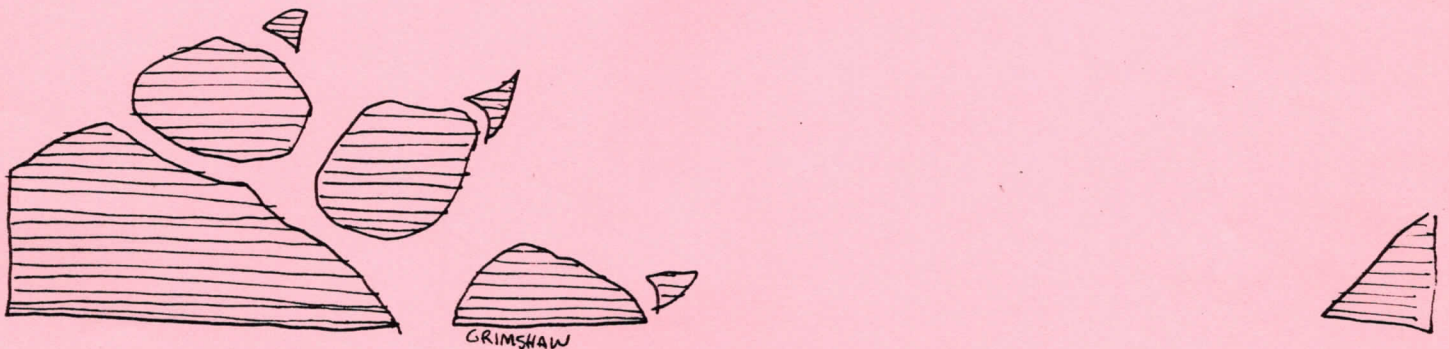


OCCURRENCE 6



GRIMSHAW

con was at least in part my fault. I find it difficult to think of Iowa as a hotbed of Discordianism, or even a warbed of Discordianism, but there is a delegation of them, and two representatives, Semaj the Elder and Reverend Mal Function, had come to this con. There too was Elayne Wechsler, whose zine, *Inside Joke*, is not yet well enough known in fandom. (It is available for \$1 or the usual from Elayne at 418 East 3d Ave., Roselle, NJ 07203.)



Friday morning, I headed for the fanzine room. This strikes me as an absolutely marvelous idea, a place where those in fandom who still pride themselves on literacy can hang out and easily find one another. It served that function quite well at this con, under the expert guidance of Marty Cantor, Mel White, and Neil Kaden.

I was to meet Bob Shea there. I'd never seen him before, but he'd told me he'd be wearing a checked jacket, and a t shirt with Japanese words on it. I was hoping that "fanzine room" would be sufficient identification for someone who hadn't even registered for the con yet. A little after noon, I was ready to meet him, but then I realized I had to go up to my room. Marc Glasser was preparing the toc for apa-nu. I'd brought along Bernadette's apa-nu zine as well as my own, but I'd forgotten the title of hers. This turned out to be fortunate, as there was a phone message waiting in my room, to the effect that Bob would be late. I got back to the

fanzine room, and Marty told me that no one answering the description of Bob had shown up. A few minutes later, a man in a suit & tie came in, and he turned out to be Bob Shea. He'd decided to dress more formally because he was now scheduled to present the Prometheus Award this evening, although he hoped to change that. Bob and I, and Brad Linaweaver (also scheduled for the Libertarian Futurist panel), went over to Operations to see what could be done. We were finally told that the award would be moved, and the panel might be rescheduled, and Bob & I went out to lunch.

After lunch, I went to the apa-nu collation, and thence back to Operations, where I found that the award had been rescheduled and the panel was being put back on the program, and would be announced in the con's daily newspaper, *The Daley Planet*. This also gave me a chance to get my ribbons. The official hierarchical signs for con personnel were the colors of the badge holders. Mere con members, like me, had black ones. Con personnel had white, yellow, green, or blue, depending on their position. (I'm copying these from a report in *Atarantes* which does not make it clear whether that's in ascending or descending order, and I've forgotten which.) I decided that the real Status Indicator was not badge color, but the number of ribbons one had. I had two, identifying me as NOMINEE and PROGRAM.

I had planned to go out to dinner with Bob Shea and some libertarians, but a problem developed. As I usually do at cons, I had scheduled a Discordian Business Meeting for 9 o'clock Friday and had purchased supplies for it. (The threatened corkage fee turned out to be a merely *pro forma* threat, perhaps an official hotel statement to mollify Chicago's rapacious unions. We were told that if we were subtle about bringing food in, there would be no problems, and indeed there appeared to be none.) It now seemed as if the dinner party would be returning after nine, so I would be late for my own party, and there would be no one there to let the guests in. And so I decided to forego the nice dinner and eat by myself at ~~feh~~ Burger King. I'm so fucking noble & self-sacrificing, I make myself puke. (Had it been McDonald's instead of Burger King, that might have been literally true.)

