

being further Proceedings of the
ROMILEY FAN VETERANS
AND SCOTTISH DANCING SOCIETY

The ERGONOMIC ATTRIBUTES of the SPACE WARP

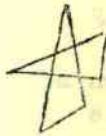
"Space warps are now demode, and are not used in the best science fiction circles. This is a sorry state of affairs. Obviously, it is not appreciated that the SPWARP has commendable domestic applications. In these days of periodic fuel crises, the problem of interior-heating creates a costly item in the household budget. Among newly-weds, in addition, furnishing a large room with the minimum of furniture sets no small task to avoid an appearance of bareness. On occasions, bookshelves and entire walls appear empty and blank for lack of suitable material, whose primary function should be functional but is often ornamental; and both types involve the outlay of cash. Other considerations are the empty seats in countless churches up and down the country - a social problem almost as acute as that of filling the seats at a convention of science fiction specialists.

The cure is dramatically simple. The SPWARP is a region where time and space do not exist relative to our own continuum or, more simply, it is where a vacuum is not. Any disused SPWARP, then, can be cut up into pieces of suitable size and fitted in the empty spaces which will automatically disappear. Naturally, these areas will not require to be heated. Further, human physical energy can be conserved by there being no need to walk through these spots since they will no longer be there. Figures relating to the savings of energy, carpets, fuel, and shoe leather are not to hand. However, an impressive, practical and perfectly true account can be given to show an application of the SPWARP in the incessant job of interior decorating.

A window cleaner in a Northern city, a Mr. Richmond Grove, by birth a bachelor, was depressed by the prospect of either having to give up his leisure or lose working time to repair and redecorate a large room at an estimated cost of £12. The installation of a suitably-sized SPWARP removed all the room. After deducting the initial outlay of 27/5d for a secondhand SPWARP, a net saving of £10.12.7d remained.

Any residual fragments can, of course, permanently end all draughts, save fuel and bodily energy by removing entirely all mouse-holes, knot-holes, cracks around skirting boards and gaps in the roof."

Reprinted by kind permission from The Ergonomist Digest & Psychonomics Review, 4/5, vii, pp. 210-214, 1954.



"Is it possible for a sudden effervescence or seething of the blood so to overcome the noblest resolutions? Does the body speak with a louder voice than the intellect? Whenever my pride blows too many bubbles skyward, I have but to put before my eyes the image of that night to bring it back to earth. I begin to agree with the men: what a poor thing is a woman's virtue! and on what, in God's name, does it depend?"

In response to this, and similar requests, we have persuaded Eric to write a sequel to The Case of the Copper-plated Kitten. The title is:

CRIME MOST CONFUSING

"Prisoner at the bar," croaked the judge, "Information has been laid before this court by a certain Mr. Holmes and a Dr. Watson that on the morning of April 1st whilst at your employment you entered the apartment of Mr. Iago Slattern and caused his death by killing him with a blunt instrument, to wit, a copper-plated kitten. How plead you, guilty or not guilty?"

The man in the dock looked thoughtfully at the dock railings and answered, "Not Guilty, My Lord." The judge leaned back and sighed, looking at a paper by his side. "You wish to conduct your own defence?"

"I shall show that I could not possibly have killed Iago Slattern," said the man in the dock. There was a gasp in court, and a newspaperman carefully noted the word "hubbub" down. As silence fell, the prisoner spoke again, "I shall show that the deceased was dead before I bashed his skull in."

The counsel for the prosecution was on his feet in a flash, waving a brief in the prisoner's face. "This man," he said to the horrified jury,

Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen,
 Was chaste to the end of her days.
 Although they hurt you, keep your virtue
 With widower's whalebone stays

"Has the coldblooded audacity to admit to crushing in a man's skull, and makes the preposterous claim that his unfortunate victim was dead before his murderous attack !"

Unabashed, the prisoner continued his defence. "I submit that the police report on the cause of death was wholly incorrect. At the time of the alleged killing no blood flowed from the wounds, which to an intelligent police coroner would indicate that life was extinct before I battered his skull in." The judge consulted his notes. "Am I to understand that you claim Iago Slattern died by some other means?"

Lescoffier, the wellknown chef,
Invariably used to garnish
Legs of ham and cans of Spam
With WIDOWER'S COPAL VARNISH

WIDOWER'S PNEUMATIC FAIRIES
So each young operator wore as trousers
Was shocked by intimate waist,
edT yrse demerB erumE IVtoIrfm nsaim

Where Florence Nightingale kept her lamp
Is a source of many rumours.
She had it concealed, it's now revealed
In her WIDOWER'S WONDERFUL BLOOMERS

"An autopsy will reveal that Iago Slattern's internal organs contain approximately one pound of industrial arsenic, which I forced down his throat with a motorcycle pump," said the prisoner with composure. Again the reporter noted down "hubbub in court".

"COURT ADJOURNED PENDING EXHUMATION AND EXAMINATION !" thundered the judge...

SECOND DAY

"Prisoner at the bar," croaked the judge, "You stand charged with administer-

ing to Iago Slattern a noxious substance, to wit, one pound of arsenic, with malice aforethought, to bring about the death of the aforementioned. How plead you?"

"Not Guilty," said the man in the box, with perfect calm. "I shall show that I could not possibly have poisoned Iago Slattern". The reporter wearily scribed "hubbub" in his notehook, while the counsel for the prosecution rose to his feet, breathed heavily, and with ponderous sarcasm asked, "You admit freely to pumping Iago Slattern full of arsenic?" The prisoner nodded happily.

"You are aware that arsenic is a poison?" enquired the counsel.

"Certainly not," answered the prisoner. Counsel flung his arms in the air and turned to the jury. "Here" he said, "Here is a man who does not know that arsenic is a poison!" Looking with supreme disdain at the prisoner, he enquired, "May I ask how it is you have reached your present age without knowledge of the effects of arsenic?"

