

grunt

:: number 4



may 1964

PresS 64

GRUNT is published infrequently by Calvin Demmon, 1002 East 66th Street, Inglewood, California, 90302. Sent mostly to Friends And Acquaintances; no subscriptions are accepted, but, I suppose, you can get on the mailing list (or stay on it) by

Writing A Letter. This is the stupidest colophon we have ever Made, and a *PresS* Publication. The two Ray Nelson illustrations inside were stencilled by Bob Lichtman. No more old Christmas Cards are wanted by the Women's Missionary Society. We have more than enough.

A fool's paradise is better than none. -- Ray Nelson

Andy Main's Jesus Bug has inspired this issue of GRUNT. Everybody write to Mr Main and send him a dollar; he will drink a toast in your name.

WORLD'S FAIR COLUMN :: I have already been to the New York World's Fair. In GRUNT #3 I related how I had snuck into the Fairgrounds and walked around, back in November when they were still building, before everybody else started to try this and it became impossible. (Copies of all three previous GRUNTs are still available.) But I hope to go to the Fair again, now that it's open, especially since I have recently conceived the Wizard Whiz of the Century...

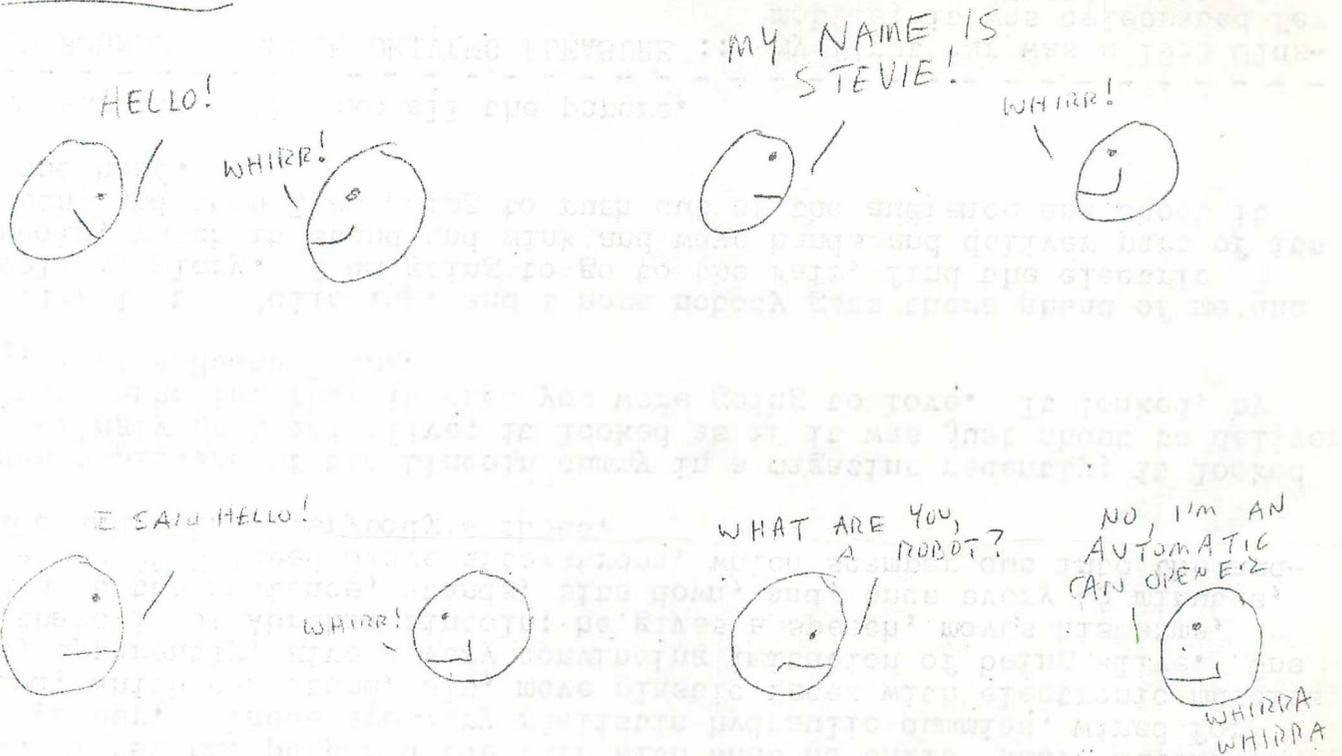
Walt Disney has peppered the Fair with what he calls "audio-automatrons," or "pepper." These are very realistic hydraulic dummies, wired for sound, which can stand, sit, move plastic faces with electronic muscles, and, apparently, give a very convincing imitation of being Alive. One of these is of Abraham Lincoln; he gives a speech, moves his arms, winks at the audience, stands, sits down, and, once every 45 minutes, releases 60 Colored Slave automatrons, which scamper out into the audience and shine everybody's shoes.

