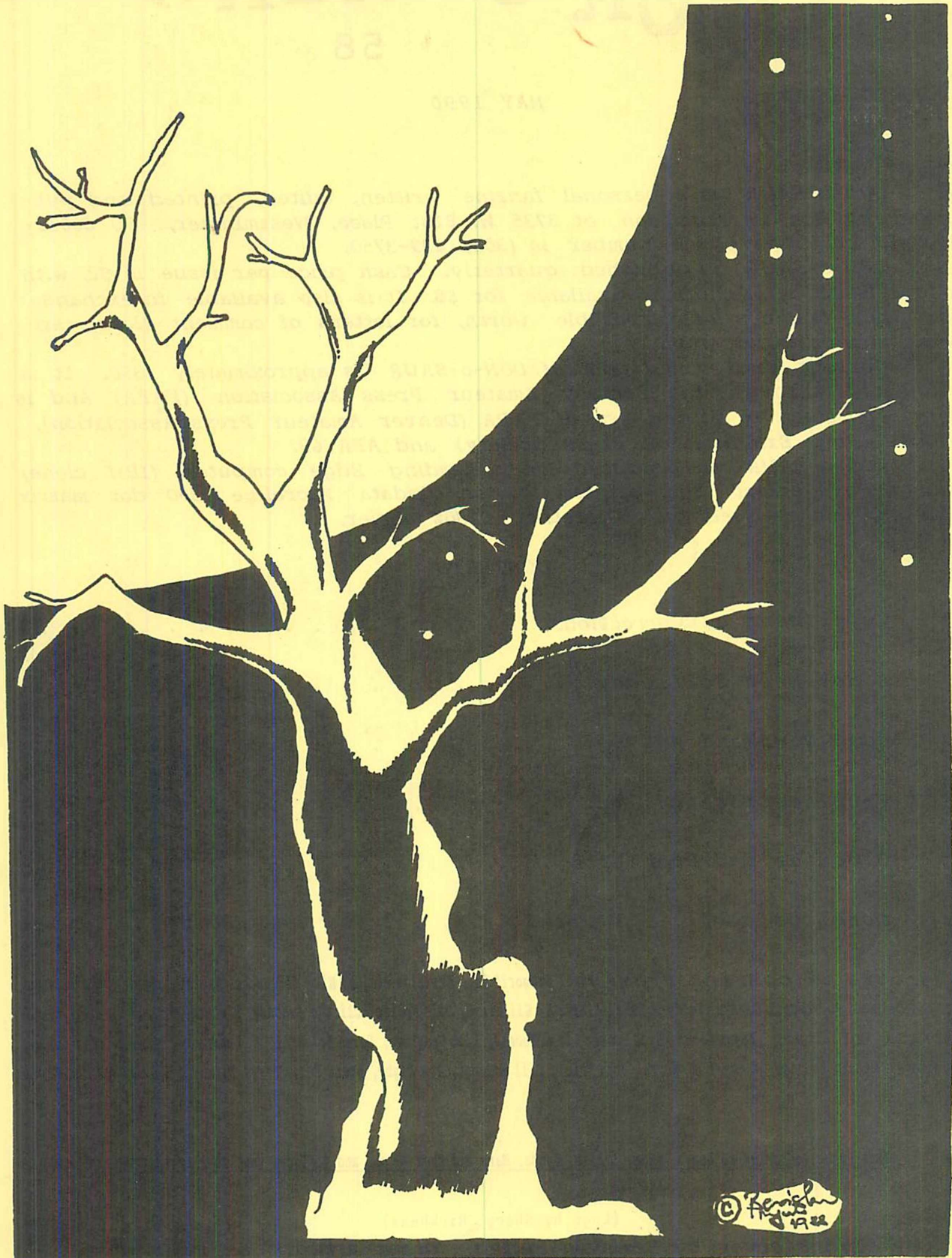


# Don-o-Saur

#58

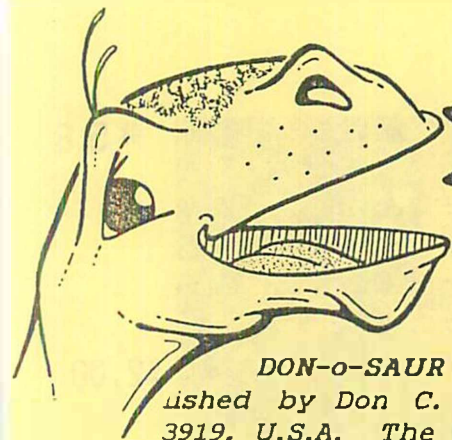
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May

1990



# DON-O-SAUR

## 58

MAY 1990

*DON-o-SAUR* is a personal fanzine written, edited, printed and published by Don C. Thompson of 3735 W. 81st Place, Westminster, CO 80030-3919, U.S.A. The phone number is (303) 429-3750.

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*(Letters of comment from: Pavel Gregorić Jr., Berislav Pinjuh, Mike Glicksohn, David A. Smidt, Buck Coulson, Juanita Coulson, A. Vincent Clarke, Teddy Harvia, Alexis A. Gilliland, Dale Speirs, Clifton Amshury, Richard Freeman, Laura A. Todd, Carl Bettis, Phil Tortorici, Wayne Hooks, Brad Foster, Lisa Thomas, Rich Dengrove, Doris Drisgill, R. Laurraine Futihasi, Tom Feller, Eric Mayer, Donald Franson, Michael W. Waite, John Thiel, Bill Bridget, Tom Digby, Brett Cox, Sheryl Birkhead, Alexander Slate, Tom Jackson.*

*This issue dedicated to Laura, Lisa, Lillie, Lynda, Mary and Thea -- oh, and to Iggy, too, to keep things in balance.*

(Logo by Sheryl Birkhead)

*Front cover by Berislav Pinjuh; Other artwork as credited*  
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## Department of Corrections

Or maybe this should simply be called "Oops!" This Department of Corrections has nothing to do with the issue of prison reform or penology (I hope; perhaps it depends on the form Alexis Gilliland's revenge takes. I'm offering justice, throwing myself on his mercy, hoping he'll negotiate.)

Sheryl Birkhead was the first to point out that I'd misidentified the artist of this sketch. A card from Teddy Harvia came a day later. Alexis' loc made no mention of the screw-up. What can I say? I'll try to be more careful in the future.

Apologies are due also to Richard Dengrove, some of whose letter apparently got lost between pages 38 and 39. The garbled section should have read: "A friend claims a relative of his in Hong Kong never heard of dinosaurs. When he saw one for the first time, he asked if it breathed fire..."

Joseph Nicholas pointed out that his fanzine, "Fuck the Tories" is NOT an anarchist publication, as I mistakenly identified it. "We are green socialists, a quite different species of political animal," Nicholas' card says. "Ignore the subheadings on the title page; they are always designed to mislead." Well, they worked, huh?

Sheryl also called my attention to the fact that the cover art on Chuq Von Rospach's fanzine, OTHER REALMS, is by Peggy Ranson, not Ransom. Sorry about that.

The main purpose of this section is simply to let you know that when I do make mistakes (I know of no way to avoid them entirely, short of ceasing publication, which I feel would be a mistake), I am willing to try to rectify them. I'm encouraging you to call all errors to my attention.

Needless to say, if receive a copy with a blank page or pages, let me know promptly and I'll be happy to provide either the missing material or an entire new issue.





# A Sot-Weed Soliloquy

## *Vapors from the Smoke Rings of My Mind*

I learned of the death of Arthur Thomson (ATom) in a letter from Vincent Clarke, and read the details a day later in a LOCUS obit written by Charlie Brown. I never knew ATom personally and never had the opportunity to use any of his artwork in any of my fanzines, but he was probably the first fan artist whose work I recognized by sight when I started becoming aware of fanzines, some 20 years ago.

He was such an established fan figure--a legend, truly--that I always felt he was my senior by many years. In fan-years, of course, he was. It was a double shock then when I learned from the LOCUS obituary that he was 62 when he died. Sixty-two? That's my age!

Both the obit and Viné's letter mentioned that ATom had been a heavy smoker--"40 a day for 40 years," Viné noted--and had died of emphysema.

A couple of years ago the mother of a friend of mine died of emphysema. She'd been a heavy smoker for at least 40 years. She continued to smoke even after she was permanently attached to an oxygen tank.

A few weeks before she died, my friend told me, "Mom says she's dying of old age. She's 60. Is that old?" I could only respond that I didn't feel old.

I wouldn't have much trouble listing the heavy smokers of about my age I've known personally who have died of emphysema or lung cancer or heart attacks; there haven't been very many--half a dozen or so, maybe, that I know of; but of course I've lost track of many of the heavy smokers (and heavy drinkers) that I used to know when I was a working newspaperman. I should add that I know a good many smokers and drinkers who haven't died, and a few abstainers who have. I'm not trying to prove anything. But I do need to clarify a few points.

I am not a smoker; I quit about 22 years ago, after about 20 years of heavy indulgence. Increasingly I find cigarette smoke irritating to my nose and lungs. Our house has become a no-smoking zone, even during the annual DASFA Winter Solstice Orgy; for the first few years we had the party here, we allowed smoking on one floor of the four-level house. Later we confined it to a single room. A couple of years ago, we started putting the smokers in the attached but unheated garage. When Carolyn and I eat in restaurants, we always ask to be seated in the No Smoking section.

I'm unable to avoid smoke entirely. I consider myself much more tolerant than many non-smokers, particularly one of my friends who sometimes displays a button reading: "Smokers, please die!" I am not a member of GASP.

Some of my very best friends are nicotine addicts (including my older sister, a very good friend indeed). I voluntarily subject myself about once a week to the company of individuals who wanted to live badly enough to quit consuming alcohol but have a strong enough death wish that they continue to chain smoke. I come home from AA meetings reeking worse than I did when I hung out in bars. Carolyn never has to ask where I've been. (There ARE such things as non-smokers' AA meetings, but they tend to be at inconvenient times in distant or unpleasant places, such as church basements.)

I found myself arguing against a proposed new tax on cigarettes when the question came up at a recent League of Women Voters Board meeting, even though the funds were intended for medical research and education to help people quit smoking. I was thinking about the down-and-outers on 23rd Street at Larimer and Lawrence that I drive past on the way to the League meetings. A cigarette represents to them the only remaining luxury in life, the only solace in a barren existence. I'm not sure that any of the League ladies quite understood what I was talking about, but the majority voted against supporting the tax--mostly on grounds that it was regressive. Well, whatever...

One more point: I hope to avoid generalized philosophical abstractions and dogmatic assertions in this discussion, confining it, as usual, to my personal experience. That doesn't mean that I won't be interested in your philosophizing. Feel free to express any general conclusions on the subject of smoking or tobacco that occur to you; but of course I'd like to know about your specific experience too.

Having said that, I'll start with a question that invites generalizing:

I wonder if there's any correlation between the age at which one starts smoking and the difficulty experienced in quitting? Has anyone reading this seen any statistics on that point?

"Difficulty," of course is a subjective judgment and difficult to measure, but I know many people who started smoking at a very early age and have simply been unable to quit, no matter what. I started fairly late and had a fairly easy time quitting.

If my mother hadn't been so strident on the subject, I might have started smoking earlier. I had plenty of bad examples. My father smoked, as did his younger half brother, who stayed with us for two or three years, as did his cousin Bob, who had an apartment nearby and was in our house nearly every day. I vaguely recall a certain amount of rolling-your-own cigarettes, but by the time I was paying attention, they were all smoking Luckies or Chesterfields or Camels.

The thing that drove my mother up the wall (as I once overheard her complain bitterly to a neighbor lady) was the habit of all those hard-working, hard-smoking males of using the toilets as ash trays.

"It's bad enough that they pee and don't flush and leave the lid up, but then they have to drop their cigarettes into the bowl. I think that stains the bowl worse than their urine does!" Obviously she didn't know I was listening; she wouldn't have said "pee" if she had; she always tried to shield me from bad language.

She tried hard to shield me from the evils of tobacco and alcohol, too, constantly lecturing not just me but the two girls as well about how bad they were. She didn't know anything about smoking causing cancer or heart disease but she was convinced it would "stunt your growth" even though her husband Bert had been smoking since he was about 12 years old and was 6'1" and 190 pounds.

"Never mind. It would stunt your growth! And don't get sassy!" Mom didn't know anything about alcoholism being a disease (or even an addiction), but she knew whiskey was evil. She referred to it, from time to time, as "the Thompson curse."

Strangely enough, beer was more or less okay--at least on picnics and fishing trips. I don't know why I use "and" there; our picnics were fishing trips into the nearby Snowy Range, and they were distressingly frequent during the summer months, when I was trying to get some reading done. Fishing was my father's primary passion and remained such until he was well into his 80s, by which time he had outlived all his fishing buddies and was finding it a little difficult to get around anyway. When I was a kid, my father would call from the roundhouse as soon as he got home from a trip on the railroad, if it was before noon, and Mom would start packing the fishing equipment.

It sometimes worked out that Dan (my uncle) and Bob (his cousin) would be in at the same time (they were railroaders, too), and it was on those occasions that the beer would be taken along, usually in those big tan-orange dark amber bottles that you don't see anymore. Cans came along later.

We kids were allowed a little sip or sometimes even a small cup of beer along with the fresh hot trout at supper or lunch time. Polly liked beer more than I did, as I recall, and was certainly a more enthusiastic fisherman. Laura

had a stronger will or more authority or something than I did, being two and a half years older, and often managed to avoid going along on the fishing picnics.

I didn't really enjoy them, but I tried to, because it was expected of me, I guess. I would fish for awhile, until my parents got fed up with untangling my lines from bushes, and then I'd go sprawl under a tree with the book that I'd brought along. I did not develop a taste for beer, and I developed a lifelong aversion to fishing.

Smoking held almost as little attraction to me as beer or fishing, but with so much tobacco around, it was inevitable that I try it.

I was about 12, I suppose, when I finally decided (probably remembering the age at which my father was reputed to have started) to sneak a cigarette from a pack that Dan or Bob had left lying around. I retreated to the room in the basement that I shared with Dan, when I thought everyone else was outside, sat down on the bed and casually lit up.

After I'd taken two or three painful puffs, Bob came barging into the room, without knocking or anything, looking for something or other for Dan; and it was no good my trying to hide the cigarette behind me.

"Hah! Caught you smoking, didn't I? First time? You look kinda green. Better gimme the cigarette. Your mom catches you with it, she'll skin you alive. I won't tell anyone, but you better stay out of sight for a while, till you're feeling better."

Then he was gone, and I was curled up in dizzy, nauseous agony for an eternity, until I was called upstairs for supper. By then I was at least able to eat.

When I was 15 and my sort-of friend Shelby Smith invited me up to the attic of his dad's garage to help him smoke a pack of Lucky Strikes that he'd illegally acquired, it didn't take much strength of character for me to decline.

There wasn't a great deal of peer pressure about smoking (or drinking, and certainly not about drugging--that word hadn't been invented) in high school. The known drinkers and smokers were generally the dregs of high school society--those who were about to drop out or flunk out anyway.

I remember being shocked as a senior when, one time after play rehearsal, I was with a group of fellow Thespians in a soda shop and Colleen Carroll, one of the girls I most admired--an A student, a superb actress, a formidable debate opponent--took a flat metal case from her purse and lit a long oval cigarette, coolly blowing smoke at everyone and smiling like a demon.

"I don't really smoke," she told us after we got our mouths closed. "It's just a prop; you notice I don't inhale." But she then demonstrated that she could inhale if she wanted to. She could even blow smoke rings.

I was enormously impressed.

In the Army, everything was different. I mean everything, and I mean totally different. Everything about it represented a whole new world of experience for me. Not much of it was enjoyable; none of it was so intolerable that I was ever tempted to cut my term of enlistment short.

