

GOBRIN GAZETTE 1

GOBRIN GAZETTE #1 is another fabulously fannish one-shot from the frozen fields of Saskatchewan, except it might be an incipient personalzine, which is why there's a "1" there. In any case, this excuse to practice hand-stencilling is being typed Dec. 13, 1975. The temperature is 73°F. In here, that is. I mention this only by way of contrast, since the temperature four feet to my right (just through that wall there) is something like -25°C. Isn't science wonderful?

Living in Saskatchewan has been very educational for me. For instance, yesterday I learned that it was possible to drive, in the middle of a blizzard, on ice covered with a light layer of powdery snow. Not only that, but it is possible to pass a road test under those conditions.

Yes, as you have already deduced, I passed my driving test and am now licensed to attempt suicide on Saskatchewan roads. (There's a line I read somewhere about Texans driving as if they owned the roads, whereas Californians merely drive as if they wish to be buried in them. Actually, my feeling towards Saskatchewan drivers is one of admiration, and I'm looking forward to driving on the roads here, just as soon as they re-appear after the spring thaw.) The test wasn't too bad (it was only a mild blizzard), and I thought I did rather well. My good friends at work, however, are now petitioning the CBC to include, along with their list of driving hazards due to weather conditions, mention of whether or not I'm on the road.

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I drove to Princeton last week.

Hmmn. Under the circumstances, I guess that requires some explanation. First of all, as some of you know, despite my being unable to drive I've held a valid NY license for the last nine years, so that's how I was able to legally drive to Princeton a week before my test here.

Oh -- I knew I'd left something out -- I drove to Princeton from Kennedy airport. There. That should clarify things, though any truly multiplex mind could have deduced all of it.

See, I convinced my boss that my value to the Saskatchewan Dept. of Social Services would be greatly enhanced if I was sent to the 31st Annual Princeton Conference on Applied Statistics. I even managed to give the impression that if I wasn't sent, my morale would suffer such a blow that my value might actually be decreased. Hell, if the province can send our Premier to New York to raise money with which to nationalize the potash industry (most of which probably belongs to Wall Street to begin with), they can certainly send me to Princeton. I'll bet the benefit to the province will be about equal.

Anyway, I had this brainstorm in the Toronto Airport. Given that my trip expenses were covered, and I was missing my driving lessons because of the conference, it didn't seem that unreasonable to rent a car when I got to New York. Which I did.

I'm very proud of myself. I made it out to Princeton only getting lost four times. (Some of you out there are familiar with the problem of getting to the Belt Parkway turnoff from the Van Wyck.) I had no problem at all finding New Jersey, though -- I just followed my nose.

The conference itself was lots of fun. I spent a couple of hours talking to Pat McGuire about Russia, which was fascinating, and discovered that John Tukey, Princeton's foremost statistician, is an SF reader. While explaining his Lewis Carroll rule for determining whether aberrant data is spurious ("What I tell you three times is true"), he specifically alluded to STAND ON ZANZIBAR, even mentioning that it had won a Hugo. At one of the lunches, a statistician from the Arizona Medical Centre and myself took turns entertaining the table with weather stories.

And I managed to make it back from Princeton to my parents' in Queens without getting lost at all. My apologies, by the way, to all my friends in New York -- I was only in the city for a day, which was very hectic, and I didn't get a chance to see or call anybody.

One side effect of the trip was that, since I had left Regina Wednesday morning the day after the postal strike was settled, I spent a good deal of time agonizing over the results of my postman cramming 6 weeks of back mail into my tiny mailbox. You can imagine my surprise, not to mention intense disappointment, when all I found upon return Sunday night was a single solitary fanzine -- an excellent one, Don D'Ammassa's MYTHOLOGIES #6 (thank you, Don) -- but somewhat less than I had anticipated. Fortunately, the next day I got 3 letters from Susan, 4 ROGUE RAVENS from Frank Denton, half a pound of Doonesbury from Elizabeth Kimmerly, and uncountable scores of clippings from Hal Davis (thank you, Hal, for the Giant Sea Tortoise).

It's so nice having mail again. Actually, not too long after the strike started, enough postal workers (about 10%) crossed picket lines in Regina to enable local service to begin again. This meant that the phone company, the power company, and all the department stores where I have accounts could write to me, and I could write to absolutely anybody I wanted to in Regina. Very amusing.

I finished DAHLGREN!

I'll admit that being able to make that statement was one of my motivations for finishing the book, but I actually enjoyed it once I got into the proper frame of mind. When I first started it, many moons ago, I was intrigued by the background, and reading mostly out of curiosity, i.e. reading for plot. Said plot was somewhat lagging, and when I read a number of reviews that told me nothing would ever be explained, I put the book aside as something to look at the next time I was snowed in for 6 months. But then I read some more reviews, and had some discussions with people whose opinions I respected who liked the book, and I picked it up again. Now, I like Delany's writing -- over and above the marvelous ideas he throws out in books like NOVA and BABEL-17, I enjoy his descriptions and characterizations. So I went back to DAHLGREN not expecting anything to be explained, and just read it for the pleasure of watching Delany string words together. Watching those people move around and do things, the same way I can get into watching people on a bus or a streetcorner. It meant that if I put the book down for any reason, there was no compulsion to pick it up again, but sooner or later I would get back into the proper mood, and before I knew it, I had finished the book. It wasn't a bad experience at all. But I doubt that I'll do it again. One can only spend so much time finding anagrams of Delany's name.

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This cleverly disguised Christmas card has been Gobrin Press Publication #12.

MERRY CHRISTMAS &
A HAPPY NEW YEAR

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