

new cat sand

NEW CAT SAND #5 is published for the 131st mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, and for a Small Circle of Friends. No copies are for sale. No more old Christmas Cards are wanted by the Women's Missionary Society, we have more than enough, and it is Copyright May 1970 by Calvin Demmon, 2338 Loma Vista Place, Los Angeles, California 90039. This is *Press* Publication #71. "Why," as Ray Nelson asks, "should the pleasures of folly be reserved for fools?" Read this. It may save the life of a child.

STRIKE A BLOW FOR NON-VIOLENCE!

ABSURDITY (Part I) This morning I was lecturing to my freshman English class about the Absurd Novel. The Absurd Novel, I explained, is not necessarily a statement about Bad or Good. Catch-22 is just Absurd. Wars are Absurd. School is, genuinely, Absurd. We keep thinking that Absurdity is something to be avoided, but it is Inevitable. For example, in Catch-22, to say that you were sane was to be insane. That's Absurd.

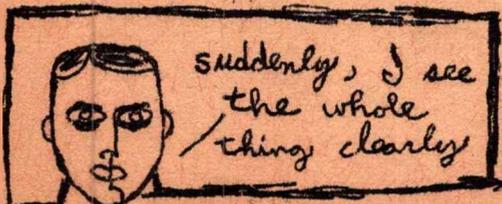
I had to dismiss the class. Out in the hall, marching up and down, were a couple of hundred students, shouting "Strike Now! Shut it Down! Strike Now! Shut it Down!" in absurd protest to the absurd war in Vietnam (and Cambodia) and the absurd deaths of four students at Kent State in Ohio. In Ohio. What could be more absurd?

Absurdity is one of those words that becomes Absurd upon repetition. It no longer looks right to me on this page. Those letters--absurd--don't look like they spell anything. Those deaths at Kent State don't spell anything, either. Tragedy. Absurdity.

THOUGHTS ON LAST-MINUTE FAPA FANZINES

I'm not the only one in FAPA who is skating along on the thin ice of eight last-minute pages a year. Better fans than me have been doing it for years. This time, though, I seriously considered not doing anything at all--and dropping out of FAPA. Here it is now, what? three days to the deadline? and I have begun

work on another FAPazine, which I will have to send by air and by special delivery to the Mailer, and which will reach the FAPA members that I care about and those whom I do not know and those whose fanzines I may not even read in this mailing. And then I will have to



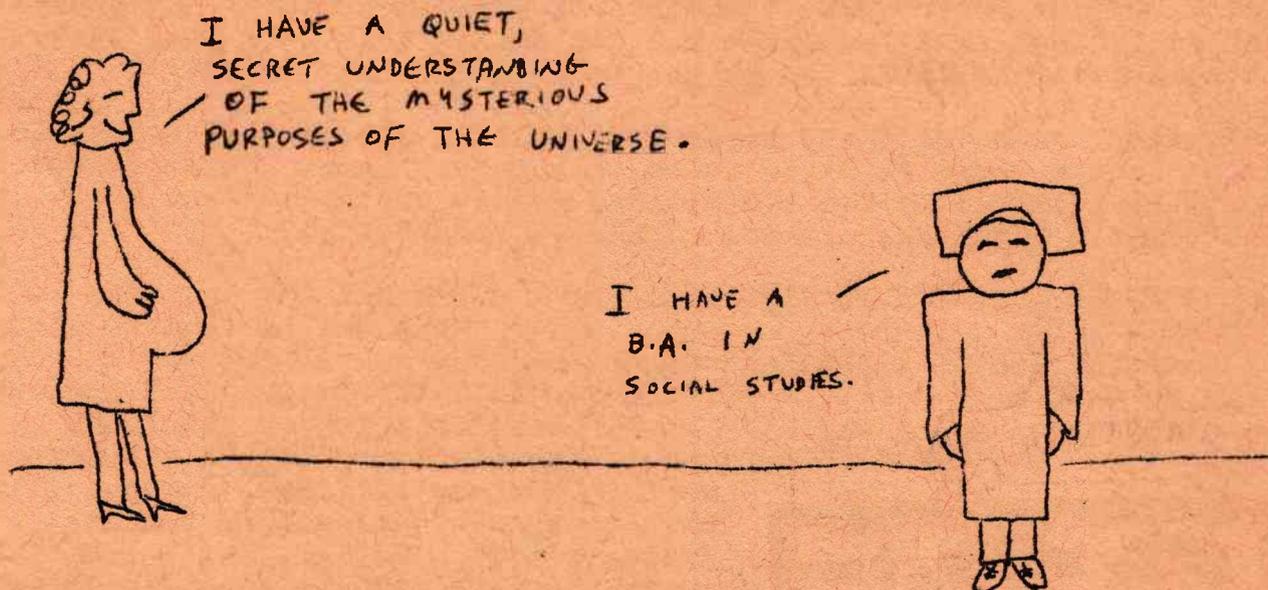
sit down and send out copies of this fanzine to all the people who are not in FAPA (some of them are not even fans) whom I care about more than I care about many FAPA members.

