

JANUARY FIRST YEAR ONE



YES,

IT'S A

FIRST DAY COVER

FOR.... SFD
20

SK 22-6-'80

JANUARY
FIRST
YEAR
ONE



Yes

It's A

First Day Cakes

For...
2FD
20

This is SMALL FRIENDLY DOG 20, the fanzine that has been described by Joseph Nicholas as oddly indistinguishable from itself, which says very little about SFD but speaks volumes about Joseph, I feel. Alternatively one could describe it as the zine which Marc Ortlieb would get down on his "...hands and knees and grovell for...". If you come across a dictionary whilst you're down there Marc..... Then again you could believe Jack R. Herman when he describes it as "A must." A must for what, he cryptically refrains from adding, although my dictionary defines 'must' as "to grow mouldy".

For those of you who are too stupid to realise that you are being drawn, inexorably, deeper into the colophon I can parade Taral's view that it is "...a bit of a drudge to read through. If this is the vaunted English writing, I'll take vanilla.....not very funny and sometimes even offensive..... only a friend could understand or enjoy Paul Skelton." Eh-eh. Too late. You're trapped. You can't get away now. Caught in the labyrinthine web of the colophon you are trapped here until SFD 20 or time itself runs out. Trapped in the Strangely Fannish Dream of Skel (who does the creative bits and the production) and Cas (who does fuck all).

Now that Terry has stopped reading..... I suppose I'd better reveal that we are still at 25 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW, our council-owned home. Cas has, praise St. Maggie, been living in council-owned property since 1968 however and this entitles us to a staggering 42% discount off the current market value if we wish to purchase this property (Praise be to St. Maggie). Needless to say we intend to take up this option granted us by recent act of parliament, just as soon as the council have made good certain defects in the skelhome. This could take a while.

However, as the bulk of SFD's mailing list comes from outside the UK ~~and hence the lengthy blab~~ I suppose I really should flesh in a little background detail about here. Also it probably wouldn't hurt to get out of this interminable colophon and into the zine proper...the zine about which fans are unable to agree. The optimists who feel that things can't be as bad as they seem, and the realists who know that they are in for yet

another mumblety-mump pages of comments in which, according to Ed Connor, "A crude but funny joke may be encountered from time to time." You don't pay your money but you still takes your choice. Those of you who are aware just how old those adverse comments are may wonder just how long I can hold a grudge. You ain't seen nothing yet, baby. However, I was about to undermine tranquiliser sales across the entire USA by telling you a little about UK politics.

POLITICS MAKES STRANGE BEDFELLOWS...

...is a load of bunk. There are two main political parties in the UK and the rest can be ignored. This fact does not sit well with the Liberals who consider themselves the third major party although in reality they are the first of the non-major parties and in all serious political considerations they can be ignored along with all the rag tag and bobtail outfits that clutter up the political scene at election time. Just like in the US the british political scene has become polarised.

Multi-valued choices are too complicated for today's voters. As our computerised society becomes more sophisticated and complicated so the proletariat, in rejecting the values required to keep pace with that society find themselves adopting the very techniques upon which the mechanical props for this society operate. Society is beginning to operate on a philosophy based on the binary system. There are only two ways of looking at things...us and them...right and wrong...all or nothing...with us or against us...on or off. The Binary Philosophy.

Just as East cannot meet West, as Good cannot coexist with Evil, as monotheism and atheism are at odds, just so with our current society. By destroying the middle ground between opposing viewpoints the Binary Philosophy negates the very principle of compromise and eliminates tolerance, the avenue by which this can be reached.

Right the way through british society this Binary Philosophy can be seen operating. It is the Us/Them principle that is responsible for all the violence at or around soccer matches.

The common ground is football, but this spectrum is no longer available to us. It is as if there were nothing left but infra-red and ultra-violet. Intolerance has taken all the pretty colours away. It is no longer a game of football. It is Manchester United. It is Arsenal. It is "Kill the Fuckers!" It is our totem against their totem, it is 'Us' against 'Them'. Throughout society it is 'Us' against 'Them'.

Politics too is an aspect of society and so politics has also polarised to reflect society in terms of left and right, rich and poor, us and them. This comes easy in politics which has always been a purveyor of Blacks and Whites, refusing to admit the existence of Greys. Hell, politics is about choice and blacks and whites make choices easier whereas grey areas are symptomatic of an embarrassing uncertainty.

Thus in Britain we have the Left, which is the Labour party which is Socialism and the Welfare State...and we have the Right which is the Conservative party, which is for Free Enterprise and the Capitalist system. In the middle, where all that middle ground ought to be but isn't, we have 80% of the british electorate who like aspects of both but wouldn't march, even if the banners were free. Alas we can't be permitted to remain uncommitted and so due to the magnetism of politics we must be drawn, like iron filings, to one pole or another. They've got you in the binary crunch. There are only two real choices and you have to pick one or the other.

You can't renege and say that the game is fixed. You can't take your money out of the machine and go and play Space Invaders instead. So, for me, it came down to the basic ethic behind the two systems. I decided that the individual was more important than the state and that the Conservative ethic would permit me to make up my own mind about more issues, more often, than would the Socialist ethic. This was important to me and so I voted Conservative. Others too made their own personal judgements and voted according to their lights. This is fair enough. They agreed or didn't, as is their right. They interpreted things in their own way, made their own value judgements and whether or not their votes were cast as mine should contain no value-judgement, and nor does it whilst one is

permitted a full spectrum of opinion. It is only in the Binary Philosophy that those who disagree with you suddenly become utter mongs. Frankly this basic lack of tolerance in today's society worries the hell out of me, but that is basically another story. I've already gotten far heavier than I'd intended when I simply set out to fill in some of the background to our intention to buy our council house.

Taking the bull by the horns and dragging it back on the rails (so to speak)...let's get back to housing. In the UK the majority of dwellings are privately owned, owner occupied. A very substantial minority however are owned by the Local Authorities who make them available only for rent. Initially of course this is less expensive than outright purchase but those who bought a £35,000 house (current valuation) about twelve years ago for £3,000 will currently only be paying about £30 per month and will own the house except for about £2,500 (ie. they have an asset worth £32,500). These people are known as My Father...and they make me sick. We, on the other hand, own not a damn thing, have no assets, live in a house of approximately half the value of my father's...and pay a monthly rent of about £65. From this it can be seen that the short-term benefits of renting are very short indeed. This is known as the poverty trap, or at least an up-market version of same. Obviously, taking inflation into consideration, I can't afford not to buy this house. Alas, on the open market, I also can't afford to buy it either. Fortunately however it is no longer on the open market. As sitting tenants we are entitled to a substantial discount on the market value. This is only reasonable as any property with vacant possession is worth more on the open market than one with sitting tenants. However, whilst the Conservative Party is anxious to sell council-owned property to its tenants at a substantial discount the Labour party is violently opposed 'on principle'. This 'principle' however is what I call a 'vampire principle', in that it cannot stand the light of day.

The main Socialist objection seems to be that the new law in effect gives away public property and, at a time when there is a shortage of council houses, it is doubly criminal to sell them for less than they are worth. On the surface this is a perfectly valid argument, but further thought will reveal that 'superficial' would be a better description.

If one assumes that the average discount in such a sale is 33% then the council will get back the market value for two houses for every three it sells which may seem like a giveaway. However, if one looks at the cars that builders drive and the houses that builders live in it seems a fair assumption that the sales value of those two houses will equal the cost of another three. Thus, without any outlay the council will have provided work for a reasonable number of builders and will be left with exactly the same number of houses as it started with.

Whilst the council may not have reduced the number of houses it has available, it has certainly reduced the number of tenants as the old tenants are still in the old houses and are no longer on the councils housing list. The new houses are therefore available to reduce the shortage. Thus, if a council has 20,000 people on its waiting list for council homes it could house these by selling off 20,000 of its existing homes to the tenants and use the proceeds to build 20,000 new housesall the while pumping over £300,000 into the local economy by way of materials and wages for the building of same. As far as I can make out there is only one valid argument against the sale of council houses and that is purely political. Has anyone any ideas?