I saw a picture of the Lincoln dummy in a magazine recently; it looked startlingly real and alive; it looked as if it was just about to deliver a witty aphorism that it knew you were going to love. It looked, by God, like a Human Being.

My plan is the following, and I hope nobody gets there ahead of me and steals my glory. I am going to go to the Fair, find the electric Lincoln, watch it stand and wink and wave hands and deliver part of its speech, and then I am going to rush out of the audience and shoot it in the head.

I am sure it will make all the papers.

2000 POUNDS OF SHEER DRIVING PLEASURE :: My first car was a 1953 Oldsmobile; it was celebrated far and wide (by me) as "Calvin Demmon's terrific Rocket 88 Oldsmobile." Perhaps the apex of its fame came in the poem, "San Francisco, in which appeared the lines,



"...A sun-kissed miss says 'Don't be late,'
And makes me glad I have an Oldsmobile Rocket Eighty-Eight."

I sold the car last year, to help finance my trip to New York; I didn't miss it at all on the East Coast, because New York is completely navigable by subway. But when I returned to California in January I found myself suddenly stranded; Inglewood/Los Angeles's Transit Systems are less than a joke. I borrowed cars, walked, borrowed Bob Lichtman's bicycle, but mostly just didn't get anywhere. After a couple of months of this, when my skin began to pale from staying inside all the time (wrapped around me, of course), I decided that I had better get a car so that I could get the Hell out of the House once in a while. Actually, it is not so simple as all that, nor so complicated, either, but, at this particular moment, I am feeling not at all lucid. Nor do I give a damn. Hey, you don't want to read the rest of this; it's just boring crap about a 1950 Ford.

Which is what I bought. The car belonged to my brother; he was selling it preparatory to leaving this summer on a long drive across the face of the U.S.A. (pulling a small trailer with his 1940 Chevvy, to which he has added a 1955 Corvette engine, an oogah horn, black upholstery, a transistor radio, and a lot of work; it's a swell car).

Oh, it is wonderful to have a car again! The headliner is missing (ripped out by the drunken owner previous to my brother during what must have been one Hell of a wild night), the universal joints clack, the radiator leaks, the heater doesn't work, the left front door opens occasionally when you round a corner, the left front fender -- injured in the same accident which crippled the door -- is black, while the rest of the car is blue, but none of these things bother me very much.

Because it runs! It gets good mileage, I fixed the brake lights myself, the radio (thanks to a New Speaker which I installed) plays loud enough to obliterate the rattles when we, car & Demmon, drive the Freeways together, and it is mine, b.G., it sits outside and waits for me and I don't have to go around asking everybody "Can I borrow your car tonight?" or "Can I rent your car tonight?" or "Can you stand the pain and trouble of a broken leg if you don't let me have your car tonight?" or "Have you read this far, have you really read this far, you incredible sucker?"

Cars. I love cars. I would rather drive around Los Angeles in a car than sleep under the bed, that's how much I love them. Hey, Everybody, Calvin has a New Car!

Vroom vroom.

JOB COLUMN :: I'm not really a student right now, although I'm taking a four-unit Creative Writing class at the Univ. of S. Calif. (under Willard Marsh, who has appeared in F&SF recently, has sold a lot of short stories to the Better Markets, and is a quietly perceptive man from whom I have learned, much to my confident young surprise, quite a bit).. But going to school has become for me something to do in my spare time; what I'm doing Full Time is trying to pay off a lot of debts, and planning to save enough money so that I can go back to New York, maybe, or perhaps even (next year) to Europe. So I'm working at Juvenile Hall in Los Angeles, as a Typist Clerk, from 10:00 at night to 6:00 in the morning, Tuesday-Saturday. Juvenile Hall is the place where your son or daughter goes if caught sniffing glue, picked up after curfew, drunk, found Possessing Narcotics, or discovered "au naturel" (oh, natural) with a member of the opposite s. If under eighteen. Or -- and here is the bad part -- if you, as a parent, desert child. All are locked up together; that's not too good, but not too bad, either. Not too bad.

