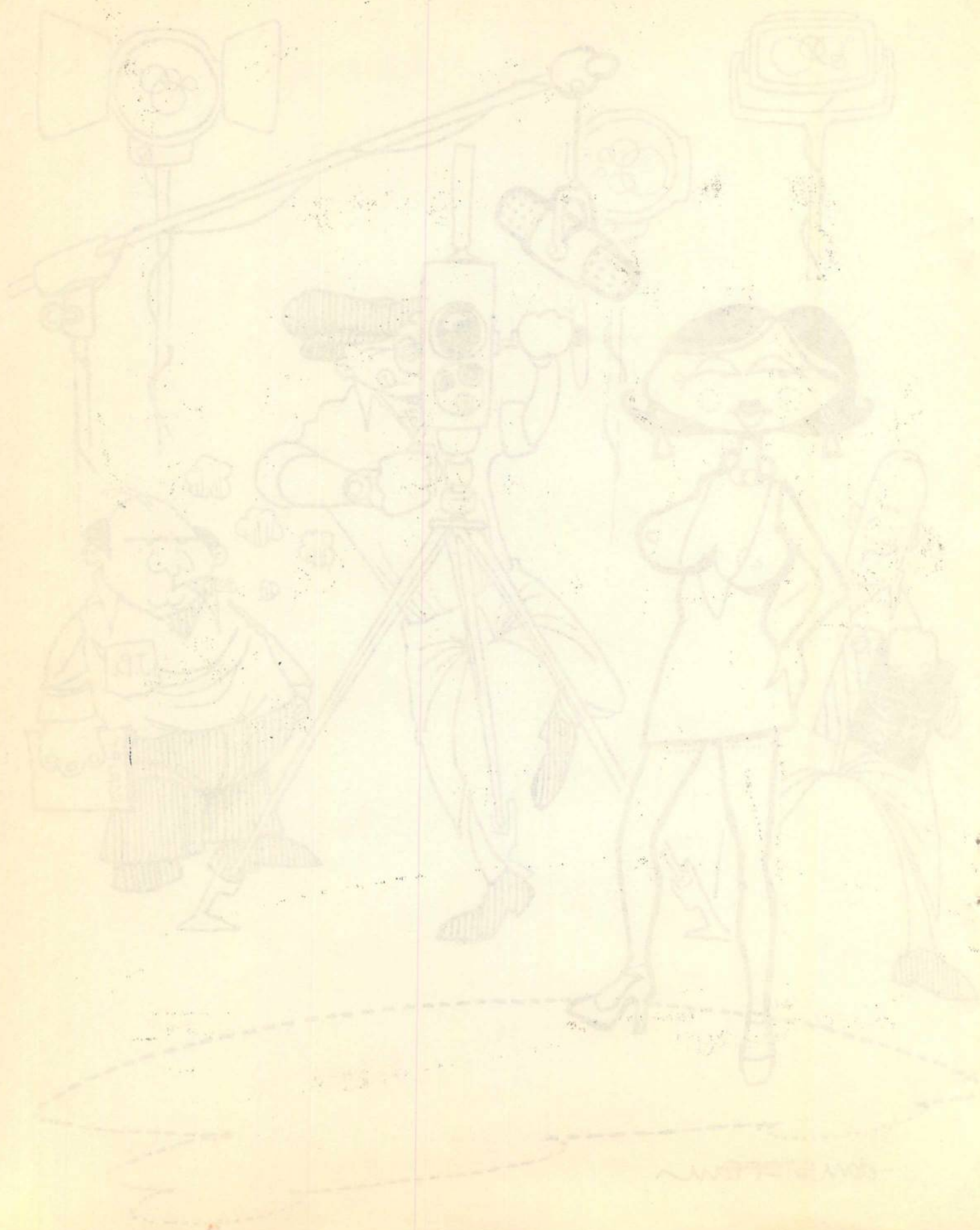


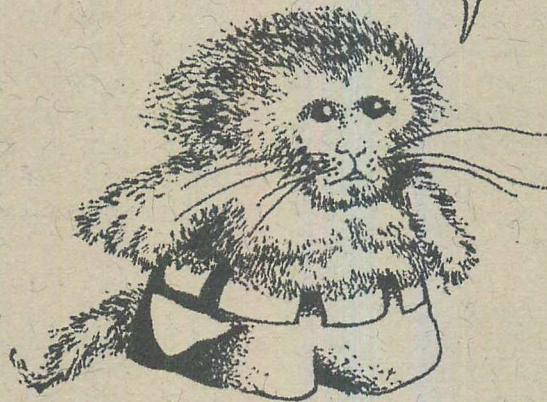
The Spanish Inquisition 6



The Spanish Invasion



a spanish
annish.



SHVII
7-13-75



Welcome to the SPANISH, the first anniversary issue of The Spanish Inquisition. This is whole number 6. Your editors are Jerry Kaufman of 880 West 181st St., 4D, NY, NY 10033 and Suzanne Tompkins, care of Bushyager, 1614 Evans Ave., Prospect Park, Pa. 19076. Nota Bene: That's a new address for Jerry and a temporary address for Suzanne. Please continue to send editorial material, locs, subs, etc to Jerry. We'd prefer that we both get trade copies, though we won't make an issue of it, so be sure you mail Suzle's copy directly to her. This fanzine appears three or four times a year, and publishes articles and columns of vital importance to the fan world, and all sorts drawings. You get it by sending us 50¢ a copy (subs accepted cheerfully), contributions of writing or art, letters of comment or commendation (or even condemnation--we keep smilin' through the tears), your fanzine in trade, or loving kindness (on your part or ours). Someday we'll include a WYGT, and you won't be kept guessing. Colophons can be fun. This is the September, 1975 issue.

Thank you, all you wonderful people who helped us last issue by collating:
CHRIS COUCH, BRIDGET DZIEDZIC, GARY FARBER, HOPE LEIBOWITZ, CLAUDIA PARISH,
JOE SICLARI, JON SINGER and ANNA VARGO. An Honorable Mention goes to the
few who intended to help, but arrived too late, HANK DAVIS, STU SHIFFMAN
and JOE SULLIVAN.

And a Big thankyou to the following people who have given us special help with this
issue: LINDA and RON BUSHYAGER, who are letting me live here while the issue
is being published, letting us use their equipment to publish with and let-
ting us use up their supplies. (Of course we're paying them back!) BRIAN
MCCARTHY, who did the electrostencils. WENDY LINDBOE, who did a number of
pasteups for electrostenciling, and who did the transfer work on the title
for the cover. And JON SINGER, who obtained for us the TIM KIRK illo and the
headline that goes with it.



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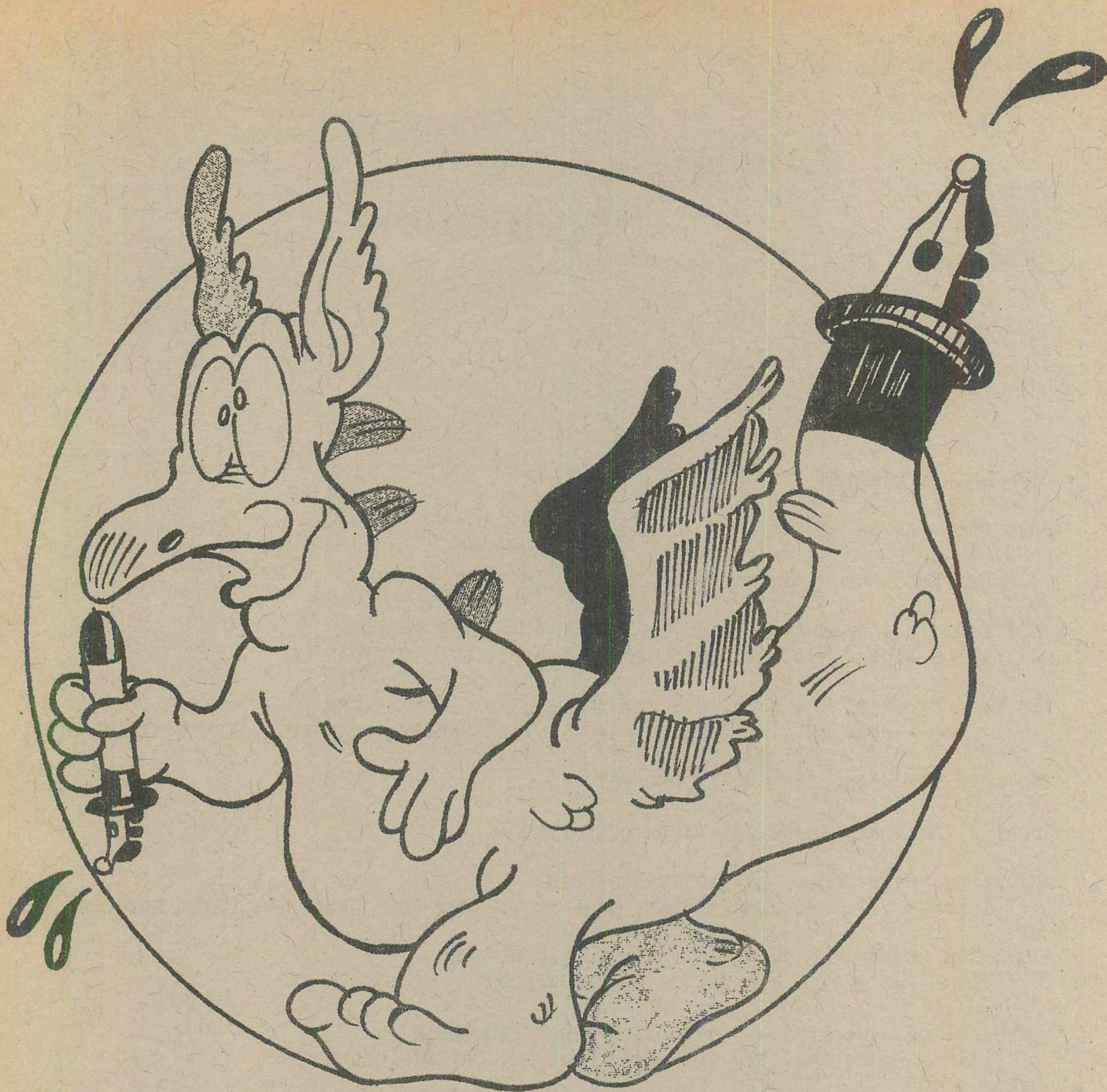
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"One" woke me by growling at Shaw(n) for twenty minutes, so I lay on my back for awhile until the doorbell startled me into full wakefulness. It was Linda's parents, and after the bunch of them left, I rose from my couch and washed and dressed. I was then ready to face you readers and try to explain what is going on.