Let us bring this overseas supplement of SFD 20 to a close with some comments extracted from Steve Higgins' review of SFD in his fnz STOMACH PUMP 2 :-

"...little more need be said than that it is...probably the best example of 'nice' fandom....a very traditional and not very exciting formula...ramble on until you run dry...It constantly surprises me that the whole thing doesn't dwindle away ...never really coming alive. Most of its respondents seem very content...There are enough people who...will happily labour over the next lukewarm LoC in order to see the next lukewarm issue...creatively it's a dead-end....a fandom of middle-age...there is nothing new...pursues nothing in any depth...no youthful vigour...SFD may be the ultimate in harmlessness."

God but I hate these reviews where the reviewer doesn't actually say whether he likes it or not.

14 JANUARY 1981 (SKEL)

The last date in SFD 19 was 26th August last year. Some time ago, is it not? Needless to say much has transpired in the meantime and indeed some of these transpirings have been causes rather than effects of this delay. Basically I suppose I simply haven't felt 'fannish'....for several reasons.

Those of you who met Cas at Novacon will already be aware of this, but for those who don't know....Cas suffered some form of mental breakdown shortly before the convention and was forced to give up work. Initially the effect was to create a complete inability to cope, a state where even minor irritations or setbacks reduced her tears and helpless quivering, symptoms which were exacerbated by her inability to understand what was happening to her, or why. Thankfully this stage is now passed but as a legacy she now displays a degree of agoraphobia, refusing to go out alone and requiring tranquilisers before even going out with someone else. She is still seeing the doctor and has an appointment with a psychiatrist towards the end of February. Perhaps then we may begin to make some progress towards a recovery.

Were Novacon to take place now there is no way we could consider attending but the whole thing was so recently developed that we both naively expected it to disappear after a few days and in fact thought that a good convention might be all that was required to take her mind off things and set her on the road to a rapid recovery. Even though this proved not to be the case both Cas and I agreed that it was the best con we had ever attended.

For me the joy of the convention was discovering so many people in whose company I was able to relax, friends both new and old. I was particularly pleased to meet William T. Goodall for I felt I owed him an apology for using his comments last issue out of context in order to make a point, using him as a type of Aunt Sally, setting him up in a certain way, specifically to knock him down. Of course I'd always intended to set the matter straight this issue, more fully explaining my position too, after having also drawn the opinions of others. In

this though I had failed to appreciate the difference between your SFD and my SFD. To me SFD is a continuous experience. I can say something towards the end of one issue and something else at the beginning of the next,,and to me the two statements are merely a few pages, a few days or weeks apart. I don't believe I've ever really appreciated that you all get your SFD in distinct lumps. Of course I knew it, but I've never really appreciated it. It never occurred to me that I was leaving both William and myself looking like tits for six-months or so. For myself that is merely one of the hazards of fan-pubbing but William was entitled to expect a greater awareness from a fan-ed of such long-standing.

William is not of course without faults. He mumbles. A ten minute conversation with him in a convention bar uses up half ones lifetime supply of 'pardon's and 'eh?'s. Such conversations are especially difficult for me because of my lack of self-confidence. I feel such a fool constantly having to ask people to repeat themselves that I simply give up and go with the flow. I smile fatuously, nod from time to time and interject an occasional "uh-uh" and generally try to give the impression that I'm getting it all. Of course this puts me under great psychological pressure because I know that there must come a time when the conversation will require from me a specific response and I will be unable to make it. Thus I begin to look around desperately for people I "...simply have got to go and talk to,"before my fakery becomes apparent. It was whilst in the middle of a conversation with William, as we were all going into the con-hall for Brian Aldiss' speech that someone I passed mentioned to me that he'd just mailed me a copy of his fanzine. Distractedly I made a perfunctory reply and moved on, fearful that a lapse in concentration might make me miss the first mutter of the next mumble. Whoever it was, if my offhand disinterest gave offence, I apologise.

One person who gobsmacked both of us was Arnold Akien who we'd both expected, possibly from his handwriting, to be an intense teenager. Imagine our surprise when this relaxed, self-assured, friendly chap of about thirty introduced himself to us. Arnold's fault is that he doesn't appear to have any. This became even more apparent on our last day of the con when

my inability to get through to British Rail Enquiries because they were engaged caused Cas to go completely to pieces. Arnold appeared with what seemed to be an octuple brandy and then provided reassuring and supportive advice whilst Cas slowly put herself back together. Needless to say we are both very grateful and appreciative.

The fact that I never felt ill (because I never overdrank) improved my enjoyment of the con, as did the fact that I never felt tired. I achieved the latter by the simple expedient of going to bed when the need for sleep first became evident, rather than struggling on looking for my second wind. Unfortunately when you find it impossible to sleep beyond 0615 you tend to flake out relatively early, or at least I do, sometime between 1200 and 0100.

Cas on the other hand, having insulated herself from the outside world behind a layer of alcohol would cheerfully wander in with Mike (we were freeloading on the Meara's floor) at five o'clock in the morning, laughing and giggling whilst Mike eagerly woke both Pat and I to proudly tell us of the sheer variety of alcohol he'd consumed...and then the following day she'd recount her wondrous adventures in the kaleidoscopic way in which they came back to her, whilst Mike lay moaning something about his head. Apparently on their way back one night the lift descended and the doors opened to reveal a man's boot filled with soil and with a plant growing out of the top. To show her sympathy for the poor unfortunate who'd lost his footwear she promptly went and hid it in the ladies toilet. A good con. See you all again in Leeds.

At the con I managed to pick up Joan Vinge's 'Snow Queen' which I read with great eagerness upon my return. Alas my impression was that it is over-rated. Whilst good, it managed to transcend the ordinary only by utilising length to round out the characters whereas I feel that the length should have been better utilised in making the story less simplistic at the same time. I also picked up her 'Outcasts of Heaven Belt' which was shorter and less satisfying. I feel however that if it had been written at the length of the first and vice versa the two books would make a better pair than they do now.

22 APRIL 1981 (SKEL)

Who knows where the time goes? Cas' illness has proved more deep-seated than we thought...and one very minor side effect has been that I simply haven't felt fannish, or as Cas would put it, "That's right, BLAME ME because you don't feel like doing SFD." Cas has been exceedingly difficult to live with. Her basic sense of insecurity and lack of self-confidence has caused her to twist anything said into a personal indictment. However, thanks to a superhuman effort on my part, coupled with my innate reasonableness and understanding nature, we seem to be past that aspect of the problem. Besides, one can't feel miserable all the time.

"The toper is a fuming bore, a loon, a mongrel, a social mockery. Often he soils his clothes and commits malditties. He smells and belches; his familiarities trouble all decent folk. His songs and tirrilays offend the ears. He often gives breath to scurrilous conjecture...postures like a clown and...is prone to perform pugnacities upon good and earnest folk who chance to halt upon their way to chide him for his folly."

From: 'The Book Of Dreams' by Jack Vance.

MARC ORTLIEB 70 Hamblynn Road; Elizabeth Downs; SA 5113; Aussie.

(Blast! Run out of things to say already. Guess I'd better get out my copy of 'Glicksohn's Guide To Creative LoC Writing'. Ah yes - page one - "First make some comment about liking the fanzine received in order to keep the editor interested in the rest of the LoC.")

The arrival of SFD on my doorstep is always an occasion of joy. SFD 18 was no exception.

(Munn. So far, so good. Now, what next - "Explain that you got at least one of the jokes in the issue." Right. Dammit, that

means I'm going to have to read some. Still, life wasn't meant to be easy. Now, If I ease myself into it by starting on the front page. Whew. That makes it even easier. There's a joke on the front page - I think)

Ha ha. I thought the idea that pretending that SFD was serious was excellent.