What bothers me most is that I am sure that being hauled to Juvenile Hall by a policeman can be a very disturbing experience for a kid. And I don't personally agree with the standards -- I don't agree, for example, that a girl should have to face a judge and go on probation just because she's under eighteen and has been having sex with her boyfriend.

Does it sound Phony if I say that this really bothers me at times? That I wonder if I should lend my support -- even if only as a Typist-Clerk -- to a system like this? Well, it does bother me sometimes, and I haven't really come to a decision about it yet -- although continuing to work at JH is, I suppose, a decision of sorts.

Well, the people who work at the Hall are young -- mostly college students, working to pay for B.A.'s and M.A.'s and, I imagine, even Ph.D.'s. So the place is jolly, not at all like a prison -- it doesn't even resemble a prison; it resembles a very crowded hospital. And kids who run away from intolerable home situations are kept here, fed, and placed with foster homes. So it's not all Bad.

And I'm only a Clerk. I'm not Responsible.

OPEN LETTER COLUMN :: The two letters which follow were not originally written for publication; I publish the first one

here as a way of spreading some Egoboo, and the second as a way of explaining my position on fandom's current cause celebre, or "Call your granny." This fanzine will continue to appear irregularly, I should perhaps note; if you have anything important to say about the Donaho-Breen Affair, send it to Minac....

Grouco Marx
Hollywood, California

Dear Mr. Marx:

Four years ago, when I was a freshman at the University of California, I read your autobiography, Groucho and Me, and was delighted, amused, cajoled . . . I still remember your thousand friends named Delaney, the time you and your brothers stepped out of an elevator stark naked; most of all, though, I remember your unexpected warmth and understanding. Unexpected because I'd grown up without watching you much on television -- my parents said you were "smutty."

Last year in New York a friend of mine said, "Hey, I want you to hear a funny record." He played it without telling me anything about it. I rolled on the floor laughing, tears in my eyes. It was your "Show me A Rose And I'll Show You A Girl Named Sam." I can't remember laughing so hard at a record before.

Last week, on the Bob Hope Show, when you came into your living-room in Florida and said, "It's the post-office lady!" I laughed again; god damn, it was beautiful, not like the situation comedies, where your hero would have made some fantastic excuses or mugged for five minutes or run wildly out of the room. Beautiful, beautiful.

I hope you get this letter. This must be awfully trite, this sentence, but I've never written a fan letter before. But since you have made

I AM A TRAFFIC
POLICEMAN



TODAY I GAVE MY
OWN SON A
TICKET FOR SPEEDING



ALL THE GUYS DOWN
AT THE FORCE SAID
THAT I WAS THE
MOST HONEST COP
THEY HAD EVER
HEARD OF!



THEY DON'T KNOW
THAT I WAS
JUST FILLING
MY QUOTA.



me laugh so many times, I suddenly felt this evening that you deserved this, that if I were a Big Name Person, no matter how Big Name or how much money I was making, I would still want to hear from people who enjoyed my stuff.