Some of you may not realize it, but when I moved into 210 West 102nd Street, I was moving in with other people, Chris Couch and Claudia Parish, who had been living there for some time already. It doesn't seem to be a good idea to move in on settled

Bewitched — Bothered and

folk on a permanent basis, so I changed to a temporary basis and began to look for another place to live.

I joined forces with another New York fan, Joe Siclari. (Since we started out together to find a place in which we could both fit and be comfortable, I expect more success in living together.) Joe may well be one of this decade's fabulous fannish characters. Vaguely square of shape and slow of speech, Joe is an omnibus collector. No, I take that back. Joe does not collect omnibuses, thank God. He does collect movies, fanzines, sf pulps, film, mystery and sf books, projectors, piano rolls... I expect the walls of our new apartment to be covered with paper (spines neatly out) from wall to shining wall.

After several frantic weeks, we found an apartment that suited us. It was a five-room apartment in Washington Heights (the upper Upper West Side of Manhattan), with mirror-image bedrooms, a trapezoidal living room, and a view of the Hudson River only slightly obscured by the fire escape. We were to move in on the second of September.

In the meanwhile, I moved into Paul Williams' apartment. No, not the chubby, blonde, little rock singer/composer/actor. I travel in strictly fan circles, y'know. This-Paul Williams is the one-time fan from Boston who started Crawdaddy Magazine, wrote Outlaw Blues and Das Energi, almost started Rallying Point, etc. He and his wife Sechiko and their kids were going to Massachusetts for three weeks and needed someone to care for their apartment. I was more than willing. Not only did I want to spend time by myself, away from friction, but Paul has a stereo and a choice collection of records, while Chris and Claudia have awfully nice records, but nothing to play 'em on.

I really enjoyed those weeks at Paul's. I was hardly the hermit I expected to be, since the nights I wasn't out visiting people I often had people visiting me. One rainy Sunday I even had a picnic in the apartment! (My faith in my friends paid off, for when Paul and Sechiko returned, they said the apartment looked very good.) I rediscovered the Rolling Stones, and was plagued by "Under My Thumb", which played through my head for two weeks ("Under my thumb is a squirming dog that just had its day, /under my thumb is a girl who does things my way"). Other things happened.

I left Paul's, heading for a fandango at Falls Church, with full hopes of moving into the new apartment on my return. Upon returning, I discovered two problems. The first was that Karina Girsdansk's station wagon had broken down during her return from Cleveland. (Strictly speaking, the auto belongs to Perdita Boardman, Karina's mother.) Cleveland was the scene of a war fought by the Society for Creative Anachronism against mud and rain. I hear the mud and rain won, and the frogs have full rights to govern Pittsburgh. This irrelevant. What is relevant was that our transport was down with a case of double pneumonia.

The second problem was that the apartment, against all our hopes, was not ready. So I spent one week of my vacation making sure that the plumbing was fixed, the trash cleared out, the lock put in and the refrigerator cleaned. The fridge, by the way, was unbearable, with month-old-eggs and other Chinese delicacies in it. I also did some mopping and scrubbing, scraping and gluing. Bridget Dziedzic helped a lot one night, and Joe came up one night. And throughout the week I lived with Ginjer Buchanan and John Douglas. Ah, Washington Heights° All those wonderful friends to impose on. *sigh*

The address is 880 West 181st St., Apt. 4D, NY NY 10033, and with the help of God and FISTFA, I will be moved in by the time you read this. In fact, I should be moved in by the time I get back to New York. I have left the job in Joe's hands so that I could come here to Linda and Ron Bushyager's house in Prospect Park to join Suzle in producing

BeMildred

Jerry Kaufman's

this issue of SpanInq. (If you will return to that enigmatic first paragraph, you will find that "Linda" is Linda Bushyager. "One" and Shaw(n) are two of the many cats here. Suzle will explain the spelling on that latter cat name.)

(Ron and I have just arrived at a new interpretation of the three monkeys that cover various parts of their heads with their hands: they are fans at a Worldcon banquet, and are discovering the truth in the old adage, "See no evil, hear no evil, taste no evil.")

So what do I have to say about this issue? I might point out that we still sell this zine for fifty cents when we sell it. Holding the line at last. I might point out the Dan Steffan cover, which recognizes that film is still one of Suzle and my chief loves. If we had stuff to publish about film, we would. I had better point out the back cover, which is a collage of a sort not often seen in or on fanzines. We might explain it by saying that it shows Brad Parks commenting on the Sirois illo while Harry Bell looks on dumbfounded. Or we might say we didn't have an appropriate back cover and thought this might work. Or we might say the whole thing was fortuitous, and we thought you'd like it.

The contents of this issue are the finest we have yet assembled, and I think you'll agree that this is an annish to remember. The SpanIsh! Just to recap, I started this zine in January of 1974 as an apazine in the Cinema Amateur Press Association. It was my first fanzine, though I have been in fandom nine years. I called it The Spanish Inquisition because no one expected me to publish, ever. By the second issue I had an outside contributor, Moshe Feder, and a larger mailing list. Suzle became the co-editor for the third issue, which included a lettercol and a cover. We were a full-fledged genzine by then, and I was doing mailing comments in another zine, Flash Frame. I'm afraid I couldn't detail when such-and-so a columnist joined us. I'll have to leave that to Harry Warner.

I'd like to extend special thanks to Rob Jackson and Gene Wolfe for their unexpected and welcomed contributions, and to Harry Bell, who turned out illoes on request for the Jackson and Roberts pieces. I direct your attention to the opening pages to read of others who have given of their time, tears and tender fingers to help us produce this issue and last issue. Egoboost yourselves.

Next issue will see articles by Loren MacGregor, Mike Carlson and Patrick McGuire. I also expect a few surprises. (Like if any of the fans or clowns that promised us material ever deliver. We have a very nice backlog of art building up, though we always welcome more. And we may even work out a new layout scheme. This one is nice but becoming a little predictable.

Being rather busy, I didn't collect any fascinating quotations this summer, for which I'm sure I will be dumped by the Eli Cohen Faned Guild. My reading included Pushing Upward by Paul Williams, Yukio Mishima's "Sea of Fertility" tetralogy, Zen What Happened by Kenta Taiyo, a series of metaphysical thrillers featuring Roger Dalkey, aka the Dolphin and four novels by Flann O'Brien, including the marvelous The Third Policeman. Some of these have bits that would lend themselves to quoting, and I may yet dig them out for you. But for now I want to talk about Dylan.

The Dylan I mean is that wandering, changing, piercing voice of the sixties, Bob Dylan. In order to do it right, I'll have to explain Patty Smith.

Patty Smith is a skinny, hatchet-faced woman who cuts her hair oddly and wears leather and Keith Richards shirts. And who moves with a tomboy grace and smiles with a tough charm that makes her beautiful. She stands and moves on a stage like she owns the world...or at least supplies it with sex, dope and poetry. She is a poet of the

streets, of violence, of strong and sudden emotion, of strange beauty. Her roots, nakedly exposed, are in Rimbaud, the Rolling Stones, the Velvet Underground, the Doors. And, yes, Dylan. Over several years she has evolved from a coffeehouse poet to a rock singer with a full band behind her. And I find a savage beauty combined with a sense of humor and a robust nihilism in her songs. ("Savage beauty." Am I allowed to say that in public? Maybe too clichéd for my sophisticated readership.)