It's not easy making that admission. I certainly don't want to hurt anybody's feelings. But FAPA has just about ceased to have any meaning for me. There was a time when I looked forward to the mailings; now, and this isn't easy to admit either, I groan slightly when I get them. I know there are going to be about five or six things in the mailing that I will really like, and about four times that many things that will bore me or disgust me.

It might seem that I should resign, and let somebody from the waiting list come up and provide the New Blood that FAPA seems to need. But no. The truth is that in every mailing there are five or six things that turn me on. That's not too many. But it's enough to keep me grinding out my eight pages a year, especially since I know perfectly well that (fan editors all being crazy and disorganized) I wouldn't get those five or six fanzines for more than a few months after my name dropped off the FAPA roster. And FAPA gives me the excuse to publish a fanzine every year, whether I really need to or not. A glance at the calendar, a whiff of the old mimeo, and I'm off. That's why I stay in FAPA.

I paid my income tax late, too. Went down to the Terminal Annex Post Office in Los Angeles at 9:30 p.m. to get the thing postmarked by midnight. There was a traffic jam around the post office for two blocks in every direction. Inside, people crowded around the benches and tables usually used for addressing mail, with their bills and receipts for the year and their tax returns piled in front of them: frowning, sweating, figuring. I'd done my return at home, after a couple of glasses of wine in honor of the Government. I had to wait in a line to hand my envelope to a postal clerk. It took me ten minutes to get out of the parking lot.

That's the way I feel about FAPA. I put it off, always thinking that perhaps I'll get killed or have a heart attack two weeks before the



deadline and then I won't have to do it. But I'm still alive, and I'm still opting for society: the Income Tax, and the Fantasy Amateur Press Association.

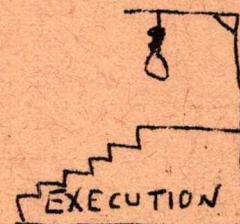
"Leave slow growth to the Scandinavians: you have only time to explode." Nathaniel West.

MORE TERMINAL ANNEX STORIES
(returning by request)

The Terminal Annex Post Office in Los Angeles is old--kitty-corner from Clvera Street, across from the Union Station, just a little bit down from Felipe's Famous French Dip Sandwiches. It is old, and it is big, with high ceilings and WPA murals, and you can mail a letter there at any time during the day or night to get the postmark that you need. In the daytime, there is a cigar stand inside the postoffice, run by a blind man who knows the location of everything he sells without looking. He can't look. At night, the Terminal Annex Post Office is a warm place to go if you are old and you haven't got any other place to go. If you haven't any food, and you can't get fifty cents from somebody for a room, or 75¢ for the all-night movies, then you can hang around the Terminal Annex for a while, anyway, addressing letters that you cannot afford to send, inspecting the stamp machines, trying to find somebody who will give you fifty or seventy-five cents without screaming, if you bring the subject up right.

I had to go to the Terminal Annex Post Office in the night a few weeks ago for a reason that I cannot remember. Something needed a postmark, right then, before midnight. Inside, a man who needed a shave and had some teeth missing and had his cuffs rolled up was sitting under one of the tables that you use for addressing letters. He spotted me, and I spotted him. I didn't have any money on me, and I felt a little guilty about that, but I didn't look away. If you haven't got any money, you can at least not look away. I walked past him to the mail slot, then turned and came back towards him, towards the door. We were still looking at each other. I'm a soft touch. He was going to ask me for fifty cents, and he wasn't going to believe that I didn't have it. I did not look away. I was next to him, on my way to the door, and I said "Hi," and he spoke.