In boot camp, in Camp Polk, Louisiana, one of my acquaintances seriously suggested that I join him in taking a weekend pass to New Orleans--and not come back. I thought he was crazy and told him so. He thought I was crazy for putting up with the hardships and humiliations of basic training. But I couldn't help noticing that he did return from his weekend in New Orleans and as far as I knew he survived basic. He didn't talk to me much after his return.

That wasn't the same acquaintance who taught me to smoke.

His name was Bob Wollford and I liked him because he was so vastly different from me, with an impressive range of military experience. He'd never finished high school, had enlisted in the Navy at age 15 (yes, he looked older than his actual age, and was large and muscular), had been discharged when his deception was discovered, and had then promptly enlisted in the Marines but hadn't quite made it through boot camp. He had then somehow transferred to the Army. He was, I think, a year younger than me, but infinitely more mature, I thought. I don't know why he liked me.

He said he couldn't remember exactly when he'd started smoking; he thought it was about age 5 or thereabouts. He could have been lying. I noticed eventually that he sometimes tended to exaggerate things. Nor was his military proficiency as impressive as it initially seemed. He started basic training as the natural choice for squad leader. Before the halfway point of boot camp, I had replaced him. He bore me no animosity for that at all, as far as I could tell.

By then he'd corrupted me, and that's what he seemed mostly interested in.

He was downright shocked when, as we were first getting acquainted, he discovered that I was a non-smoker.

"That's terrible," he said. "You must be the only guy in the barracks that doesn't smoke--maybe in the whole Army. Gotta do something about that. Who am I gonna bum butts from when I run short if you don't smoke? Here, try one."

That's peer pressure.

He applied it steadily, repeatedly and rigorously. He didn't just give me a cigarette and a light and let it go at that. He gave me detailed instruction in the mechanics of smoking--how to inhale without choking, how to hold the cigarette naturally, without betraying myself as a beginner. He would watch my every move until I met his standards. A good teacher. I knew I'd passed the final exam when I started buying cigarettes myself, by the carton, and providing butts to Bob Wollford when he would occasionally run short.

I would hate to try to estimate how many cigarettes I smoked, and how many pounds of pipe tobacco I burned up, during the next 20 years.

I made several attempts to switch from cigarettes to a pipe; switching was the whole idea of learning to smoke a pipe, while I was still an impoverished student at the University of Wyoming. Like all smokers, I'd quickly learned that it is an expensive vice, and eventually I'd had to think in terms of potential cost-cutting. (The obvious one, which never seems to occur to many smokers at all, is to quit, but a multitude of alternatives must first be explored before that can even be considered.) I saw pipe smoking as an economy measure. A pound of pipe tobacco cost less than a carton of cigarettes, and even though the pipe itself cost something, it was a one-time investment; you didn't have to buy a new pipe each time you bought a fresh supply of tobacco.

There were other factors: Pipe smoking has a mystique, an aura of both respectability and eccentricity that makes it much more glamorous and appealing than ordinary cigarette smoking. I liked the image that I thought a pipe gave me. And what with loading the pipe, tamping the tobacco, lighting up and meditatively taking a few puffs before responding to tough conversational gambits, it helped me survive some ticklish social situations--or at least I had the feeling that it did.

I'm sure now that it was illusory. I would probably have survived 'em anyway.

It took a lot of (expensive) experimenting before I could find both a pipe and a pipe tobacco that both I and others in the same room with me could be comfortable with. I had to try all the flashy, highly advertised stuff first

-- the pipes with filters and metal stems and the aromatic tobaccos that women were supposed to love the smell of. I finally ended up with two or three fairly simple and inexpensive briar pipes (I gave up on meerschaums, too) and Union Leader tobacco, one of the least costly brands, and if others didn't like the smell of it, that was their problem.

I was never exclusively a pipe smoker, except for relatively brief periods -- a few weeks or a couple of months at a time. Sooner or later I would always take up cigarettes again. But I don't mean just cigarettes, either. I would still smoke a pipe while intermittently puffing on cigarettes. At various times, I was going through a pack of cigarettes a day PLUS an ounce or so of pipe tobacco. And if someone offered me a cigar, I'd smoke that too. My cigarette of choice for most of my smoking career was Pell Mell, which had the highest nicotine and tar content of all brands.

And I inhaled everything.

One of the advertised advantages of pipe and cigar smoking was that pipe and cigar smoke didn't have to be inhaled for full satisfaction. I don't know who invented that myth.

**My first** serious attempt to quit smoking entirely was in 1953 or '54, when I was still new on the day copy desk job at the *Telegraph-Herald* in Dubuque, Iowa. I was the slot man. It was stress-filled, nervous work, demanding instantaneous decisions as to which were the important stories of the day, how much of them to use, where they were to go in the paper, with what kind of headlines and pictures, if any. Also, I had to edit my share of the stories and write many of the headlines myself, in addition to dummied the pages. I loved the work, and it got easier as I became familiar with the detailed aspects of it, but in the early stages I found myself smoking a couple of packs of cigarettes during my working shift. Well, not smoking, exactly. I would have one smoldering in an ashtray on my left and another on my right, and I'd find myself lighting up still a third. It became embarrassing.

My lungs and heart started feeling the pressure after a few weeks, and I even went to a doctor once, half hoping he would tell me that I had to quit smoking if I wanted to avoid a stroke or heart at-ack. He checked my heart and lungs and found them basically sound, nor was my blood pressure abnormally high; but he agreed that I was probably smoking too much and said it would be a good idea to quit or at least cut down drastically. He advised quitting, but warned that it wouldn't be easy, and said that tapering off was not a realistic step toward quitting.

"If you really want to quit, then just quit," he advised. "Do it with some emphatic and dramatic gesture. Get mad at the stupid habit. Throw a whole carton of cigarettes into the trash can or shred your last pack and flush 'em down the toilet. Make a big deal of it. Let everyone know that you've quit. You'll get a lot of support." I tapered off.

By conscious and heroic effort, I cut down to less than a pack a day, and, gradually, down to only about five or six a day. My lungs quickly felt better, but it didn't improve my disposition any and it probably slowed down my mastery of the job, because I had a hard time thinking about anything except when I could have that next cigarette.

Little by little, of course, I was soon (within a couple of months, at most) back up to a pack a day, and somewhere in there I was smoking the pipe again (or still; I may have tried smoking nothing but the pipe for while. The details get a bit foggy with time. )

I know that I remained a slave of nicotine for at least another 15 years.



Carolyn's attitude toward my smoking during all this time was remarkably tolerant (and it seems especially so as I look back on it now, in view of my own increasingly intolerant attitudes.)

Carolyn was not a smoker herself, though she told me she had tried it a few times, just because some of the girls she knew were trying it, and it seemed fashionable. She probably never inhaled, and no one ever took her in hand and taught her to smoke. Neither of her parents smoked (though I think her father may have tried a pipe at one time or another, perhaps to enhance his professorial image. But I don't know for sure.)

When she first knew me, I was a smoker, and Carolyn simply accepted that as part of my totality. I had some good characteristics and some bad; she didn't expect me to be perfect. She strongly supported my efforts to switch from cigarettes to the pipe, and she made it clear that she preferred the smell of pipe tobacco, but she never nagged or whined when I'd inevitably increase my cigarette consumption. She expressed just a bit of impatience and bewilderment a time or two when I'd run out of cigarettes late at night and feel compelled to run out to find a drugstore or liquor store or cigarette machine somewhere. (This was back in the '50s, remember; it seems to me that not as many places stayed open all night then as now. Even the 7-Elevens--did they even exist then?--weren't open all night.)

"Really?" Carolyn would ask. "You can't get along without a cigarette just until morning?"

Well, maybe I could, but I sure as hell couldn't face the prospect of waking up without a cigarette to start the day. That first cigarette was just as essential to my existence as the trip to the bathroom and the first cup of coffee. So I'd go out scrounging.

It's difficult for a non-smoker (or for one who hasn't smoked for a couple of decades) to understand the fierce and ruthless power that tobacco holds over its victims, the extremities to which it can drive them.

I have a humiliating memory--it must be from my early years in Denver, though it could conceivably be from Dubuque: I'd run out of cigarettes and I didn't have enough money with me to buy a pack. I was downtown, on foot. It must have been Denver; I was probably on my lunch break from the *News*; I dunno. It was still daylight, but late in the day. I may have tried to bum a smoke from anyone on the street who seemed to have one, without success. Most of the details of this are gone. What I do remember, all too vividly, is wandering through an emptying office building, surreptitiously but thoroughly inspecting the ash receptacles by the elevators and retrieving every butt, of whatever brand, that hadn't been smoked all the way down. I remember gently smoothing the longest butts I could find and aligning them gratefully and carefully in the metal cigarette case/lighter I carried at that time. They were my temporary salvation.

I can give you all the details of my final and successful attempt to quit smoking--but I'll try to exercise some restraint. I've learned from experience that my experience in quitting doesn't seem to be of much use to anyone else. Various people have asked me, at various times, how I managed to quit, and I've told them, as honestly and completely as I could. But I don't know of anyone who has followed my advice and managed to quit. (I could say that I don't know of anyone who has followed my advice, period, but never mind.)

Here's the simplified version of why and how I quit smoking:

I quit because it was hurting so much to smoke that I was certain it couldn't hurt any more to not smoke. That's the why. The how is a little more complicated, and to explain it, I have to try to remember when this was; and the

strange thing is that I can't recall exactly. It was a couple of years after I first quit drinking (Jan. 11, 1967; I remember that!), but whether it was little less than two years or a little more, I do not recall for sure. Maybe it shouldn't matter, but it was at least as important a milepoint in my life as quitting drinking was, and it bothers me a little that I can't pinpoint it more accurately.

It was early in my teaching career, and I recall that I had an office to myself at that time. My very first year of teaching was on a part-time basis, from September 1967 until May or June of 1968, and during that time I didn't have an office or even a desk; I just showed up at 8 a.m. to meet my one class a day and then went home to take a nap before going to work at the *News* at 3 p.m. I quit the *News* in the fall of 1968, after accepting a full-time teaching contract at Metro State College, and for a year or so I did have a tiny office all to myself, in a corner of the Cherokee Building.

Smoking was hurting; I mentioned that. It had to have been winter, let's say December 1968; I think that's close enough. I'd developed a bad cold, which was nothing unusual in itself. I'd had at least one cold every winter (sometimes lasting most of the winter) for most of my life, and I'm not sure this one was much or any worse than colds I'd had before, but this one had settled in my lungs, and it hurt like holy hell to draw in a deep lungful of cigarette or pipe smoke. It was enough to make me think again about the possibility of quitting.

Frankly, I didn't think I could do it, but it seemed to be worth one more try. I thought maybe I had a secret weapon this time.

So I went about it more systematically and with greater confidence than I ever had before. The secret weapon was the knowledge that I had already broken one vicious addiction, and that it hadn't even hurt too horribly much.

I was determined that if giving up tobacco started hurting too horribly much I would abandon the effort and refuse to feel guilty about it. I had no compunctions about being a coward. I remembered that my father had quit cold turkey (a couple of times, in fact) back in the '40s and '50s, and had become a gum and Life-Saver addict for a while and had made life unpleasant for everyone around him while bravely undergoing withdrawal. Nearly everyone I knew of who had quit smoking had done it cold turkey and had suffered enormously--and often quite vocally.

Cold turkey never even occurred to me. At the very outset, I told myself that I was not going to suffer. I was willing to keep on smoking rather than go through any kind of withdrawal hell. I remembered how I'd quit drinking, and I looked around for any kind of help I could get to quit smoking.

Have I told how I quit drinking? Not recently, I guess; at least not in DON-o-SAUR, so here's a brief summary of that process:

By early January 1967, my drinking had gotten totally out of control. I was drinking my lunch at work and hitting the bars as soon as my shift was over at midnight and sometimes not getting home until 3 or 4 or 5 in the morning. I was keeping a bottle of vodka in the trunk of my car at all times, and taking a nip or two even before going to work. I had been a binge drinker; now I was becoming a maintenance drinker. I needed at least a quart of alcohol a day just to function at my job. If I wanted to get drunk--as I often did--that required extra effort.

I knew I was having problems, and I was losing all semblance of self respect, but I hated to admit I was an alcoholic. I thought maybe I was going insane, so I went to a psychiatrist, after one final all-night binge.

Contrary to popular belief, there are some competent and intelligent psychiatrists in the world. This one, who happened to specialize in alcoholism

problems (I had called a referral service and explained my problems), was a crusty, no-nonsense practitioner in his early 70s.

He told me bluntly, "You're not crazy, you're just a drunk. Can you go without a drink for three days? If you can, come back and see me then, after you've had time to sober up, and we'll talk seriously then."

He gave me some pills to keep my nerves from flying apart during the withdrawal agony (something that I think most doctors today would disapprove of, but I considered the pills vital at the time) and I returned on the appointed date, when he informed me:

"You might as well face the fact that you're an alcoholic and that medical or psychiatric science can't do a damn thing to help you. Far as I can tell, only alcoholics can help alcoholics, so the only advice I can give you is to start going to AA meetings. You can spend a fortune on psychoanalysis if you want to, I suppose; I can't stop you, but I won't take your money. Go to a few AA meet-ings and see how you feel about things then. Let's make one more appointment..."

At our next session, three or four weeks later, I was able to tell him honestly that I had indeed attended a few AA meetings, and that I hated them, and that I thought I could stay sober one day at a time without the help of the God-spouting hypocrites in AA.

He was both amused and exasperated.

"It's your life we're talking about here! If you can't stay sober, you're dead! Almost no alcoholics have been able to stay sober on their own. Go to a couple more meetings at least, before you give up on AA entirely. It's really about all there is."

I did go to two or three more meetings, but I didn't get hooked on AA. However, I picked up and applied a couple of helpful hints.

One, of course, was the one-day-at-a-time principle. I had promised myself several times in the past to "never take another drink as long as I lived," and each time I'd be drinking heavier than ever within a few weeks. The thought of sobriety forever was just too depressing. But to do without a drink just for today was easy enough.

Anybody could do that, and that's all it took, really. The days had already started piling up.

The other thing that appealed to me was the idea of victory through surrender. Step 3 of the AA program has to do with turning "our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him," which made no sense to me as a hard-core atheist, but I was able to interpret the words to mean that the exercise of will power was a waste of energy.

I visualized myself as drowning, floundering in the cosmic ocean, getting in more difficulty the harder I struggled. If I could just relax, lie back and float, allowing myself to be buoyed by the waves instead of buffeted by them, I thought I might have a chance to survive.

Something worked.

By December 1968 I'd been sober nearly two years, without the help of AA meetings and without the slightest compulsion or desire to taste alcohol on any given day.

I was remembering all that when I faced the prospect of giving up tobacco.

I didn't go to a doctor or a psychiatrist, because I thought I could remember enough of the useful advice that I'd received about alcoholism to apply it to the nicotine addiction.

First I tried to find the right kind of pill to help me through withdrawal. (I believed in pills more in those days than I now do.)

There were two kinds of over-the-counter pills available to help people stop smoking. I think both of them still exist, though I haven't paid much attention to such matters for a couple of decades now.

The cheapest and most widely advertised product was Nic-o-Ban. I bought a box. Nic-o-Ban was a flat orange colored lozenge that you dissolved in your mouth instead of lighting up a cigarette. It tasted like a cigarette dissolving in your mouth.

Horrible.

It reminded you constantly of what tobacco tasted like. I think it was also loaded with nicotine, and it didn't even reduce my craving for a real cigarette at regular intervals.

I threw the box away before it was half empty and bought a small box of Bantron, which cost more than Nic-o-Ban -- about as much as a carton of Pell Mells.

One of the best investments I ever made.

An inspirational sheet of explanatory instructions is included in the box of Bantron -- at least I hope it still is, if Bantron still exists. I have to believe that if people use Bantron and fail to quit smoking, it's because they haven't read the instructions carefully, or haven't believed the explanations.