(Oops. Better check to make sure there aren't any Sturgeon, Kuttner etc stories in the issue. Good. Don't seem to be, unless Tiptree is using her Harry Andruschak pseudonym. What next? - "Pick a comment from anywhere within the zine and find a way of writing about it, even if you have to twist the comment a bit.")

It was interesting to note your comments on gnu's vomit and its relationship to lager. It would probably surprise you to learn that to a biochemist, there are few differences between the two. The gnu, being a ruminant, has several fermentation chambers as part of its digestive system. These make use of various bacteria and yeasts to break down the cellulose in the food they eat. Now, it is commonly known that such fermentation processes yield alcohol and carbon dioxide, the two most important components of beer. True, the presence of additional esthers does make such beer a little unpalatable to the western palate, but the gnu apparently finds it tolerable, which is rather fortunate, as the licencing laws in Africa are, to say the least, discriminatory to cloven footed animals, a fact that makes the presence of devil worship in South Africa even more inexplicable. Now, ruminants are noted for their capacity and tendency to regurgitate, a tendency not unknown in beer drinkers. Therefore I feel you are being most unfair to gnu's vomit.

(Great! Now, what does it say next? - "Make a comment about the reproduction.")

I find reproduction is really fun, and one of my favourite activities.

(Not hard at all, and I didn't even have to lie. This is easy. What do I do next though? Turn the page. Ah yes - "Caution, the term 'reproduction' refers to the way the fanzine

has been printed." Oh shit! Bungled again. Well, better make ammends hadn't I?)

I thought the printing in SFD 18 was really great. It's nice to see that there are people who are willing to use cruddy mimeographs rather than waste subscribers' money on expensive offset machines. I found the poor quality of the printing in this issue an artistic statement about the oppression of the lower classes and workers by the bourgeoisie. It was, however a little difficult to read, as it didn't have any pictures, and I hope that you can revert to the glossy paper and graphic centre-fold in full colour for the next issue. Once is a good political statement, but to print a second issue on such lousy paper would dilute the message.

(Come to think of it, I hope they change the title back to 'Stunning Fuckable Dames' for the next issue too. Now, where was I? Oh yes...page three of 'Glicksohn' - "If all else fails try a grovelling plea for further issues.")

Please Skel & Cas, I really did enjoy SFD 18. I think it's really great and would love to get number 19.

29 JULY 1981 (SKEL)

There seems to be someone getting married today. Our house is gaily bedecked with red, white and blue festiments. Cas is esconced in the lounge being regaled by all the televised fooraw. Me? Well, 'wedding' is one of those women's words, like 'headache', 'Tampax', and 'decorating'. These are all words men seldom mention. Don't get me wrong. I am a staunch royalist. I'm glad we've got them and think we should keep them and would like to see the Queen's theoretical power become a little less theoretical. She is supposed to protect me...and that includes protecting me from politicians. I will even be popping into the other room to watch the nuptuals themselves, but I'm fucked if I'll sit through an entire day's overkill. Which in a way is quite handy because just about everyone has the day off work, including yr hmbl and obdnt srvnt...and I have things to do. Yes, at the request of Marc Ortlieb the SFD show comes bursting back onto your screens with all the dynamic impact of a fly's fart.

Yes, I've looked at the back page of SFD 19 and seen the date of 26/8/80...and I have sworn a solemn and a mighty vow:- The date on the back of this issue, without cheating, must not be more than a year after that of the last. I've never gone a year between issues before and I don't intend to start now. To be on the safe side I have booked a week's holiday starting on Sunday 16th. August.

I have not however been idle. I have sent three pieces to Marty Cantor for HOLLIER THAN THOU, although at this writing the third has not yet been accepted. Also, vast numbers (four? five? six?...) of LoCs have winged their way to the four corners of fandom. This of course is not much use to the many fans, like William M. Danner, who have heard from me the big zilch and who have given me the big 'X'. OK, so I've been a nordy boy. Never mind. I am back. I have quaffed the 'Royal Celebration Ale' and am ready for the fray. Alas, thish must be less substantial than the last if it's to get out at all. Fear not. SFD 21 will have a Dan Steffan cover and would I dare Gafiate before bringing you that?

I have also grown tired of waiting for Mike Glycer to publish my Seacon report in STFR. So this issue of SFD will feature the first in a series of 'Great Unpublished Con Reports Of Our Time'. This is partly because I thought it was pretty ace, but minly because I've got vast amounts of letters from YOU to put in here, but not much ME ("minly? Cas, this damn typer is acting up again. I'm sure I typed 'mainly'.) OK, so thish will be 'minly' you. OK, so it's an honour, but you deserve it. I should have caught that typo earlier but at the moment Fleetwood Mac's 'Rumours' LP is wapping in through my headphones on our alternative sound system and I am having enough trouble not typing 'Second Hand News' never mind catching real typos. Our alternative sound system is a Hitachi Stereo Radio Cassette with 16 watts output. We picked this up from our local Debenhams store only to discover that it was £20 cheaper the following week after the sale had started. We go to our local Debenhams store quite frequently. Mainly because it is our main 'Atari' dealer. DO NOT BUY AN 'ATARI'. Last Christmas we got one for Nicholas and in the six months since then we've spent over £150 on cartridges. Last weekend Mike Meara brought

his 'missile command' cartridge on which he had achieved a best score of 60,000+ after a couple of weeks practise. In one week-end our Nicholas got up to 680,000+. On second thoughts, by all means get an Atari, just don't have any kids, is all..... But enough of me (for now). It's time we had a word from Harry...

HARRY WARNER Jnr. 423 Summit Ave, Hagerstown, Maryland 21740.

This LoC on the 19th SFD might have been prompter if I hadn't hesitated so long about admitting something. I have no guinea pig anecdotes. I can't even make one up out of my imagination. This might be the beginning of the end for me as a letterhack. The only way to survive in this LoC jungle is through the cunning which creates comments on any topic. Otherwise, how do you write a LoC about a fanzine which contains only one or two topics?

If England is getting the worst of United States television shows (maybe it has something to do with unpaid World War One debts) you can expect very soon the new Nero Wolfe series. The first episode ran tonight. It was frightful. William Conrad isn't fat enough...and he smirks.

I enjoyed the vacation account, even though I find it hard to believe any walking tour in England. The size of the nation on the map and the fact that street numbers rarely seem to go above 150 or thereabouts cause me to imagine that any hike of more than a half-mile or so would inevitably cause the walker to arrive at the sea shore with either the white cliffs of Dover or an arriving transatlantic steamer visible on the horizon.

GREAT UNPUBLISHED CON REPORTS OF OUR TIME - NUMBER SIXTEEN IN A SET OF TWENTY-FOUR : COLLECT THE SERIES.

No. 16 : SEACON '79.

The early morning mist was gone as if it had never been, the last whisps sent fleeing by the fierce rays of the cruel sun. Outside the cool walls of the hostelry the rollers on the Sea of Forgetfulness wallowed in an oily lethargy, turgid

counterpoint to the hum of excitement in the marketplace where strangers of many races mingled in a sea of riotous colour, ignoring both the unseasonal heat and the sour, acid smell of excrement which vied with the more appealing aromas issuing from the vendors' booths. It would soon be time.

It was a strange melange of races, all drawn to this annual caravanserai to still the cravings of their own unique desires. Standing out above the throng were the tall, blond barbarians from the mountains of Swid. Rich from the sale of furs they sought to buy that very civilisation of which they were incapable. Here too were men and women from across the great sea itself. Traders and gnostics from the fabled land of Yewess, recognisable by the talismans festooned about their bodies, 'kam-raahs', by means of which they somehow propitiated their god 'Dol-ahh'. Here and there were missionaries from the antipodes. Strange bearded men who spoke a dialect few could understand, who laughed at their own jokes and who drank only from cans, a strange and nauseous beverage brought all the way from their homeland and reputedly made from the fermented urine of a native animal that spends all its time jumping up and down. Having sampled this drink one would hardly blame them. All these races and more were gathered here. It was almost time.

