

HOT SHIT #1

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This is not your telephone bill. This is not a questionnaire on "Science Fiction" from the University of Wisconsin. This is the very first issue of HOT SHIT, the very weekly fanzine being published by John D. Berry (625 Scott, #507, San Francisco, Calif. 94117) and Calvin Demmon (371 21st Ave., San Francisco, Calif. 94121), both of whom have typewriters that skip spaces at will. We will endeavor, each week from now until we stop, to send you a small pile of HOT SHIT of your very own. What you do with it is between you and your Maker. If you are getting this, you are on our Select Mailing List. If not, the case is hopeless. There is no way to get on our mailing list, unless you ask us. There are, however, many ways to get off. With this issue, if God is With Us, you will find a set of five blank address labels; fill them out, with your address and the name by which you wish to be known, and return them to us. We will then use them. Simple? Of course it is! If you don't respond and return your labels to us pretty quick, we will keep our hot shit to ourselves. So there. Today is Dec., 6, 1971. Deimos Pub. 52.

Starting a new fanzine seems a reasonable way to celebrate my new status in life, as an ex-student (why, hell, I'm a Bachelor of the Arts, which could be translated as living in sin with the Muse), an unemployed would-be writer, and a new resident of the City of San Francisco. It seems that upon moving to San Francisco, one is seized with the urge to publish a weekly fanzine. When Calvin and Wilma moved here, over a year ago, Calvin called me up and said, "Let's publish a weekly fanzine!" But I was busy, and when I got unbusy he got busy, so we didn't. Then I went off to France for six months, as most of you know, to finish off my Undergraduate Years in style. Once I had learned to deliver obscene lectures to all the crowned heads of Europe, I came back in time to catch the World Science Fiction Convention in Boston. That was a mistake. I slept my way through most of the convention, despite my greatest desire to stay awake, but at least I met one or two nice new people who are on our mailing list, and I saw lots of Old Friends. But I wrote all that up for Terry Hughes's fanzine, anyway. So I spent six weeks in New York, swimming happily in the flood-tide of Brooklyn Fandom, then I came out here again to live. And I felt like publishing a frequent fanzine. Of course, I do publish EGOBOO, "The Frequent Fanzine." But Ted is 3000 miles away. If we were in the same place (or as close as the laws of science and society will allow), then we might publish EGOBOO as a little biweekly fanzine again. Maybe someday we will. But now, instead, Calvin and I are heating up a little merde for you. Would you rather get hot shit than drippy old egoboo, anyway?

HOT SHIT :: THE STUFF THAT WAS LEFT OUT OF "NEW CAT SAND"

I don't know how Paul Krassner does this. Or Terry Carr. Or Arnie Katz. (Wait a minute! I do know how Arnie Katz does it!)

And here's tonight's tv listing: (2) MOVIE - DRAMA. "Too Old To Die" (1947). Lyndon Johnson, Perry Como. Two elderly men survive.

I'm not as Young and Cute as I used to be, but I want to write in the same old way. The last time I was into publishing a weekly fanzine each week meant New Adventures and New Friends. Now, well--the big news in my life today, for example, is that the company is undergoing its annual audit by the State.

Yet there is much to be said for growing conservative and hard. I can ride the bus every day without freaking out. I shave every day and only notice it every other day. I yell at the kids, watch tv, have a few beers, pay the bills, and go to sleep. It is a small, tidy life, and almost completely misleading.

For example, the only reason I can ride the bus without freaking out is that I spend the entire time in the prone position, speaking to God, pulling my vibes together. And when I yell at the kids, they yell back. Also I don't pay bills. It is very hard to get at the truth about one's own life.

Several weeks ago Wilma, Peter, Casson and I went to visit Philip K. Dick. Phil had never met Wilma or our sons, and I hadn't seen Phil for a number of years. It was a strange afternoon. "We have lost the ability to distinguish between truth and reality," Phil said, almost as soon as we got there, and he soon had me believing it. Finally, after some heavy melodrama happened at the front door, and Phil began to mutter about getting a shotgun and some shells, we left. On the way out, Phil autographed a copy of "Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep" for Wilma. "To the people," it said, "we are trying so hard to protect."

The Carrs have moved to Berkeley; Greg Benford has moved to Southern California. Robert Lichtman is in Tennessee. Marlin Frenzel was in San Francisco for a while, and may still be here. John Berry lives in The City now. And Dick Ellington is getting a kangaroo.

"Mrs. Fig, do you like sex?" says the radio, starting a vd commercial. Possibly pro-vd, I don't know. From John Berry's window I see the revolving neon sign of the Jack Tar Hotel, miles away at Geary and Van Ness. John is trying to get me interested in Indian food, but the time seems inappropriate, with the war and all. After years of prodding by our friends, Wilma and I finally went after some Arab food at the Fez in Los Angeles--finding the place deserted because it was the first day of the six-day war. But who reads the papers? (Norm Clarke reads the papers.) "You can't foul your nest in a fanzine." -- John Berry.

Welcome to side three

For about two weeks I lived in Joe Rolfe's house in Palo Alto. Joe has been an all-around Good Man in providing me with a place to sleep and food to eat while I had no other. (Jesus, that's fancy prose. I'll have to read something lighter than 18th Century English Essays before our next issue.) While I was in Palo Alto, I spent a good deal of my time walking; over to Stanford, around Stanford's huge country-estate-like campus, occasionally into downtown Palo Alto, and then sometimes all over San Francisco in the search for an apartment. I spent one day pounding the pavement walking through the northern Mission District and the Noe/Eureka Valley area in the city. (When you're apartment-hunting you discover all sorts of areas and divisions of San Francisco that nobody else has ever heard of, including the people who live there.) The Valley area, which really reaches up the side of Twin Peaks, is neat and hip-looking. So much so that there are lots of notes on bulletin boards from people looking for a place to live. Very few from people offering places to live. Rents are high. So I enjoyed the area, and I dug the sunset from the hills, and I went home having accomplished nothing.