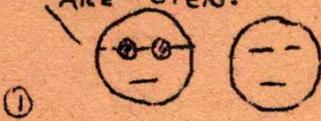
"Boy," he said, "I wish I had your energy."



JUSTICE

MR. DEMMON'S
NEW THOUGHT COMICS #1

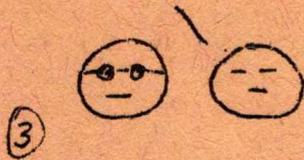
I WEAR DARK GLASSES SO
NOBODY CAN TELL MY EYES
ARE OPEN.



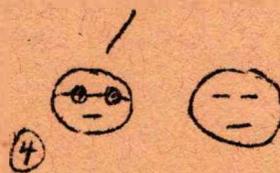
GEE IT IS A GREAT THING TO
HAVE YOUR EYES OPEN; TOO BAD YOURS
ARE CLOSED, KID.



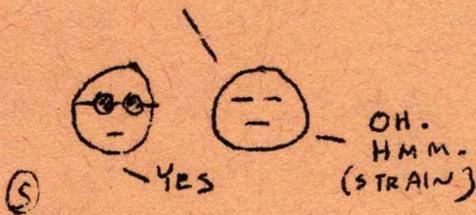
IT MUST BE REALLY GREAT
TO HAVE YOUR EYES OPEN;
HOW DID YOU GET THEM OPEN?



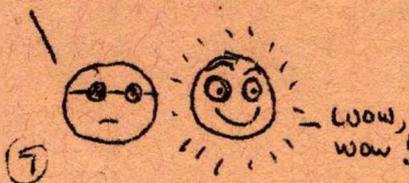
OH, I JUST OPENED THEM
ONE DAY AND THERE WAS
THE WORLD; IT'S GREAT!



YOU JUST OPENED THEM
ONE DAY EH?



YES, I JUST OPENED
THEM ONE DAY.



HEY YOU'RE RIGHT THIS IS
ABSOLUTELY GREAT! THANKS
A LOT!



WOW THIS IS GREAT I
OPENED MY EYES JUST
LIKE YOU SAID!



YES IT'S GREAT! WHY
DON'T YOU TAKE OFF
YOUR DARK GLASSES?

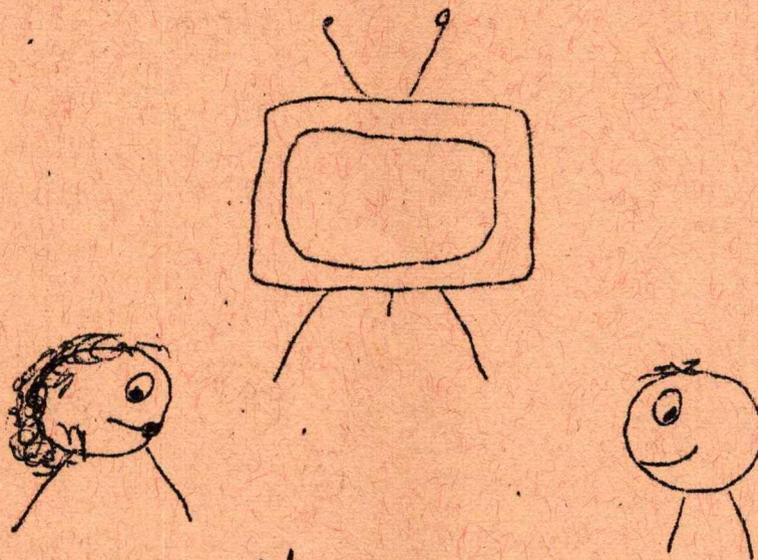


OH. I SEE.