The instructions are simple: Take one pill with a glass of water following each meal. Continue to smoke as long as you feel the desire. The sheet promises that because Bantron contains a safe and non-addictive substitute for nicotine, the craving will soon subside and you can quit painlessly whenever you wish.

I convinced myself that I could feel the wholesome ingredients of Bantron flowing into my bloodstream, replacing the poison. I had about an ounce of pipe tobacco and a couple of packs of cigarettes left when I started taking the Bantron. After popping the pills for two or three days (while trying to hold the smoking to a minimum, but refusing to suffer) I was beginning to feel that I probably could throw the rest of the cigarettes and tobacco away, but I hated to waste anything (and still do), so I smoked 'em to the dregs. The last cigarette and the final pipeful of tobacco were both consumed in my office at school.

The doctor in Dubuque had told me to make a big deal of quitting. "Tell everyone; get support, make a dramatic gesture." I ignored that advice totally, keeping my effort a deep dark secret from everyone; if I failed, I didn't want everyone knowing about it. On about my second day without a smoke of any kind, Carolyn noticed me slipping the pill into my mouth at the conclusion of the noon meal.

"Asprin?" she asked. "Headache? Sore muscles?"

I shook my head and showed her the Bantron box. "You'd probably never notice if I didn't tell you. I'm trying to quit smoking." The kids were at the table, and I seem to recall that my parents were there, too, or maybe it was her parents.

Anyway, there was more reaction from all of them than from Carolyn, but I don't recall that any of them seemed particularly impressed by my courage and determination; at least no one sneered and said it couldn't be done, and certainly no one expressed any disapproval. Bruce and Claudia, as teenagers, had managed to let me know, more emphatically than Carolyn ever had, that they didn't like tobacco smoke, but they'd never nagged me about it either.

I took a nap on the couch in my basement room after lunch and had a strange and memorable dream. (I still have many strange and interesting dreams, but I seldom remember them.) All I recall now, after all these years, is the image of a small boat drifting farther and farther from shore, and the certain feeling

that this was goodbye, that there was no returning. It was a fond and somber farewell, as to an old and cherished friend; and I realized as I emerged from sleep that I had finally parted from my tobacco addiction. The emotion was more one of sorrow than of jubilation. I felt like I'd been to a funeral.

But that was the end of it, and it was the last of the Bantron, too. I'd only bought the one box, at the price of a carton of cigarettes. Best bargain ever.

I'd quit smoking the same way I'd quit drinking: by not fighting, by surrendering my own will to the forces of nature--my interpretation of AA's "higher power" or "God as we understand Him."

I know it sounds vague and mystical and just too-too New Wave, and I don't know of anyone else who has quit smoking the same way I did, so I've given up expecting my experience to be of much benefit to others, but that's the way things are sometimes.

Ten years (or less) after I quit smoking--11½ years after I quit drinking --I decided to give alcohol another try, and it took me five additional years to free myself from that monkey again. It never occurred to me, even at my sloppiest drunkest, to resume smoking. I had become, and remain, at the deepest level of my being, a total non-smoker.

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*The following few pages, begun when I was about half finished with my Sot-Weed Soliloquy, are reprinted, with some editing, from RIM RUNNER #97, my contribution to the April 1990 issue of the Denver Amateur Press Association (D'APA). It's easier than rephrasing the whole thing. I've said what I think needs to be said, about as well as I can say it. The only thing I'll add is that the irony of what follows in light of the preceding pages is by no means lost on me.*

## Good news and not so

This is unlikely to be another 10 pages of RIM RUNNING, but we can never be certain of things to come, can we? Last issue I was restraining myself from anticipating pleasurable things that I knew might never come to pass. (I could add that there was considerable pleasure in the anticipation itself.) Recently I've been making a conscious effort to avoid anticipating grim and grisly, decidedly unpleasant things that might never eventuate. The effort has not been entirely successful, and there has been some unpleasantness in the anticipation itself. Life is like that.

The difficulty of working at the word processor a little more than 12 hours after surgery is considerably less than anticipated. (This is being written at about 5 a.m. Satur

day, April 7.) I was prepared psychologically to be an awkward left-hander for a week or so following the operation. Instead, I am able to use my right hand and arm almost as much (if a bit more painfully) as I ever was. That's the good news.

I'd better back up and be more specific. (I could use pain and pain pills as an excuse for incoherence, but I've never needed such excuses before, so I don't want to rely on them now.)

Back up to March 21st. That was my (and Carolyn's) 39th wedding anniversary, a fact that has no significance to the topic under consideration here but seems impressive in its own right.

Carolyn spent the day generating some income with the Denver Convention and Visitors Bureau. It was



a beautiful spring day, remember? I refuse to say that I was feeling guilty about staying home and loafing while Carolyn was gainfully employed, but for some reason I was impelled to rotate the tires on my little Honda Civic. No big deal, except that it just isn't the sort of thing that I normally feel impelled to do. I stretched muscles that I didn't realize I had, creating a minor ache and pain or two.

Carolyn and I had a quiet anniversary dinner that evening at the Black Angus restaurant and I told her about switching the tires and about another project that I had embarked upon.

"It has finally occurred to me," I said, "that a lot of the stuff I've been writing in DON-o-SAUR all these years can be considered essays, and I've noticed that any number of publications listed in the *Writers Market* actually pay money for personal essays. So I'm going to rewrite some of those pieces and try to sell them. There really is some good writing in there!"

"Well, and while you're about it, you might as well sort out your memoirs," Carolyn said. "Your autobiography is scattered around in DON-o-SAUR, too."

Later that evening, after Carolyn had gone upstairs to bed and I was sitting in my easy chair simultaneously watching TV, reading and rubbing sore muscles, my hand strayed to a certain sore spot under my right arm that had been trying for my attention.

I knew what it was the instant my fingers closed on the lump, and I whispered, "Aw, shit!" But there was nothing I could do about it just then, so I took my nap and got up at 3 a.m. as usual and did a little work on the next DON-o-SAUR before finally getting to bed at about 5 a.m. Carolyn worked that day, too, but the first thing I did when I got up was to call Kaiser and get an appointment with Dr. Ramach, the surgeon who had worked on me in 1988 and had been checking me periodically since then.

Friday was the earliest I could see him. I spent Thursday culling essays from old DON-o-SAURS and retyping them in submission format. It was engrossing and a bit depressing.

I mentioned the doctor's appointment and the reason for it to Carolyn when she completed her day's work.

"It may not even be anything important," I said. "Could be just a pulled muscle from wrestling those tires. Or, I don't know. There must be lots of innocent reasons for lymph nodes to get swollen up."

"Well, I'm sure it's wise to have it checked out," she assured me.

I like Dr. Ramach; he's always explained things very clearly and concisely, and never insulted my intelligence with the kind of games that some medical experts can't seem to resist.

When he felt the lump that I'd found he refrained from making soothing but meaningless noises to the effect that it might be nothing important, that there were all sorts of innocent reasons for lymph nodes to get swollen up. He said:

"Oh, yes. That's a lump, all right. I'm going to do a needle biopsy right now. We'll get the results early next week and let you know as soon as possible, so we can schedule the surgery. If the biopsy is positive, we'll remove all the lymph nodes under the right arm. Even after that, there's about an 80 percent chance that the cancer will spread to some other area--to other lymph nodes or one of the internal organs. If we detect it in just one area, it might still be operable, but the chances for success go down with each successive operation. Now, if this biopsy should happen to turn up negative, we'll still have to excise this one swollen node and do a cross-section biopsy on it, in case the needle doesn't happen to catch the cancerous part. The surgery in either case is fairly simple and you can go home immediately afterward."

(I don't think he used that many words to convey that much informa-

tion, but that's what I learned from the session.)

I spent the weekend polishing essays. I had found four that I liked a lot, and I sent all four of them off to magazines that same day.

The expected phone call came Monday afternoon. It might have been kind of funny, except that it wasn't.

A woman's voice said, "This is Dr. Ramach's office, and I have the schedule for your surgery. Are you ready to take this down?"

"Go ahead."

"Monday, April 2, at between 9 and 11 a.m. you come in for preliminary tests. Wednesday, April 4, at 3 p.m. we have you down for pre-op physical and a talk with the doctor. Friday, April 6, 11 a.m., be at the outpatient department of St. Joseph's for the surgery. Got it?"

I wasn't sure that I did have it all, but I said, "I think so. Now, I assume that this means the results of the Friday biopsy were positive?"

A long pause followed, and finally the voice said, "Can you hold just a minute?"

A longer pause was followed by a different voice.

"Uh, Mr. Thompson? This is Melanie (or whatever the name was--probably NOT Melanie, but that sounds appropriate, doesn't it?) Listen, I was supposed to have talked to you before we notified you of the surgery schedule, but things have been a little hectic around here. The biopsy report. Uh, yes. The results were positive--consistent with melanoma. Now, Dr. Ramach said he had talked to you and explained what all this means. I'm sorry if we..."

"It's all right; no problem," I told her. "It's pretty much what I'd been expecting."

Still, it wasn't what I'd wanted to hear, and it didn't exactly cheer me up.

The monthly board meeting of the state League of Women Voters was scheduled for Wednesday, the fourth, from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. It would have been possible for me to attend

the meeting, leaving only an hour or so early in order to make the doctor's appointment, but...

Well, for one thing, I wanted Carolyn to go with me to talk to the doctor, to help me remember what he said. And for another thing, I hadn't felt for some time that I was doing the best possible job for the League of Women Voters and had been looking forward to the expiration of my term on the Board in another year. I saw the opportunity to get off it and wrote a polite letter of resignation --which I didn't get around to delivering until Tuesday, April 3; I wasn't sure I wouldn't change my mind; I have enjoyed working with those women.

Three of the four apas I'm in have deadlines this month. PEAPS was first, Saturday the 14th. I want to hang in with PEAPS as long as I comfortably can, and I owed pages for this mailing, so I focused on that for a few days. I got it in on time.

The deadline for APA 69 (Classic) is virtually the same as for D'APA, and I intend to drop out of it after this mailing. It's the one apa that I get least out of, and contribute least to. If the idea is to save huge hunks of time for my own writing (the reason I gave LWV), it won't accomplish much.

There were a couple of other projects I had to complete before the operation. My *Denver Post* column was due on the 11th, but I wasn't sure how I'd be feeling that week, so I moved it up, got it in early and I needed to write my Secretarium column for DASFAx and some book reviews.

The surgery... Well, as the doctor promised, it was fairly simple. The worst part of it was doing without coffee from Thursday night until Friday afternoon ("nothing by mouth after midnight!") And at least this time I got to sleep through the actual slicing process. Last time I was awake throughout and was able to feel some of it. This time, the anesthesiast said, "Ready to take a little nap?" and I said, "I guess

so," and he slipped an oxygen mask over my nose and mouth -- and the next instant I was in the recovery room with a sore throat and a very sore right armpit, and Carolyn was giving me spoonfuls of ice to ease the sore throat (caused by a breathing tube used while I was asleep, someone told me).

It was kind of like the instantaneous scene shifts in movies, and it occurred to me that it would be a good idea if a lot more of life could be handled that way, editing out much of the dull, painful and unpleasant stuff.

It took less than half an hour for me to feel strong enough to get my clothes back on and let Carolyn drive me home. We were home by 4:30 that afternoon. I admit I didn't feel like doing much except taking a pain pill and another nap. Waking from that first pill-induced nap wasn't like waking from the anesthesia; it was more like using the fast-forward on a VCR. I woke up a couple of times enough to remember I had taken the pill and why, but I'd just close my eyes and a couple more hours would zip by.

By 5 a.m. Saturday, I was in front of the word processor, testing the flexibility of my right arm and the coherence of my thoughts. It seemed important to get back to a regular working schedule as soon as possible.

Since the surgery, I have found a few more DON-o-SAUR essays that I want to submit to magazines, but I haven't done anything about them. I've contented myself with getting started on RIM RUNNER and getting my PEAPS material in the mail and typing in some letters for the next DON-o-SAUR. I didn't try to go play chess Monday night, but I made it to my regular AA meeting Tuesday, and I took Carolyn out to dinner Wednesday night. I'm back on schedule.

When I first learned about the fresh outbreak of the melanoma, I started mentally cancelling plans to attend PulpCon and ConFiction and thinking seriously about bringing my

will up to date. I had a strong feeling that I might not have more than a year or so left, and I really DO want to get a book or two put together before I shuffle off.

In the intervening three weeks, I've done a little additional thinking, with a little less sense of urgency resulting. The talk with Dr. Ramach on the Wednesday before the surgery (with Carolyn present) seemed to put things in a slightly different light, also. That's odd in a way, because the figures he cited on the chances of success in melanoma operations were certainly no more cheerful than the ones he'd used before.

"There's about a 15 to 20 percent chance that it can be stopped here," he said. "But melanoma is a strange and baffling disease. It's not at all responsive to radiation or drug therapy. There just seems to be no drug strong enough to affect the cancer without killing the patient. All that works is to cut it out when and where we spot it. And there have been cases where patients have gone many years--in one case about 40 years--after one operation without any recurrence. Usually, if it does show up again, it's within the first year. Yours was, what? Two years?"

It was 18 months, actually, but I didn't interrupt. Carolyn did:

"So what we're doing with the surgery then is buying time? This stops it for now, but we don't know for how long?"

"Exactly. It could be for good. And even if it does show up again somewhere else--if it's just in one place, like another lymph node or even in a single internal organ--we can still go after it with surgery. Now, of course, if it seems to be widespread, showing up in several different places at once..."

He finished that sentence with a shrug that said more than he could have expressed in words.

But for some reason I felt a little better after that discussion. I liked Carolyn's phrase: "Buying time."

Well, sure! That's what we're all doing every day, isn't it, every time we make a sensible decision, such as to not run a red light or step out in front of a truck. We're buying time--upping our chances for living a little longer by just that amount. When I quit smoking 22 years ago, I knew I was buying myself a little time, postponing my death a bit. And when I quit drinking (again) six and a half years ago, I was buying time. I had countless opportunities to die during those five years of drinking; at one time I even tried to freeze myself to death. Surviving that bought me some extra time that I didn't even think I wanted right then.

If I haven't used it as wisely as I could have, that's no one's fault but my own.

Really, when I think seriously and realistically about my current situation, I have absolutely no grounds for complaint (and who or what would I complain to, anyway?)

I could still live to be 90, like my father and grandfather. Or I

could slip on a rug on my way to bed and break my neck within the next few minutes. There are a zillion things that could get me before the cancer has a chance. And this was true even before I knew how to spell melanoma. I know as much and as little about my future as I ever did--namely, nothing for sure.

So I'll continue to take things as they come--one day at a time, one little detail at a time.



(Phil Tortorici)

## Fanzines In Review

*Okay, okay, in the face of advice to the contrary, this is, after all, a sort of fanzine review column. I haven't been able to confine it to a simple list of the zines received in exchange for DON-o-SAUR, with no comments, and I'm also too lazy or too cowardly to pick out only the best for review.*

**ASA #126 & 127** (January 1990); Francis Valéry, French Space Academy, c/o Frederique Pinsard, 11 rue des Vignerons, 33800 Bordeaux, France. Attractive 6X8 1/2 fanzine French language fanzine.

**BLACK HOLE #29** (February 1990); Ian Creasey, Leeds University Union SF & Fantasy Society, PO Box 157, Leeds, LS1 1UH, U.K. 54 pages (6X8) of articles, reviews, fiction, poems and artwork. It's an attractive publication, literate and readable (though I didn't read the fiction).

**BARYON #44**, Barry R. Hunter, P.O. Box 3314, Rome, GA 30164-3314. Eight pages (8 1/2 X 11) of reviews, most of which I read because Barry seems to get some books that I don't. Artwork by Peter Horwath.