The natives too were nearly as varied as these visitors from foreign shores. To one side, aloof, noble southern Lords and Ladies genteely conversed as they waited for the auction to start, a veneer of sophistication concealing their eagerness to see the sacred relics here to be offered for sale. Treasures stolen from the tombs of long-dead kings. They disdainfully ignored the drunken revelry of the poor northern folk who had to be content merely to watch and, possibly, to pick over the crumbs left by their more fortunate brethren. Suddenly the babble of tongues was stilled. It was time!

O.O.O.O.O

I always make a point of getting to the auctions. With the exception of the Bob Shaw speech they are usually the high-spots of the programme. Unlike the panels where the participants generally have some idea of what they are going to say beforehand, the auctions are always spontaneous, a triumph not

of mind over matter but rather of money over mind. The YORCON auction was fresh in my memory...Rog Peyton reading out passages from 'The Power Of The Pyramids' knowing full well that he was not going to sell any (he had several copies) and the look of horrified amazement on his face as Mike Meara bought every one, eager to corner the market and to spend Pat's salary before she could fritter it away on trivia like 'food' and 'clothing'. My appetite was whetted. Could SEACON be any less?

Pat wasn't there at the start of the auction, apparently unable to watch, but she turned up before too long. I guess not knowing was harder to bear than actually watching her hard-earned money vanish.

"How's it going?" she asked, nervously.

"Great!" I exclaimed. "He's just bought Jim Blish's sox."

I put my arm around her as she sobbed quietly to herself. Thinking to cheer her up I said "That's nothing. You should've been here when Ron Bounds sold his lunch. A small smoked sausage went for several quid."

"Kerist'." she cried, rallying. "What fool bought that?"

"Hi dear," said Mike, ambling over. "I've saved you a piece of this sausage. Hey, did Skel tell you...I bought Jim Blish's socks? Hey, aren't you feeling so good dear? Are you crying.....?"

"Probably overcome with emotion," I told Mike. "I don't think, even in her wildest dreams, she ever expected to be co-owner of a pair of Jim Blish's socks. By the way," I added, trying to distract his attention, "...are they mint?"

He sniffed at them and then sniffed a second time, disappointedly. "No, slightly 'foxed'." he replied. "Obviously laundered." Then his face became suffused with an inner glow. I knew then that a vision had been vouchsafed him. "But it doesn't matter." he whispered, awed. "This is just the start of my collection. My unique collection. Today, Jim Blish's socks...tomorrow, the world. Just imagine...Anne McCaffrey's tights, John Brunner's red velvet suit, R. L. Fanthorpe's underpants....."

I imagined R. L. Fanthorpe's underpants, blanched, and reached out once more to Pat who seemed, if anything, to be getting more distraught. "I don't think..." I told Mike, "... that any other fannish mind could have grasped this concept with such facility."

His modesty and embarrassment were soon banished once more by the strength of his vision. "What a collection," he whispered, his eyes fixed on future auctions. "4SJ eat your heart out."

He was so engrossed he failed to notice when Ron auctioned off, for many pounds, a hotel 'Meeting In Progress' sign he'd found behind the dais.....to an american fan who was obviously ~~stuck~~ just getting into the spirit of things. "By the way," he later told her, "I only sold it. How you get it out of the hotel is entirely up to you."

"That's OK," she replied, and walked off with a large, stiff anorak clasped to her side.

"What was all that about?" asked Mike, coming back down to earth. I quickly filled him in. "How much?" he asked aghast. I told him. "Yanks!" he sneered deprecatingly. "I got one pounds cheaper at NOVACON."

His attention was immediately torn from us again as now copies of underground comix with titles like 'Crude Sex' and 'Hard Tack' were being auctioned off as fast as Ron and Rog could get them out of Ian Maule's hands. Bids of "Two pounds" and "Whow! Two pounds-fifty" began to issue forth from behind the growing pile of comix which now hid Mike from view.

Too soon though it was all over. The auctioneers eventually had nothing else left and so had to stoop to selling*ghasp*.....science fiction.....*shock-horror*. Now the auctioneers realised that they had done their job too successfully. The SF ephemera had gone so well that now all the serious collectors had no money left for the SF. Why, a complete run of 'New Worlds' went for the one minimum bid of £120. Heck, even I managed to pick up a mint first edition for only 50 pence.

"Mortgage repayments," muttered Pat dazedly as we left. "Unpaid garage bills, bankruptcy....."

but it's not one I'm too anxious to watch. Mainly because it looks like Australia are going to piss all over England again. True, it looked like they were going to do that in the last match and England ended up the victors but I can't see your lot throwing it away twice running. Actually the public response to England's victory in the third Test Match was a real eye-opener. Top level cricket in this country does not have the widespread popularity of yore and yet that night every TV programme had beaming presenters, men and women, all chuffed up to little butties over the result. It was like living in a different country. I watched the finish at lunch-time on TV round at my boss's place. It was magic. We'd sat down out of a sense of duty to watch the bitter defeat only to find ourselves leaping up and down as amazingly the Aussie wickets tumbled. Then when Chris Old dropped the last man twice it looked like the miracle was to be snatched from our grasp but thankfully it didn't matter as the final wicket fell the very next over. When we got back to work and told people the score nobody could believe it!

Alas the England batsmen are back to their dismal worst in this next match. After watching yesterday's inept performance I went with my father and uncle to watch my brothers' team Offerton play Saddleworth in a local league match. Even when Offerton looked like losing everyone present agreed that this was what cricket was all about and much more interesting than the first-class game. The fact that Offerton came out ahead in an exciting finish was merely icing on the cake.

Grass-roots cricket is as popular as ever as a participation sport but I'll never understand why it doesn't draw bigger crowds. It's a much more watchable game than even one-day matches at County level and one can evade the restrictive licensing laws and quaff one's ale throughout the match if one plays one's cards right...and yet on a glorious summer's day there were less than two-dozen spectators to watch yesterday's match in a beautiful sylvan setting...to see over 340 runs scored in less than five hours for the loss of fourteen wickets...to see a finish that could have gone either way even in the final over. I blame the bomb.

I think it's time we had another round up of comments as there's no way this mini issue can carry many full scale LoCs. Terry Jeeves was "...pleased to see Joe Nicholas is his usual intolerant self...how nice it must be to be so positive that one's views are so utterly correct." Terry also warned us against playing croquet next time we visit the Bentcliffes'. Alan Ferguson found my "...BR graffitti a bit flat. I much prefer the one scribbled over the coin slot on a durex machine, 'For refund, insert baby here.' or the one where some embittered soul wrote 'I hate the middle-classes!' and someone wrote underneath, 'Can't we discuss this over a round of golf old boy?' and as for your BBC commentators, what about the time David Coleman said, 'Now Ovet's opening his legs and really showing the crowd what he's got'." That last one reminds me of the time Brian Johnstone, commentating on a cricket match, described a fielder as "...crouching with his legs apart, waiting for a tickle."

Tom Whitmore was a fountain of knowledge on the buying of vibrators in California, a subject sadly of small skelish use. He did however add, "Speaking of SF musicals, you have heard about 'Charlie And Algernon'? Based upon 'Flowers For Algernon' and no, the ad line is not 'You'll believe a mouse can sing...' Personally I think the success of 'Sweeney Todd' and 'Dracula' indicate that it's about time for a musical based on the works of Edward Gorey. The mind boggles at the sing-along chorus for 'The Insect God'". Joni Stopa kept silent on the subject of 'flats' thus indicating that 'flats' are a secret US government-inspired biological weapon inadvertently revealed in her previous letter. She also claimed. "I don't remember seeing a dinosaur, flatulent or otherwise, when in England. However, we didn't go to Cheshire, and for all I know the place is simply overrun with them." Actually Joni, it isn't, but it makes for a great excuse. When sitting in the lounge and Cas wrinkles up her nose and looks balefully in my direction I simply sniff the air and say "Must be a dinosaur about."