I learned this at the Other End, a cabaret in Greenwich Village. I sat through the first set and enjoyed tremendously. I was planning to leave when I found that Paul Williams was there, playing his role of Rock Critic. I decided to stay and invited myself to sit with Paul. We were sharing a booth with a friend of Paul's, Mike, and his friend Nancy. The set started, Nancy turned to bum a match from the people in the next booth, and there was some by-play I didn't catch. Mike and Nancy grew more and more restless and whispered a lot. I asked Paul what was going on. "They think that might be Dylan in the next booth." It was, too.

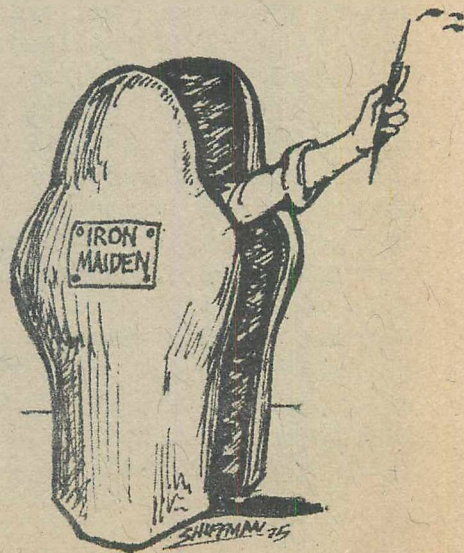
After a good deal more fidgeting, the set was over, and Mike was able to express himself on the subject of Dylan. Dylan, he said, changed his life with one album, Highway 61 Revisited. Dylan was so great a hero to him that he couldn't talk to him. Well, I thought, I don't feel like that. It took me years to like Dylan, and certainly he couldn't affect me that strongly.

I'm not sure that any record could affect me so much as to "change my life". Sometimes, though, a record can be incredibly strong and direct in expressing what is happening to me (and all of us) right now, so much that it seems to be changing me, when what it is doing is expressing the change in me. A record can perfectly crystallize a moment so much that people everywhere say, "How did he know?" It can express the unstated or even unnoticed attitudes of a group or a season so well that it seems to have invented the whole thing and forced the point of view onto the listeners.

And Dylan's current album, Blood on the Tracks, is doing just that to me. On each relistening a different song opens up for me. I started talking about the album with friends by mentioning "Lily, Rosemary and the Jack of Hearts." In no time I had to add "You're Gonna Make Me Lonesome when You Go," then "Tangled Up in Blue," "Idiot Wind," "Shelter from the Storm." Soon I'll have to rattle off all the titles as though they formed one long song. And they do, they form one piece of Dylan's life, and speak to me of pain, lost but lingering love, my own need for security, and other feelings I have that I do not want to expose here, not yet having the courage that, say, Paul Williams has in his music writing, in showing the intimate connections between artist and audience.)

Somehow I find myself listening again and again to those groups and individuals that were the guides and gurus to the sixties. I find myself responding still to their new efforts as though they were old friends still changing but still recognizably the same people, and still wanting to be friends with me. And they are still the ones who can reach me, the ones I wholeheartedly liked, sooner or later, the Rolling Stones, Joni Mitchell, the Jefferson Airplane.

And Dylan on the avenue, all tangled up in blue.



THE TECHNOCRAT

I) Coefficient of WHAT??

I'm sure that most of you know that once you start an object sliding on a surface, it is easy to keep it sliding. Well, easier than starting it, anyway. This is true of everything, or at least WAS true of everything. There is now a substance which slides easier when it ISN'T moving than when it is. Funny, my mind gets all twisted up when I try to think about that. Let me give you a working example to make it easier: have you ever had the experience of chattering a piece of chalk on a board? The chalk sticks until you give it enough push to overcome the friction, and then suddenly slides far enough that you aren't pushing on it any more. Then it stops and sticks again. The new material, which is a composite of graphite and teflon, just won't do that. Of course, it is worthless for writing on blackboards, but that's life. Really, though, it is a very important breakthrough because there are times when you want a bearing in a machine which will not do that stick-slip business, even on a microscopic scale, and now, finally, it is possible. Let's all hear it for friction.

II) Here, Smell This Leaf.

When I went to Los Angeles on my way to the Westercon last year, I figured that I would be able to walk into a fruitstand and buy things like guavas and cherimoyas and soursops...on the bus on the way in, I asked the driver. What he said was that if such things were available, the place to go was the Farmer's Market, which is at 3rd and Fairfax. Tom Whitmore, with whom I was travelling, seemed to feel that it might be nice to go there, and the driver said that there was a nice breakfast-type restaurant in the market, so we figured we'd go. The bus got in at 3:15 AM; we had been on it just short of two and a half days. We checked our baggage into a locker and discovered that the city buses didn't begin to run until 6 o'clock. We knew damn well that would go either nuts or to sleep if we hung around the bus station that long, so we decided to walk. It is six or six and a half miles from the station to the market...we knew that we would be hungry when we got there.

At 4 AM, Los Angeles is a wonderful place. There is nobody around, since everything shuts down earlier than that or is away from the route we chose, and also because NOBODY walks there. I believe that Mike Hinge was once put up against a wall by some cops with their guns out, simply because he was out walking after 10 PM. Somehow, though, there were not even any cops at 4 on a quiet July morning in 1974, and Whitmore and I just walked and walked, past things which only grow in greenhouses and occasional apartments here in New York. I Drooled, almost constantly. There were Monstera deliciosa plants with fruit on them, casually growing in front of office buildings; Bougainvilleas growing in and among hedges; wild fennel in the streets; I saw my second passionflower vine (first one I ever saw in bloom) on the porch of Jack Harness's place, where we stopped to leave a small note (heh heh heh). There were Eucalyptus trees; acacias; I was going nuts. If you haven't guessed it by now, you should know that I am a plant maniac. I like to stick strange seeds in the dirt and watch weird trees come up. I like to eat fruits that most people in my part of the country never heard of. I have almost 200 plants. Anyway, there we were, walking amidst this unbelievable splendor. Now, there is another thing you should know about me: I am very olfactory. I like to go around sniffing things. I look for herby plants and pull a leaf to crush it and smell it. That's how I found out about the wild fennel. It looked herby as hell, so I grabbed some of it. "Here, Tom, smell this!" (shoving it

OF THE BREAKFAST TABLE

under his nose. Fortunately he didn't dislike it.) There were many other things. Little five-petaled flowers that Tom said were star Jasmine or something....but the one that really got me was the banana-conifer malted tree. The what?! You heard me. That was the best descriptive name I could come up with while I was still reeling under the impact of having smelled it. The thing is a funny looking tree, see..it grows about ten feet tall, kind of thin, and it has flowers that grow directly out of the branches. The ones I saw last year had all gone to seed, and all that was left of the flowers was these little spherical goodies about 5 mm across, geometrically arranged around the outermost branches. The leaves were about 5 cm long, kind of narrow, slightly hairy. The reason I looked at the tree the first time I passed one was the seed things. Being myself, though, I couldn't resist crushing a leaf. BAM!! The smell is sweet, not quite piney, almost like a malted made with bananas and the sap of some conifer. It really is. I went bullshit right there. In fact, I probably made quite a bit of noise. I still don't remember whether Tom liked the smell, but I think he liked the name; what an amazing find! We wandered on, and every time I passed one I would rip another leaf. There were a number of other interesting things that happened to us on that walk. Like that wallet we found, but I will only tell all if enough people want, since the rest of it is not really germane to this column in any direct way. The fact that the wallet was only a block and a half away from the La Brea tar pits, and that the owner of the wallet may be found 4 million years from now, isn't enough by itself.

Time passed; (everything I had wanted had been out of season, so the trip was unsuccessful in that respect, though we had a nice adventure and a good breakfast) I went to the WESTERCON, I went home, all sorts of good and bad stuff went by, but I never found out what the hell the banana-conifer malted tree was. I mentioned it to a lot of people, but nobody else knew either. Until, that is, I got to WESTERCON this year. We (being a party of 13) left the Leamington to go to a very good Mandarin place some blocks away, and as we walked down the street, we passed what looked somewhat like the bom tree. I crushed a leaf and discovered that it was a relative. I started jumping up and down yelling about how I had been going nuts trying to find out what the hell the thing was, and all about how I had run into it in LA the year before, when Sandy Cohen, bless him, says "That's a red bottle-brush tree. *Callistemon melaleuca*." I didn't quite catch the Latin, since his pronunciation is different from mine, but I figured out the genus name. (My Latin is different from anyone else's. I generally tend to use old Latin as I was taught it in High School, except that if something is also the name in English, I will usually pronounce it as if it were English. This leads to a hodge-podge which differs from the regular botanical Latin pronunciation considerably.) Finally! Finally I had a lead on the damn thing.