**BCSFazine #201, 202, 203**, Feb., Mar., April 1990). British Columbia SF Association, P.O. Box 35577 Stn. E, Vancouver, B.C. V6M 4G9, Canada. Available for "the usual." An impressive combination of clubzine and genzine. I've been following the "But What Did I Read" column by Ed

Hutchings because it stirs nostalgic memories.

**BRUZZFUZZEL NEWS #63, 64**; Baton Rouge Science Fiction League, Clay Fourrier, Editor, P.O. Box 14238, Baton Rouge, LA 70898-4238. Six-page clubzine, with occasional fiction, reviews, etc. The most attractive feature is the great Steve Fox artwork.

**CROOKED ROADS Vol. 1 #2**, Feb. 1990. Published by Carl Bettis, P.O. Box 32631, Kansas City, MO 64111. Issue 1 was impressive; issue 2 is even more so, having grown from 24 to 30 pages and including a wider variety of material, including the start of a story by Carl. The emphasis remains on poetry and politics. My only suggestion for improvement would be to put the page numbers on the outside corners. It's a clean, professional-looking publication. \$4 for three issues.

**DE PROFUNDIS #216, 217, 218**, (Feb., March, April 1990); Newsletter of the Los Angeles SF Society, 11513 Burbank Blvd, North Hollywood, CA

91601, Jeni Burr, Editor. Available for "the usual." The editorial about the Ackerman collection in issue 217 is of particular interest.

**DOXY #2** (February 1990) John Foyster, P.O. Box 3086 Grenfell St., Adelaide, South Australia 5000. A news and review zine from one of fandom's fabled figures, available for more or less the usual.

**FACTSHEET FIVE #34 & 35**, Mike Gunderloy, 6 Arizona Ave., Rensselaer, NY 12144-4502. THE catalogue (132 pages in the latest issue!) of fanzines and small press publications--of all kinds. \$3 per copy or trade.

**FILE 77 #84**; Mike Glycer, 5828 Woodman Ave. #2, Van Nuys, CA 91401. Best fanzine of 1988 (1989 Hugo winner), edited by world's best fan-writer (Hugo winner for several years and prime candidate again). Five issues for \$5, or by arrangement.

**FOSFAX #148** (March 1990); clubzine of the Falls of the Ohio SF Association (FOSFA); edited by Timothy Lane and Janice Moore, published bimonthly by the Committee to Publish FOSFAX (Grant McCormick and Timothy Lane) P.O. Box 37281, Louisville, KY 40233-7281; \$2 per issue, \$12 a year.

**FUCK THE TORIES #8** (Feb. 1990); Judith Hanna & Joseph Nicholas, 5A Frithton Road, Stamford Hill, London N15 6NH, United Kingdom. 28 pages (04X11) of politically oriented yet highly fannish material (but definitely not anarchist, okay?) Available for the usual.

**THE GEIS LETTER #1**, April 1990; Richard E. Geis, P.O. Box 11408, Portland, OR 97211. Here's the Fan Who Will Not Fade, back again with an 8-page review zine which will be published "whenever an issue is completed." Probably available for the asking, at least to begin with.

**HERMIT CRAB #4**, Feb. 1990; Carl Ray Bettis holes up at PO Box 32631, Kansas City MO 64111, and this 4-page poetry-oriented personalzine is available for "30 cents, SASE, trade or friendship."

**JOURNAL OF MIND POLLUTION #30** (April 1990), Richard A. Dengrove, 2651 Arlington Drive #302, Alexandria, VA 22306. Well, shucks! Richard says this will be his last issue 'cause he wants to write a book about magic. Send a suitable hex and maybe he can provide back issues. This personalzine is fun to read, and educational, too.

**THE LEIGHTON LOOK 1/90**: from Rodney Leighton, RR 3, Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Canada BOK 1L0. Rodney reviews wrestling zines and still aspires to make a fortune as a reviewer of books and stuff. He has a Special Essay on the subject.

**LOOMPANICS UNLIMITED 1990** main catalog; P.O. Box 1197, Port Townsend, WA 98368. This is a book catalog, not a fanzine, and the books it sells are generally subversive. Some tell how to make bombs or otherwise overthrow the government. Contains provocative articles by Robert Shea, The Company of Freeman, Harold Hough (on cold fusion) and Bradley R. Smith (a holocaust revisionist--he seems to be saying it never happened). No price given for the catalog.

**NEOLOGY #68 & 69** (Winter '89-'90, March 1990); quarterly newsletter of the Edmonton SF and Comic Arts Society, Box 4071, Postal Station South Edmonton, Edmonton, Alberta, T6E 4S8 Canada. Combination club and genzine, available for \$1.50 per issue (\$1 U.S., \$2 overseas) or the usual. Catherine Girczyc is the new editor with issue #69 and sets clear and emphatic guidelines in her editorial. Great cover on 69 by Andrea Baeza.

**RADIO FREE THULCANDRA #20** (February 1990), Marty Helgesen, 11 Law-

rence Ave., Malverne, NY 11565. Published for Christian Fandom, "an interdenominational fellowship of Christians and Science Fiction Fans interested in the courteous and accurate representation of Christian viewpoints in the fannish community." Not surprisingly, locs take up 40 of the 50 neat and readable pages. Even and atheist can (and does) respect what Marty is doing here.

**THE RELUCTANT FAMULUS** March 1990, Thomas Sadler, 422 W. Maple Ave., Adrian, MI 49221. Tom's editorial/article about perception of the purpose of fanzines is particularly interesting in this 36-page issue. His reasons for printing fan fiction seem valid: "...some time in the future I may be known as one of the people who helped launch the career of some certain writer..." Available for the usual; he'd probably rather have contributions of articles or artwork (or maybe even fiction) than money.

**RENAISSANCE FAN #8** (November '89). Rosalind Malin and Dick Pilz Jr., 2214 SE 53rd St, Portland OR 97215. This "amateur fanzine" is consistently attractive, with hand-colored interior art, lavish covers and typeset on a Mergenthaler CRTronic. A letter enclosed with the 20-page issue 8 explains the problems resulting in lateness. Sounds vaguely familiar. Available for the usual.

**ROBOTS AND ROADRUNNERS** Vol. 5 No. 1 (March 1990); published for Ursula Major, The Science Fiction and Literary Society of Bexar County, P.O. Box 691448, San Antonio, TX 78269-1448, Alexander Slate & Lynn Garcia, editors. The biographical articles are a good idea, but they read too much like obits, always starting with date and place of birth instead of something interesting. 20 pages this issue. Available for the usual.

**THE ROGUE RAVEN #40**; Frank Denton, 14654 Eighth Ave. S.W., Seattle, WA 98166. It's always a pleasure to read Frank's increasingly infrequent perzine (eight pages this time) and good to note that he's keeping fit and busy in his "dotage." (I'd forgotten that he's two years my junior!) He's finished a novel and was planning to blow his uncollected royalties in Las Vegas.

**SCAVENGER'S NEWSLETTER #73** (March 1990), Janet Fox, 519 Ellinwood, Osage City, KS 66523-1329. THE magazine for small press editors, writers and artists. Sample copy \$1.50. Subscription rates are \$10 a year bulk, \$14 first class. 30 pages (04X11 folded).

**WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GOOSE IS GOOD FOR THE DANDRUFF & MANIFOLD DESTINY**, Ron Salomon, 1014 Concord St., Framingham, MA 01701. One-page one-shots, letter substitutes and an excuse to play with the new computer.

**WEBERMAN'S WREVENGE #36 & 37** (August & October 1989), Jean Weber, 6 Hillcrest Ave., Faulconbridge, NSW 2776, Australia. Peggy Ranson did the cover on #37 and interiors in both issues. Jean crams a lot of intelligence and a lot of good reading and fine artwork in each 16-page issue.



IRIS

(Iris Hunter)



## Gloomier and Doomier Section

## Can U.S. education pass the test?

If you were a student in rural Kansas in 1900, you would have had to pass the County Eighth Grade Examination to receive an eighth-grade diploma. And, as a quick peak at the exam's questions demonstrates, it was rigorous.



**Paul Craig Roberts**

Yet, students taught by teachers without high school diplomas could cope with it. Since those long-ago times, expenditures on public education have soared more than a thousand-fold, but quality has plummeted.

Try the exam yourself. If you send a copy to your junior high school, your high school, your college, your graduate school, maybe even a major university.

The "or" asked

But it seems to me that we have the opposite problem. The rules are quite clear. Narrow is the way, and straight is the gate, and staying on course often requires an expert guide. Unfortunately, many of our spiritual leaders aren't up to the trip. To the contrary, follow them and you might end up in the ditch. What's more, the guy who led you there has some of your money in his pocket. Zounds!

*Dave Shiflett is assistant editorial page editor.*

Q: My fiancée and I are in our early 30s and are both professionals. Our combined annual income is \$42,000 and we have \$2,000 in savings. In addition, I have recently

A third group doesn't know what to make of her, although it watches intently. "I really am fascinated by

At a White House reception Wednesday for women appointed to Administration jobs, Reagan pledged to stick by his plans for record increases in military spending and deep reductions in domestic spending. "I believe in the course we've chartered for America," he said.

Two geography questions were: "Name the country producing large quantities of wheat, coal, two of tea" and "Name the U.S., three of Europe, Africa, and the Americas, and three of Asia."

Another

## Old Torah scroll enriches holiday

**By Terry Mattingly**

*Rocky Mountain News Religion Writer*

An attorney representing the Pacific Gas & Electric Co. conceded that he had been "innaccurate and possibly misleading" when he assured the Nuclear Regulatory Commission last November that a con-

eventually refusing to answer questions put by Republican Howard Wolte, D-Mich., who is chairman of the House subcommittee on Africa. Later Botha

## TRACY CHAPMAN

**May 31**

With the release of a new album entitled "Crossroads," Tracy Chapman, at left, reaffirms her place as one of the most incisive songwriters and most expressive voices of her generation.

Crossroads features Tracy on both six and 12-string acoustic guitars and harmonica, and her live performance exonerates her versatility and talent. Tracy is a rare and charismatic singer/songwriter in the acoustic field who can grab the listener in a moment and hold him with a single note.

unions' expiration date of June 31. Since then, as talks continued, the unions have been working on a day-to-day basis.

(Thanks to Don Franson for about half of these)

# Dono-locs

Pavel Gregorić Jr.  
Tuškanac 22  
41000 Zagreb  
Yugoslavia

First of all,  
I'd like to thank  
Don for the appeal  
in issue 55 to

which some readers  
replied. I've received parcels of books  
from Roy Lavender, Mike Glicksohn and a  
giant one from Sheryl Birkhead, apart  
from Don's regular parcels. Thanks a  
lot, folks; an awful lot! Now I can  
read only SF & F until they put me in  
that long wooden box, since I'm not a  
dynamite reader like Ann Greenberg.

About schools--education is a great  
problem in Yugoslavia, mostly because of  
the lack of money that is supposed to  
finance schools, which leads to very low  
standards of schooling. In my classroom,  
for instance, two desks are missing.  
There are 37 of us and only 34 desks.  
(We sit in pairs). But sometimes it  
happens that one problem solves the  
other --there are never 37 of us in the  
class. At least five to 10 students are  
absent each lesson. Only a minority of  
the absentees are cases of illness; the  
rest are those who "oversleep the first  
lesson" or "were stuck in a traffic jam"  
and those who have various excuses for  
not "being in the mood" for school.  
People are not interested in science,  
history, languages, geography... And in  
my opinion the primary purpose of any  
junior and/or high school is to incite  
interest, to provoke the imagination  
(which Simon Hawke properly stresses as  
a desperate need) because it's only an  
individual who decides what and how to  
study. Kids ought to be informed, in-  
structed and guided about how to learn.  
Many 16 and 17 year olds actually don't  
know how to learn.

Still, school is merely an element in  
the long and peculiar process of under-  
standing and gathering all kinds of  
knowledge. The individual is important.

As you know, I'm in the fourth grade  
(the last one in Yugoslavia) of a high  
school and have an awful lot of study  
for the next six or so months. Unlike  
other grades, the last semester ends on  
the 15th of May in order to give us time  
to study for the final exams that sum up  
all four years of high school plus a  
special work each student must perform.  
We call it "graduate work" and the point  
of it is that a student chooses a sub-  
ject and a particular theme on which  
he's to write an essay posing some the-  
sis. Afterward, in front of the profes-  
sor council, he has to defend the the-  
sis. The subject professor conducts the  
process and poses questions that are

often unsolvable. My work is one of the  
most difficult and complicated--compara-  
tive analysis of the Bible and Kur'An.  
It'll be fun and rather instructive but  
there are hours and days, nights and  
weeks of study before me. The professor  
of the subject, History of Civilization,  
is the most rigorous at the school and  
he'll be conducting my examination.

When I graduate and get my diploma,  
I'll have to do qualification exams for  
the University. I've decided to study  
philosophy and literature, but exams for  
that faculty are bloody difficult. I  
must succeed...I must succeed...I must  
succeed... When/if I get to the univer-  
sity, I go to the army. I'll be losing  
precious time (a whole year) in God-  
forgot-where with primitive people who  
barely know their name and I'll suffer  
the mental aggression that officers usu-  
ally impose. After the army I'll begin  
the studies and keep going with my life.

So, how does it sound? What a bright  
future, huh?!

Berislav Pinjuh  
Krklecova 9  
41090 Zagreb  
Yugoslavia

Through you, I'd  
like to thank Roy  
Lavender for send-  
ing me books. Yes,  
I know it was an

eternity ago, but I do appreciate it.

I'm running for entering the faculty  
this year (medicine). Right now I'm at-  
tending a seminar--a kind of class where  
I learn and prepare for the entering  
exam--biology, chemistry, physics).

In Serbo-Croatian, we distinguish  
between faculty and university: Univers-  
ity is an institution which consists of  
various faculties, so it's called *medi-  
cinski fakultet sveucilista u Zabrebu--*  
medical faculty of Zagreb University.

From next year (the one I enter), it  
will last for six years--12 semesters.  
Up to now it lasted five years. Now  
this extension of one year means there's  
no praxis--it's included in the sixth  
year.

Regardless of the extension, after  
graduating one needs four years of spe-  
cializing and then your M.D. of what-  
ever field you specialize in. Then one  
can go for further exams to earn the  
title of doctor or professor. They then  
have part-time jobs as professors of the  
faculty (medical). This part-time job  
means that they work both on their clin-  
ics and on the faculty.

I myself am very interested in cardio-  
vascular surgery, but maybe it's too  
early to speak.

Mike Glicksohn Thanks for the  
508 Wendover Ave. latest in an ap-  
Toronto, Ont. parently endless  
M6S 3L6 Canada stream of eminent-  
ly readable fan-  
zines. Your artwork and layout may be  
simplistic but the words themselves are  
of the best quality and if there's any  
justice DoS will make this year's Hugo  
ballot for best fanzine. Unfortunately  
the chances of that happening are some-  
what less than the chances of the Rus-  
sians abandoning the one-party system  
and the South Africans sharing political  
power with the blacks but what the hell,  
maybe we're on a roll?

While I happen to be personally glad  
to see DoS back to its old format (what-  
ever the reason) I'd also be the first  
to agree with you that a fanzine editor  
must first and foremost please himself.  
If others think the issue is too heavy  
or too frothy or too awkward to read,  
that's their problem if the issue is  
pleasing to the person who published it.  
So I'm sure I don't have to tell you to  
keep writing about whatever interests  
you at the time each issue is being pre-  
pared and let the chips fall where they  
may. I usually find each issue of DoS  
to have an excellent balance of material  
and if you happen to publish some stuff  
I'm not interested in that's fine too.  
I publish whatever I feel like in my own  
infrequent fanzines and while I welcome  
comments and criticism I'm very rarely  
moved to change my mind about what I've  
produced because of that criticism. In  
a field that personifies subjectivity  
and editorial freedom I'm amazed when  
any criticism actually produces results.  
So because of the rarity of such events  
I'll continue to think that I had some  
influence over you even though you make  
it clear I didn't. Gotta justify 23  
years of letterhacking somehow!