Jeezuz Christ, we won again! Our batsmen may be bad, Jack but yours are fucking awful. Cas says I have to mention that she always thought we'd win. It's easy for her, she knows absolutely nothing. Me? I was looking around the ground for those

twelve blokes collecting baskets of crumbs.

Tilda Palmer's cat would rather we stamped out SMALL FRIENDLY DOGS as it (the cat) isn't usually bothered too much by dinosaurs, they being pretty thin on the ground in the Bellingham area. Meanwhile Mom, Pauline Palmer, when not complaining about jeans with 9 foot-long legs, says "Your comment re 'typo of the month' reminds me of a very famous newspaper typo here about a new bridge, which somehow came out: "The bride collapsed during an attempted opening when a shaft was broken." She also said she might publish WILD FENNEL again one of these days. They said the same about SFD Pauline.... hang on, I have published again. Okay Pauline, I won't tell a soul about that headline you sent from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer that read 'Chips Fly As Beaver And Dicks Meet'. Trust me.

Tim Marion wonders how Cas feels (*squidgy*...but she's dieting) and warns me that I may get to like US TV shows as they are now full of "jiggle". Alas, whilst I occasionally do like to sit and look at cock-fodder I find I have to be in just the right frame of mind. Mostly I would rather read a good book, like George R. Martin's 'Dying Of The Light'...which is the best SF novel I've read in aye these many yonks. Other good things that I'd rate more than a passing 'glans' are:-

TELOS 2 (so good I sent copies of SFD to everyone in the LoC column) and SPACE JUNK 4 and any and all issues of SECOND HAND WAVE. Also the article 'Alice and Drugs' by Marc Ortlieb in Q36C. Now here's a quasi-quote from SPECULATION 29 and then I reckon it's time we had a full-length LoC before I start to get too cocky.

[illegible]

"As of this writing, the known space series is virtually complete. I plan to write one more novel within the history: 'Protector'..... Where would I be if I tried to write a sequel to 'Ringworld'?"

Larry Niven.

DAN STEFFAN 823 N. Wakefield St.; Arlington, VA 22203; USA.

I'm one of those american fans who is always pissing and moaning about the state of fanzines; the fanzines that find their way into my mailbox are usually disappointing. Especially the new ones. SFD is hardly a new fmz, but it is new to me and I naturally expected that same disappointment. Then again, my expectations were a wee bit higher since this was a British fanzine, and anyone who has ever read Joe Nicholas knows that British fanzines are always better than American ones.

I once saw a woman reduced to tears when she discovered that her vibrator was run down (battery-wise, not truck-wise). It was chaos to be around her and her "little friend". ~~Many~~ a time I was a passenger on a 2 a.m. drive to an all-night drug store in a search for fresh batteries. It was crazy. It seemed like it was impossible to keep a functioning flashlight in their house as she was always raiding it for the batteries. It was really strange.

Eventually she switched to an electric model (((What the fuck sort of batteries had she been using - steam?))), but the electric bills then became astronomical. It got to the point where we could tell if she was home by listening for the buzzing upon entering the house. Out of frustration(((?))) with the bills and the fact that she started blowing fuses as she added various attachments, her husband got her a small generator of her very own. This kept her happy for a while but it all ended one morning when the guy went out to his car in order to go to work. It wouldn't start -- the fuel guage was on 'empty' -- and he was sure that there had been fuel in the tank when he came home the previous evening. Returning to the house he found his wife bent over the generator furiously trying to start it. There was gas on her breath. He flew into a rage and their marriage rapidly disintegrated after that.

I understand that she's currently employed as a pneumatic drill operator.

ROYAL WEDDING ADVANTAGES NO. 27.

Every brewer in the country seems to be bringing out a

"Crook place for Aussie *chortle*". Finally, Marc's comment about Ulverston... "Didn't Glen Campbell sing a song about that in between editing Authentic and Astounding?"...leads us remorselessly to Bob Shaw who writes:- "I bought a beautiful little nostril vibrator in the local chemists the other day. It didn't even need to be christened, because it said 'Vick' on the side of it. The manufacturers have thoughtfully filled it with menthol so that when you're using it in a public place you can pretend it is some kind of medication for a cold. It's a real fun object -- only yesterday I achieved three nostril climaxes, sometimes known as sneezes, within ten minutes and nobody else in the pub even guessed what I was up to."

Apparently I also have Bob to thank for my SEACON report as he also went on to say, "As the person who originally donated Jim Blish's red glittery socks to the Seacon auction, I'm perturbed to hear that they have taken on a life of their own and are rampaging through fandom." Aha! This of course raises the even more interesting question of just what you were doing with Jim's socks in the first place. One has visions of sock-swapping orgies at writers' conferences. I can see you sneaking home in the early hours after just such a revel, only to find yourself stopped by a policeman who takes one look at your stockinged feet and asks, "Do you have a license for those socks, sir?" I think there must be a story in this Bob. How about it?

Dave Piper asked me to thank everybody who signed the card we sent him from Novacon, "I'm speechless...it was very much appreciated." He said his broken ankle is getting better every day but he'd no idea when he'd be getting about properly. Then he sent us a postcard from Greece. Greece I'd call getting about, eh Dave?

Richard Faulder wrote and mentioned, "A friend of mine was telling me about some people she knew. It appears they had an unspeyed female cat which, as such animals are wont to do, used to come on heat. To ease her frustrations in a non-consequential way they devised a mini-vibrator which she apparently found very satisfying." Vibrators for cats...now I guess I've heard everything. Richard also agreed with my stand on LoCs

as did most people, which is somewhat annoying as I deliberately over-stated my point in order to get a bit of an argument going.

Eric Lindsay says he doesn't have a TV, which goes some way towards explaining why he manages so much fanac. He also adds that he is allergic to cats. Damn! This thwarts my plan to publish this issue of SFD on thirty-two dead cats and subtitled 'The Thoughts Of Chairman Meow'. Not having a TV also leaves Eric generally unaware of the fate of the Third World millions, from which we can deduce that new-fangled gimmicks like newspapers have yet to percolate down under (?). Mike Ashley too mentioned this point, somewhat peripherally, by saying, "Eric Bentcliffe's amazing comments on the situation in the Third World provided me with quite a few laughs. But I was quite puzzled too: why does he talk on a subject about which he quite clearly knows nothing?" Mike also pointed out that whilst he agreed with my comments on LoCs I was being too didactic. He pointed out that a fan might not have any time to respond to SFD. This being so Mike, I hardly see how sending him further issues will do other than exacerbate the problem. I better point out here, to squash any misconceptions, that I don't demand response on every single issue. Anyone who is on my 'permanent' mailing list will generally stay that way providing he responds to at least every third issue. This is not however infallible because every so often I make a positive effort to obtain new readers and then have to drop people who have only missed twice in order to make things go around. I suppose it's time for another pace-changing long LoC. However Mike, to stay in the spirit of things I've had to hack (?) at least two-thirds of your LoC out, but then you hacked all of it out so why should you complain? (NOTE: Readers should not interpret these remarks as a general requirement for shorter LoCs. You gotta watch these crafty readers.)

MIKE GLICKSOHN 137 High Park Avenue; Toronto; Ontario; M6P 2S3

I find myself embarking on something that has of late become decidedly unfamiliar to me. I am about to attempt my first letter of comment in weeks. I feel this strong obligation to LoC SFD while dozens of other, probably better, fan-zines have languished unread for six weeks. I don't entirely

agree with your comments on the obligations/responsibilities involved in sending/receiving a fanzine. When I get a Skelzine I don't feel obliged to respond because I know I won't get the next issue if I don't. I feel a personally created obligation to reply because I want to be a part of the next issue and I won't be happy if I'm not. I look upon SFD as one of those few fanzines in which I have an integral part. Missing an issue of SFD would be like failing to publish an issue of XENIUM but getting one that someone else had published instead. I guess it all boils down to the very basic fannish idea that we can impose obligations upon ourselves but no other fan can impose obligations upon us.