"The effects of arsenic are completely outside my own experience," beamed the prisoner. "I have heard of the effects, and read of the effects, but this is mere hearsay which is not admissible as evidence in a court of law."

"A likely quibble," sneered the prosecutor. "And you, in complete ignorance of the nature of arsenic, poisoned Iago Slattern in cold blood by your own admission." The prisoner smiled and looked at the jury. "Members of the jury," he said, "All of you stand somewhat in awe of this court of law, and as such are highly impressionable. I ask you to take careful note of the extremely high content of suggestion

in the prosecutor's address." All the jury looked thoughtfully at the prosecutor. "I must warn you," croaked the voice of the judge, "that interruptions of this nature cannot be allowed to impede the progress of justice."

"Justice has already been done to Iago Slattern," was the answer.

The judge frowned. "Any further remarks of that nature will be construed as contempt of court," he said, with acerbity. "That, your worship, would constitute a genuine offence, but would not qualify as a crime or felony. It is merely an offence against the prevalent accepted moral code of our society, which is imperfect. Although theoretically a democracy, it is not permissible to express free opinion of the courts of justice of such a society. Therefore this society only holds free speech permissible insofar as free speech does not attack contemporary prejudice and social bias. Therefore, in denying me free expression of my opinion this court undermines the foundations of itself as a pillar of a democracy which allegedly supports free speech."

The judge rubbed his chin thoughtfully. Gloomily he stewed it over for a while, then brightened. "You are not permitted to criticise the court while under trial," he announced. "Am I to be deprived of my civil liberties without conviction or reason?" asked the prisoner, eyeing the jury, who looked puzzled. "Continue with the prosecution!" ordered the judge.

The prosecutor looked through his notes and cleared his throat. "You claim," said he, "to have no personal knowledge of the effects of arsenic on the human metabolism?"

"Hell, no," muttered the exasperated prisoner. "I used it on Iago Slattern."

The prosecutor ground his teeth and went on. "Other than the death of Iago Slattern by arsenic, you have no experience or certain knowledge of the effects of this poison?"

"I OBJECT!" shouted the prisoner to the judge. Looking at the jury he went on, "The prosecuting counsel has no right to suggest that arsenic is a poison!" "Order in court!" bellowed the court usher.

"You are under the impression that arsenic is harmless in effect?" cooed the prosecutor with a vulpine smile.

"I ask that synergy be taken into consideration. It is conceivable that the presence of arsenic in Iago Slattern was synergic in effect. Perhaps the ingredients of his toilet preparations, the contents of his gastric fluids, the nature of his blood group, and possibly any narcotics he may have taken, may all have combined to bring about a toxic condition unsuitable to life."

"Have you any reason to think that Slattern took narcotics?" asked the counsel.

"Have you read his Western yarns?" came the answer.

"CONTINUE WITH THE PROSECUTION !" howled the judge.

"And why is it you think that arsenic is not a poison on its own?" asked the prosecutor, returning to the attack.

"Because doctors have been known to prescribe compounds containing arsenic to their patients to help alleviate suffering," answered the prisoner. "And you prescribed arsenic to alleviate Iago Slattern's sufferings?" "Not exactly," said the prisoner, deep in thought. "To prolong them, yes." "And in the belief, humane of course, that arsenic would prolong Iago Slattern's sufferings you administered arsenic to bring about his death?" "Certainly not," replied the prisoner, "Many workers employed in industry where arsenic is extracted or recovered can eat large quantities of arsenic without harm. I had no reason to believe that arsenic would bring about Slattern's death, nor can the court prove that arsenic alone caused death." Glee showed in the prosecutor's face as he pounced on this statement.

"You claim that you have no personal knowledge of the effects of arsenic or that it is poisonous. Yet you administer an overdose. WHY?"

"It is completely outside my experience, of course," was the apologetic answer, "but I thought that arsenic was a preservative." "And why did you administer this unusual preservative?" "There is no law against it, is there?"

"CLEAR THE COURT !" ordered the judge, tearing his hair.

THIRD DAY

"COURT NOW IN SESSION," boomed the usher as the thoughtful-looking judge sat in his seat of office. "Continue with the prosecution" he said. The prosecuting counsel looked sternly at the jury and in a vengeful voice stated, "The case for the prosecution is complete. This dossier contains the findings of Mr. Sherlock Holmes and a Dr. Watson. We have sworn statements that the prisoner has openly admitted both administering a noxious substance and to crushing the skull of Iago Slattern. The prosecution rests."

The man in the dock turned to face the jury. "Gentlemen," he said, "The speech by the counsel for the prosecution contains no mention of motive. If any motive is to be found, it may be found to be altruistic. I cannot be found guilty of killing by crushing in the skull of a dead man. It is for you to decide if after my defence you still hold your prejudice about arsenical poisoning. Unless you can state flatly from your own experience on yourself that arsenic is a poison, you cannot trust your judgement, since it is a form of bias, a pre-conceived idea

of the nature of arsenic. No intelligent man could possibly convict me from bias." He smiled fearlessly at the jury and gently said, "The defence rests."

"The jury will retire to consider its verdict," ordered the judge. The leader of the jury held a hurried conversation with his fellow-members. "We have reached agreement, your honour." "And your verdict?" The juryman looked unhappy. "None of us can find grounds for believing that arsenic alone killed Iago Slattern. None of us knows if arsenic is a poison or not without trying it. All we can say is that arsenic may have contributed to Slattern's death, and that the prosecution has failed to prove its case and as a result... we find the defendant Not Guilty."