I don't read *Asimov's* magazine. In  
fact I'm not sure I've ever read an  
entire issue although I may once have  
read a story in one issue at a friend's  
house. So consider my hand raised. (It  
slows down the typing something awful.)

I suppose it's not surprising that I  
don't understand why you'd care whether  
Isaac or anyone else loved the same sort  
of music you do because I've never cared  
one way for the other about music. In  
any form. (On the other hand I care

passionately about such things as fan-  
dom, baseball, scotch, poker etc. and  
yet I never expect my friends to share  
in those passions, or rather I don't try  
to convert them to my way of feeling it  
it doesn't come naturally to them.)

I've always been baffled by what it is  
in a person that turns them on to music  
because whatever it is, I don't have it.  
I had the normal amount of exposure to  
music while I was growing up but somehow  
it never fired me up. (My brother took  
instantly to all forms of music and yet,  
with the same exposure to books as I  
had, he didn't voluntarily read a book  
until he was in his early 20s while I  
was reading as many as three a day in my  
teens. You figure it out.) It wasn't  
that I hated music, far from it. I knew  
(and still know) the lyrics for quite a  
few of the pop songs I grew up with. I  
bought a few records (Dylan, Beatles and  
Stones, primarily) and had my own favor-  
ite songs ("House of the Rising Sun,"  
"White Rabbit," "Desolation Row," "Cru-  
cifixion") but mine was an almost unemo-  
tional reaction. I never experienced  
the sort of reactions you describe in  
your article. (I certainly never had an  
erection just because of a song. If I  
had, maybe I'd have taken more inter-  
est!) By and large, music nowadays  
doesn't make any impression on me. And  
how people can actually do any work  
while listening to music I don't know.  
Different strokes for different folks,  
obviously, which helps explain why I  
enjoyed your thoughts as much as I did.  
It's always fascinating to read about  
alien lifeforms and life-styles.

Guns never interested me much either.  
I once fire a small calibre pallet rifle  
(at a pie plate on a tree) a couple of  
times but that's the extent of my ex-  
perience with firearms. I have no in-  
terest in owning any sort of gun and,  
happily, I don't have any great need to  
do so either. I hope my culture remains  
sufficiently close to what it is today  
that this state of affairs doesn't  
change. Charlotte Proctor may drive  
around with a loaded Magnum under her  
seat but that'd be damned uncomfortable  
on my motorbike!

When I made the comment about death  
and drug dealers I was thinking more  
about the top people who distribute the  
really nasty drugs and make mega-mil-

lions doing so, not the small timers who deal in recreational substances. I recognize the inconsistency there (and the impossibility of deciding where to draw the line) but that was an emotional rather than a logical reaction. I certainly don't wish to see Ted White executed for his crimes (although there have been a few times when I felt like killing Ted myself!)

Interesting letter from RoyTac. For myself, I have little trouble rationalizing a couple of the viewpoints Roy ponders over. I certainly believe that every time a decision is made, it shunts the entire universe along a particular path, namely the path followed because all the other possible decisions were not made. On the other hand, I acknowledge that almost without exception the universe proceeds regardless of what choices we make as individuals. Because I chose to sit and type this letter I have most assuredly selected the future history of the universe. It is the history in which this letter was written. All other histories are hereby invalid. The only trouble is, the history of the universe would be essentially the same whether I wrote this letter or not, so my particular decision had no importance in the big picture. Whether it will have any importance to my own individual history remains to be seen. I doubt it will, but one can never be sure.

Along the lines of stories that show how times have changed, Avedon Carol told in one of her recent fanzines of a black student researching the civil rights movement in the U.S. who was heard to inquire, "Who was this Malcolm the Tenth?"

David A. Smidt  
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Since this is my first Don-  
o-Loc I suppose  
I should introduce myself. I am a native Coloradan and avid reader since the age of 4. My indoctrination into the world of SF began as an accident. Between classes in the eighth grade I found a dog-eared paperback under a desk and threw it in a bag with the rest of my textbooks. I could tell by the cover that it was one of those books that the nerdy guys around school always had their noses buried in, but I began reading it any-

way. From that day on I knew that I had found a special place to go. I began reading every fantasy and SF novel I could afford (or get my hands on) in order to discover all the fantastic ideas they held. I guess you could say I was a closet fan for several years until my third year of college at Metropolitan State when I enrolled in a class called "Science Fiction Literature" taught by a Don C. Thompson.

I could tell that I was in the right place when, on the first day of class, Don glanced around the room and said, "I can already tell which of you are true fans of SF and which are just here for easy credits. You fans are weird looking like me."

(I wonder if the reading of SF distorts the features or if we mutants are drawn to the reading of SF by the same mental defect that has so hideously twisted our physical appearance. Anyway the end results are the same.)

Well, thanks to Don's class, I now subscribe to six SF magazines, have a shelf full of novels waiting to be read, and no time to read them (a source of considerable frustration). But I did discover that Science Fiction has a rich and colorful history and, I believe, a promising future.

Don-o-Saur 57 was a great read and I was especially glad to see that you have an appreciation for rock music. I believe everyone is entitled to their own opinions regarding music preference, but I find it hard to comprehend how anyone who appreciates creative and mind-stretching literature can dislike a musical field so full of creative and exciting sound and ideas.

My own musical taste covers a wide spectrum--from Mozart to Metallica, and most points in between, but the raw, driving sounds of rock 'n' roll are what really trips my trigger. I realize there are a great many "image" rock bands who get by on hairspray, makeup and tight leather pants, but the selective ear will recognize the innovative and talented styles that make the genre so exciting.

Your "Tale of Two Guns" story prompted me to consider my own stance on guns. I've never felt an unhealthy attraction or repulsion either when it comes to firearms. I've never been a real hunter

and I suppose if I weren't working in a capacity where I wear a pistol on my belt daily (security guard), I would probably never own one. I believe it is far too easy to purchase a weapon in this state (a Colorado driver's license and a signed statement that I'm not an escapee from a psycho ward or convicted felon, and I'm the proud owner of the weapon of my choice--on the spot), but I also believe that a gun is only as dangerous as the idiot behind it. I am convinced that it would be quite a bit more difficult for the average thug to commit a crime with a handgun if handguns were more difficult to obtain. I believe that for this reason alone a more restrictive law regarding the purchase of handguns is a necessity in our state.

I was disturbed by the loc from Robert Coulson and his comments on rape. His assertion that "rape is on the rise because women are no longer compliant about 'putting out...'" ought to ruffle a few feathers. It sure ruffled mine. Rape is a crime of violence and domination, not merely a sexual catharsis to those individuals who feel that a woman should be "putting out" but isn't. I tried to figure out whether Mr. Coulson's comments were tongue-in-cheek or not; if so they were very distasteful.

*[I'd be the last to deny Buck's talent for ruffling feathers, but I can't believe it was his intention in this case. I think he was just citing one cause among many for the increase in reported rapes, but of course I could be wrong, too.]*

Buck Coulson  
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I'm one of  
those fans who  
dislikes rock  
music. But not  
just rock; I also

dislike country, most classical music, opera, and nearly all of the various "popular" musics of the last 60 years. Occasionally I find some material in all of those categories that I do like, but not often. I enjoy folk music and what used to be called "light classics" or "concert pieces"--Gilbert & Sullivan, Rodgers and Hart, Rudolf Friml, etc.--and Kurt Weill, who is in a class by himself. My parents did enjoy music; my father insisted on listening to the National Barn Dance on Saturday night and the opera on Sunday afternoon, and

they had a Brunswick console phonograph and several hundred records (which came in very handy when the power went off, as it did frequently in the 1930s and '40s. I wasn't allowed to read by candlelight because my eyes weren't good enough, but the spring-wound phonograph worked just fine.) I had very firm tastes, even as a child. I liked some of the songs on the National Barn Dance, but not nearly all; it was only later that I discovered that most of what I liked could be classified as folk music. My musical tastes haven't changed since my first musical encounters, which I suppose means that either I have very strong preferences or the musical capacity of a 6-year-old; possibly both, and I can't say that I care which. My likes aren't just for specific types of music, but for specific performers. I haven't turned on a radio since we got a tape player in the car, and I'm gradually getting those old 78s and my folk lp's onto cassettes. Dylan I loathed. We got that record of Odetta singing Dylan and I decided that if even Odetta couldn't make his music palatable, I didn't want to ever hear any of it again, and I haven't heard all that much of it since. (I love Mitchell Clapp's folksong, "I Don't Do Dylan.")

I'm constantly amazed at how (well, be polite and call it naive rather than stupid) most anti-gun people are, in their beliefs that (a) passing laws will solve the problem, and (b) that the police are sufficient protection for private citizens. Joseph Nicholas mentions, smugly, the "intellectual European tradition." As I recall, the intellectual European tradition began the last two world wars, into which the U.S. was dragged because England was getting its intellectual ass whipped, and the intellectual Europeans were screaming for help.

Well, I wouldn't want to see Ted White killed for drug dealing, but I think I could restrain my anguish if it happened.

For Alex: death for "fools with tools" isn't a bad idea, and it would certainly apply to ten times as many auto drivers as it would to gun owners. (As far as I can see, it doesn't matter how an individual kills someone; the victim is just as dead. But in the current legal



system, it matters a lot. If you want to murder someone and escape the penalty, do it "accidentally" with a car.

Rodney Leighton did waste his \$50. I answered the same ad, but I didn't send any money. They wanted me to buy their book, telling how I could get reviewing jobs: "up to \$100 for a single book review!" For the NEW YORKER, maybe. I do get paid for reading sf books, but it ain't a living, by a long ways. I learned how to review books from fanzines; never say they aren't educational. And I suppose I learned how to sell fiction from my own book reviews, since they taught me to look at why I liked or disliked specific books, which also is a clue as to what to put in and omit from one's own efforts.

*(I didn't want to be the one to tell Rodney what a poorly paying pastime book reviewing is, so I'm glad you did. I DO get \$100 for my monthly review column in the Denver Post, but that's only once a month. I get \$10 for longer and less frequent reviews in "Blood Review." I didn't seek the Post column; I fell into it)*

Juanita Coulson  
Same address  
as Buck's

Your prof was  
right. There is  
an exceptional  
amount of political

and social commentary as well as downright sexual content in folk music ...and in those early-day rhythm & blues your friend tried to tout you onto (r&b, sanitized outgrowth of "race music"). If it was erotica you were after, black blues was definitely it; thanks to a friend, I have a nostalgia-triggering entire cassette full of "Risky (Risqué) Blues"--and they certainly are. But if the music-responsive and emotional buttons weren't pushed, it would have been wasted. Like Buck, I found Dylan puerile, find most rock lyrics about as profound and/or sexy as a lump of clay. But I like rock, for the rhythms and sheer sounds. For erotic sound--whether or not there are lyrics--I'll take afro-cuban anything. But as one fallen rock star put it: "different strokes for different folks."

A. Vincent Clarke  
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Welling, Kent  
DA16 2BN, England

Thanks for the  
DON-o-SAURS. I found  
them fascinating but  
almost un-loccable.  
Our ways of life and  
thought differ so enormously. How can

I comment on your gun laws when I live in a country where the policemen are unarmed, for instance? Where it's taken for granted that the readers of DoS go on to University, and 85% of our youngsters leave school at 16? (In my day it was 14!)

And at present I'm not too happy. Last week one of my best friends, Arthur Thomson, died. He'd been drawing for fanzines for about 35 years under the semi-acronym 'ATom.' He had emphysema and the last 14 months of his life were spent largely in trying to find enough energy to breathe. He was down to 100 pounds in weight and was in hospital, hoping they'd build him enough to last until spring and better weather. I have a strong suspicion that it was cigarette smoking that caused his problem--he was a 40-a-day man for about 40 years--but there's nothing one can do--the government gets too much rakeoff in taxes, and saves on State Pensions for those that don't make it to 65 (for men; it's 60 for women.)

Teddy Harvia  
P.O. Box 905  
Eulless, TX 76039

What a big turn-  
around from the  
doom and gloom of  
your last couple of  
issues to show a creature that's been extinct for millions of years drinking on your cover. If this is a look at the lighter side, I want to know what it's smirking at. Heavy!

I found B-Ware's interior fillo of the masked Tyrannosaurus Rex visually amusing. I found it even more amusing when Bill Ware could neither explain it nor remember what inspired it.

I instantly recognized the cartoon on your inside cover as one by Alexis Gilliland. I chuckled at the cartoon itself and at the erroneous credit given to me for it. Let's hope AG has a sense of humor.

*(AG's sense of humor is not in doubt. I'm just wondering why he made no reference to the misidentification in his loc. What sort of revenge is he plotting?)*

Alexis A. Gilliland  
4030 8th Street  
Arlington, VA 22204

After the  
German invaders  
were defeated,  
there was an  
active partisan movement in the Ukraine,  
a mixed group composed of Ukranian pat-

riots, Ukranian deserters from the Soviet army, and volunteers who had fought for the Nazis. Well armed and highly motivated, they continued active resistance until about 1953. They fought and lost a war of attrition. Did the possession of guns help? No. The decisive element was the will of the ruler of the state. Stalin was determined to crush his opposition without pity, and if they had guns, it merely took longer. Last November, the will of the Communist leaders of Eastern Europe had eroded to the point where they fell like autumn leaves in the face of popular disapproval. Guns did not secure liberty for those people, nor did guns regain it.

With a nice rhetorical flourish, Roy Lavender says: "Where does any politician get off declaring I must be unarmed so a burglar won't be hurt in the pursuit of his trade?" Homeowners with guns have an obligation to use them with discretion, a duty to exercise proper care. Lose your temper and blow away an intruder, and you will very likely have to justify yourself to an unsympathetic court, as you learn the rules of engagement *ex post facto*. But by all means keep as many guns in the house as you please. He then discusses prisons, speaking approvingly of concentration camps. He suggests that it would be a good thing indeed if prisoners could be made to grow their own food so as to support themselves at no cost to the taxpayers. Two critiques are possible, one engineering, one philosophical.

The engineering critique is that if it takes one acre (the argument is the same for any acreage) to grow enough food to support a prisoner for one year, as the number of prisoners goes up, their farm-land requires and larger and larger area. 640 prisoners need a square mile. 64,000 prisoners need 100 square miles. Never mind that land is not free, nor that it may have to be located within a specific county. Our prison farm requires a secure perimeter, and it should be immediately obvious that it will be cheaper to buy food on the free market and patrol a much smaller perimeter than it would be to get 'free' food within an enormous and expensive wall. Historically, of course, Britain used the whole of Australia exactly as Roy suggested in order to

support a legal system that hung sheep stealers and pickpockets, but nowadays the Brits are wimped out and the Aussies are getting picky.

The philosophical critique is that taxpayers ought to pay a lot to keep prisoners in jail. It gives the unimaginative an accountant's reason to respect the liberty of their fellow citizens. And if incarceration were free, the temptation to use it would be irresistible. Thus does air-conditioning our prisons strike a blow for liberty and the common weal.

Rock music. Well, I guess I'm with Asimov. Opera, especially the less serious stuff like Fledermaus or Tales of Hoffman, is nice. Or movie scores. Theodorakis's score for Zorba, for instance. I used to listen to the good music station on the car radio, until one morning they played the Ride of the Valkyrie as I went through Washington Circle. I damn near killed myself. I've driven to easy listening or country and western since.

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Your notes for  
an open letter to  
Asimov immediately  
caught my eye, as

I have enjoyed reading him for years. His SF magazine is a different story, and I now buy it only as cheap secondhand copies in used-book stores. Buying it off the newsstand made me feel guilty for wasting money since I only read the editorial, fact articles and a few of the stories. I refuse to give an author more than one page to get me interested, and the selections in IASFM mostly had me skipping to the next story after only one or two paragraphs. Buying el cheapo copies allows me to keep my run of the magazine complete at minimal expense but without wondering whether I should have spent the money on something more useful.