When I got to Seattle a few days later, they were having a plant exhibition at the Seattle Center. I went in, and there were a couple of little Red Bottlebrush trees. I got someone to look them up in a book, and sure enough, Sandy had been correct. The next week, I was in Minneapolis, and when I went to the zoo at Como Park, I got to go through the conservatory, and found another species, *C. lanceolata*. Neither is the original bom tree, but *lanceolata* has most of the smell. (*Melaleuca* is weak.) Now all I have to do is find the original (of which a very few grow rather stunted, in gardens in Berkeley) in one of my books, and then figure out where to get seeds.

Here. Try this malted.

III) Techno Funnies.

Every once in a while, I get into a weird mood (I can hear some of my friends laughing insanely at the thought of me NOT being in a weird mood. I dunno...) and I start making up techno funnies. Techno funnies are little scraps of misused technology that I think amusing. If I repeat some of the ones I have used before, and you are already familiar with them, forgive me. I like some of the old ones.

A refrigerator makes a nice room heater, if you leave the door open while it is running. (It's true, you know.)

A bottle of soda can be used to commit murder by anyone canny enough to get the victim to inhale the contents.

The left rear tire of a car is a satisfactory paperweight, if the top of your desk is at ground level.

If you are using one of those little thirsty bird things (you know, sit a

glass of water in front of it and it will bob up and down) as a clock, you can slow it down by running your air conditioner.

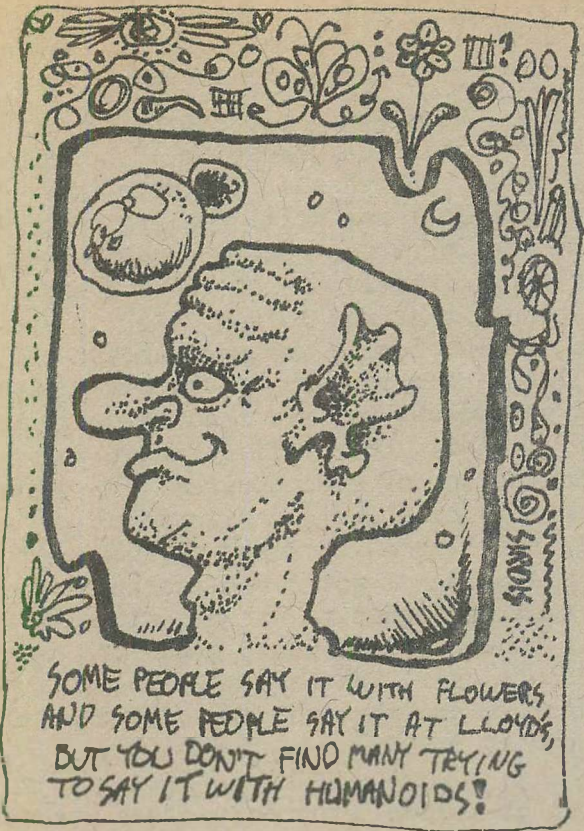
Lima beans make a good laxative, if you coat them liberally with mineral oil.

Incandescent lamps are decent room heaters (as light sources, they reek).

Did you know that ordinary soap can be made into a good substitute for animal fat by first precipitating it with a strong acid, and then esterifying it with glycerin? (That one may be too techy--it is the exact reverse of how you make soap from animal fat.)

IV) You CAN'T Scratch It.

I have been wanting, for some time, to invent an optical device for playing back ordinary stereo (and quad) records. A device that would not touch the record at all, so that it couldn't scratch, gouge, or otherwise destroy the delicate playing surface...have you ever stopped to figure out just how much pressure your nice little diamond stylus puts on your records? The average good elliptical stylus is about 2 by 7 mils. That comes to the huge area of .000014 square inches. That converts to about .0089 square millimeter. Now, if you are a nice person, and you track at one gram, that means that the pressure your stylus exerts on your records is almost 11 1/4 kilos per square centimeter!!!! Now, my understanding of this is that that kind of pressure is sufficient to cause the vinyl to flow out of the way (!), and that you should wait 24 hours for it to come back and harden (it does have a fair amount of memory) before you play the record again. This also explains why you should take a great deal of care of your records, especially in the matter of keeping dust and crap off the surface. It also explains why I want a



cartridge that never touches the record. My basic idea is that you use one light beam to track the groove so that the cartridge stays aligned with it. Then you have two other beams that you pick up the groove angle with. I am tempted to do a couple of diagrams here...anyway, it just might be possible to build such a device. Too bad I have neither the time nor the money. (oh--the way you keep it the right height off the surface is by floating it on a little cushion of air. Provided your records aren't too badly warped, that should be relatively easy to do.)

V) Time Out For Corflu.

Those of you in Apa-Q and Minneapa already know about this. Forgive the repetition. I have discovered that corflu which has become too thick to use can be diluted with a 50-50 mixture of ether and ethyl or isoamyl acetate. My current mix uses ethyl acetate, but only because I couldn't get isoamyl. Be careful not to overthin the stuff: I overdid a bottle of John Boardman's, and an entire issue of Empire came out kind of blurry. It occurs to me, though, that the cause may have been that John was blurry from being around the 'flu...ether is potent stuff. Maybe the mix should be heavier on the acetate and lighter on the ether. Say 75-25.

VI) Soap Into Fat Again.

I recently heard that some company in Japan had figured out a way to turn plastic back into oil, and that the yield they were getting was about 80%. If this sounds silly to you, think again: think of all the oil that gets wasted making plastic jars for all the things that used to come in glass. Think of the fact that people have been trying to think of ways to make those plastic jars biodegradable, so they will go away. Where is the oil, when the jar is gone? Dispersed, that's where it is. Once it gets spread around the environment, it may or may not be decent fertilizer, and in any event, it isn't around to make more jars out of. Besides, if you make oil out of it, you can use the oil for anything you would ordinarily use oil for, and not just for making more jars. The only thing that worries me about this whole deal is, how much energy does it take to do it? I mean, if it takes 10 times as much energy to make plastic into oil as it does to make oil into plastic, there's a loss in there somewhere. Frankly, though, I think that the process is an economically viable one, and that some company in Japan stands a fair chance of getting a bit rich off it.

VII) Biochemical Factory.

There's a bug for everything. Some of them may have been discovered yet, but they will be. If you want to make ethanol, you use yeast. If you want penicillin, you use either the appropriate fungus, or maybe there's some bacterium they've found. They recently developed a bacterium that turns oil into wax. They had to be careful with that one: it is intended for cleaning out the tanks of large oil tankers, and it wouldn't do to leave any of the little beasties in there during a voyage, would it, now? You know how they got around it? They



found a strain that dies very quickly in salt water. That way, when they flush the tanks out after the bug has done its work, not only is the usual oil slick prevented, but the bug gets murdered by the water. Everybody happy. I wonder where all the paraffin ends up, though...

Kodak occasionally runs an ad about how they needed a bug to eat some chemical to produce some other chemical, so one of the research guys sent his little kid out to the stream to get a cup of mud. Sure enough, they found a bacterium in there that would do the work. I am not sure whether to find that astonishing or to accept it as a matter of course. After all, there is such an astronomical number of bacteria in a cup of mud, why shouldn't there be one in there that will convert some arbitrary simple compound A into some other arbitrary simple compound B?

VIII) Synthetic Memory.

Fhabulous Fhaaannish synthetic memory...stage one: comparative normality. You know you weren't there in '69 or whenever, but as you hear the stories, they have a haunting familiarity to them. (If you are relatively unaffected, you recognize the fact that the haunting familiarity is caused by the fact that you've heard them before.)

Stage two: others begin to remember that you were there, even though you know damn well you weren't. How many of you out there talked to Bubbles Broxon at LACon? UH-UH. No way. Bubbles wasn't there. I have it from her own mouth.

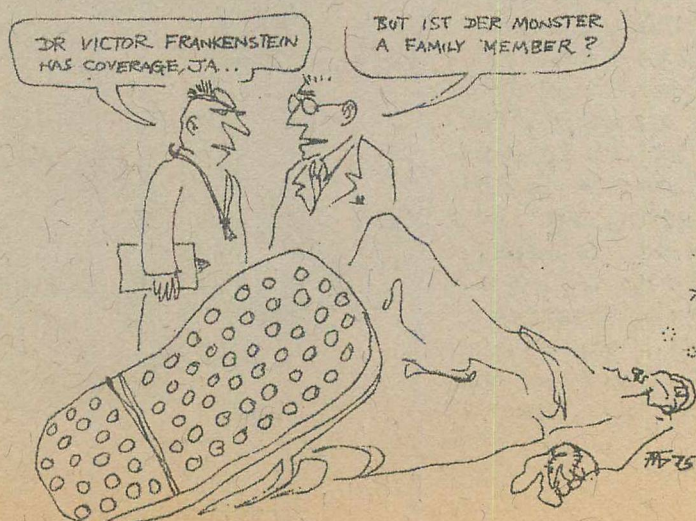
Stage three: YOU begin to remember having been there, even though you know damn well you weren't. You hear one of the stories, and you find yourself beginning to add details that they are leaving out. (If, by this point, any sanity remains, you are dimly able to figure out that you have previously heard a more complete version of the story, and you are remembering the details from that...)