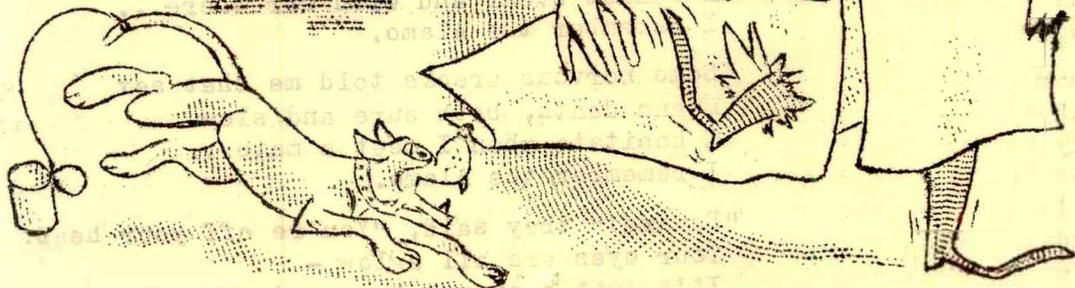
The judge thoughtfully pronounced judgement in favour of the prisoner and, as the man left the dock, whispered to the usher.

"Ask him if he can do something with my mother-in-law."

When the Serpent caused Adam and Eve to fall
(Was it python, asp, or viper?)
They had to leave Eden and shortly were needin'
WIDOWER'S WONDERFUL DIAPERS

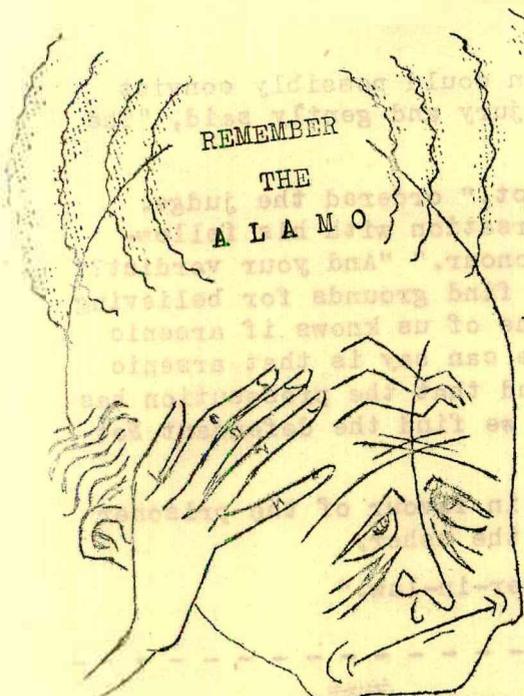
Moses climbed up Mount Sinai
For ten tablets to cure mankind's ills;
But when internal growls distress your bowels
Buy WIDOWER'S WONDERFUL PILLS !

The Boy stood on the Burning Deck:
That fire was a wow, sirs !
Yet he could, without doubt, have sat it out
With WIDOWER'S ASBESTOS TROUSERS

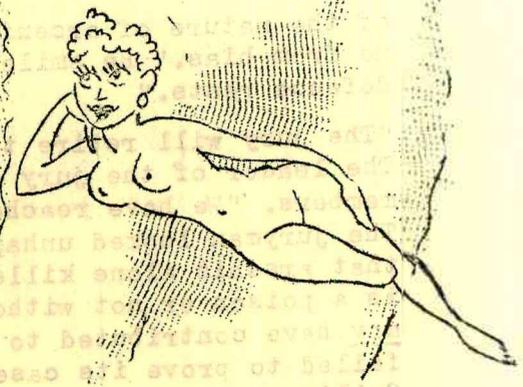


REMEMBER
THE MAINE

Copywriter for these ads Robert Bloch



REMEMBER
THE
ALAMO



No laughing girl sets my head in a whirl
With hints both sweet and low;
She can't beguile me with a smile...
I remember the Alamo.

When at night in pure delight
I meet some girl I know,
I shake my head, for once in bed...
I remember the Alamo.

Or if I think of drugs or drink
Or Marilyn Monroe,
My pure heart clings to higher things...
I remember the Alamo.

I can't endure these thoughts impure
Or the looks that women throw;
So to evade each snare they've laid...
I remember the Alamo.

If at a date I turned up late
What curses she'll bestow !
To stem the torrent of sound abhorrent
I remember the Alamo.

Should I deplore a mother-in-law
And wish her down below ?
I cannot swear and wish her there...
I remember the Alamo.

Some nervous wrecks told me that sex
Means death, both sure and slow.
I hesitate when I meet a mate...
I remember the Alamo.

"Beware!" they said, "You're off your head.
Your eyes are all aglow -
It's just a phase. Now mend your ways..."

REMEMBER THE ALAMO !"

Below the sumptuous gold frame of our Pat Lyons original hangs a new fannish Sacred Relic - a bloodstained shuttlecock. To satisfy the curiosity of visitors we let our new member, JOHN BERRY, tell all ...

SHIRTS TO PLEASE

CERTIFIED that this is a genuine Berry Factual Article. It has not, repeat not, been written by Eric Needham.

Signed:

John Berry

IT IS NOW MY STANDARD PRACTICE to write a short descriptive piece about each visitor to Oblique House. Chuck Harris, Mal Ashworth and Tom White have all had the full treatment, and they have taken it like the men we know they are. I was pleased the other day when I heard that another visitor from across the sea was to gladden our hearts. The name of our victim, Harry Turner, was known to me as being the organiser of some sort of mystic dancing school. Pansy stuff. I wondered what Harry would be like...

My instructions from Walt were the same as on previous occasions.

"Turn up," he breathed, "in full Ghoodminton kit, thirsting for bhlood."

... ..

So I arrived on Sunday 26th June 1955 in a really aggressive mood. The Romiley Fan Veterans and Scottish Dancing Society. Pah! I pounded up the stairs, crossed the threshold, and there was Harry. An intellectual. No thick crepe soles? No bow tie? No long wavy hair? Was this dancing stuff a hoax, I thought? Taking the cue from Walt, however, I smashed a couple of chairs and announced:

"Ghoodminton, anyone?"

Harry laid aside his copy of Thru Darkest Ireland and, evincing a slight spasm of interest, he yawned. YAWNED. This annoyed me. At the mention of Ghoodminton, visitors are supposed to gasp, and say "No! No!" in a strangled voice.

