believing that feelings and expressions of affection are wrong unless they're between people who are legal or potential legal mates. It isn't easy to see through and beyond, this arbitrariness. It takes an enlightened kind of social education, perhaps starting in childhood, and an unconstrained mind (maybe that's why fans are better at it) and some "consciousness-raising" a la Gale Burnick. Your ability to love grows from your positive attitude toward life and people, and your positive attitude grows from your ability to love.

I wish I could believe in ESP. I know it's narrow-minded and unfannish not to. But I haven't yet heard or read any argument or had any experience that has convinced me that ESP exists. I've never experienced *deja vu*, (and remember being the only person at a DASFA meeting who had never experienced it, in response to a speaker's question).

I do have an ability to find money on the sidewalk with greater frequency than anyone else, I know, but I attribute this to a tendency to walk with my eyes cast down, rather

than to any paranormal ability. I've had experiences that could be equivocally interpreted as psychic or coincidental, and I prefer the coincidental.

This will probably be incomplete. It's been a long time since DoS 46, and there have been a lot of locs and I'm afraid some may have gotten mis-filed. Abject apologies if so.

I'll start with the letters that arrived just barely too late to be listed in 46:

Linda Emery, Cathy McGuire, Jodie Offutt, Ken Ozanne, Alan Sandercock, Jackie Simpson, Philip Stephensen-Payne.

And now the rest, more or less in alphabetical order, but expect some of them to be out of order. (Alphabetical only, I meant).

John J. Alderson (an article really, rather than a loc; you'll be seeing it eventually, in the special "article" issue, whenever), Paul Anderson (*did you receive the back issues? Let me know if not, because I don't remember whether I sent them!*); H.J.N. Andruschak, Don Ayres (two; one long, one short); Neil Ballantyne (*thanks for the artwork; some of it least will be used eventually*); George Beahm, Sheryl Birkhead, Alan Bostick, Lester Boutilier, Robert Bloch, Ray Bowie, Jr., Richard Brandt, Alan Bosco, Denny Bowden, Bill Bridget, A. Bertram Chandler (two!); Cy Chauvin (*thanks for the APA-50 mailings, but that, I take it, is not the new apa you meant? I think I would be interested. Sometime soon I must write a sort of discourse on Love. I assure you I do not use the word indiscriminately, but it does have a lot of meanings*); Pete Chronis (another one!); Dave Cockfield, David Cohen, Brett Cox, Joan Dick, Dale Donaldson, Carolyn "C.D." Doyle, Graham England, Jack Flanagan (*Sorry I haven't written to you; I've been meaning to every day, and I will yet, just as soon as this issue is mailed. Meanwhile, thanks for the books; I'm still enjoying them*); Ken Gammage, Mark Gisleson, Mike Glicksohn (*please remain berserk; you are much loved*), Hank Heath, Jackie Hillis (*Henry's pilgrimage was to Canossa but I'm amazed that you caught the reference. You constantly amaze me*), Lee Hoffman (*thanks for the SF Five-Yearly; a most impressive production*); Rose Hogue (twice, and it's nice to be hearing from her again); Ben Indick (two or three notes and letters, and I'm proud of myself for finally having written a letter to Ben); Fred Jakobcic, Ken Josenhans (*I hope you assumed that silence was permission*), Alan Lankin (*Sorry. I didn't realize I'd had the artwork so long; I intend to use at least some of it sooner or later — and thanks*), Johnny Lee, Paula Lieberman, Rebecca Lesses, Denny Lien, Eric Lindsay, Brian Lockhart, Steve McDonald, Christine McGowan, Barry Kent McKay, David C. Merkel, David Moyer, Jodie Offutt, Orland V. Outland, Ken Ozanne, Bob Peterson, Brad Parks, Karen Pearlston, Randy Reichardt, Ronald M. Salomon, Chris Sherman, Stu Shiffman, Willie Siro, Sheryl Smith, Rick Sneary, Rod Snyder, Lindsay Randall Stuart, Dave Szurek (*I'm glad it was nothing serious — "just" pneumonia. Miraculously, I have not lost the zines you sent me; they're in good condition still and will be returned*), Ira M. Thornhill (*Thank you for the Clay Fourrier artwork. I got a beautiful print of one with no trouble, but the matted one poses problems, which is why I've delayed returning them. Soon, though*), R. Laurraine Tutihasi, Bill Wagner, Dr. A.D. Wallace, Bud Webster, Linda Westlund (*I had a return tape almost finished for you — including hits by Angelo, Dancer, Silverado, Eddie Rabbitt and Leslie Duncan — when my machine quit entirely. They've had to send to Timbuctu or someplace for a part. Maybe I'll just send the tape as is. Thanks for yours*), Robert J. Whitaker, and last as usual but, as always, far from least — Leah Zeldes.

\* \* \* \* \*

I lied to you. There is no fiction supplement, after all. Not this issue anyway; perhaps next. Watch for it.

Ads      and      Ends

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