If Asimov does not like rock music, so be it. I consider opera and ballet to be fossilized artforms intended more as an opportunity for rich folk to preen and display in public rather than as a source of good music. (Add jazz to that as well.) But so what? All music appreciation is a matter of opinion. The louder music critics talk of objective analysis of music, the more I think of

the university professor who liked to run opera and rock through a computer to prove that they were the same, based on decibel levels.

Your gloom and doom section reminds me of the news report about a businessman whose store bares his name. Spell-checking programs will never eliminate the human proofreader on merit. It is, unfortunately, too easy to let the computer do the work and let the typos through. In the good old days, there were several lines of defense, right down to the typesetter. Today, it's all done with magic. My judgement of spell-checkers in computers is based on patriotism: does it spell 'labour' or 'labor,' 'centre' or 'center?'

Guns are too emotional to do much arguing about. I favour (please note the 'u') gun control but I think the advocates of control are going about it the wrong way. Instead of dull statistics, one could have an advertising campaign based on "Do you trust your neighbor with a gun?" and "If you keep a gun around the house, what might happen if your wife grabs it the next time you're beating her?" That one ought to get the rednecks thinking over their beers.

Clifton Amsbury  
768 Amador St.  
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I find the gun  
comments interest-  
ing. All I can do  
is repeat the same

remarks I've been saying for years:

The Constitution created a strong federal government, but the states were insistent upon mechanisms by which they could protect not only against local dangers, but against federal aggrandisement. So they insisted on local militias independent of Federal control, and the "right to bear arms" was linked to a "well-regulated militia."

By the militias are the National Guard, with arms supplied by the U.S. So if you want to find what a well-regulated militia means these days, join the National Guard. There you will be issued arms as needed, and when the time comes for you to go home, you will surrender those arms, for them to be locked up until superior channels deem it time to reissue them again.

That's what the "right to bear arms" means nowadays. A "militia"--the National Guard. So much for the people's

protection against "the might of the state," when the president can order the National Guard units overseas despite the wishes of any state governor or legislature.

Furthermore, "widespread ownership of guns" was not always "totally irrelevant" in the Soviet Union. Soviet power originally rested on local armed militias and before World War II Stalin gave guns to people who joined gun-clubs which could serve as local irregulars, and which did serve as the cores or the guerilla units behind Nazi invasion lines during the war.

It doesn't seem to be "irrelevant" in TransCaucasia now, since both the Azeri (Turkic-speaking Azerbaijani) attackers and the Armenian self-defense groups seem to have plenty of arms at hand.

Personally, I don't have any, but I believe that by Junior High School, everyone should have thorough training in the use, care for and proper respect for personal arms of all kinds.

*(And I, out of sheer perversity, I guess, would defend a child's right to NOT bear arms if he or she didn't wish to.)*

Richard Freeman  
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Not only do I not know why Ike doesn't like rock 'n' roll, I don't even know why I don't much like it any more. But at least I have some expertise in pop music--born '44, grew up with the radio in or around Philly, one of the birthplaces of rock (multiple birth & all that)...pre Dick Clark bandstand (Bob Horn got busted on a morals charge when the show was still local... which is pure rock n roll, when you think of it.)...

By 1962 I was also into folk (wanted to be a folk blues singer--sang in local Philly clubs--got booed for singing Ray Charles) and jazz. Went to Antioch College instead. Up & down career there--thought I'd become a writer. Am still in a state of becoming. How was I to know that jazz would be dead by 1967? That folk would be dead? That rock (which had seemed dead in the Dick Clark era...Fabian & Chubby Checker instead of Chuck Berry & Jerry Lee Lewis & Fats Domino) would resurrect with a bunch of Limeys? If only our dear dead departed Western Civilization could so easily be resur-

rected--three days in the tomb & kablooie, out it comes...but I fear that instead of a civilization, we now have a nonbiodegradable popular culture.

Eventually I ended up working in a record store, and my knowledge and love of music took in everything from Ambrosian chant to Jackson Browne. However, after 13 years of doing radio shows, I began to notice that the old thrill was gone. Classical music was as dead as jazz & folk...and rock had transmogrified (whatever that is) into disco--and then punk & rap &...what was once just rock & roll was now a socioeconomic phenomenon as well--each social class had their own brand of rock--lower class had metal...uppermiddleslummers had punk...I don't know who it was had disco but whoever it was deserved it. As for me, I now listen to Country instead of rock since all of my favorite folk rockers discovered a home there.

It isn't that I don't listen to rock --I produce kids' TV shows over the cable station--and I listen to Rap (the dozens set to music--proof that blacks do not have a natural sense of rhythm as rap is set to Sousatime), metal, alternative (to what?), etc...none of it excites me.

I speculated that adulthood comes when one's taste for the most current form of pop music...(second childhoods, however, are always possible--if the right music comes along).

Here's a question that might find an answer within the engineers--LoCs are desired (personal ones if necessary).

It would seem that much of what we now call progress stemmed from the necessity of coming up with new energy sources. In Europe, when the trees ran out, it was find a new source or die. The steam engine got invented, which allowed deeper coal mining.

Now, the first question: to what extent was the Great Depression caused by the breakdown of the coal-based energy system?

To what extent was the Depression ended by the new oil based system of energy? (I realize that U.S. prosperity also came from the fact that we had no real international competition for 20 years.)

To what extent is the economic system breaking down from the end of our oil-

based energy system?

Whatever energy system replaces oil (and, as all previous replacements have gone to a higher energy system, I suspect we will see the return of Captain Nuke in the '90s), will it be able to provide enough power for a doubled population (though I suspect that lack of water will cause a precipitous drop in pop)?

Not only don't I have answers, but I suspect I have the wrong questions.

Help!

*(Not being an engineer, I think I'd better stay out of this one, but I too suspect that the wrong questions are being addressed. Roy Lavender or Tom Digby might have some ideas.)*

Laura D. Todd  
404 Brower Ave.  
Oaks, PA 19456

I don't know why you keep sending me your zine since I'm not a contributor or a Big Name Fan, but oh, well, thanks anyway. Guilt feelings have finally got the best of me and I've decided it's time for a LOC. Also, it's gotten to the point where I just have to respond to some of the fascinating comments in your zine!

Specifically I read your ruminations on Rock Music with much interest, and I'd like to add my comments. Although I came of age along with Rock, back in the '60s, I appreciate rock a lot more now than I did when there were no cassette players, earphones and cheap tapes; you had to go into the living room and listen to your folks' stereo. Later when the music got more interesting I was living in an unheated attic with my hippie friends and we didn't have anything to listen to either. The only time I heard music was on friends' stereos.

Still some of the music I did hear was extraordinarily "subversive" and many of the songs fit right in with my interest in SF. As examples, how about Jefferson Airplane's Crown of Creation. I loved this song's imagery of evolution and survival; many years later I discovered that the lyrics came directly from John Wyndham's Rebirth, a postnuclear story of mutant children persecuted for their psi powers. Or how about Blows Against the Empire, also by the same group, which revolves around the theme of a band of hippies hijacking a

starship and forming their own free society in space.

Well, years passed, and I ended up being trapped in a nice suburban house with three little children. Someone gave me a cassette player as a gift and that's when I started listening to Rock again. I listened while doing dishes; its liberating energy helped get me through the boredom. More and more I found myself responding to rock's adolescent, rebellious spirit. I saw myself in the same trapped, repressed position as an adolescent itching to get out of high school. I would stand up and cheer at lines like the Jefferson Airplane's "we are the forces of chaos and anarchy." Such sentiments were the antidote for my boring, domestic little life.

Yes, much of rock is about the primitive, the wild and savage. I do have to say that from a woman's viewpoint, a lot of it is also disgustingly sexist. Innumerable rock lyrics are variations of "I just gotta have your luhhv" and "Gimme some lovin' right now!" To counter this constant barrage of male programming, I'd really like to see a female rock group do a song that goes, "Just say no when he says 'gimme!'" (If there were more lyrics like this and fewer of the other, who knows, maybe there'd be fewer campus rapes and pregnancies.

To conclude, I've always had to exercise an internal censor that allows me to ignore words and just enjoy the music. (I think most women have to do this. Not just with music, but with advertising, movies and just about every form of mass media!)

Aside from that gripe, I'm a confirmed rock fan! But I'm not surprised that Asimov isn't. Asimov (like my Dad, also a New York first-generation descendant of Jewish immigrants) worships Reason, Logic and Science.

Of course such people will despise Rock. Why? "It's primitive, tribal!"

Carl Bettis  
P.O. Box 32631  
Kansas City, MO 64111

Interesting  
essay on rock  
music. I'm not  
sure I'd put  
Beethoven in the category of "rational" music, but then I'm not sure I'd apply the word "rational" to music; maybe to some specific lyrics. How do you decide

that Beethoven is more rational than the Beatles? My musical taste, like my literary taste, is all over the board: love Bartok, hate Brahms; love Hank Williams, hate Hank Williams Jr.; love the Doors, hate Devo, etc.

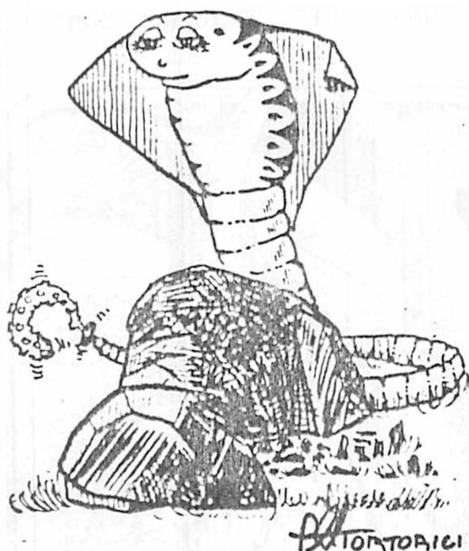
But your thoughts on music got me thinking about how I formed my literary taste: why do I seldom read science fiction, when I used to have a 3-book-a-week habit? The fact is, in childhood & adolescence, I read omniverously & almost indiscriminately; I had preferences, of course, but I would take whatever was available. Since my older brother was a SF nut who had boxes and trunks & drawers full of the stuff, that was the available; but my taste, even in SF, leaned toward the irrational--technolatr--ry always turned me off. Early formed a love for Lafferty & Lovecraft (collecting the latter myself, out of my pitiful allowance), and even today will choose a ridiculous Van Vogt pulp over Asimov. I have fond memories of sitting in the back row of my elementary classrooms, immersed in Edgar Allen Poe or even Franz Kafka. Then, some time in high school, I discovered William Butler Yeats & William Blake & Ezra Pound, & knew that this, poetry, was what I'd been waiting to find. Grabbed me in the spiritual groin, you might say. Yeah, I'd been reading Poe, & even Robert Frost (I'd call his poetry, and Alex Pope's, rational, so forget my carping about categorizing Beethoven), but they only entertained--never moved me. I suppose what I was looking for was Mystery, & I don't mean Sherlock Holmes; what passed for mystery & awe in Poe was "let's pretend" at best, humbuggery at worst.

On the subject of gun control, what with one thing & another I've been reading a lot about the American Revolution lately (history is another passion, in a minor key), & it seems pretty clear to me that the 2nd-Amendment right to bear arms was talking about maintaining a citizen militia, to take the place of a standing peacetime army. Still sounds like a good idea to me; at least better than the inefficient potentially oppressive mega-machines we have now. Besides, being an anarchist, I'm against government bans on ANYTHING. (I'm also a pacifist, but that's a personal

decision; I have no desire to apply that as a uni-versal moral law. But I don't want anyone killing or dying on my behalf, either.)

Phil Tortorici I picked up your  
P.O. Box 57487 zine at Worldcon '89  
West Palm Beach and would like to  
FL 33405-7482 contribute some art.  
Come to think of it,  
I just did. Hope you can use it. Aloha  
and best.

(Looks like I can use at least some of it. More may show up elsewhere, elsewhen.)



Wayne Hooks I found the  
Route 4, Box 677 letter from Rodney Leighton interesting. I am  
Nichols, SC 24581 not sure predestination means you can sit on your rear end and let God do the driving. Calvin discussed this in some detail. Basically, even if all is predestined, you are supposed to submit to God's will and struggle against what life throws at you and strive for Goodness though you will never attain it and will only be saved by Providence. It sounds contradictory and I reckon you've got to be a farmer to understand it.

My father never wanted me to farm; he opposed it. I was supposed to go to college, so I went, choosing a college

by pure serendipity. I finished college and somehow wandered into a profession, teaching. I am still teaching but am also now running the family farm. Since 1981 we have increased by 57% and we have survived the big farm bust, a god-awful drouth, encroaching development and government regulation. Since I grow tobacco, I even have the Surgeon General trying to put me out of business.

However, farming has changed since my grandfather's days. I farm land which once supported 60 people and required that many to till it. I am a one-man operation. Equipment, such as a 135 hp tractor, has replaced people. My grandfather cleared the land with an ax and plowed with a mule team. I have reforested part of that land and where he was happy plowing 5 acres per 12-hour day, I plow 10 acres per hour. I am a small businessman. Each year I spend less and less time riding the tractor and more and more time with bankers, lawyers, brokers, agents, dealers and other buyers or suppliers. On one hand, I am a sometimes heavy equipment operator, carpenter and mechanic and on the other hand am a purchasing agent, treasurer, financial officer, financier, real estate agent and commodity broker.

People ask me if my children will farm. I truly don't know but I have my doubts. Farming is changing. Corporate farming is being touted as the wave of the future, with the poultry industry cited as the shining example, with four producers dominating the industry. Couple that with the capital costs of equipment and the land will be too valuable to grow food on, and I seriously doubt my children will farm.

To return to predestination, my father built on my grandfather's foundation as I am building on his and my children will build on mine. When I was a child, my grandfather was point man. When my father buried my grandfather, he took that position. When I buried him, I took over. The cycle existed before me and will exist after me. Free will or predestination? I don't know but either seems inevitable.

(That final statement is hard to argue with, so I won't. I can't help kind of wondering though whether Wayne, in making his business decisions, is influenced more by the Surgeon General or by the Tobacco Subsidy Program.)



Brad Foster I tend to read  
P.O. Box 165246 zines in either bath  
Irving, TX 75016 or bed, not the most  
convenient places  
for suddenly jotting down ideas. But  
I've tried to improve, and took a pencil  
with me when I read DoS #56 to jot some  
notes in borders as I went along. What  
say we see if this method works, 'cause  
here's what I find noted--

page 3--"sort of semi-prozine" phrase  
caught my eye. With all the Hugo rules,  
battles and category splitting over the  
years, I figure early next century we'll  
see a new category for "sort of semi-  
prozine" being added.

page 3--I don't understand something  
about that \$1,500 "other" income. If  
you reported it as income, what did it  
matter which line on the form it was  
entered on? It all gets added together  
in the end and you pay the tax. Why  
should you have to pay any back taxes or  
a penalty? You did pay tax on the  
amounts. That doesn't make any sense.