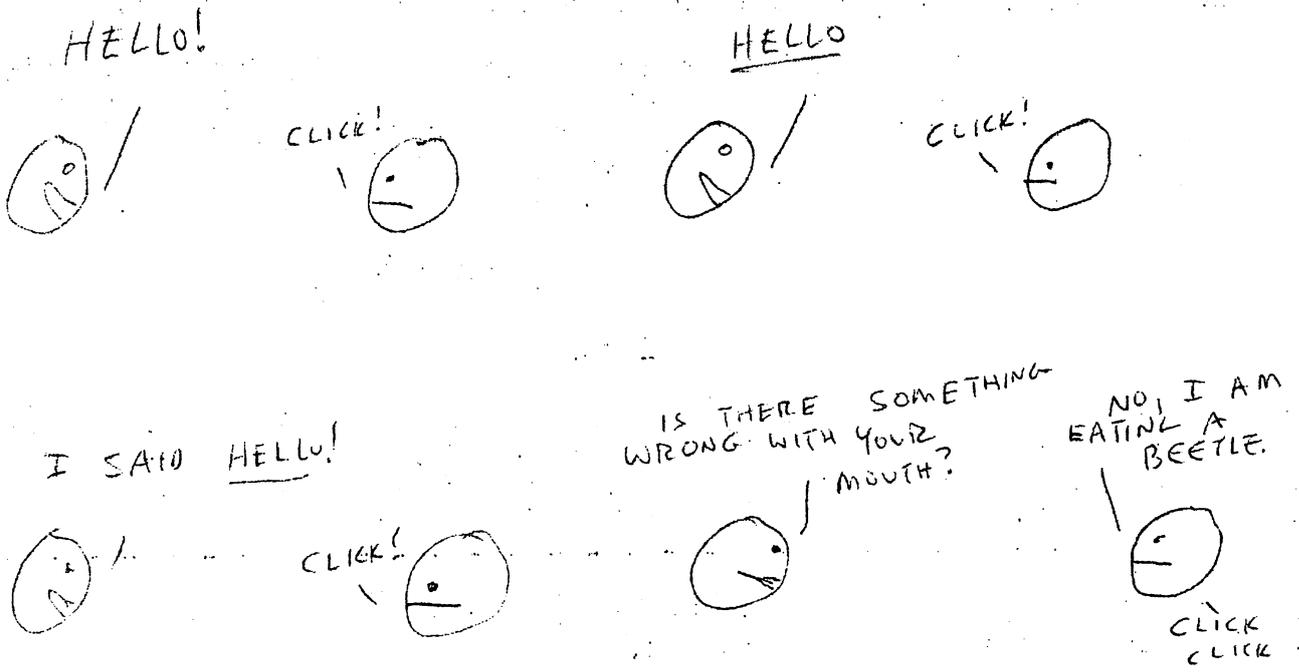
Best,
Calvin Demmon

-oOo-

Pacificon II Committee
Berkeley, California

Dear Sirs:

It is with deep regret, and only after considerable thought and even,



if you will, Soul Searching, that I hereby return my membership card in the Pacificon II and request a refund of my money.

This has not been an easy decision for me to come to. It means that I will not attend the convention at all, even as a "free-loader." It means that I will have to remove myself from Dick Lupoff's panel, of which I was a member. It means that I will probably not see, over Labor Day weekend this year, a lot of people I was looking forward to seeing. Nevertheless, I cannot, not without feeling it to be wrong, allow the use of either my money or my name in the support of the convention.

I have delayed this long only because I wanted to be absolutely sure that whatever decision I made was not a matter of waiting for the right bandwagon to come along, and jumping on. But when I received your recent statement about the Donahoe-Breen affair, I knew that I would

have to write this letter when I had the time.

I don't know you, Ben Stark, nor do I know you, Al haLevy, very well. I know you, Bill Donaho and Alva Rogers, well enough to be terribly disappointed in both of you. I do not question your right to exclude anyone from the convention for whatever reason. What disappoints me is that you seem to be deceiving yourselves as well as you would like to deceive others: you seem to really believe that your actions are not a "personal vendetta," and that you had "no other choice" than to revoke Walter's membership and then publish, propagate, all the damaging, hateful, and, maybe worse yet, completely unnecessary statements you have published. This disappoints me greatly; I am not angry with you, nor will I refuse to speak to you when I see you again (although you might refuse to speak to me; that is up to you). I am disappointed.

When I make a decision such as this it is good only for the particular atmosphere which produced it. Should you recant, apologize to Walter, or even produce something further which shows that you were within your rights in spreading this mess all over fandom, I will be happy to re-join the Pacificon at the door and attend and see my friends.

Sincerely,
Calvin Demmon

-oOo-

Bill Donaho sent me a check for \$3.00, along with a letter which I cannot print here because I have not asked for permission -- it merely reiterated the Committee's position, although I was grateful to Bill for writing it. And that's OPEN LETTERS for this issue.

He's the kind of guy who never has to worry where his next meal is coming from because he doesn't Eat.