And the party was a success. The Discordians, mentioned above, showed up and made things more enjoyable, as did many of the people from the jelly bean party, and a whole bunch of new people, including Lea Day, Miriam Schlinger, Vanessa Schnatmeier, Sean Haugh, and TAFF winner Kevin Smith.



I immediately asked Kevin why he was picking on me. That may require a bit of explanation. Kevin did a good-natured parody of one of my zines (*Intraview*) in Avedon Carol & AnneLaurie Logan's *Harlot*. That was OK, but then in his own zine, he did a bit about some envelopes I have with immense return addresses. After this second attack, he felt compelled to say that he wasn't really picking on me, which of course immediately aroused my suspicions. O well, I'm sure there's nothing to it. *WILL WILLY HE DOES HIS VICIOUS PARODY OF THIS ZINE!* In any event, I enjoyed meeting the sadistic bully.

I learned how useful the term "Discordian Business Meeting" can be. A small herd of teenage male medioids, the bane of cons, came around and asked if this was the Discordian party. Someone said, "No, it's the Discordian Business Meeting," and the schmucks actually left. **Hee hee hee**

The party went well, and ended with a bit of substance abuse, and so to bed.



Saturday morning, I awoke and again headed for the fanzine room. This time I noticed that one of the zines for sale was *Evergreen 16*, Mike Glicksohn's long-awaited one-shot revival of the zine he and the late Susan Wood published in the early '70s. I purchased a copy, and found it, as I had suspected, a sampler of some of the best faanish fanzine writing. I particularly enjoyed Dave Locke's arkle (Dave is the one fan writer who can get away with writing on the worst topic of all, "Why I cannot/do not wanna write a fanzine article"; young fen should read him, but not emulate him); Joe Haldeman's filk; Terry Carr's historical reprint; and Ro Lutz-Wagey's thoughts on fandom, juggling, and computer programming. You might have other favorites, but there's a lot of good stuff in here. It's \$4 (US) from Mike Glicksohn, 137 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ont., M6P 2S3 CANADA. I also saw *The Baley Planet*, which had announced the Libertarian Futurist Panel, gave the names of all the panelists, and merely failed to note where and when the panel would take place.

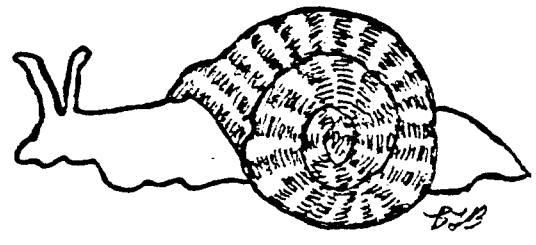
In the fanzine room, I was talking with David Bratman, another old friend from LASFAPA, and he introduced me to a delightful person named Amy Thomason. I would have liked to talk with her some more, but I was supposed to be over at the Prometheus Award presentation. (It had already produced a Great Moment in Spontaneous Putridity; I was talking with Marty, and told him about the award. He said,

"Oh, does the winner get fire?" "No," I replied, "they peck out his liver.") I was going there not only because I was interested, but because Michael Grossberg had asked me to be there to represent the winner, should the award go to someone who wasn't at the con. (This was a reasonable possibility, as only two of the five nominees--J. Neil Schulman and Norman Spinrad--were present. In case you're wondering, the books were, respectively, *Alongside Night* and *Songs from the Stars*. This year's award is going retroactively to the best book of 1979-80, and they plan to catch up next year.)

Bob Shea handled the presentation, and did it right. He had read all the nominees, and discussed them as both libertarianism and literature. He also discussed libertarian/anarchist philosophy briefly, and made one point that I liked. He said, "People ask me whether government keeps us from a dog-eat-dog existence. I like to point out that dogs don't have a government and dogs don't eat dogs." He then said that the winner would receive a libertarian gold coin with the likeness of Friedrich Hayek on it, but since the Libertarian Futurist Society did not trust the State's postal system to deliver the coin, he did not have it, and thus would present the winner with a facsimile. That gave me an idea. When he announced that L. Neil Smith had won the award for his inventive alternate-world novel, *The Probability Broach*, I accepted the facsimile of the award and announced that I was a facsimile of L. Neil Smith.

That bit of business taken care of, I went up to Lee Ann's LASFAPA party, where I was pleased to see Amy once again and to talk with her some more, as well as getting a chance to meet Georges Biguere, yet another old friend from the printed page whom I'd not yet met in person.