YAWNED !!

Didn't Mal Ashworth cringe behind Madeleine's skirts? Didn't Tom White start mumbling about dependants? Didn't Chuck Harris bring his own towel to throw in as his final gesture of surrender?

YAWNED !!!

Suffering Catfish. I have a special pair of trousers I keep at 170 for

occasions like that. Blood just drips off them. I quickly changed, selected a George Charters' hard-cover bat (he has the contract at the moment), threw a horrible leer at Harry, and crouched in my most diabolical stance. Even Madeleine has quailed at the sight. Yet Harry gave a sort of Sphinx-like inscrutable smile. 'You'll get your just deserts,' I said to myself. (Thanks, Bob).

"Would you care to play, Harry?", asked Walt, thrusting the flabbiest bat into his hands and directing him to the darkest corner of the room. I held my bat in the dreaded Shaw Grip, creating a miniature axe. It was going to be a pleasure to flounder about amongst a few of Harry's red and white corpuscles.

Hey, folks - that dancing stuff is no hoax. That boy can certainly trip the light fantastic. He nipped about the Ghoodminton court as though a madman was after him. (A Berry Factual Statement --WAW). I tried to decapitate him with the White Bonce Slash. He ducked. I attempted the forbidden Mrs. Willis Vertebrae Displacer. He swayed.

I gritted my teeth. Harry was obviously ready for Project X3, which we had been provisionally storing up for the proposed visit of Eric the Bent. The oak table on which the net is affixed used to be a symbol of all that oak stands for. Solid, reliable, and firm. Then I started to play, (although I don't want to take all the blame, in case Walt is secretly preparing an inventory), and now the table is an excellent example of how elastic the Law of Gravity really is.

Project X3, briefly, consists of drawing a visiting opponent over the table, then kicking the table leg away, with a raucous shout of "Timber" as an accompaniment.

I am pleased with the way I played my part. By consistently slapping Harry across the optics with the broad of my bat, I had him roaring at me over the table. I raised my foot ready to displace the leg which was really holding the table up, when Harry did something that softened my heart. He carried out a certain action that made him an everlasting comrade of mine... a true Ghoodminton exponent.

He opened his shirt, pulled it out of his waistband, and allowed his shirt tail to flap round his ankles. I stopped the game with a resolute wave of my hand.

"There - you see!" I shouted. For I was not alone. Someone else had followed my example. For Ghoodminton is music with shirt tails flapping, a veritable Rhapsody in Phew.

I admit here and now that I shook Harry by the hand. I gave him my bloodstained shuttlecock... I permitted him to use my bat... I refused to hit him again. I mean to ask him to make me an honorary member of his organisation.

... ..

But you, Chuck Harris, and you, Eric Dentcliffe, don't you think you'll escape by doing the same thing.

I intend to keep the one small select band of strippers.

Just me, Harry, and Sadie.

DO-IT-YOURSELF
HINT ...

How to renew an old typewriter ribbon: Take your old ribbon to the second floor of any building, throw one end of the ribbon out of the window, and firmly secure the other end to the window ledge. Dip your hand into a vat of boiling coal tar, then, when the tar stops dripping, leap out of the window and slide to the ground, holding the ribbon in the oiled hand. By all means, wear gloves.

- Rory M. Faulkner

END OF THE
WORLD
NEXT THURSDAY!

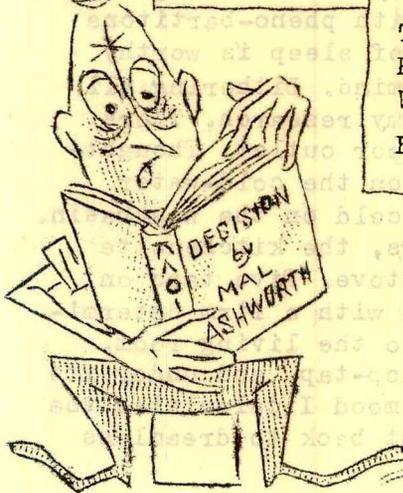
The Mona Lisa's secret smile
Which hints of gay adventures
Could be more daring if she were wearing
WIDOWER'S PORCELAIN DENTURES

As Salome shed her seven veils
With Herod as an audience
They beheaded John to the sound of one
Of WIDOWER'S PIANO ACCORDIONS

REMEMBER
LOS ALAMOS,
Too...

The Ancient Mariner, lost at sea
Had almost given up hope.
What washed this explorer safely ashore? A
Bar of WIDOWER'S SOAP !

Spartacus led the revolt of the slaves;
He refused to give a royal
Tyrant his whim to embalm him
In WIDOWER'S COD LIVER OIL



THUNDER OVER FANDOM

or did someone
say egoBOO ?

- I did think of writing a fighting editorial, I said. After all, we cannot afford to ignore the fundamentalist cries of Ted Tubb in the latest Orion calling for a return to "science fiction" fandom, whatever that is. Nor can we allow Vince Clarke

to attack the freedom of the fan press in Ploy under the plea of "too many fanzines", nor endorse his drastic ritual slitting of faneds' throats to raise the standard of publishing. And here is Mal Ashworth pleading with us to announce that he did not write "Decision"... But should the peace of Romiley be disturbed by such trifles?

- No, said Eric. Tell them instead that the new members elected after our last issue include John Berry, for reasons that should be obvious, and Paul Enever, the Fan Veteran; that this means we have no less than five members in Belfast where a Branch has been established with Walt and Madeleine Willis as Master and Mistress of Ceremonies...

- Yes, I said guiltily. Meant to write about their hospitality when I visited Irish Fandom during June, but so much else came along - a call on the Bulmers before they departed on their TAFF trip, work, holidays, work... Hell, you know how it is.