{Okay, you've convinced me; now explain it to the IRS. It has  
something to do with the tax rate being different -- I think.}

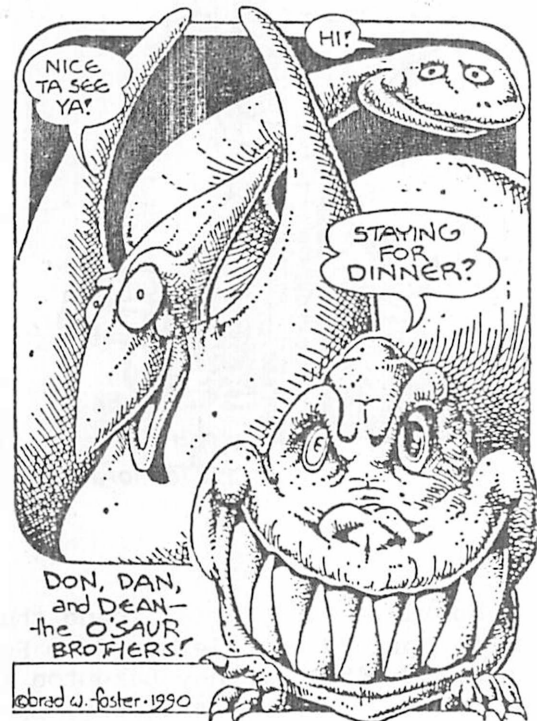
page 5--when got to the end of the  
zine, see you had come up with a name  
for the new business. Too bad. I was  
hoping for "Tax Write-Off Unltd."

page 8--"What would my life have been  
like if I'd decided to be a railroader  
like my father instead of a journalist?"  
You took that one way too serious for my  
taste. That was probably your point,  
but you kind of stuck a pin in the game  
of "What If..." The question is not  
meant to be one of reality; it's just a  
brain game. I never had any interest in  
becoming a railroader, but I could play  
what if and think of what might have  
been my life if I had pursued that. You  
play What If by setting up certain as-  
sumptions, like What if you did want to  
do whatever it was, and you did get the  
opportunity. I studied architecture in  
college, but didn't feel much urge to  
continue it. It had no real appeal for  
me. But I can play What If and extrapo-  
late what might have happened had I  
indeed pursued it.

So, when you get to calling those  
things "meaningless" questions, shows  
you're taking it too serious. Of course  
it's meaningless; you can't change any-

thing, you can't really know what would  
have happened. But, what might have?  
Any answers don't mean a thing, because  
it's all just imagination and conjec-  
ture, it's a game is all. Lighten up,  
Don. You've been tackling so many ser-  
ious subjects in the zine, I'm starting  
to worry that you may never smile at  
anything any more!

page 10--"I've decided many times to  
write a best selling novel." No, I  
don't think so. I think maybe you deci-  
ded you would like to write a best sell-  
ing novel, but you can only hope it'll  
be a best-seller. (Unless you got a few  
million bucks around and you just go buy  
them up yourself to make them show up on  
the best-seller lists. --See, I just  
played "What If!" That was fun!)



Lisa Thomas  
1672 Bruce  
Henderson, KY  
42420

"Notes for an open  
Letter to Isaac Asimov"  
was interesting. If you  
were actually to send  
it to Dr. Asimov and  
enclose a SASE you might actually get an  
answer. Nearly a year ago I was looking  
through the sports pages when I came  
across a mention of a racehorse named  
Asimov. I am unable to resist some  
temptations and wrote Dr. Asimov an  
exceedingly impudent letter. Though I

enclosed a SASE I didn't really expect an answer. Instead, I received my letter back with a short comment in the same joking vein. I don't think your chances are good of ever being able to read ASIMOV'S GUIDE TO ROCK.

My sense of humor is so perverted I thought the Gloom and Doom section was humerus.

An interesting discussion on turning points. I have often wondered what my life would have been like had meningitis not left me with a slight focusing handicap. It matters little now but when I was growing up it mattered immensely to me that I was always the last to finish copying off the board. I also wonder what would have happened had I not chanced a stray glance back at a truck I thought had stopped several feet from my bicycle. When I looked back I saw a white bumper only a few inches from my back wheel. I instinctively jerked the bicycle sideways. My reaction didn't avert an accident but it did get me out from under the truck's wheels. Instead of having my fool neck broken, I got off with a minor fall and scraped knees.

Rich Dengrove  
2651 Arlington Drive #302  
Alexandria, VA 22306

Enjoyed DoS  
again. The  
subject is  
rock 'n'  
roll. Asimov dislikes it. Apparently  
all of it. Is it possible to dislike  
all of a genre? Is it possible to like  
all of a genre? Either extreme seems  
pretty mindless to me. I'm into classical  
music, make no mistake about it. But  
I'm not going to praise John Cage's "Two  
and a Half Minutes of Silence." Forget  
that. On the other hand, I've heard Rap  
and Disco that were pretty good. At a  
demonstration in Washington a few years  
back, they had a fellow sing who was  
billed as one of the founders of Rap. I  
was about to hold my ears when I found  
he wasn't too bad. He wasn't glass  
scratchingly loud and he didn't need a  
backbeat that did strange things to your  
liver. The real reason a lot of people  
hate entire genres of music--I don't  
know about Isaac--is these genres of  
music are associated with certain  
groups. Rock 'n' roll during the '50s  
was associated with hoods in black leather  
jackets, Southern white trash and  
Italians. Above all, with young bucks

of these breeds. It was wild, rebel-  
lious, unlearned and unwashed. Asimov  
associating himself with the staid,  
learned and washed may have disliked  
Rock for that reason. Disco was associ-  
ated with Ghetto Blacks, Ghetto Hispan-  
ics and Ghetto skinheads. Rap is as-  
sociated with Ghetto Blacks. People who  
are turned off by these groups will  
naturally be turned off by their music,  
aside from the esthetics. And I suspect  
some of the music is designed to turn  
them off. The silliness of this is that  
few people are ever completely members  
of one group or another. There are many  
groups battling it out within us. Didn't  
Walt Whitman say that multitudes were  
within him? Well, there are multitudes  
within me, and within most of us. A  
person grown as staid, bookish and wimpy  
as I am still has within him the black  
leather hood and the Ghetto Black and  
yes, the skinhead. Maybe not too much,  
maybe they all make up an eensy part of  
me. But they're there nonetheless, and  
should be recognized. And one was is to  
recognize the good in the genre of music  
you would typically dislike. I remember  
reading in the old Ramparts magazine  
about this White blue collar worker who  
said, "I can't see anything good about  
n-----s." Then he put a quarter in the  
juke box and played Ella Fitzgerald.

The idea that someone could have changed their life by deciding differently apparently didn't originate with science fiction writers or quantum mechanicians. While I don't know who originated it, I know O. Henry wrote about it in a story, "Roads of Destiny." A youth goes to seek his fortune and had before him four or five different roads. Some of the roads lead to death. But one leads to fortune and one leads back to where he started. The story must have been written before 1910, when O. Henry died.

About what we could have decided, I don't think it's a matter of quantum mechanics; I think it's a matter of ethics and a matter of our self-esteem and of human motivations. While philosophers like Ryle may have proven free will is possible, they have by no means proven it exists scientifically. I grant that when people mix vague generalities with other vague generalities, it may look superficially like they have

proven free will. Yet these formulations always unravel when you look closely at the photons or the drops of water they refer to. What happens to photons or drops of water is not really what we want free will to be. But though we are cloudy about the scientific proof for free will, we are perfectly clear about why we assume it: our whole morality is at stake and the whole meaning of our lives. If there is no free will, it's not fair to punish anyone. And if there is no free will, nothing we do can change our fate. We may as well roll up in a ball and die. There is one problem here: THIS DOES NOT CONSTITUTE PROOF; these are reasons why we better look like having blind faith. Or else. Argumentation ad bellum. The equivalent of holding a knife to your face. While these reasons should not be convincing by the rules of formal logic--they're supposed to be a fallacy--such reasons always prove very convincing indeed.

Doris Drisgill  
2631 W. Pikes Peak Ave. #S  
Colorado Springs, CO 80904

Here's a  
likely  
answer to  
your ques-

tion as to why Asimov doesn't like Rock: maybe it hurts his ears. It certainly hurts mine, especially at the volume most people play it. More than anything it's the beat: that monotonous beat that turns you on grates on my nerves and sends me up the wall. It seems to hit a biofeedback circuit that, over a period of five minutes or so, ends up affecting my nerves like fingernails on a blackboard, or a motorcycle revving in my front yard.

Two major afflictions seem to have been either born into me or developed very early: an acute sense of aesthetics and a very low threshold of pain. For some reason the traditional definition of pleasure distinguishes between sensual pleasure and aesthetic pleasure: beauty. For me, visual or audial pleasure is just as great as tactile or taste, maybe more so. The world is full of visual and audial harmonies, rhythms, grace and balance. It's also full of stridence and discord and incongruity. The first give me pleasure, the second give me pain.

I grew up with the outdoors as my aesthetic model, with harmonies of color

and line and sound: Renoir and Rembrandt, Tchaikovsky and Grieg. The finest art in the world is that of traditional Chinese landscape painting: they have refined the visual harmony of the natural environment to an ultimate degree. Picasso, abstract art and scarlet bullfighters on black velvet are all offenses against the ideal of beauty that my eyes search for.

Audially, nothing gives me more pleasure than the Romeo and Juliet Fantasy Overture, or Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony. Or vocally: the Bell Song from *Lakme*, sung by the French soprano Mady Mespre. For something more contemporary, try Joan Baez's rendition of the Bachiana Brasileira. These illustrate purity of tone, harmony and balance.

To me, most 20th century composers -- Stravinsky, Bartok, et al-- are discord, dissonance and a severe pain in the ear. So is Rock. And general pop music comes a close second. It's the style to misuse voices, to shout and strain and falsify the natural clear tones. Add that to the monotonous beat, then throw in a constant barrage of clashing volume (Rock doesn't seem to recognize concepts of musical subtlety such as diminuendo and pianissimo), and repetition to the point of nausea, and you have an audial experience that I would much prefer to pass up.

Here's a theory that should bring out some wild responses from you Rockers: Rock is not a form of music; it's socialized noise. People like it, not for any inherent audial pleasure they get from it, but because they associate the sounds with friends, with social occasions, with a certain style of life. Unfortunately, for me that style of life speaks of drugs, freaky clothes, grotesque hair and makeup, all-night sessions in nightclubs with heavy drinking, strobe lights, thick smoke, oppressive noise and exhaustion and ugliness. My style is wildflowers on the prairie with meadowlarks singing on every fence post and antelope dashing in the distance. Skiing above timberline among frosted banner trees, with the world stretched out in waves of white and dark for 50 miles below. Or listening the Pier Gynt Suite while delighting in my newest bit of Oriental art.

*[Why do I tend to bristle when someone tells me that their aesthetic sensibilities are purer than mine? They may be right, but I don't know how such things can be measured. I like nature, too, but I respond to the ferocious, wild, loud and noisy aspects of it as well as to the calm and peaceful.]*

R. Laurraine Tutihasi I found  
5876 Bowcroft St. #4 "Notes for a  
Los Angeles, Letter to Asimov"  
CA 90016-4910 interesting. I  
never thought  
about music appreciation in quite that  
way. I guess I must be more rational  
than you. I happen to like some rock  
music, but my tastes are much narrower  
than yours. Like Carolyn, I cannot tol-  
erate the "singing" of voices such as  
Bob Dylan's and Rod Stewart's. It ap-  
peals to me as much as hearing finger  
nails scraping blackboards. I never  
found any music to be sexually arousing.  
However, I find loud rock music very  
good therapy when I'm stressed out. I  
guess it uses up excess energy.

Bravo on the "Doom and Gloom Sec-  
tion." I forget whether I told you  
about joining the Society for the Pres-  
ervation of the English Language and  
Literature (SPELL). We are supplied  
with "goof cards" to send to publishers  
and other communications professionals  
when they commit mistakes. I'm even  
more observant of the quality of lan-  
guage in fanzines these days.

I even enjoyed your book review sec-  
tion, which is something rare for me.  
I'm going after two of the books you  
reviewed--the Anderson one and the  
Kress. I've read one other of Nancy  
Kress's books and think she is quite a  
talented writer. We used to be in the  
same science fiction club in Rochester,  
N.Y. Despite your warning, I'm putting  
the Viereck/Eldridge books on my books-  
to-read list.

I have one response to your letters  
section. Juanita Coulson says she made  
a conscious decision not to play "the  
game." My decision was made for me by  
my basic personality. I still don't  
understand "the game." I guess I'm just  
too guileless. However, I have not had  
a dearth of men in my life. There are  
plenty of men out there who appreciate  
honesty.

In the letter col of #56, Bruce's  
comments about learning a subject before  
taking a course has a strange tangential

relationship to my attitude about taking  
a course in a subject one already knows.  
I never wanted to take a formal course  
in any of my areas of interest. I was  
always afraid that the regiment of the  
classroom would ruin my interest. I had  
a great deal of interest in astronomy.  
My college offered courses in the sub-  
ject. However, those courses had the  
reputation of being easy A's. I asked  
a few people who took the courses about  
the things they were learning. Just  
about everything was something I already  
knew. I knew I would have been bored,  
and that would have decreased my inter-  
est appreciably. I have never taken an  
astronomy course yet.

Tom Feller Your comments  
Box 13626 on rock music and  
Jackson, MS 39236 sex reminded me  
of an article I  
read years ago which compared rock, jazz  
and country-western in relation to sex.  
Rock, according to the article, corres-  
ponded to the sexual arousal and fore-  
play; jazz was analogous to the act in  
itself; and country-western represented  
the morning after. As you might guess,  
the writer preferred jazz. There was  
certainly a sexual aspect to pre-rock  
pop music, but it was sublimated so  
deeply that it was possible to ignore  
it. Thanks for the zine.

Eric Mayer I find myself  
279 Collingwood Dr. encountering the  
Rochester, NY 14621 same problems you  
are with writing  
income and the IRS. During the last  
couple of years I made the occasional  
small sale: \$25, \$47... once even \$100.  
But it never amounted to enough to worry  
about. I actually felt some sympathy  
for Pete Rose when he explained his  
failure to report his gambling income by  
saying he just thought of it as a game,  
not a business, nothing to do with taxes  
and all that. Because that's how I felt  
about reporting those piddling amounts.  
I was having fun trying to sell stuff.  
It was just a game. However, in the  
past few months I managed to latch onto  
some assignments--for the local Sunday  
supplement and for WRITING!, a Chicago-  
based magazine used in high school Eng-  
lish classes. So suddenly my 1990 writ-  
ing income is going to be similar to

what yours is. And I don't know that I can ignore reporting it. And I resent that!

I don't like paying taxes on my salary at work...but that's life. It's my job. But my writing is what I do for fun. I resent the IRS sticking its nose into my fun, forcing me to keep records of expenses, etc. And oddly I resent the IRS taking a cut. It's weird but the little I make writing seems like MY money, whereas my real income is just that money ya gotta earn to live.

Needless to say, one immediately begins to wonder how to screw the IRS. Simply deducting the postage on manuscripts mailed, the cost of the paper, etc., hardly seems sufficient.

What I did was depreciate the word processor, claim a lot for postage and supplies, which, with my one sale for \$39, led to a \$300 loss for my so-called sole proprietorship. Not much, but a start. Were I to publish a fanzine again and claim it as a business expense it would, morally, if not legally, be appropriate since if not for fanzines I would long ago have given up writing entirely and so would have no income to show at all.

You can dislike rock music personally (I get little out of jazz), but you cannot dismiss it as music, as art. I think music plays a larger role in society today than it did in the near past --maybe a role akin to the role it played in more primitive times? I always had the impression that for my parents' generation at least music was part of a phase of one's life. Part of one's youth, courtship. It was something that was largely put aside when one "grew up." The old songs might be played to evoke the old days. There were some new songs--by old singers--but they were very much like the old songs and not particularly important. Music just wasn't as important to people, maybe because, as you point out, the technology wasn't there to reproduce it conveniently. Last summer we saw some monster tours by quarter-century-old bands like the Rolling Stones. You didn't, during the mid-'60s, see such tours by the Big Bands of the '40s. Presumably, had the audience stuck with them, had they found a new audience, there would have been such tours.

Guns...I fired my brother's .22 at some beer cans once and missed. My brother was induced to hunt by my father. He finally brought down a woodcock, about the size of a mouse. The little plucked corpse lay in the freezer for weeks until my brother could be induced to eat it. He not only gave up hunting but he's now a vegetarian!