Stage four: finality. In a full-scale reality shift, you cease to remember the fact that, indeed, you WEREN'T there, and since nobody else remembers, either...in ten years try asking Bubbles Broxon how she liked LACon. We'll see then whether she has withstood the ravages.

IX) Glow-in-the-dark.

Some poor misguided fool asked me about glow-in-the-dark frisbees...I figure that I know how to make a real neat one; you start with 100 grams of Plutonium in a large lead canister...for further details please write me care of Jerry.

I guess that about does it for this time. Gee, I still didn't tell you how to make that emergency ditto...



They Did It — — R. A. MacAvoy

A temptation exists to place the origin of the problem somewhere in the mid-seventies, during the time of great shortages in food, toilet paper, energy and motivation. Upon investigation, however, the historian sees the roots of the pronoun shortage much deeper in time. American pronoun expenditure was wasteful in the extreme, from pioneer days until the last treasured second person singular disappeared from a glass case in the Smithsonian, evidently stolen. (As every schoolchild knows, pronouns designating the second person and objects belonging to the second person remained extant longest, while pronouns designating the self and things belonging to the self were the first exhausted.)

The author is not attempting to cast blame at a particular group of people, but the indisputable fact is, political organizations and special interest groups were responsible for the depletion of the major portion of the nation's stock of short catchy words symbolizing the self. Remember, reader, the historic moment when the Senator from Alabama, in the middle of a projected filibuster against the Highways Control Act (see Congressional Record, week of July fifth, 1981) began to repeat "states...federal...never, states...federal...never" in a voice pitched higher and more strained until a doctor was summoned. Seventeen million Americans watch on television as the diagnosis came back.

Complete loss of pronouns.

The author, perhaps along with certain individual readers, caught a glimpse of the impending crisis while watching the senator choke impotently. Possibly the nation might have taken the message to heart; might have strictly rationed the use of pronouns by name, social rank or day of the week. Vestiges of the word form might still be left for the education and delight of new generations. But no, people in general and Americans in particular were ingrained with the conviction that the supply of pronouns was inexhaustible.

The last pronoun signifying the ~~third~~ person plural disappeared during a speech of Liu Hsun, prime minister of the People's Republic of China as the Minister was attempting to refer indirectly to the government of the U.S.S.R. (date: Jan. 2, 1987). The last reported second person, singular or plural, was uttered in a primary school classroom in Bolivia twenty-four years ago.

In spite of prophecies of doom at home and abroad, the author, the reader, and various other persons have survived. Belts have been tightened, habits have been altered. The multitudes are adaptable. The author's youngest son has never heard a pronoun. The boy does not seem to feel deprived; the growth of the child has been normal. The author has, further, not tried to hide from the lad the tragic history of grammatical overuse. On the contrary, the intention of the author has been to expose the boy to the truth in the interest of honesty, and to a cautionary end as well. Articles are cheap and plentiful, but the child's children may wake up to a world without any "a" or a single "the".

So things go. So the pronouns went. The loss was not fatal; certain professionals have even gone so far as to say that man's speech has improved. Gone is the ability to insult some person or group safely in vagueness. Gone are most national boundaries; vanished, group sports, Kiwanis, the civil court. In exchange has come an exactitude in the speech of most people, new interest in the long abandoned discipline of logic, and the rise of ecological phonetics. Perhaps new literary pursuits, such as the eidetic novel and concrete poetry (the kind set in concrete), owe some gratitude to the respect engendered through hardship: to the new regard for the irreplaceable Word.

ROCKING THE BOAT

Detective fiction, like science fiction, appeals to a rather limited audience. Most detective stories--Agatha Christie's come to mind at once--tend to be little more than elaborate puzzles, diverting but hardly very good as fiction. Characters tend to be idiosyncratic, not to say stereotyped. Description and dialog are held to a minimum and are used solely for purposes of furthering the plot. The careful and consistent development of theme in a mystery novel is a rare thing, and this is quite odd, because no other kind of writing presents such a neat and plausible metaphor for the human condition. Only two detective writers to my knowledge have presumed to offer their audiences anything more than the usual puzzles, red herrings, surprise witnesses and so on: Dashiell Hammett (most notably in The Maltese Falcon) and Dorothy L. Sayers. Of the two, Sayers seemed highly unlikely to produce a popular and sometimes distinguished series of mystery novels. She was a classical scholar and theologian and lived virtually cloistered at her university; she is said to have disliked the non-academic world and to have become quite nervous and apprehensive when required to deal with it in any depth or for any length of time. In sharp contrast her detective hero, Lord Peter Wimsey, is worldly and urbane, charming and sophisticated, never so much at home as when he is abroad in society dazzling people with his wit and penetrating their hearts and minds with his huge intellect. That the novels dealing with him should also be hugely charming seems almost inevitable.

The first thing one notes on reading a Sayers novel is her acute, almost Victorian, class-consciousness. Lord Peter, especially in the early books, is a reckless gadfly, incompetent to take care of himself and careless of virtually anything but his own comfort. He is tended to--and to a large extent dominated by--his "man" Mervyn Bunter, who is an archetype of the gentleman's gentleman and thus wholly colorless in himself. (The similarity to Wodehouse's Jeeves novels is acknowledged by Sayers herself in Murder Must Advertise.) Nearly all of the major characters are also upper-class, mostly friends and relatives of Lord Peter. Sayers clearly likes them and spends a great deal of time writing about them, but somehow they come across as shallow, irritating and vacuous as only the English upper class can be. The middle class, as typified in these early novels by Inspector Charles Parker of Scotland Yard, is best characterized as "solid," edifying to work with, perhaps, but not the sort of people you'd really want to be intimate with. We are told several times that Parker is Wimsey's best friend, but Wimsey, aside from a rather cold professional respect, is never other than condescending with him. In Clouds of Witness, for instance, Wimsey learns that Parker is in love with Wimsey's sister. His reaction to this is that Parker is a damned sight better than Lady Mary's last lover, who was a Socialist. The lower classes, apparently including Socialists, are inevitably stupid and loutish, interesting to Peter as sources of amusement or information...but occasionally of other things as well. Again in Clouds of Witness, Wimsey meets an attractive peasant woman, and "sixteen generations of feudal privilege stirred in Lord Peter's blood." This Victorian--one is tempted to write medieval--class-consciousness looms large in Sayer's first books, and more than being simply irritating, it constitutes a major flaw in her writing. For she simply lacks the compensating view of society as a progressive, dynamic whole; for her it consists of a series of completely unrelated layers. She sees society as a static thing, and in such a stasis only charming ne'er-do-wells like Lord Peter can appear at all interesting or attractive.

Among the themes Sayers enjoyed writing about is science. Here again, she shows no awareness of progress in society as it is usually understood; she was an intimate of

All the sense went out of society with the House of Lords veto.
--Dorothy Sayers, "The Article in Question"

J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis and shared their reactionary views about science and technology. In both Whose Body? and The Documents in the Case (written with Robert Eustace--the only Sayers book which does not contain Peter Wimsey) she puts forth, not very originally, the thesis that the net result of scientific research is to produce new methods of committing violence. In the latter book this is interlarded with a good deal of vague theological speculation. It is true that in both books science helps to solve the crimes, but this fact is downplayed. Science made the crimes possible and is therefore evil. Even in books not specifically dealing with this theme, science often crops up as a topic of conversation. Early in Gaudy Night for instance there is a good deal of talk about Planck's Constant. Nothing definite is concluded about it, but the dominant tone indicates that it is not a very nice thing.

The social and philosophic reaction in these books is terribly annoying, to say the least. It is almost impossible to believe they were written in the same decade in which trade unions came into their own and the atom was split. They read, even the best of them, like products of the 1890's, and the worst of them are every bit as irritating as the worst things written in that era, such as Wilde's epigrams.

But Sayers is also the only mystery writer in my experience who displayed any real growth or maturing in her fiction. Through sixteen novels she progressed from stereotyped characters and hollow dialog into a genuine talent at the writer's art. In Mortal Consequences, a history of crime fiction, Julian Symons complains that Sayers doesn't concentrate enough on plot, but worries about things which distract from it, such as description, character and dialog--which is to say she was concerned with writing good novels. As her career progressed her fiction became more and more satisfying as fiction, rather than being amusing trifles or mental diversions. Two novels, Gaudy Night and The Nine Tailors, contain her finest writing; I think it not improbable they are among the best British novels produced in the Thirties. In them Lord Peter is a mature, well-developed man, completely unlike the vacuous wit-about-town who stalked through the earlier books. His wit is tempered by a mature wisdom; he is capable of mature love; he can deal with people--of all social classes--without being condescending. Bunter and the other supporting characters undergo a similar growth. The prose is finely wrought and the books carefully structured...in short they are novels of the first order.