- You don't know the half of it, shuddered Eric. I shall not forget the aftermath of my tour of members after the Cytricon. I can only commend the Manchester & Salford Skin Hospital on the simplicity of their dermatitis treatment. It is to remove all infected skin, leaving beautiful raw flesh to heal into healthy skin. During this period of regrowth, I was liberally supplied with pheno-bartitone tablets, and what happened on the first night of sleep is worthy of note. I awoke with a strange problem on my mind. Dithering all over, I switched on all the lights, and began my research. There are two taps on the gas-fire and one on the floor outlet. Thoughtfully I explored the bathroom... one stop-tap on the cold-water cistern, hot and cold on the bathtub, hot and cold on the washbasin. In a sort of new realisation of my surroundings, the kitchenette came under surveillance. Gas stop-tap to the stove. Five taps on the stove. Hot and cold on the sink again. And with a firm determination to resolve this problem for ever... into the living room, where behind its cover lurked the hot water stop-tap, and under its cover, main gas supply stop-tap. In a strange mood I calculated the sum total of taps I was worth, and happily went back to dreamless sleep. I feel there is no moral to this story.

POCKETING THE MONEY which came with the letter I read the contents.

"Dear Chief," it said, "While the Torbay Happy Fans and Lampshade Makers Society do not offer technical advice as a rule, our chief constructional engineer, Miss Highwater, offers the following suggestion. If you are greatly troubled by flies in your lampshades, the trouble may be overcome by the insertion of a dead spider in the bowl, which should scare the flies away. This is all the cash I can spare at present. Yours, etc. Nigel Lindsay."

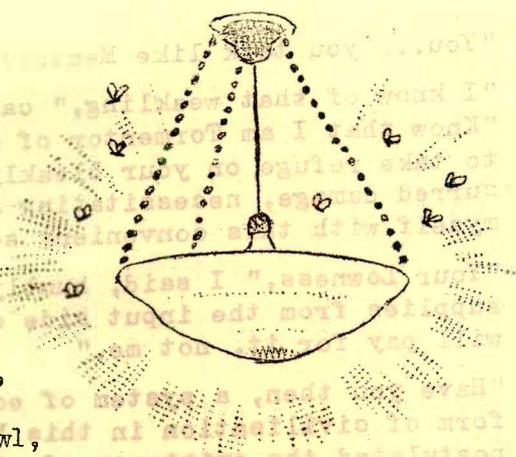
Marvelling greatly at the simplicity of the notion, I slew a spare Black Widow I didn't particularly like, placed it in the lampshade, and stood back to admire the effect. A frown creased my brow as the light dimmed to a red glow. In doubt, I switched on the desk lamp, which also gave a glimmer, eliminating the possibility of the spider causing the light to fail. Still wondering, I went on the landing, where the light gave only a feeble glow, though the flat downstairs still had theirs burning brightly.



Speculatively I went into the cellar to examine the meters, and was digging for my matches when I saw a pale glow around the meter... and a tenuous ray of luminescence which reached across to a shelf. In puzzlement I struck a match and examined the shelf, and gave a gulp as the flickering light fell on a foot-long snake in a space-suit. In sheer disbelief I saw around its neck the polychromatic refulgent jewel which could only be the Lens of the Galactic Patrol !

"A Lensworm..." I breathed in amazement.

"I perceive, youth, that you know of the Patrol," came a calm thought.



"You... you talk like Mentor!" I stammered.

"I know of that weakling," came the resonant mental intonation. "Know that I am Tormentor of Ophidia, compelled by circumstance to take refuge on your bleakly hostile planet. My speeder incurred damage, necessitating a forced landing, and now I refresh myself with this convenient source of energy."

"Your Lowness," I said, humbly, "Would you consider taking your supplies from the input side of the meter? Then the Corporation will pay for it, not me."

"Have you then, a system of economics? I had not looked for any form of civilisation in this backward region of space. I had not postulated the existence of civilisation in an utterly mindless community. I find it a novel concept indeed. As to your request, I am fully refreshed." Cutting off the glow, Tormentor floated off the shelf and looked at me with doubt in its beady eyes.

"There's not much point in stopping here," I said, "Come on upstairs and have a cup of tea and some cake. There's a nice fire, too."