When I got back from the worldcon, I spent a few days recovering and then managed to find a few scattered hours while I was re-adjusting to being back at work and having external responsibilities that took precedence over my purely selfish and hedonistic personal desires to send out the rumour that I was not LoCing many fanzines because I'd been away for nearly ten weeks and was too busy to catch up on the 76 fanzines I'd acquired during that time. (And if you can follow the structure of that sentence I prescribe a stiff drink because you're far too sober!)

Of course, this was a mere facade as you so cruelly reveal in this latest issue of SKEL'S FANNISH DUNGHEAP which has inspired me to try and recapture the lost art of letterhacking. The main reason I couldn't LoC all those seventy-six undoubtedly deserving fanzines was simply that despite revealing my secret of success as an internationally famous letterhack you have yet to return those uncanceled stamps! (Since the Canadian \$1 and \$2 stamps are primarily various shades of green this clearly makes you the Green Ripper-off, which is somehow fitting, don't you mcgee?) If you ever see your way clear to returning those stamps, faneds all over the civilized world (also New Malden) can once again depend on stimulating and controversial material for their lettercolumns. (Joseph Nicholas was almost through his correspondence course at my Famous Letterhack's School, you see, and only your niggardly holding on to my mystical stamps has prevented him from graduating and taking his proper place as the Terry Jeeves of his

generation.) I hope you're proud of the way you've derailed the train of fanzine fandom through your ill-advised and incautious revealing of the innermost workings of the Secret Masters. You didn't think it was just rotten luck or bad taste on the part of the voters that constantly keeps SILLY FOOLISH DISCOURSE off every ballot, did you? Whom the Secret Masters would destroy they first make unknown...

From the above you will realise that I am admitting your thesis concerned with the-letterhack-as-mutation is indeed correct. The young dolly fans do indeed cluster around us BNF letterhacks (to the point where servicing them has sometimes interfered with my poker-playing and drinking but while it's never lonely at the top there are some sacrifices you don't mind making) but you've clearly failed to see the long-term result of this delightful behaviour. You suggest -- in a perfect example of inadequate scholarship -- that this attraction international letterhacks inevitably will exert on nubile lithe young dolly fans is a positive survival trait aimed at propagating the mutation. (Naturally you didn't phrase it so well but that was the intent of your regretably loose train of thought.) Think, if your consumption of scotchey substances will allow it, who the international letterhacks are. That's right: Harry Warner, Mike Glicksohn and Joseph Nicholas! A hermit, a vasectomy and...well you know. I ask you, where will the next generation of mutated letterhacks come from? I strongly suspect we are a dying species...

The quotation "It is undoubtedly hard, but any suggestion of reversal would take us into horrendous areas of outer space." which you ascribe to the British Space Program strikes me as more likely being a comment on sexual techniques and on that basis makes perfect sense: reversing, while still hard, into outer space would indeed be horrendous. (Also a hell of a waste) Naturally I wouldn't expect you to be able to remember this, not since Vincent, I mean...

It isn't only fanzines that bloom briefly and disappear but fans as well. Of course the two are often inseparable: I can't offhand think of any fanzine which had a VEGAl like career -- old fan history reference there, boss -- and then disappeared with-

"...wonderful...cute, nice and friendly...and if you'll believe that you'd sleep with a doberman." The doberman is safe. The front of the card read 'Ontario - yours to discover' and over-leaf was printed 'For travel information call (collect) 416-965-4008'. I just may, but in case I don't there's the number so that you can. Y'all ring them, ya hear?

Joan Sharpe writes, "There is a rumour going round that I've lost my touch, that I'm getting past it, that I can no longer write a letter that is as moronic, puerile, rambling, boring and nonsensical as once I could." Well Joan, I am only too pleased to scotch that rumour. Chris Lewis says, "Mike Glicksohn's strange psi power is obviously not a hereditary trait, or is there something I don't know about your relationship? Perhaps it's one of those latent powers that only shows in times of great stress such as when mailing an ish. As you may have guessed, they didn't frank my copy of SFD." Go easy with that libellous crap about 'relationships' Chris. I know Mike looks like he might be my grandfather, but that's just the ravages of alcohol. It may be difficult to believe but he is not really all that much older than I, he simply hasn't worn as well.

Jim Meadows III has been trying to educate me with respect to Judy Collins, namely that her voice has gone down the nick and that her earlier albums were much better. I have since picked up a couple of her earlier albums, 'A Maid Of Constant Sorrow' and 'Fifth Album' and also a german compilation 'The Most Beautiful Songs Of...' and whilst I agree that her voice was much better then I still prefer her more modern albums. No matter how good the voice, boring old folk songs remain boring old folk songs. Jim also takes up the subject of Sunday School; "Being brought up an Episcopalian, which is almost like being C of E (I assume that's where Bethany is sent) (((Nope, Non-Denominational))) I would think that my memories of Sunday School would be as dreadful as what you describe. But they weren't, and despite them being dull at times, and awfully amateurish, I survived them with a religious belief intact, although no longer one aligned with the Episcopal Church. Of course, it was kind of muddled at the start. I remember when I was four that I believed God and Jesus Christ to be two

of the teachers, both pleasant middle-aged ladies." Nic Howard also took up the same point, viz: "Don't think much of the Sunday School teaching up there. At our local church (shared RC/C of E) I teach a group of six-year-olds every two weeks. We don't actually try to teach the kids anything. We just give them a good time with their friends, plenty of singing and colouring, and if they actually learn anything about God, Jesus or the Bible, that's just a very welcome bonus. I don't see my job as a teacher to indoctrinate them with Christianity; just to keep an interest, however small, until the time when they feel ready to decide for themselves."

Pamela Boal muttered darkly about my lack of mention for the LoCers whose LoCs don't make it into the issue, "...how can your readers know of your vast number of semi-silent admirers if you don't admit to our existence? I'm puzzled - how can a golf ball selectric be only pica sized? I thought the whole point of golf ball machines was that you could change the type face." True Pamela, but whichever typeface you use, unless you wap out vast amounts for a machine with variable spacing, every time you hit the key of a pica machine the carriage moves on one tenth of an inch, whereas on an elite machine the carriage only moves on one twelfth of an inch. You can use an elite typeface on a pica machine but then a word like 'seven' would look vaguely like 's even'. As to mentioning all the LoCers, that's what I'm trying to do this issue and as my upper page limit is 36 (that's how much paper I've bought) there doesn't look like there'll be room for any more long LoCs. Just squeezed in under the tape there Mike. Seth Lockwood gets into my good books by saying "SFD 19 arrived and brightened up my day - truly! I had just finished reading Heinlein's 'Number Of The Beast' and was most depressed with the crap it was, not to mention bored. Anyway, SFD was more than welcome relief." Gee Seth, do you think maybe I should give him a few tips and maybe help him out a bit? Dave Rowe sent me a letter congratulating me on congratulating him. Sometimes fannish correspondence can seem a little incestuous. He also sent copies of a couple of newspaper headlines, 'Skelton Quick To Recover' which is a lie as anyone can confirm who has seen me the afternoon after the night before. The second headline was the mind-boggling :- 'Christ Would Have Been Perfect Athlete, Dave Rowe Says At

Prayer Breakfast'. God, can anything follow that? The news that Brian Hampton has a girlfriend? Nope, even that pales in comparison. Maybe news of Dave's own wedding (to Carolyn Doyle). Tell us about it Dave... "We got married at the Indianapolis City-County Building...in the basement. Mary Long was Best Woman (((You'll get no arguments from Sam on that))). The basement's decor was Period Latrine, all tiles and concrete while the offices were slightly better (vinyl and permoglaze). A lady took our papers and gave 'em to some janitor to fill out. That really freaked us out. He was fat with the standard American stomach pouring over his belt, he was wearing a stained yellow short-sleeved shirt and his hair was greasy. He was also the Judge. To begin the ceremony he began with :- "Twenty-five Dollars." Now no one had mentioned \$25 to us. We had already paid the 'full' \$5 so we all started pawing trouser pockets for the cash. Thing was, it was Memorial Weekend which meant everybody was on the road. It was also the Indianapolis 500, which meant they were all on the road to where we were. Result - no bridal suites. No hotel rooms at all. All for the better really, that's how we got to stay at the State Park Hotel and on the Saturday morning rambled through the woods to one of the most beautiful waterfalls I've ever seen. As Carolyn had on her reception dress and I my three-piece suit we somewhat blew the minds of the passing hikers." I think that ought to remind me of our wedding Dave, except that the only thing I can remember was that Cas's first words after the Judge said "I now pronounce you man and wife.", her very first words as a married woman were, "God, I'm hungry!" Dave also added that there was a company in Bloomington called Skelgas. "They can sell that?" said Cas.