After that party, I ran into Pat Morell, a fellow *Illuminatus!* nut who was very pleased at the opportunity to have dinner with Bob Shea, and so the three of us went to an excellent Chinese restaurant. As we arrived there, we saw Georges and Amy, and as we left after most enjoyable dinner and conversa-



tion, we ran into a couple of old friends of mine, Ed Zdrojewski and Lee Howard. Ed remains a first-rate writer, whether it's fanac or grinding out farm news for whatever pissant midwestern rag is paying him now. Lee is an old friend who's been wandering the Western parts of this country looking for something, and thinks she has now found it, in the form of a training program that will equip her for the high-tech world of computers & such. I hope she is right. In any event, she & Ed certainly seemed to enjoy finding each other.

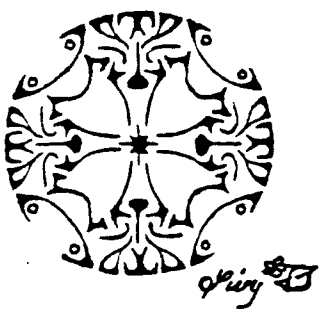
Bob & I ran into Marty Cantor thereafter, and the three of us went looking for parties. But there was a bit of a problem. As you know, some people enjoy dressing up funny at cons. That doesn't bother me as much as it bothers some people, since some of these curiously clad individuals look rather pleasant to me. But on Saturday night, there is an alleged big deal at which all the people who dress up funny get together to decide who is dressed the funniest, or somesuch, and parties seem to stop while that is going on. (I've been having my parties on Friday night to avoid the Saturday night crush, but more & more others are doing likewise--this is the second year out of three that the Discordian Business Meeting has been opposite the Pagan Circle, which is a drag, as both appeal to pretty much the same group. Maybe for worldcon, I should have my party at the same time as the costume show.)

At one party we did find, a guest was Steve Jackson, of Steve Jackson Games, the inventor of ILLUMINATI, a role-playing card game based on the same general mythos Shea & Wilson were working from. (The game is \$6.50 from Steve at PO Box 18957, Dallas, TX 78760. I'm not into FRP games, but it looks to me like an interesting one.) He was most pleased & surprised to meet Bob Shea. Incidentally, he also was selling buttons at the con, including some interesting Illuminated ones, and one with what I decided was my favorite new slogan of the con--LIFE IS LIKE AN ANALOGY.

We wandered a bit more and discovered the Murphy's Law of this sort of hotel--It's Always In The Other Tower. I prowled various parties. I talked with Iris Brown at Atlanta in '86 and Diane 1 (Diane 2, alas, could not be there) at the Circle party, chatted with a bunch of other people, some of whom I probably should remember, and always had the feeling that things were somewhere else. (That's one reason I like to give my own parties.)



Sunday noon was the time for the Libertarian Futurist Panel. As the con had done such a poor job of alerting people to it, the panelists were doing what we could. Vic Koman had printed up a bunch of announcements and placed them in various spots. As noon rolled around, the four of us arrived and found, pretty much as expected, a hard core of libertarians and a few personal cronies of the panelists. In any event, we did our number. Brad Linaweaver talked about libertarian esthetics; Sam Konklin discussed utopian, dystopian, and libertarian futures; Vic Koman spoke on the possibilities of private enterprise getting out into space, with Sam predictably stressing the importance of not giving any support to the State's space program. I talked about fandom as a communications system. It's something I've written about before. I started with the utter boringness of most mass media, with the need to appeal to a vast percentage of the audience resulting in a least-common-denominator approach which satisfies almost no one. I pointed out that for the last few years the biggest thing in radio has been CB, and the biggest thing in TV has been video games, as these represent alternatives to the boring crap that centralized media put out. I mentioned that fandom has always worked as the same sort of medium, with people interacting instead of sopping up what big business decides people will want or what the majority votes for. I insisted that the main thing that is wrong with fannish communication today is the fact that it has to rely on the State's postal system, with the main alternative being those parts of the communications system run by the thinly disguised branch of the State known as Ma Bell, and suggested that what we really have to do is find alternate means of communication. I was not surprised to find that no one could think of any. All in all, I thought that the panel went well, and regretted that the failure to announce the panel properly had kept away the great number of listeners who could have benefited from my wise words. (The possibility that people would not have gone even if they'd known about it is not worthy of serious consideration.)



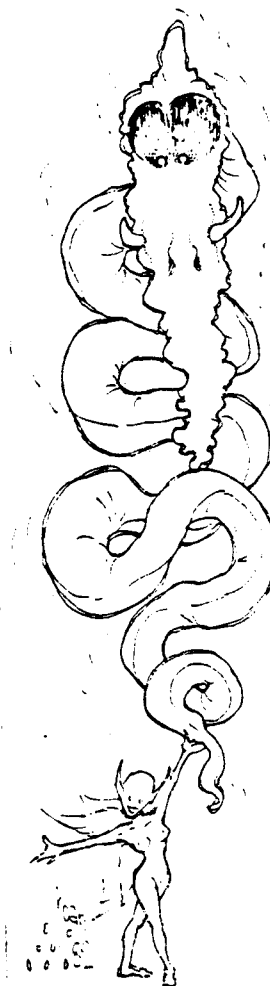
I wandered. I ran into Eric Lindsay, an old zine and apa friend from Australia whom I'd finally met in person two weeks earlier at MidSouthCon, and Linda Ann Moss, another person I enjoy exchanging mailing comments with, and the three of us went out to a surprisingly good Chinese fast-food joint somewhere in the bowels of the building. (I would expect that by now several Dungeonmasters have created labyrinths based on the general layout of the Hyatt Regency and surrounding buildings.)