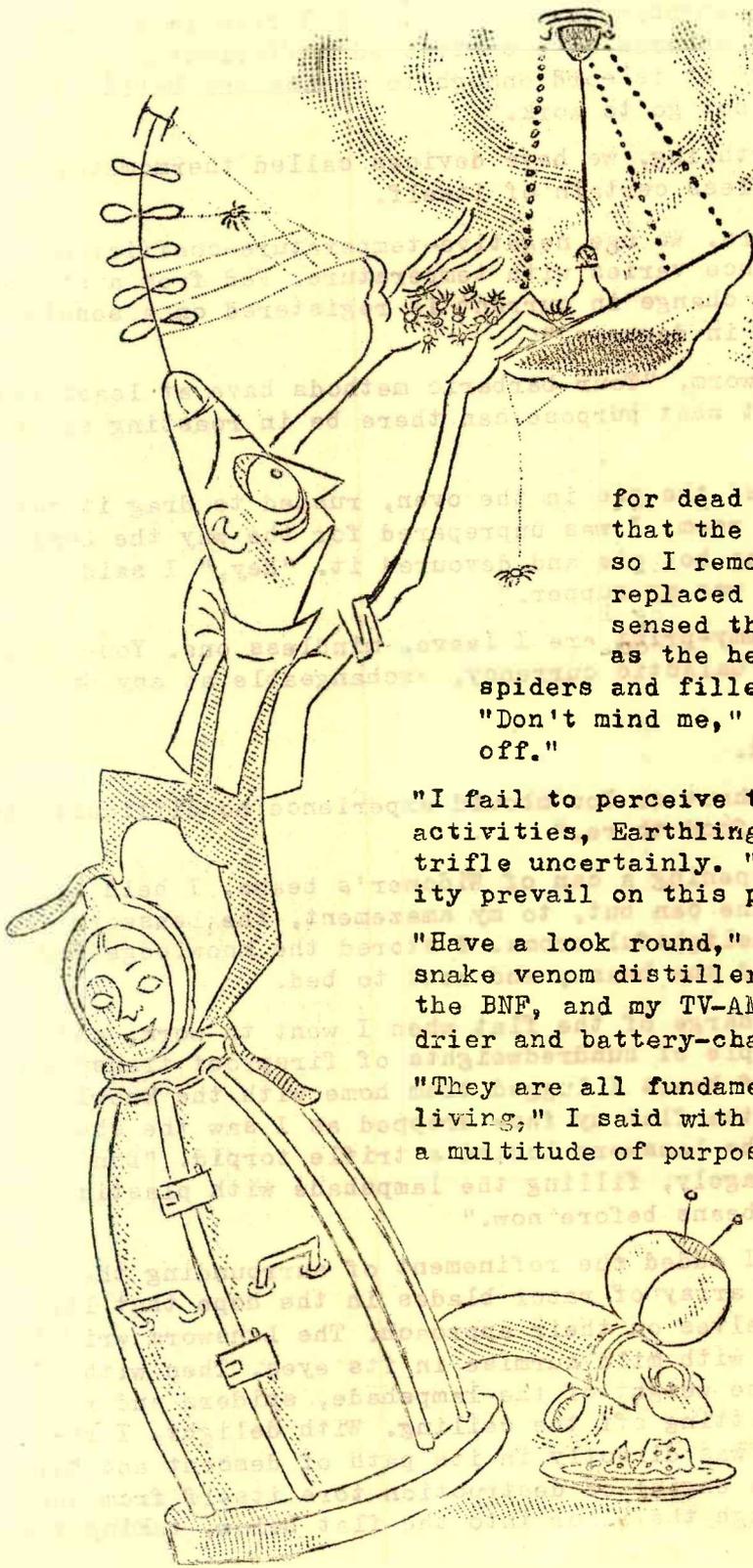
Waves of amazement radiated from the Lensworm as I tramped upstairs. Vaguely I felt the surprise of the Ophidian that any conscious organism was not directly energy nourished. Thoughtfully, I went into the flat and looked up at the lampshade, where to my great annoyance I saw that already a fly had breathed its last and perished in my lampshade. I did not like the idea of this habit spreading. All things have small beginnings and no-one has yet found the Elephants' Graveyard.

"Just a minute, old snake," I said, lighting the gas stove in the kitchenette and sticking a pie in the oven for supper. "Home-made cake," I said, trying to start some light conversation. "Sit down and have some."

"Not even in the memory of the oldest of our race has any worm eaten food," came the thought of Tormentor. "We have, it is true, a rudimentary digestive tract, long unused. I am, indeed, tempted to accept your offer."

"Very fine cake," I said, brightly, "Made with country-fresh margarine." I put a great chunk of cake on the plate, as the Lensworm floated down to inspect it. I felt pleased when the worm opened its helmet and took a bite. Pure pleasure crossed its face at the taste, and I began to like the Lensworm a little better. "Remarkable," came the mental voice, "May I have more?"

"Help yourself," I said thoughtlessly, and regretted it when I saw the way the Lensworm tore into the remains of the cake. With



a beatific smile on its features it rested on its tummy and watched with puzzled wonder my next activities.

Recklessly I slew my remaining stock of Black Widow spiders and stuffed them into the lampshade, reasoning that if the bowl were stuffed solid with dead spiders there would be no room

for dead flies. Gloomily, I found that the spiders obscured the light, so I removed the 100 watt bulb and replaced it by one of 200 watts. I sensed the puzzlement of the Lensworm as the heat of the bulb roasted the spiders and filled the air with dense smoke. "Don't mind me," I said, "Finish the cake off."

"I fail to perceive the slightest reason in your activities, Earthling," came the thought, a trifle uncertainly. "What standards of rationality prevail on this planet?"

"Have a look round," I said, indicating the snake venom distillery, the Nuremberg Maiden, the BNF, and my TV-AM-FM-Hi-Fi-radiogram-clothes drier and battery-charger.

"They are all fundamentally adjuncts to gracious living," I said with pride, "Everything serves a multitude of purposes. I'd like you to meet Algy, but he's away visiting relatives."

"What conceivable purpose can that serve?" asked the Lensworm, eyeing the BNF.

"It is a Brass Nude Figure which, apart from being ornamental, serves also to indicate external temperature. Those two brass spheres are retained in place by clips of metal

of a different thermal-expansion coefficient. If I rise in the morning and find that the brass spheres have contracted sufficiently to fall out of the clips, I know it is cold enough to freeze the balls off a brass statue, and I do not go to work."

"On my home planet, Earthling, we have devices called thermometers," came the thought, much less certain of itself.

"Oh, we have thermometers. We use negative-temperature-coefficient resistors whose resistance varies with temperature. Fed from a stabilised power source, any change in current is registered on a sensitive microammeter calibrated in degrees."

"Truly," mused the Lensworm, "Your barbaric methods have at least the merit of simplicity. But what purpose can there be in roasting spiders in a lampshade?"

With a shock I remembered the pie in the oven, rushed to drag it out, and carried it into the room. I was unprepared for the way the Lensworm dived on the far-too-hot pie and devoured it. "Hey," I said, "What am I to eat? That was my supper."

"I shall give you my tummy-print ere I leave, mindless one. You shall be amply recompensed in Galactic currency, exchangeable at any Galactic Patrol base."