Paula Lieberman sends the following public service announcement. Remember, you read it first in SFD - "This is the second LoC I'm doing on #19, the first got eaten by two giant inkblots from a misbehaving Kastell technical fountain pen. Technical fountain pens are included among objects I'm fond of despite such nasty habits as being unsuitable for bringing on airplanes (ever see what happens to one with ink in it after a pressure change? It empties all over whatever it's in contact with. I keep forgetting to take them out of my pocketbook before flying anywhere." All knowledge, as they say, is con-

-tained in fanzines. ARNOLD AKIEN sent a care package of diabetic fruit gums - as mentioned by Bob Shaw last issue, with the comment, "Whilst I was doing my shopping this lunchtime the enclosed packet caught my eye. What an opportunity, the chance to send Skel lots of raspberries, and at the same time a perfect description of SMALL FRIENDLY DOG. As it says on the packet - Skel's - Hard Boiled - Sweet - Free from added sugar.

Arnold also had something to add on the subject of Sunday Schools, namely:- "When I was an innocent seven-year-old I was sent off to Sunday School. This was thought by my mother to be a good idea, not that she was or is a true believer. However, since my father was a drunken sadist (more politely known these days as a socially maladjusted alcoholic) and Sunday morning followed Saturday night, my chances of survival to adulthood would be considerably increased if I wasn't around the house on that morning. So off to the Sunday School I went. They didn't have colour-in-God books but they did have savings stamp books. The idea was you got a different stamp every time you went and you stuck this 'Saint Of The Month' or whatever in your book and when it was full they gave you a bible. All this gentle Jesus stuff didn't find much favour with me. What I wanted was a God who'd strike my father with a thunderbolt and this I prayed for with great fervour. When it didn't happen I came to the conclusion that if God existed he wasn't about to do me much good and the two pence my mother gave me for the collection (for the 'Deprived Children' charity) would be better spent on the most deprived kid I knew - ME. I never did get a bible."

Joy Hibbert puts me right as follows, "The correct definition of 'nesh' is 'susceptible to the cold'. The funniest use of dialect I've ever heard was Richard Scollins reciting a mining poem in Derbyshire dialect and stopping at the end of every line to do the translations - "Laid darn be t'fire, em bain nesh (susceptible to the cold)." Yes, 'Not The Nine O' Clock News' is the best TV comedy cut. The single best, most timeless line from the last series must be "The President's just stepped outside to change his mind." I wouldn't agree that Monty Python is better than NT90'CN - to put it in magazine terms you can compare the two shows to 'Mad' (Python) and

'Punch' (NT90'CN)." My favourite (I think) piece is where an interviewer asks Senator Kennedy if he's learnt anything from the Chappaquidick incident. "Oh, Yes" he replies, "I've learned something." "What?" asks the interviewer. "I've learned never to drive across narrow bridges when I'm pissed out of my skull." replies the Senator.

Alyson L. Abramowitz concedes that she's mis-pronounced her own name all her life (Gee, the power of the 'Press') but demand restitution in the form of conceding her the middle initial. OK, seems fair enough to me, Alyson L., as does your request that I send a copy of SFD to George Flynn seeing as he is mentioned therein...and I would too, if I had his address. Alyson L. also said, "I was never forced to go to Sunday School. Indeed, although I wanted to for years, my parents wouldn't let me attend and I'm very sorry about that now in adult life. I missed learning about so many traditions and interesting ideas that it took much more work to pick up later. But I'm glad you're letting Bethany have a choice in the matter. It's better to decide, with knowledge, not to believe than to never have had the chance to determine what there was about religion that you wished to believe in or otherwise. You seem to be coming down rather hard on William Goodall (((That's William T. Goodall to you))), who probably didn't know better. I suspect I'd not be wonderfully pleased with receiving three-year-old fanzines when I asked for a copy of the current ish, either."

On the same subject William T. Goodall also took me to task, with some justification, thusly:- "I don't want to get all recriminatory about this but - 'very hostile'? I would go on about being quoted out of context, and having attitudes imputed to me that I don't actually hold - but I'm at least 50% responsible for any communications breakdown, as I am the poor slob who wrote the contentious LoC. (Don't laugh. This is serious.) In fact, of course, you see, what it is - is that - that unfortunate LoC wasn't quite intended to be read quite as literally as you read it, and rather more literarily. Or at least that's what I'd like to claim, in my unenviable position of being 'That person who wrote that very hostile LoC to that nice Mr. Skelton'. It slightly annoyed me to open my first SFD and find myself caught in the flak already. Enough of this." Okay, William, and to prove what an all-round nice Mr. Skelton

I am I'll leave you there with the final word.

Gary Deindorfer had quite a bit to say, even though for a couple of paragraphs or so he seemed to think this zine was called STOP BREAKING DOWN. No points there, Boss. However, once his brain cell came back from the cleaners he commented as follows:- "About vibrators: Years ago in 'The Rolling Stone' there was an article about musical vibrators. It seems they have music played into them and transform it into, of all things, vibrations, so that a lady who is a great fan of Paul McCartney can have his songs buzzing away inside her, ah, er, *cough*, you know. Imagine, a lady who is a great fan of Bob Shaw could play his convention speeches through one of these vibrators and really get off on his puns. Just a thought. Every letter I write I try to include a thought. Don't believe any of Eric Mayer's anecdotes. If you have noticed that they have a Harry Warnerish feel to them, there is a good reason for this. Eric copies Harry Warner anecdotes from old fanzines and changes the details slightly and passes them off as his own. 'Where the hell is Ella Parker?' This question is asked in your nineteenth issue. I don't know, but I have an anecdote about her. I met Ella at a convention of SF fans in Philadelphia in the early sixties. Well, that's the anecdote. I may not be a very good teller of anecdotes but at least I don't rewrite old Harry Warner ones and try to pass them off as my own the way Eric Mayer does." Now that you come to mention it Gary I have this niggling feeling that I read somewhere where Harry Warner mentioned that he met Ella, though I don't think it was at Philadelphia but that's only a slight detail....

Ed Cagle, who will be greatly missed, wrote, "Have been observing with some amusement the Great Joe Nicholas-Inspired Flap regarding the comparative existances of British and US fandom (the fanzine side). US fmz fandom is a bit moribund at the moment, and has been so for far longer than usual. Every two or three years a new crop of fans arises to carry on fmz fandom, usually effecting the transition with little furor. This time it would appear that the new crop of fans is small in number and short on both enthusiasm and talent. Throw that suggestion into the debate from your side and watch the turmoil erupt." I think I should stand well back from this.

OK, I admit defeat. I can't quite squeeze everything into my self-imposed thirty-six page limit. Aha, not to worry too much though as a thorough search has revealed a box of paper oddments from previous issues. Thus I can use all the letters I've recieved on SFD 19 but this will mean I'll need some PDQ LoCs on thish to get me started on number 21. Your Faned Needs YOU! Rally Round The Fnz, Boys! Once More Into The Letter-col Dear Friends, Once More!