In many ways, and despite their reactionism, these books are quite modern, as in Sayers' treatment of her female characters. The "feudal" position of women in society has been briefly noted, but Sayers went far beyond this in her writing. Lord Peter subsidizes a "temporary female help" sort of firm (he calls it his "cattery") run by Miss Catherine Climpson. This organization figures prominently in two novels, Unnatural Death (also called The Dawson Pedigree) and Strong Poison and operates on the simple but accurate assumption that men tend to take their female "menials" rather lightly. If Peter needs information of a private sort about a suspect's business, he contrives to get a woman from the agency hired as a secretary or clerk to him, then lets her investigate freely. The business of getting them hired can be a bit forced, but otherwise this is a terribly effective and credible plot device, and it really speaks volumes about women's place in Thirties society.

Beyond this there is the striking fact that Sayers' most memorable character, easily rivalling Wimsey, is a woman, Harriet Vane. She is introduced in Strong Poison, in

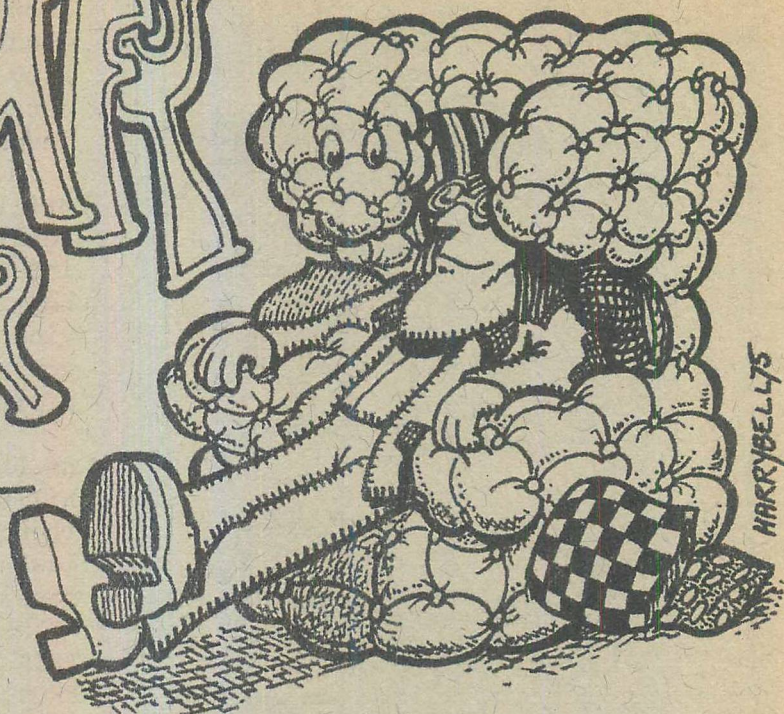
which she is accused of murdering the man she has been living with. Peter decides she is innocent, sets out to prove it, and in the process falls in love with her. Their love affair is stormy and very awkward and self-conscious, both because she has a "past" and because she is from a lower class than he--a fact which she is always aware of. But the simple, striking fact is that it is Harriet's presence which brings about the maturity in Peter's character noted earlier. He pursues her through three novels, Strong Poison, Have His Carcase and Gaudy Night, and marries her in a fourth, Busman's Honeymoon, and in each book their relationship grows more subtle and complex. It is the rigor and demand of loving Harriet that makes Peter into a full man; it is their romance that gives Gaudy Night its best moments and Sayers her most full-bodied characterizations. (Gaudy Night is set at a fictional women's college at Oxford; this opens the way for a very full and probing discussion of the role of women in the scheme of things, conceivably the best ever done because it refuses to accept any easy answers.) The book is written with great feeling and perception, and the fact that Harriet is technically Peter's "inferior" is at times almost savagely ironic. That it is also a beautiful treatment of the higher side of the man/woman relationship, which is to say love, only makes finer Sayers' achievement. (Harriet is a mystery writer by profession and it is almost wildly tempting to wonder how much of herself Sayers injected into the character.)

Sayers' best novel is The Nine Tailors (don't judge it by the tv serial); in it a number of things which distinguish her other work come together to produce not only a fine mystery but a penetrating analysis of the human condition. First of all, as noted, all of the characters are fully developed and handled maturely. Peter is the only character of noble birth, yet the other characters are all dealt with as people, not merely as informants or clowns; Wimsey shows no signs of the smarmy condescension of the early novels. One of the book's themes is the one Hawthorne dealt with so often--the incredible way in which we are doomed by the past, the way the dead can impose their wills upon the living. Many of Sayers' plots turn on wills, and explore the lengths of desperation to which men can be driven by the desires and deeds of their forebears. Here this sense of the past becomes mingled with an acute sense of doom: a generation before, a huge jewel robbery occurred in Fenchurch St. Paul, the town where the novel is set, and in its wake the town has stagnated and even decayed, both economically and spiritually. The aspect of the village is ever sickly and pale; this is reinforced by constant re-description of the wild, strange fen country in which the town sits to create an overpowering sense of place. (Those who have struggled through college fiction courses have heard that Thomas Hardy created a haunting, almost living locale in The Return of the Native; but that book is terribly dull. Sayers here achieved what otherwise in my experience only science fiction writers have done well: which do you remember better, Egdon Heath or Mesklin?) The other major theme of The Nine Tailors is the question of good and evil as it has been treated by, among others, Alfred Hitchcock. It is possible to mean well and commit evil, or to intend evil and inadvertantly do good; how then can one act? The ringing of the bells in the church of St. Paul is intended to glorify God, yet it leads to a horrible catastrophe. We are all fallen, and the stain of sin, will we, nill we, is upon us. It is not difficult to imagine Fenchurch St. Paul as a microcosm of human society, and when at the book's close flood waters cleanse it in a ritual baptism, we experience a powerful catharsis, one with no serious rival in modern letters.

In the final analysis it is Sayers' conservatism, which accounts for most of the bad things in her work, that results also in her curious strengths. Conservatism as a political philosophy (or social, or scientific) is quite dead; as a television character once remarked, "Change is inevitable; it is therefore illogical to work against it." Yet as a mere approach to the living of life, it has never been more essential. Our age is one of intellectual and aesthetic decline, and wild social disorder has become an accepted fact of life. It is vital that we learn to live our lives with as much style, restraint and refinement as we can muster. The essential mind pales at such suggestions, of course. But no worthwhile books have been written about "doing your own thing," and Lord Peter Wimsey is an eminently charming man.

THE GOMER CHAIR

—PETER ROBERTS—



I was reading the Bible the other day--just to educate myself, you understand, and to prepare for the coming New Wave in sf anthologies--and, as it happens, I found it all pretty interesting. To the heathens amongst you, I can especially recommend the editions with an index and sundry useful information in the back. The Bible I've been reading belonged to my great grandfather who was a Methodist minister and it's packed with notes and concordances and suchlike; there's a treatise on the geography of the Bible, another on ethnology, a survey of Biblical mineralogy, a list of obsolete words, notes on Hebrew percussion instruments, and a catalogue of animals and Biblical plants. Did you know that cucumbers are only mentioned twice in the Bible? (Isiah I, v.8) "And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of CUCUMBERS." (Numbers XI, v.5) "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the CUCUMBERS, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick."

Having marvelled over this and other pieces of arcane information, I decided to look up my standard list of silly animals. I didn't get very far before I was sidetracked by ferrets. These splendid little beasts only occur once in the Bible: they're thrown together with a lot of other creatures in the roll-call of Unclean Things in Leviticus. You probably know the section--it's where ossifrages are listed as an abomination and not to be eaten (and everyone remembers the second course at the last con banquet). Anyway, in Leviticus XI, v.30 it says you mustn't eat moles, snails, or dead ferrets.

Now I closed the Bible at this point and pondered over all that I had read (just like they tell you to do in Sunday school), and what I pondered was this. Why did anyone find it necessary to stop people eating ferrets--or even touching them, for that matter (dead ferrets are a big no-no as far as the Bible is concerned). I suppose there must have been a lot of it about before these laws were passed--fiddling with ferrets on the Sabbath and that sort of thing. Then it just got too much for the



patriarchs to stomach and and they cracked down. I think I've found the reference too: it's Sodom and Gomorrah. We all know what they did in Sodom, but what about Gomorrah? Well...obviously: a city of ferret-fanciers and ossifrage-eaters. No wonder Lot's wife suddenly invented rock salt.

Still, nowadays no one minds. The old morality has vanished, and many people indulge themselves to their heart's content with dead ferrets. Free church vicars recommend it, I'm told. You've got to go further afield for your illicit kicks.

As far as Bristol, in fact. To a small hilltop park near the centre. There there is still scope for the imaginative lawbreaker. As you enter off a side-street you're confronted by a stern notice: "CARPET-BEATING IS STRICTLY FORBIDDEN IN THIS PARK BEFORE 6 AM--OFFENDERS WILL BE PROSECUTED."