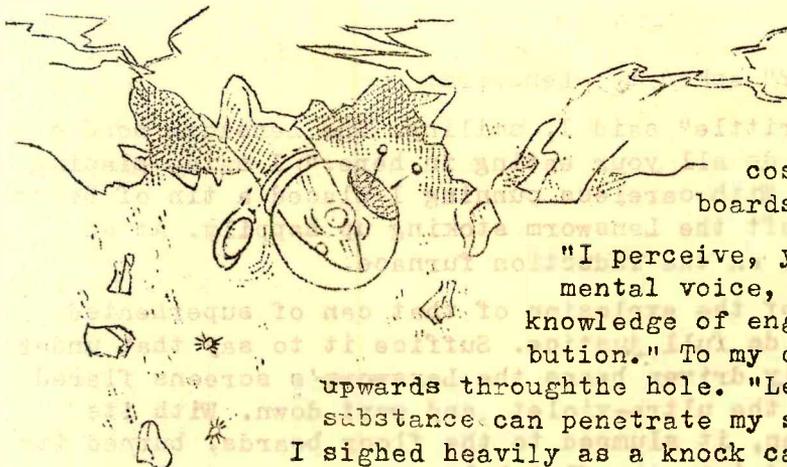
"Such as where?" I asked.

"The local base is Fomalhaut 4. You should experience no difficulty in replacing your stock of food there."

"Big help," I snarled, opening a can of Widower's beans. I held my hand protectively over the can but, to my amazement, the Lensworm flinched away from the delightful aroma. I stored the knowledge for future reference, scoffed the beans, and went to bed.

I left the Lensworm in charge of the flat when I went to work, and on my round bought a couple of hundredweights of fireproof transparent plastic spiders. Light of heart I lugged them home with the knowledge of a problem solved. In the flat my face dropped as I saw the shelves were bare of food, and the Lensworm looked a trifle torpid. "Don't mind me," I muttered savagely, filling the lampshade with plastic spiders. "I've lived on beans before now."

Satisfied with the job, I added the refinement of surrounding the rim of the lampshade with an array of razor blades in the hope that live flies might injure themselves on their approach. The Lensworm wriggled over and looked up at it with mild surmise in its eyes. Then with cold horror I saw that the weight of the lampshade, spiders and razor blades was pulling the fitting off the ceiling. With delight, I realised that the Lensworm was directly in its path of descent and held my breath as the terrible engine of destruction tore itself from the ceiling. It crashed through the floor into the flat below, taking the



Lensworm with it.

"Teach you to eat all my food," I gloated, anxiously estimating the cost of a new carpet and floor boards.

"I perceive, youth," came a familiar mental voice, "that you have little knowledge of engineering and weight distribution." To my dismay, the Lensworm floated upwards through the hole. "Learn, thus, that no material substance can penetrate my screens or cause me injury."

I sighed heavily as a knock came at the door. It was the lad from the flat below.

"Is this your lampshade?" he asked. "It just came through the ceiling."

"Yes, it is," I admitted. "Thanks, I was just looking for it."

I looked the Lensworm firmly in the eye. "How long do you propose to live here and eat all my food? I can't support you indefinitely."

"Until rescue comes, in perhaps a month or so of your time," came the calm tones. "In the meantime I shall use this place as an operational base and study you, having ascertained that you are harmless. Now I must eat."

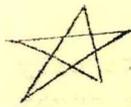
Bitterly I looked at the tin of custard powder, packet of salt and two cans of beans which remained. "And if I refuse?" I asked.

"It is conceivable that you yourself are edible," came the reassuring reply. "I shall not starve in the meantime."

Grabbing my shopping bag I tramped out in black fury. I plied my full intellect to the problem as I loaded myself up with food for the Lensworm and beans for myself. Slowly an idea insinuated itself; I permitted myself a smile. "Winter is coming," I said to Tormentor, giving him the food. "I must prepare for the cold weather."



Absently eating a can of stewed steak, can and all, the Lensworm watched me as I dragged sheets of armour steel into the kitchenette and bolted them to the walls. It shook its head as I tore up the floor, installed a high-frequency induction furnace between the joists, and replaced the floorboards. "Gets very cold in winter," I said, chattily, "The place contracts a lot in winter. Only the steel plates stop the gas stove from being crushed."



NATTERINGS...

Gramma RORY M. FAULKNER writes from Rancho Rigor Mortis to say:
"That wonderful minor poet, Needham! His two poems on Fan Love and
Femme Love are out of this world. I would address a small warning to
the gal friends of this strato-beanied Don Juan -

WHAT A YOUNG GIRL	When Eric vows platonic love,
OUGHT TO KNOW	Do not be led astray;
	He means the tonic is for you -
	For him, 'tis only play!

Concerning the episode of the Trombone Orchid ETHEL LINDSAY insists
we publish this protest:

"It was with mounting amazement that I read Eric's account of his trip
to Glasgow. At first I toyed with the idea that he had met another
Ethel, but fortunately for my ego, rejected this as manifestly absurd.
Any other Ethel would have had him certified. I merely blinked and
said "Oh, a fan..." /What other form of life would visit Glesca to see
a nurse? esn/ He arrived at 2 am. Though you will admit that this is
an unusual calling hour, I turned not a hair, but merely took my pins
and curlers out. I fed him with tea and toast, and noted that he ate
normally. I housed his infernal machine (no, no, the motorbike) in the
backyard, and blessed my luck that the matron was away for the weekend.
/That's what she says... she slung me out into the rain. esn/
How he could get Brian Miller's telephone to become non-existent
just so that he could call me scatterbrained I do not know. This is
one of the deeper mysteries. The next evening he turned up and mention-
ed that he had been all over Glasgow about three times, which is just
possible. Here the shoe-brush makes its appearance... His riding boots
being covered with the mud of many counties, I lent it to him in the
faint hope it might help. He calmly kept it and shows every indication
of doing so forever. My own shoes are now a stylish grey. /Ethel also
lent me her razor. This I did not keep, so why should I keep the brush
unless she gave it to me? My income is such that I can afford new
good quality brushes instead of ex-WD stuff. It was the thought behind
the gift that mattered. In any case Ethel told me she never used the
brush... and THIS I have in writing... but merely spits on her foot-
wear and rubs them with her sleeve, or else pulls her authority and
commands a probationer to do the job. esn/
The cafe we visited only became lowdown when he entered it. He pinched
a spoon not to save me from embarrassment but to make me nervous with
apprehension, which he did. I'm slowly recovering. His account of the
sleight of hand at the bookstall is so distorted I despair of ever
explaining the true facts. /Apprehension? I thought it was love or
indigestion... but think, a trained nurse being apprehensive!/
When a high-tension wire breaks and lies around as a grave menace to

all who come near, it gives off a low humming sound as its only warning. There is no humming sound around Eric, but my word! there ought to be." The hum, as all who have heard the Orchid can testify, now forms the accompaniment, and Ethel's high voltage is due to the fact that my love is for Frances Evans, and Ethel has green eyes. This correspondence is still open. esn/