Finally I took a suggestion from Felice Rolfe, who had been told of it by Jerry Jacks, and went to Rosalie's Rentals on Lombard St. To get there from the train station, I got to take the Powell St. cable car --the first time I had ever taken the cable car just to get somewhere, not as a tourist. There's a great feeling of satisfaction and consciousness-expansion to be gained from sitting on the cable car, knowing that you are merely using this wonderful bit of 19th Century science as an everyday mode of conveyance. My sense of wonder has still not disappeared.

I thought I could do a beautiful paragraph of evocative prose conveying the sights, the smells, the very feel of walking about San Francisco that day, in search of a home.. Things like that always seem so simple at the time. Later, they get even simpler, so simple that you can't expand them beyond a single sentence. So: I found this apartment. It reminds me of a Brooklyn apt. building, and I get beautiful sunsets shining through the picture window in my livingroom; then at night all my heat radiates out that same window and the wind blows coldly upon it. The sidewalks are cracked and dirty, and there are sirens in the night. There's a deli in the next block; that, more than anything else perhaps, makes me think of Ted White's old neighborhood (now Steve Stiles's neighborhood) in Brooklyn. Across the street from the front of my building is Alamo Square, a tiny park with a hill in the middle of it. It may not be much compared to Golden Gate Park, which is only a few blocks away, but Alamo has trees in it in which I have sat and read good books and gazed out over the city. A few blocks in one direction is the Haight; not far the other way is the freeway, and beyond that Downtown. From one window I can see the New Eiffel Tower, a tv antenna going up on Mt. Sutro; from the other I can watch the neon sign of the Jack Tar Hotel go round and round. (I think Calvin has already mentioned this.)

Half the time I'm not even here. I go down to Stanford a lot, where I hang around the Stanford Community Coffeehouse. I'm a big fan of coffeehouses, and of this one in particular. With very little effort at all, I can feel just like a student; why, I even get nervous at the onset of exam week. Yet there's that delicious feeling of being unaffected by the hustle and bustle all around me. (Hustle and bustle? You've got to be kidding. All right, ennui and apathy.) When I'm not in Palo Alto, I often go to Berkeley, where once again I am mistaken for a student. But now I am in San Francisco, where Calvin and I have just finished writing this fanzine.

By the way, how do you like our new title? We think it is pre-tentious, but catchy. I really wanted to call this FANAC, but the last time I did that (with Ted White) it got Terry Carr a little bit pissed off, and, well, Mr. Carr being practically a neighbor now and everything. (You going to come over and visit us or not, Mr. Carr?)

BORING BOOK TITLES GAME (#1) (Contributions Solicited): "The Man Who Avoided Probate." (More next week.)

MORE SOLICITATIONS: Remember, this is your fanzine, not just ours. We encourage you to make fliers to send with each issue of HOT SHIT; to write us; to send cartoons; however, no reviews will appear on pages 2 & 4 other than those contributed by our staff. Wilma and I saw George Harrison on Dick Cavett the other night. He is still as gamy and irreverent as ever, poking fun at the pretensions of modern life, tweaking the nose of the establishment, and yet he is a millionaire. It's not the same any more.

CABLE CAR STORIES: Two can play this game. One night it was raining and I was on the Powell Street car with some friends. This was years ago; one of the friends may have been Andy Main. We came over the top of a hill and saw below us, parked across the tracks, a Chinese Hot Food Delivery Truck. Now, each cable car has three sets of brakes, plus the "natural braking action" of the cable itself. However, none of the brakes work in the rain. "Hang on!" said the gripman, and we crashed into the side of the truck and derailed. Soon a truck with a big rubber bumper appeared, pushed the smashed truck out of the way, and pushed the cable car back on the tracks. Weeks later I got a form in the mail to fill out and return to the Muni, explaining my side of the accident. I sent it in anonymously. Apparently because of that experience, I am now recognized wherever I go as a seasoned cable car vet. I don't ride the cable cars very often, though I occasionally take one home from work as a sort of joke. But whenever I get on a cable car I am immediately swamped with questions from the other passengers. "Where's Union Square? Does this car stop at Sutter Street? How many sets of brakes does a cable car have?" I figured it out finally: it's because I always ask for a transfer. I have to transfer to the Geary Bus in order to get home. And of course the tourists don't ask for transfers, because they get on the Hyde Street car, ride down to the turntable at Market Street, then jump off and wait for the Mason Street car and ride back to Fisherman's Wharf. And somehow I think this applies to real life as well.

HEADLINE OF THE WEEK: In the San Francisco Chronicle, over a story about a teenager's tragic life with dope: "The Agony and the LSD."

"The emperor of the South Sea was called Shu, the emperor of the North Sea was called Hu, and the emperor of the central region was called Hun-tun. Shu and Hu from time to time came together for a meeting on the territory of Hun-tun, and Hun-tun treated them very generously. Shu and Hu discussed how they could repay his kindness. 'All men,' they said, 'have seven openings so they can see, hear, eat, and breathe. But Hun-tun alone doesn't have any. Let's try boring him some!'

"Every day they bored another hole, and on the seventh day Hun-tun died." --Chuang Tzu