Meanwhile, Dave Langford flexes his steely thews and then writes:- "Our mutual trade agreement as regards ANSIBLE continues: You can't afford to subscribe and I can't afford to post 'em (((With a 'mutual trade' agreement like this, who needs GAFIA?))). I like T. McGee too -- and looked into the books mainly because you recommended them so loudly. Filled out the collection in the States." All right, swankpot. But wait...that famous Mexican/Canadian half-breed El Glicko wrote to say he'd enjoyed the new McGee novel, 'Free Fall In Crimson'. This is driving my local Librarian batty as I imediatey went and ordered the book from them and she even went so far as to ring me at home late one evening to appologise for the delay in obtaining it for me. Seems they've even looked in up-to-the-minute US bibliographies and can't find any mention of it. You wouldn't be having me on, would you Mike? Long before this Ron Salomon had written about his previous book, "Bought John D. MacDonald's latest Travis McGee paperback, 'The Green Ripper' and the latest 87th. Precinct story, McBain's 'Calypso'. My mind is mentally stuck with Burt Reynolds as Steve Carella, though. I eagerly await reading such mainstream SF as 'SS-GB' and 'The 3rd. World War' but not 'The Number Of The Beast ~~AAA~~ ~~Beet Disbububububub~~". Odd that...I could never accept Burt Reynolds as Steve Carella because my conception of the character was set when I saw the old 87th. Precinct TV series. I do not know the name of the actor who played Carella in that but he's been in loads of series as a guest, particularly he played the time-travelling human with the cat in the episode of 'Star Trek' where he was trying to sabotage an Appollo launch and Kirk & Co. were out to stop him.

Mark Bennet, in search of Italian lamp-posts wrote from Sunny Italy, "Bella Roma has cast her spell (((I told you, never trust those Gipsy fortune-tellers!))) and captured yet

another visitor's heart--A brilliant city with one overwhelming drawback; the Italians. The city itself I really like. The Roman stuff is what really interests me and there is so much of it, every street and every piazza seems to have its Roman wall or aqueduct or obelisk or whatever, often very badly looked after. I have found second century B.C. Roman villas being used as rubbish tips with burned out car hulks rotting in the ruins. Incredible!" Careful Mark, you're letting your ethnic preconceptions get in the way there. Just because we live in a land of such shoddy workmen that anything that remains standing for over ten years becomes a listed historical building doesn't mean the whole world has to be run that way.

Brian Earl Brown offered the following advice:- "Runny mimeo ink? Marty Cantor mentions chilling his ink in the fridge before printing. I wonder if that would help you." I tried that, Brian, but the oil base and the pigment separated and when I ran it into the drum it poured in two distinct stripes. So, if anyone scoffs at 'striped ink' again, you put them right, eh? Brian also said, "Flatulent dinosaurs are, of course, the reason they're extinct. With all that flatulent gases in the air all it took was one spark and - *KABLOWEY*!!- no more dinosaurs. Resounding Dildo Stories - you must be getting a flock of them this time. The best one I've heard - the only one for that matter - involved Taral Wayne MacDonald. It seems he was walking along one day and saw a dildo lying in the gutter. Taral claims to be able to find dollar bills, even tens and twenties. Where most people would have crossed the street to avoid this hedonistic impliment, Taral picked it up and, when she wasn't looking, slipped it into Victoria Vayne's purse. Victoria wasn't amused." Well, I can just imagine her inadvertently pulling it out of her purse when with her parents or like that, but being a quick-thinking fan she could always have claimed it was a 'Giant Economy-Size' lipstick or Vick Nasal Inhaler or like that. Brian also mentioned his inability to get many of the boozy references in Mike's LoC last issue... as did several others. To set your minds at rest I will list them in order, with the 'loose' references in *asterisks*:-

Beer, *rose*, gin, *tot*, martini, Scotch, whiskey (and that is definitely two. Scotch is 'whisky'...with the 'e' in

it's Irish), ale, rum, lager, *sup* - whoops I said ten and now that's eleven. Does that make me a dum-dum?

Rob Jackson's two-pager could be sub-titled 'Thrilling Pregnant Tales' and the tardiness of this issue has rendered lines like, "Coral's been getting larger and larger..." too far out of date to be repeated here. Sorry Rob, but I enjoyed it when it was 'live'. Alexander Doniphan Wallace sent me his regards and good wishes, but not one single damn comment I can use here, although I could claim this was because lines like:- "I see from the AM paper that the Prince Of Wales has not yet selected his bride." also are too dated. As you said Alexander "By the time you read this it will no longer be newsworthy." There, that's fandom in a nutshell. 'Fandom In A Nutshell'? Wasn't that written by Ray Cummings? Sequel to 'The Girl In The Golden Nutshell (and 38C cup)'? And that's it....except for Peter Campbell. Stop crying Pete, I haven't forgotten you. I was hoping I'd have room at the end to run a fuller LoC and that's why I've held you back to the end. Take a bow.

PETER CAMPBELL 80 Royal Terrace; Thurso; Caithness; Scotland.

I misread the cover as 'Stamp Out Fraudulent Dinosaurs' about half-a-dozen times and as a consequence wondered why the brontosaurus had its head above the cloud -- it couldn't be that tall, surely? Even more perplexing, why was there a man standing beside it wearing (what appeared to be) a spotted hankie over his face? However, I finally got my brain circuits unscrambled and re-read it in its proper form -- and duly felt like a total prat all day.

With Vincent taking over the household, SFD suddenly means SEXUALLY FRUSTRATED DRUNKARD. Actually, a while back I read that a male equivalent of the vibrator had been launched on the market. Even better, this was designed to operate from a car-battery, so that the owner could occupy himself during traffic jams! The mind boggles... (((Methinks the cock would boggle a bit too.)))

Amazing what you read in the NME - specifically, a small snippet of information telling us that the previous week's

'Woman's Own' contained a Phil Dick story. SHRIEK!! - and much hysterical laughter. To think that among all those 'mouth-watering recipes', 'heart-rending fiction' and 'super clothes to knit for all the family' there was an actual Philip K. Dick story with all its usual ravings about drugs, religion and false realities? Yup. Hmmm, no doubt the quantities of valium consumed tripled during the following days. I would have said that this was the limit, but I saw one of those hack-work imported American detective magazines with the headlines - "Sizzling Sex Shocker - I Was A Teenage Lesbian Werewolf.... Full details inside!" I wouldn't mind, but I think the magazine's title was 'True Detective Tales' or somesuch inspired title.

I notice a few murmurings of discontent among the masses when you respond with that moth-eaten copy of TZTHNN...and I can't say I blame them. SFD is light-years away from that rag-bag of assorted mediocrity (((OK, you didn't like it, but there was no need to underline it, for fuck's sake!). Somebody else might see it. That's you booked down for the 150th copy of this...and sometimes I only get 149.))) Have you ever thought about producing a zine specifically for first-timers - or was that your intention with TZTHNN?"

12 AUGUST 1981 (SKEL)

THE ZINE THAT HAS NO NAME was indeed meant for first-timers, although by that I mean first-timers-for-getting-something of mine. I have no spare copies of SFD. Copies of SFD are no good to me skulking in my cupboard so every issue, when I've satisfied my existing mailing list, if I have any copies left I send them off on spec to people who've never had it before, or who somehow got dropped a while back and who I'd like to get back into regular contact with (Anyone got Ken Bulmer's current address?). Then someone writes and asks for a copy. Can't be done, and so TZTHNN was born. The idea was to fill it with good material (Tales Of The Sea-Badger Mythos, Nebulous Time At Faancon, Who Can Replace A Fan) plus some general Skelish natter like what may be found in SFD. The idea was to have something on hand that preferably wouldn't date too quickly, something that would enable me to respond to requests

SFD Quarterly
Issue No. 20.



To: JOK. D. SICKLER,
4599 NW 3 AVENUE,
BOCA RATON,
FLORIDA 33431,
U. S. A.

"I believe that all good literature has a political purpose, and SF particularly so."- Chris Priest in SPECULATION 30 (1972)

Last stencil:26/8/81:SFD Lives!

SURFACE MAIL
PRINTED PAPER
REDUCED RATE

FROM: Skel & Cas, 55 Bowland Close, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 5NW, England.