"Heavens, the universe is in order." Allen Ginsberg

FRONTIER MOUSE Over at the Longhorn Cafe the mice were stirring things up. There was always that kind of trouble on payday. Paula had her hands full, and Fred knew there'd be hell to pay that night. The last time the mice got paid, about two or three weeks ago, they broke the mirror behind the bar and pulled down the chandelier that Fred had had shipped in on a stage from Kansas City. But the mice were good customers and Fred didn't mind. And Paula really loved the mice and was glad to see them have a good time. By eleven o'clock the place was really jumping. You could hear the nickelodian playing clear down by the church, and you could hear the mice singing and shouting and occasionally firing off a round or two



The Eternal Triangle

into the ceiling, although Fred tried to make sure that everybody checked all their guns at the door. But the mice were irrepressible. The sheriff stayed in town just in case there was any trouble, and he was sitting down the street in his office playing solitaire and drinking whiskey from a bottle. There wasn't anybody in jail yet but he thought the place would probably be full up come morning. At the hotel the guests had boarded the place up tight in case things got rough. All the lights and noise coming from the Longhorn Cafe kept people awake, though, and the mice had left their horses tied up out in front and the horses were nervous too, stamping and blowing. It had just about started to look like everything was going to go along without any incidents when Frontier Mouse rode up. He had been gone for a long time, under mysterious circumstances, and Paula really missed him. But Paula wasn't expecting him, and she was dancing with another mouse. Frontier Mouse saw all this from outside. He drew his guns. He kicked his way in through the swinging doors, guns blazing. Many mice fell, wounded, none seriously. Everybody else ducked behind the bar and under tables. Nobody was left standing but Frontier Mouse and Paula and the mouse she was dancing with. Even though the music stopped he was still dancing. Paula was trying to warn him, but he paid her no attention. Frontier Mouse motioned Paula out of the way. She broke out of the mouse's embrace and

backed off. That fool mouse was still dancing away. Frontier Mouse shot him at close range, for fooling around with his girl. Somebody called Doc, but when Doc got there it was too late. There wasn't much else that happened that night. Frontier Mouse said he was glad to be back, and ordered drinks all around. Fred was glad nobody had shot up the mirror. The Sheriff heard some mice pounding on his door, saying that Frontier Mouse had killed a mouse down at the Longhorn Cafe, but the Sheriff pretended he didn't hear. Frontier Mouse had quite a reputation, and he didn't come to town very often. The Sheriff decided Frontier Mouse could take care of himself. Besides, everybody knew Paula was his girl. The next day there was quite an uproar about the incident, but by that time Frontier Mouse had rode off again, on another mission. As the sun rose, Paula missed him.

Nature Poem
*Your eyes, my love,
are green as grass!
and you can shove
Them up your ass.*

You live with euphemisms long enough, you get used to them, sweetie.

WARREN BRICK told me a strange story the other day. He had to go to San Francisco to make some arrangements about a job-- Warren and Emily are planning to move North next year. At the last moment, though, Warren's 1957 Buick gave up the ghost, and, after fussing around with garages and mechanics, Warren was forced to grab a taxi and head for the Airport. He bought a ticket and called Emily to tell her of his change of plans.

She gasped. "Oh, Warren," she sobbed. "I didn't tell you, but I dreamed last night that you took a plane to San Francisco and it crashed and you got killed. Please don't fly!"

Warren argued, but he was tired anyway, so he yielded. He would return home and wait for the car to be repaired. He called his contact in San Francisco and made arrangements for a later meeting, then he sold his ticket back to the airline, making an elderly gentleman waiting on "stand-by" very happy. And he returned home safely.



The next day on the front page of the L.A. Times he saw a terrifying photo story. The plane he had decided not to take, because of Emily's "silly" dream, was Western Airlines' millionth flight to San Francisco, everybody on the plane had his money refunded, and an old man, whose picture Warren of course

recognized, had the lucky ticket number and won a free trip to Europe and Asia, two cars, and a movie contract.

o Speak, Good Sir, Again To Me,
And Tell Me What You Say,
And Stay for Dinner, Mince-meat Pie,
And Then, Please Go Away.
(from the songs of Warren Brick)

Dear Meredith,

It was very foolish of you to kill your father and then write to me about it. By the time you get this note the police will have been notified. I am sorry you felt the way you did about the canary. Your father and I always wanted you to have the best, but not a canary.

Love,
Mother.

Do I annoy you with my posturings and intonations? Be thankful I don't kill you.