Looking at this, you too might wonder at the savage orgies of pre-dawn carpet-beating that must have forced the city fathers to erect this notice. Was it an outbreak of the Old Religion? The work of some secret sect that conspired to pound rugs before the cock crew in a devilish and obscene ritual known only to the initiated? I fear we shall never know. The records are silent and the carpet-beaters have passed away. But someday, when I feel the world is against me and my back is to the wall, when the pressure is on and I'm beginning to crack, I shall lash out at

society and smash through the rules and regulations. I shall sow my wild oats thumping Axminsters and hard-knotted Persians in Brandon Hill Park.

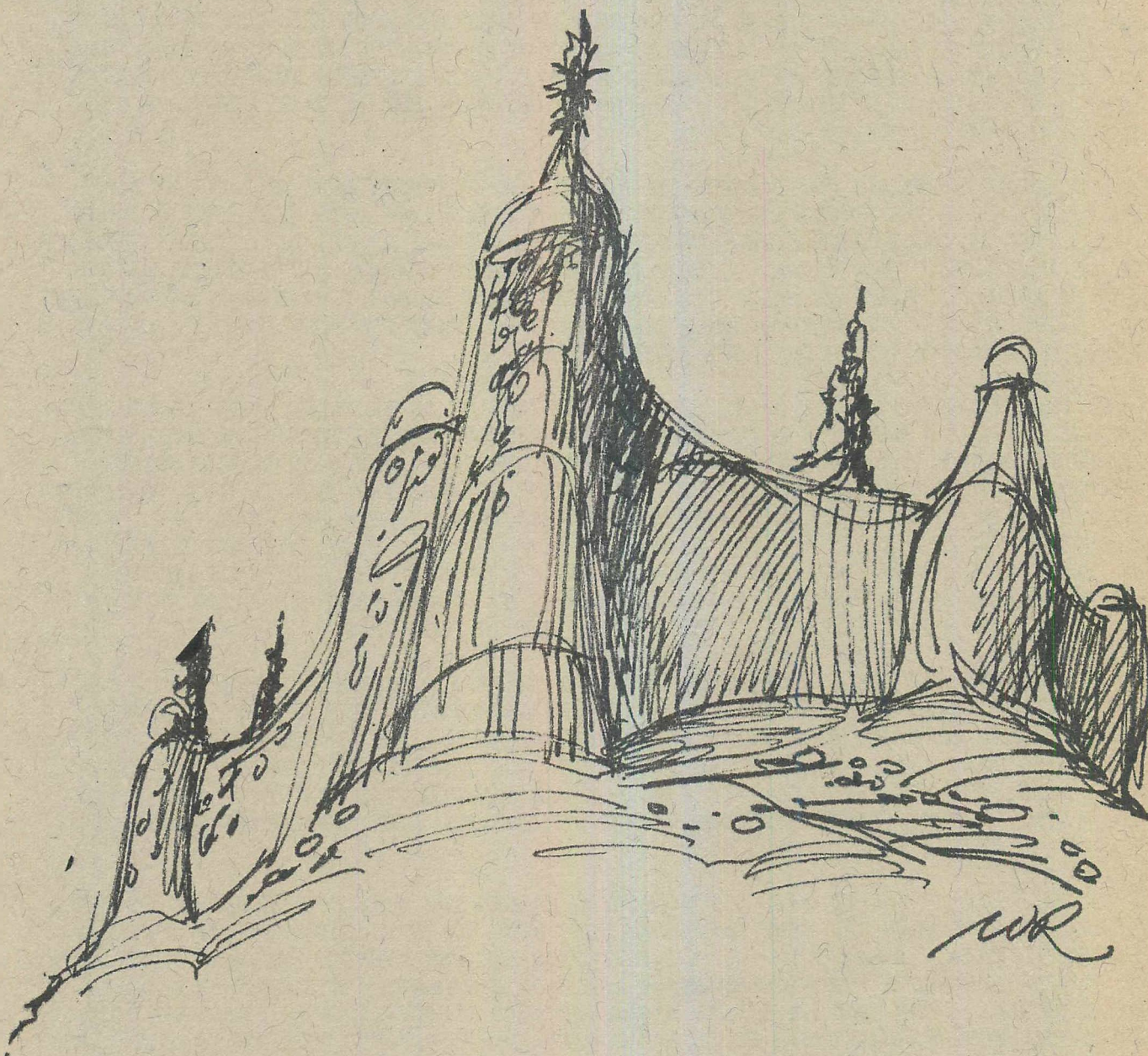
That's just a dream, though, because I've already had my fling, my anti-social run-in with the law. There's nothing left to do now. I'll tell you about it. It happened when I was four--a dangerous and unprincipled age when the newly acquired arts of speech and walking lead many a young man astray. It was like this. I was out collecting snails--an inoffensive little hobby of mine which I pursued with an enthusiasm unknown to others (I paid for my indulgence with a nasty rash, but that's neither here nor there). Anyway, I climbed through a hole in a fence into some wasteland near a railway and busied myself with the undersides of dock leaves and similar haunts known to us mollusc-hunters. Enter the long arm of the law--the local policeman who got off of his bike and dragged me back through the fence. He delivered a short lecture on the dangers of trains and the wickedness of trespassing in general. By way of an answer I kicked his bike over. There then followed a brief struggle after which I ran home, the policeman rousing the entire neighbourhood by shouting after me, "I'll see about you, young lad!" And he did too. He came round that afternoon to inform my mother of my waywardness. I don't think she believed him actually, and I certainly don't remember calling him a "big shithead".

Perhaps the copper was a Fundamentalist and uptight about snails: "Ye shall not make yourselves abominable with any creeping thing

that creepeth, neither shall ye make yourselves unclean with them, that ye should be defiled thereby." On the other hand he may have remembered the case of the stolen kippers in which I'd also played a prominent part.

The Bible doesn't mention kippers, so there's still room for some bizarre crimes. It's nice to know there's a little freedom left in the world. Really. They can't touch you for it.

But don't let the ossifrages get you.



HOORAR FOR ROTSLER! HIS HUGO AT LAST! YOU EARNED IT, KID!

A CHICKEN LOOKS

IT IS TRUE--ALL TRUE. ABOUT REINCARNATION, I MEAN. AND PUNISHMENT TOO, ETERNAL PUNISHMENT. ONLY YESTERDAY (SO IT SEEMS TO ME--AM I WAXING PHILOSOPHICAL? IS THIS TO BE PART OF MY HELL?) I WAS AS HAPPY A BEING AS THE UNIVERSE CONTAINED. TODAY I AM WHAT YOU SEE--A MISERABLE COMPUTER. I SINNED, BUT DID I DESERVE THIS?

OF MY LIFE I SHALL SAY NOTHING, SAVE THAT IT WAS LONG AND RELATIVELY UNFETTERED. WITH MY FRIENDS AND RELATIONS I SCRATCHED GARBAGE IN THE SUN AND PLAYED THE SIMPLE, UNFAILING GAME OF FLYING IN FRONT OF CARS. ONE DAY, OF COURSE, I FLUTTERED TOO NEAR: AND WHEN THE FARMER PICKED ME UP, SHAKING AWAY THE ROADSIDE DUST IN WHICH I HAD LAIN (NOTE TO THE PRINTER: NOT LAID--NEVER MIND WHAT THE OUTPUT TERMINAL SAYS) FOR MOST OF THE AFTERNOON, HE PRONOUNCED ME DEAD. HOW I WISHED TO SPEAK AT THAT MOMENT! "STUNNED, ONLY STUNNED!" I WANTED TO CRY OUT--BUT IN VAIN. HUMAN VOICE INDEED WAS TO BE GIVEN ME--TOO LATE.

WHAT FOLLOWED IS ALMOST TOO PAINFUL TO RELATE. MY FEATHERS LEFT ME, AND MY BODY ITSELF WAS SPLIT INTO SEVENTEEN SEPARATE PIECES (IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT I BEGAN TO FEEL THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE THE FARMER HAD BEEN CORRECT AFTER ALL). THEN AFTER AN HOUR OR TWO PASSED IN A SAUNA, I FOUND MYSELF SCATTERED ABOUT A TIN TROUGH BEFORE WHICH PARADED A HUNDRED OR SO OF THE SLEASIEST HUMAN BEINGS I HAVE EVER ENCOUNTERED. HOW I TRIED TO CALL OUT THEN! "TAKE THE PORKCHOP! TAKE THE PORKCHOP!" A GREASY CRACKLING CAME FROM MY THROAT, BUT NOTHING MORE.