Donald Franson  
6543 Babcock Ave.  
North Hollywood  
CA 91606

Thank you for  
DON-o-SAUR 57. I  
don't have time to  
read it right now,  
but I'm reading it

anyway. The next thing I will be writing a letter of comment, which I have even less time for. So when I got to page 13 I stopped. The note, "Literary crusade recruits needed" was the stoplight. That's because I have a few of the examples myself that I've been saving up and didn't have a place to put them. Maybe you can add them to your "collage humor" page. I don't want to circle the errors; let the reader figure out what they are. I can't find the quote about the war prisoners who was interred for years, but it belongs here.

[See page 19 for details]

Michael W. Waite  
105 W. Ainsworth  
Ypsilanti, MI 48197

The mention of  
Ray Bradbury's "A  
Sound of Thunder"  
(re: Roy Tackett,

DON-o-SAUR #57) brought back memories from my youth. I can vividly recall the first time I read Bradbury's story and the outrage I felt--BIG GAME HUNTING FOR DINOSAURS!!! Now I ask you, is that a proper use for time travel? Homo Sapiens are such saps! Although I suspect that was just the kind of response Bradbury was trying to garner from his readers (or was it?).

If time travel becomes an eventuality, and I have no doubt that it will, I imagine the time traveler will be no more than an invisible visitor in her/his chosen time frame. Living ghosts, if you will, unseen and unable to change the future. (Living ghosts! Is that a paradox? Kind of like "if you die, I'll kill you!") Of course you don't have to be a time traveler to change the future, but that's another story.

John Thiel  
30 N. 19th Street  
Lafayette, IN 47904

It was nice to see a discussion of Isaac Asimov's *SF Magazine* in your editorial. I like to see a stress on SF in fanzines. I think, myself, that the stories in his magazine are better than the ones in the others, although it is true that they are more insolent. Rather the reverse of you, I don't like his letter column and don't care particularly for the editorials.

I recall when Asimov's books had a real sense of wonder. Reviewers would wonder what they were about. Since then publications like *Inside* have told everyone, and since he started writing poetry after responding to Randall Garrett he has become the chief and central personality in SF, much like Forrest Ackerman once was. He is an enjoyable speaker on the subject of being a Russian Jew. His comments on the subject come across better than mainstream writing on the same topic, to the sf ear at least.

Yes, I see what you're saying. Rock 'n' roll is unearthly.

Bill Bridget  
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Chattanooga, TN  
37405

I don't believe anyone who reads DON-o-SAUR takes the idea of a mandatory death sentence for convicted drug dealers such as Ted White seriously. I suspect we would consider Ted above the law. I'm almost certain that Ted himself does. And there are half a dozen other who spring immediately to mind. We recognize there is a different law for certain people than there is for everybody else. It is a fact. I don't say it is right. I don't say it is wrong, but I do recognize that's the way things work. So mandatory death for dealing dope is certainly within the realm of possibility in our inconsistent universe, with its laws that mirror our own inconsistency.

Tom Digby  
1800 Rice St.  
Los Angeles, CA  
90042

I don't think I ever noticed an erotic reaction to rock music, and I wasn't "in" with my peers enough to have any of them mention such a reaction to me if they ever felt it.

I was in high school when rock 'n' roll came out, but I didn't care for it at the time. I think part of it was that at the age when most people start to rebel against their parents I was rebelling against my peer group, possibly because I'd been heavily picked on in the lower grades and had few friends. In addition, I was in the band and thereby being exposed to more traditional music. Also, my maternal grandmother had given me a stack of sheet music from the '30s and '40s (and some even earlier) and I'd learned to pick much of it out on the piano. This led my tastes into what might be called "standards" or "easy listening." I also had some acquaintance with folk music, primarily from church parties and from books.

I got back into liking what the Top 40 stations were playing during the folk music boom of the early '60s. By the time of the psychedelic stuff in the late '60s I had found fandom, and the segment of fandom I was in identified more with the hippies than with the establishment. We were going to Change the World, and the music was part of that.

Some time in the '70s or early '80s I gradually got out of the habit of keeping a radio going in the background, and I've lost touch with whatever the Latest Thing in music is. From what I've read, however, I gather there are several segments of it geared to different cultures. And racism and other forms of bigotry may be to the music of the '90s what sex was to the '50s and drugs were to the '60s in terms of stirring up controversy.

Related to this, when I got into fandom in late 1965 it was common to sing filksongs at parties. Then filking sort of died out as fans started singing Beatles and such instead. It's been revived since then, but in a different incarnation: The old filksongs, many of them dealing with fannish life of the '50s and '60s, are seldom heard nowadays. There are more original tunes, and those tunes that are borrowed seem to come less from folk music and more from contemporary sources, including other filksong tunes. Perhaps this change would have happened anyway, and I've noticed it more than I would have otherwise because the dormant period of local



filkdom gave me definite "before" and "after" labels. Or perhaps not. But it might be interesting to ask other readers whether fannish filking "died" in their local fandoms during the late '60s and early '70s.

My personal theory of alternate worlds, assuming such things exist, is more complicated than the one Roy Tackett disagrees with. For one thing, alternate timelines can merge as well as split. If you have a present that could have been the product of any of several different pasts (in other words, a loss of information about the past), then you probably have a merger.

Like several of your letter writers, I seem to feel in retrospect that my major decisions were obvious. I do recall, however, that for a time after any such decision I would wonder how things would have gone had I decided the other way. The feeling of "of course, it's obvious, that was the only possible choice," came only later.

Brett Cox  
1309 Hudson Ave. #16E  
Durham, NC 27705

Several  
nights ago, my  
wife Tehri and  
I had a friend  
over for dinner. While the food was  
under way, he started leafing through a  
magazine he had pulled out of the stack  
by his chair. It was DON-o-SAUR 55.  
After glancing at it for a few minutes,  
he looked up and asked, "What's this?"

"A science fiction fanzine," I said.

"It doesn't seem to have much about  
science fiction in it."

"They seldom do," I said.

It's nice to know some things haven't  
changed.

Although I can think of few things  
less relevant to my concerns than Isaac  
Asimov's tastes in music, I really en-  
joyed your essay on rock&roll. I think  
your conclusions are right on target,  
too. The best rock&roll has always been  
a kind of high-tech folk music, an in-  
tersection of primal energy with the  
maximum available technology, whether  
it's Led Zeppelin electrifying Willie  
Dixon or the Beastie Boys sampling Led  
Zeppelin. Add to that the other great  
intersection rock music provides--be-  
tween black and white culture--and it's  
no wonder it grabs you between the legs.  
It's also no wonder that this wild stuff

has frequently been embraced by avant-  
garde intellectuals--the Hamburg art  
students and the Beatles, Andy Warhol  
and the Velvet Underground, etc. I know  
from my own experience that, the longer  
I've pursued an academic career and  
spent a great deal of time in rational,  
"intellectual" pursuits, the more I'm  
drawn to the most primitive, violent and  
loud music I can find. And as for sense  
of wonder, well, I saw the Rolling  
Stones when the Steel Wheels tour played  
Raleigh, and when they launched into  
"Tumbling Dice" I shut my eyes and let  
the sound pour over me and felt far  
closer to whatever runs in the universe  
than I ever did in church.

Maybe that's why Asimov doesn't like  
rock&roll. It's too religious.

I enjoyed the fanzine listings. Even  
though I get virtually no fanzines any  
more, it's nice to know they're still  
out there. In fact, let me make it of-  
ficial: I'd be interested in seeing fan-  
zines from anyone who would care to add  
me to their mailing lists. I have noth-  
ing to trade and can't promise much in  
the way of locs, but if that doesn't  
bother you, mail away.

Here's a blatant plug: One of my few  
non-academic projects is that I've been  
writing for a magazine called Short  
Form. Edited by Mark L. Van Name and  
published by Orson Scott Card, Short  
Form is a critical journal devoted to  
essays on and reviews of SF short fic-  
tion and related subjects. Regular  
columnists include John Kessel, James  
Partick Kelly, Jane Yolen, Robert Fra-  
zier, Orson Scott Card, Mark L. Van Name  
and Harlan Ellison. The most recent  
issue includes an article by myself on  
James P. Blaylock. Single issues are  
\$4; a subscription for one year (six  
issues) is \$24. Make all checks payable  
to Hatrack River Publications and send  
to same at P.O. Box 18184, Greensboro,  
NC 27419-8184. The editorial address is  
10024 Sycamore Road, Durham, NC 27703.

Sheryl Birkhead  
23629 Woodfield Rd.  
Gaithersburg, MD  
20882

Unusual cover  
by Bill Ware, but  
on second thought  
nothing he does  
seems "usual," so  
that must be his style.

DoS has been somewhat serious--but the  
topics have been interesting and thought

provoking (and not esoteric). I'm not really sure how I stand on rock music and guns (NO, I do not mean to imply a linkage). I enjoy most music but am not really a music fan. At one time I did paper target shooting with a .22 rifle, but I never was very good at it. I also did a little (very little) bow and arrow target shooting but got tired of ripping the skin off the inside of my left arm. As far as gun control is concerned... just not sure. Too many "accidents," whether it be a child playing with a safe gun or some late home-coming family member drilled by the well-meaning head-of-household. BUT, would I want to face a prowler/intruder if he had a gun? No, that wouldn't work either. Some situations (killing "vermin" pops into mind) require a minimum of fire power. Oh, well, you all figure it out.

I agree with Joe Hensley on two counts: yes, you "should" write professionally, and yes you must want to do it.

I believe it has been through DoS that I sent notes to two "new" European fans, and their command of English continues to make me want to hide my head. A co-worker said, "Yeah, but they TEACH English in the schools over there. Sure--and can you imagine what would happen here if we imposed a (heaven forbid!) second language into the curriculum?"

*(I can even imagine the outcry that would result in some U.S. schools if they actually tried to teach English!)*

When I corrected grammar, syntax, etc., on science papers, the kids would get irate, screeching that this wasn't ENGLISH class. I tried to present any concept that I seriously wanted to stick via three media (five was better)--usually verbal, visual, written--but I'm not certain that even that worked.

Alexander R. Slate      I hope every-  
1847 Babcock #406      one will be hon-  
San Antonio, TX 78229      est and admit the  
real reason they  
didn't like the format of #56 is that it  
messes up their collections. When you  
put the issue of DoS on the shelf after  
having finished with it they are sup-  
posed to stand up with the spine out and  
make a nice neat row. Printing the

issue in the format you did messes up this orderly configuration. Seriously, I personally didn't worry about the format. With fanzines, I'm more concerned with what's inside, although the zine itself must not distract me from what I'm trying to read.

As for issue #57, I think you've got the best attitude when it comes to pubbing your own fanzine: trying to satisfy yourself. You're certainly never going to satisfy everyone with the contents.

Are you sure there was no moral to your piece on gun ownership? I think there is, even if that moral is only that every person has their own perspective and logic (or illogic) concerning every issue. I am in favor of stricter gun control laws, though I can understand the logic of those who support the right to own guns. The problem is to balance the rights of the individual with the needs of the public. Gun control is an area where the public need overshadows that of individual rights. One of the reasons this is so is that in many instances the public need is also the individual right to an existence without unreasonable fear.

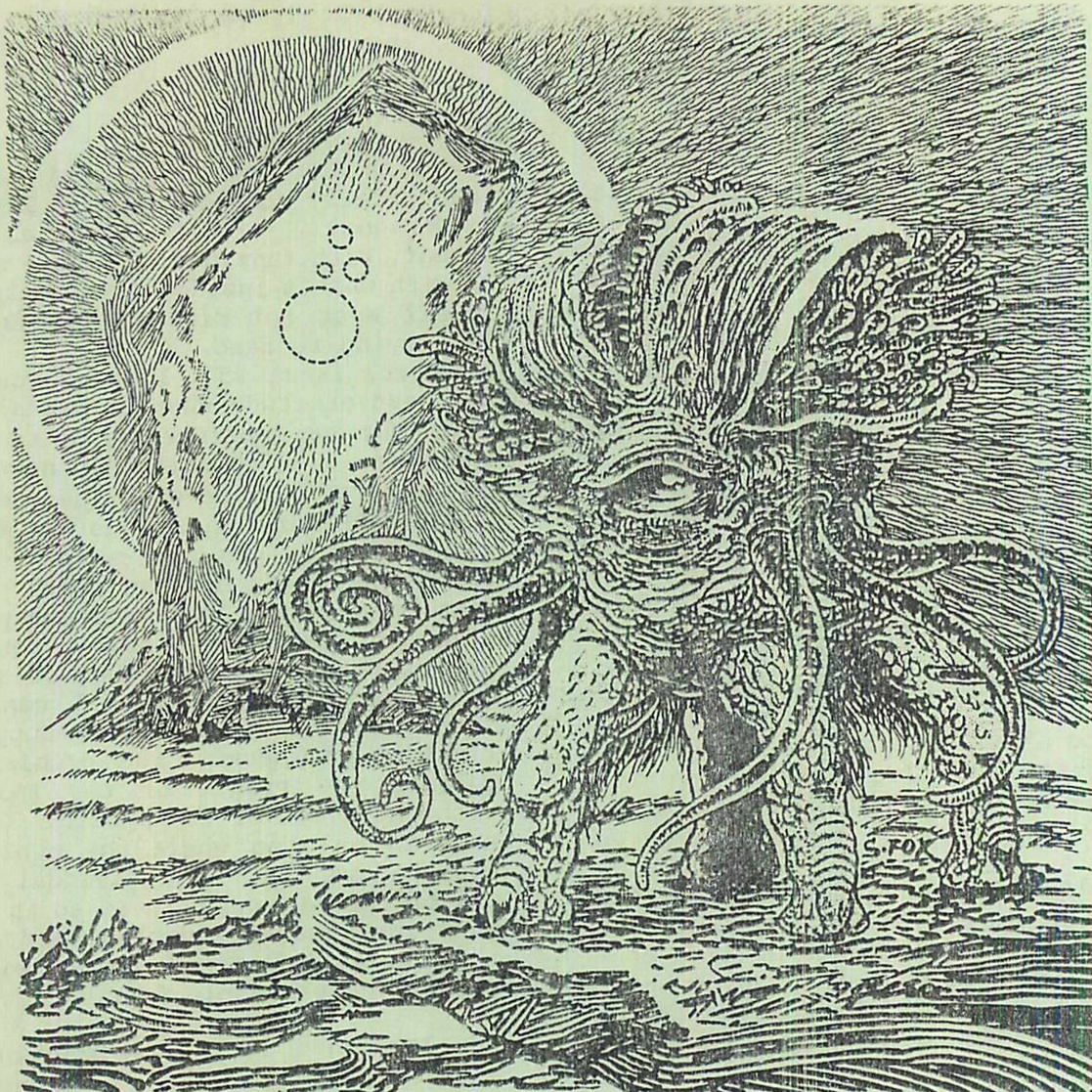
Tom Jackson      In bringing up  
1109 Cherry      the relationship  
Lawton, OK 73507      between sex and rock  
music, you've zeroed  
in on a topic of fascination to many  
which ought to inspire some interesting  
correspondence. I'm just sorry you  
couldn't work drugs into your article,  
but perhaps they are beyond the purview  
of your brief survey. I've never found  
that alcohol is very useful as a tool in  
music appreciation, but music sounds  
great when one is stoned on marijuana,  
and I'm sure that helped promote the  
popularity of the drug.

While I'm fascinated by the direct  
link you make between sex and the nasty  
beat of rock, I must say that for myself  
I've found that, say, looking at women  
is more stimulating than any rock song.

## Also heard from.

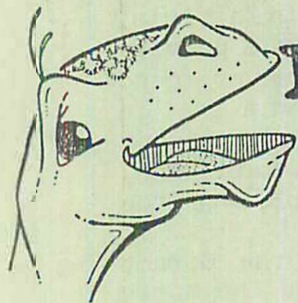
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