THE WORLD OF THE PISTON

Somebody told me that the engine turns over, but I lifted up the hood and it was just shaking slightly from side to side, kind of tied down by a lot of straps and wires. No wonder the damn thing wouldn't go, some fool had tied it all up. This is going to be a lot of work, but nothing I can't handle. In a few hours the engine is completely free, and when I start her up again she turns over and over. I test drive her and find I'm getting a smoother ride and better mileage. Other motorists are stalled at the curb, their engines steaming and sweating because they can't turn over. Somebody's spending a lot of time and money sneaking around at night fastening those engines down. I seem to be the only one on the street who has figured out what is wrong. A girl flags me down. She's late for work and frankly says, although she doesn't care for my type, I can come over after work if I'll fix her car. It's one of those big American jobs with eight pistons. I'll need her help. We unfasten the whole engine so it can turn over but now it won't start. I can spin the engine over and over with my hand but it won't catch. Must be a fuel line. I figure out a way to eliminate a lot of the fuel line so the fuel runs faster and better, but although it runs it coughs. A dirty piston, I have to tell her. By this time she is frantic. Her boss is going to kill her if she's not at work in five minutes. I'd give her a ride in my car but I want to lick this problem first. We have to take off the spark plugs and climb down in each piston and clean them out, that's the only way. Naturally there's not much room down there so we both have to take off our clothes. Lucky everybody else is stranded, even the cops, I apparently am the only one who knows how to fix a car anymore, the things are so complicated. Each piston requires a different special kind of work in there to make it right again. By the time we get through with all eight pistons and put the spark plugs back on we discover that we have worked so well together we are in love. She quits her job. We have two cars running now, and cannot decide whether to open a garage or start a taxi business.

"Looking back through the years, seeing both errors and triumphs in their correct perspective, I feel I have enjoyed it all. The motor trade has been, so far as I am concerned, a most interesting business."

H.F.S. Morgan

(From a letter to Allan Fogrund): A small side trip about our tv. It melted one night when we were watching it in bed and pulled the covers up around our necks and accidentally covered up the vents in the back of the tv. A puddle of melted wax under the tv, and Broderick Crawford dwindling to a dot and vanishing just as he was about to make his last stand against the cops up in the hills. So a couple of weeks ago I took it to a tv repair shop for an estimate, anticipating my paycheck. Call back in two days, they said; I called back and they were very apologetic. "We were robbed last night. I'm sorry, but your tv was stolen. They even took the 25¢ items. We were insured, don't worry, we will get you a brand new tv." So now Wilma and I believe in God and go to Vespers every week, even though we often fall asleep and fall off the pews and that's very hard on Wilma because she's pregnant, you know.

(From a letter to Bob Lichtman): I don't think there's much point in arguing the virtues of the city vs the country or country vs city any more. The thing is I do understand why you like the country. I still like the city. I've been stoned in the city and the country & dig the city better. Sirens and noise & light and smog don't freak me off at all. I dig them. Since I don't believe in any big absolute scale of right or wrong anyway, I think you've got to put it down to differences in temperament or something. Busses & fire engines & traffic lights turn me on more than trout streams and deer &c. That's an actual fact, which I have measured extensively and found to be true. I'm a city-freak, that's all; I get restless & bored in the country, my brain gets fogged up: just as yours does in the city. Well, you see, that's what makes the world so wonderful and holy: total absurdity, such as this discussion we've been having for a year.

This is a government of the people--not cats!

About 50% of our mail says, "I could write like you only better if I had the time." The other 50% never gets here.

ABSURDITY (Part II) Wilma and Peter and I were driving home from my mother's house in Inglewood last Sunday morning, at a little bit past midnight, in the black 1964 Morgan Coupe that I have had for nearly five years. We stopped at a red light, and Peter dropped his bottle on the floor. Wilma reached down to pick it up, adjusting Peter in her lap. A White 1969 Thunderbird rammed into the back of the Morgan, went up and over, ripping the convertible top off, pushing the topbars down, tearing off the windshield, crashed down on the hood in front, and stopped a hundred feet ahead. We were drenched with gasoline. I got out, pulled the top off of Wilma's head, and helped her out with Peter. We are alive. The car was destroyed. Had Peter not dropped his bottle, he and Wilma might be dead.

PresS 6 May 1970