And from Toronto, home of the Lyons, BOYD RAEBURN sighs:

"You are very fortunate getting artwork from Pat... the other night I suggested that she might consider doing some artwork for a local fanzine." Howard replied that for doing artwork for the RFV&SDS she had been made a member. I replied that we would be quite willing to make her an honorary member of the Derelict Insurgents. Howard said that he also had been made a member of the RFV&SDS. We pointed out that Howard is always stressing the fact that he is NOT a Derelict Insurgent, and therefore we did not even consider the possibility that he would be even slightly interested in being made an honorary member. Howard has an awful taste in clothes, and would never dress as befits a Derelict Insurgent.

"Be not disturbed by Howard's suspicion that one of you is pseudo. Howard is an extremely skeptical person, and is ALWAYS doubting the existence of fans he hasn't met. Yes, Pat is telling the truth when she says she makes good coffee. I believe that by Canadian standards English coffee is very weak. As Canadian coffee is to English coffee, so Pat-coffee (as it is called by the Insurgents) is to regular Canadian coffee."

Still on the subject of Pat, LYNN A. HICKMAN enthuses:

"I loved Pat Lyons' toons. You should see some of the ones she did at the Midwestcon. All that talent and pretty as can be too...

I enjoy the WIDOWER'S slogans no end, but I have little or no taste for Billikens. My favorite meal is Mississippi candied catfish eyes, washed down with a tincup full of Jack Daniels Black Label ~~#7~~ Tennessee Whiskey. Now there is really a meal fit for a king! Many's the night we went down to the Tombigbee River with our 5th of Jack Daniels, a bit of fire, a pound of brown sugar, a tin of cinnamon and our fishing poles. It seems strange, but the catfish in the Tombigbee River have better tasting eyes than any other catfish in any other river."

With an injunction to "examine your conduct; mend your ways, and cast out your sins" comes this Message from VERNON L. McCAIN, High Priest of the Society For The Preservation Of Robert Bloch:

"... always delighted to welcome new recruits and it is with the heartiest approbation that I view this new trend for already organised groups to enter en masse. However, I am disturbed to observe signs of insufficient awareness of the mighty and awesome responsibilities which accompany conversion to Blochism. With acolytes we expect and excuse a certain amount of ignorance of the finer points of the beautiful Blochist religion. But it is expected that each and every recruit, no matter how recent, be fully conversant with all the basic tenets of the Society For The Preservation Of Robert Bloch and I am shocked at the evidence

of ignorance (by at least one individual) of the basic dogma of Blochism, the cornerstone on which the entire Blochist religion is based, Bloch is the only true Ghod!

"Blochism is not an unreasonably arbitrary religion. There is room for disagreements among adherents on many lesser points, i.e., just how Bloch is to be preserved (and may I say that your plan merits consideration, though the Divinity Himself has expressed a liking for the pickling method advanced by another member) but there can be no disagreement or even questioning of the basic truth as divinely revealed to the founder of the movement - Bloch is the only true Ghod!

"Yet whoever wrote up the minutes of your meeting makes a reference to a suggestion having been made by Ghod, in response to which you were all converted. Now I am morally certain that Bloch has been meditating over his typewriter in Weyauwega for lo! these many months, except for a brief appearance in Ohio early in June to bless a group of his devotees gathered together there for that purpose. While no bypassing of the laws of nature is beyond His ability, our Ghod is a modest Ghod and restrains himself to such minor miracles as writing those pieces for fanzines or lighting the initial spark of inspiration in your obedient servant which bids fair to revolutionize the culture of the entire Western world by next November 27th. Therefore Ghod could not have made the suggestion you report. I wonder if possibly you refer to a discredited ghod from an outlying province (I believe they call it Ireland) who was himself one of the first to recognise the divinity of Bloch and has been one of our most tireless and devoted workers in the cause of the True Faith. Bloch is the only true Ghod.

"Yours in brotherly love (don't tell Laney)

V. J. McLean

Bloch is the only true Ghod.

[Oh brother: what have we started here... !]

"This time our plans somehow became disorganised," reports JOHN BERRY, " and instead of Eric Bentcliffe being helped downstairs swathed in bandages, I myself became the victim. It worries me even now... not because I can barely manage a hobble... not because I worry about Ghoodminton injuries... but because I feel it was a deliberate ploy on Bob Shaw's part to get his own back for the Shavian Mysteries.

"First of all, Bob suggested a new Ghoodminton ploy, Footsie Ghoodminton, consisting of kicking the shuttlecock over and over the table without it touching the floor. It worked rather well, but I should have noticed that Bob gradually drew me nearer and nearer the solid oak table that separates the contestants. His last footsie return was a gem, but more, it was a challenge. It just shaved my side of the table. Could I get it back... ? My prestige depended upon it. I leaped forward and brought my foot up with a sharp rasping movement.

"Eric tells me it didn't take them too long to re-construct the table, although the nearside plank was relegated to the Willis coal cellar as potential fuel. I myself was hopping down the Upper Newtownards Road for the next half hour, but I dare say Eric was saying the bitter truth. I cannot recommend Footsie Ghoodminton."

NOW & THEN 5

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