And soon it was time for the award presentations. As I had done at Denvention, I invited Janice Gelb to join me for the ceremonies. (Terry Carr has remarked that one of advantage of being a perennial also-ran for the Hugos--as he is in the Editor category--is that at least you get to sit up front every year.)

This year Marta Randall was Toastmaster. She came out in an elegant white tux, and announced that she was planning to have a fast ceremony. This admirable goal was loudly applauded, and she stuck to it, finishing in a possibly record-setting 90 minutes. This year, too, unlike Denvention, they scattered the non-Hugo awards among the Hugos instead of getting them all out of the way first. That meant that the suspense was brief for me. It was very soon that I learned that Dick Geis had unsurprisingly won yet another Best Fan Writer award.

Indeed, all the awards given for general achievement went to repeaters. Victoria Poyser again won the Fan Artist award; LOCUS was chosen Best Fanzine; Michael Whalen was again Best Pro Artist; and Edward Ferman was chosen Best Editor. These are talented people, but their continuing victories are a sign of stagnation. To take just one category, the immensely talented Joan Hanke-Woods has not yet won a Fan Artist Hugo, and such fine artists as Charlie Williams and Olivia Jasen have not even appeared on the ballots. There was much talk, and a vote was passed, on separating the semiprozines from the amateur fanzines in the balloting, but I think the real problem is repeat winners. It makes sense when the award is for a specific work to treat each year as a new one and let artists win year after year if they come up with specific winners year after year, but I think that letting the same people win for general achievement year after year is a mistake. If I ever do win the damned thing, I will remove my name from consideration the following year.

I will say little about the other Hugos. The one achievement award which by definition does not repeat, the John W. Campbell award for best new wri-



ter, went to Alexis Gilliland, who richly deserved it for his droll and satirical Rosinante books. John Varley's "The Pusher" struck me as worthy of the Hugo it gained for Best Short Story, though I must admit I have not read any of the competition.

I'd decided somewhere along the line that I would hold a small impromptu party after the award ceremony, probably as a reaction to my feeling of failure in finding the good parties the previous night. It was a small party. I feared that there would be no refreshments, but what happened was even worse: Mike Gunderloy brought peanut-butter-and-tuna-fish sandwiches. Still it was a good party, with most of the people I most wanted to have there--Bob, Janice, Mike, Amy, Georges, Sewaj, Lee Ann, Ed, Lee, Bear....



Monday morning, I returned to the fanzine room, where I saw Marty and his new-found friend, Robbie Bourget (I knew I left somebody out of my Sunday-night party list.) It was at last to be time for the WOOF collation.

Bruce Pelz, inventor of WOOF, says it's one of the worst ideas he ever had. I disagree. That may be a sign of his greater knowledge and experience of fandom.

The idea of WOOF is that it is supposed to be a showcase of fanzine fandom. People make up 300 copies of a zine and bring it to worldcon. It is then collated and distributed to fans throughout the con. It seems marvelous to me, and for the three years that I have been attending worldcons, each year I've done a two-page zine, distributing it in all the apas I belong to, as well as in WOOF.

But it hasn't worked, as a whole. WOOF has been underadvertised. Relatively few people have known about it. As a result, few people have done zines. There is a small hard core of consistent contributors (notably Guy Lillian, Don Markstein, and Charlie Belov), but much of each disty has been one-

shots done at the con, on the endlessly fascinating theme of "I can't think of anything to say next."

At Denvention, Bruce abandoned his offspring. It was offered to a number of people, including me; and finally Dick Smith, who was running the mineo room, put the apa together because no one else was willing to. But that didn't get done until Monday, at which time most of the people had gone home, and as a result, even contributors didn't get copies. (I got mine only because Janice was still around when it was collated and picked up a copy for me.)

Dick remained the DE, and this time vowed to get copies to the contributors, but once again collation could not take place until Monday.

That of course utterly defeats the purpose of WOOF. It should be available during the con. (I would recommend selling it to noncontributors, for a dollar or so, both to help defray expenses and to keep it from being considered freebie-table junk.)

In any event, WOOF did finally get collated, before I had to leave. And that left only one problem: ending the con report.