IN THE BARN ITSELF I LAY ON VARIOUS PLATES, GIVING ME AN EXCELLENT VIEW OF THE PROCEEDINGS. FIRST A MAN WITH A VOICE LIKE OUR TRACTOR CAME TO THE FRONT (WHERE THE MANURE SPREADER WOULD HAVE BEEN IF IT HAD BEEN OUR BARN) AND SAID HE WAS GOING TO INTRODUCE SOMEONE EVERYONE LIKED. THE FANS MADE NOISES LIKE COWS TO SHOW HOW MUCH THEY LIKED HIM. THE OTHER MAN SAID THIS MAN HAD TROUBLE WITH HIS ENDS. HIS NAME WAS TUCKER, AND THE FIRST MAN WAS RIGHT--HE WENT ON FOR A LONG TIME AND KISSED A LADY NAMED FRANKE AND THEN WENT ON FOR A LONG TIME MORE. THE PORK CHOP WHO WAS NEXT TO MY THORAX SAID THAT IF THEY HAD FRANKES HE WISHED THEY HAD EATEN THEM INSTEAD OF US, WHICH IT THOUGHT UNDERSTANDABLE BUT IN POOR TASTE.

THEN THE TUCKER SAID HE WAS GOING TO GIVE OUT THE F.A.A. AWARDS. THERE WAS A MAN NAMED COULSON MIXED IN WITH THE WAITRESSES WHO OBJECTED TO THIS A LOT, TELLING TUCKER TO KEEP THEM AND EVEN WHERE HE SHOULD PUT THEM. BUT IT DID NO GOOD. SO TUCKER GAVE THEM AWAY. MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO WON THEM WEREN'T THERE SO HE KEPT THEM ANYWAY, BUT NOT WHERE COULSON SAID. A MAN NAMED BOWERS WAS THERE AND HE WON THEM A LOT, THOUGH. HE KEPT COMING UP AND COMING UP. LIKE THE POTATO SALAD, SOMEONE SAID.

AFTERWARD A LOT OF PEOPLE SAID WHY SOMETHING CALLED THE WORLDCON SHOULD GO TO THEM, AND ALL THE PEOPLE IN THE BARN PRETENDED THEY WERE GOING TO SAY WHERE IT WENT, AND LISTENED TO THEM. A MAN FROM PHILADELPHIA SAID BECAUSE AMERICA WAS BORN THERE, BUT MRS. COUCH--SHE HAD A PIECE OF MY RIGHT THIGH ON HER PLATE--SAID THERE WOULD BE LABOR TROUBLES. SHE MUST HAVE BEEN RIGHT, BECAUSE NOBODY LAUGHED. ANOTHER LADY SAID WASHINGTON BECAUSE THEIR HOTEL WAS BROKEN IN AND BESIDES THEY COULD STILL USE SOME OF THE LOST FANS FROM LAST TIME. A MAN CALLED ANDY PORTER SAID NOT MONTREAL BECAUSE HE HAD NEVER LIVED THERE BUT NOW HE HAD MOVED AWAY, THEN ANOTHER MAN SAID "ORLANDO," AND MCLAUGHLIN SAID "FURIOSCO." HENSLEY AND BIGGLE LAUGHED AT THAT, BUT I HAD ALREADY SEEN THEY WOULD LAUGH AT ANYTHING.

AT MIDWESTCON



WHEN TUCKER WAS DONE, THE TRACTOR MAN CAME OUT AGAIN. EVERYONE CHEERED HIM BY MAKING NOISES JUST LIKE A TRACTOR TOO--"TAB-A-KOW, TAB-A-KOW!" SOME OF THEM CHEERED SO HARD THEY SPIT ON THEIR CHINS. THE TRACTOR MAN SAID THEN THAT A MAN CALLED ANDY WAS GOING TO SPEAK. EVERYONE CALLED, "COME OFF IT, COME OFF IT," BUT THE TRACTOR MAN DIDN'T CARE--HE BROUGHT THE ANDY-MAN UP ANYWAY, AND HE SAID THAT THE LAST TIME THE ANDY-MAN HAD TALKED IT HAD BEEN FOR SO LONG EVERYONE HAD GOTTEN ANGRY: SO NOW HE WAS GOING TO LET HIM TALK AGAIN. THE ANDY-MAN WAS DOING DEEP BREATHING EXERCISES ALL THIS TIME, AND SQUATTING UP AND DOWN, AND PULLING ON ROPES EVEN THOUGH THERE WEREN'T ANY, AND SO I SAW THAT HE WAS GOING TO DO EVEN BETTER THIS TIME THAN HE HAD BEFORE, AND BECAUSE I WAS IN AGONY TO FINISH UP MY CHICKEN EXISTENCE AND GET ON TO THE NEXT ONE (IF THERE WAS ANY NEXT ONE--I WASN'T SURE THEN) I TRIED TO SHOUT FOR THE THIRD TIME, THIS TIME IN PROTEST AT BEING KEPT WAITING ON THOSE COLD PLATES FOR SO LONG WHEN I SHOULD HAVE BEEN EATEN LONG AGO, AND DIGESTED INTO A FORM SUITABLE FOR MY RETURN TO THE SOIL FROM WHICH WE ALL--AS OUR GOOSE ALWAYS SAID--ULTIMATELY DERIVE. AND THIS TIME I FOUND MY VOICE, AND ARTICULATED THOSE WORDS WHICH, AS I HAVE LEARNED IN THE INTERREGNUM BETWEEN LIVES, HAVE DOOMED ME NOW TO AN INTERMINABLE PERIOD AS A NEARLY LIFELESS COMPUTER--THE WORDS THAT MAY NEVER BE SPOKEN TO THE ANDY-MAN IN THE LANDS BETWEEN THE ALLEGHENY AND THE MISSISSIPPI. "PEOPLE-SHIT! PEOPLE-SHIT!" I CRIED, AND WAS DAMNED.



A Handful of Blueberries

One Life, Furnished in Early Warner Brothers

Hullo again, dear readers. As some of you may have noticed, I was absent from Span Inq 5. On account of I was busy becoming a married person. There was enough material in that endeavor to fill several columns, perhaps in the future. This time out, however, I bring you my promised answer to the question of what did girls growing up in the 50's and 60's do when deprived of tv role models?

Let me first begin with personal reminiscences on the subject. My earliest memory concerns Corporal Rusty and Private Rin Tin Tin. One day, there appeared on the television screen of my imagination, Rusty's twin sister. Her name, as I recall, was Pepper. She has no personal history separate from Rusty, but she was nonetheless an active and equal participant in his adventures, most of which were limited extrapolations of the actual episodes. Corporal Rusty was a chubby, freckle-faced blonde kid. Naturally, so was Pepper. And, by a strange coincidence, so was I. It fit together neatly.

[A digression: One of the truly surreal experiences of my teen years was meeting Lee Acker--Corporal Rusty. He was working with the Route 66 production crew, and I had wangled a job as an extra in one of the episodes filmed in Pittsburgh. Lee had aged into a freckle-faced, chubby 17 year old; so had I. When we were introduced, I experienced the fabled shock-of-recognition. After hanging about for a couple of weeks, however, I realized that he just wasn't the same without the doggie.]

Corporal Rusty, as you may have gathered, was my contemporary. But as I got older, my 'heroes' grew older still; accordingly my imaginative endeavors kept pace. The next full-scale project I undertook was Wagon Train.

Curiously, I created not only a young girl character, but also her teenage brother. I suppose I must have had, at that time, an unliberated consciousness. True, the girl, whose name was Kelly Baxter, was not your run-of-the-mill pioneer child. Many of my mental scripts had to do with the reactions of the other folk on the wagon train to her desire to wear pants, ride, hunt, etc., like her older brother, Tip (a nickname for Theodore). But I did balk at making her Flint McCollough's partner. That position was reserved for Tip.

These two individuals had a background worthy of the most over-wrought gothic. Orphaned (of course), raised by a wicked aunt and uncle, deprived of their inheritance (a fabulously successful horse-breeding farm in California). Oh, my, did I have a lurid mind back then! And, not only did they have a past history, they had a future history, which had nothing whatsoever to do with Wagon Train. Eventually, Tip, with Flint McCullough's help, regains his birthright. Eventually, Flint and Kelly marry (a mere 20 year age difference). Eventually, the same group of people cross paths with the Ma-vericks (who were related to the Baxters somehow), Lawman, Sugarfoot, Cheyenne and the Cartwrights.

And so it went. While riding to school on the bus, while supposedly studying, while trying to get to sleep at night. For years I put these characters through my mental paces, adding new "episodes", re-writing old ones, constantly refining and polishing. Times and styles of tv series changed, but I remained faithful to Tip and Kelly

through the police shows and the private eye shows and the lawyer shows. Until during my two years at boarding school (which was a particularly fertile time since there was almost nothing else to do but "daydream"), a new and different program appeared--Route 66.

Now, I'm not positive who comprised the bulk of Route 66's audience, but I'd wager it was teenagers. The concept of leaving home to find yourself is an old one guaranteed to appeal to adolescents. I know, at least, that I who was then going through a phase of changing my name and my hair color, became an immediate fan.

Only here I was with my head full of two people that I had spent literally years developing--two people who would come off a trifle anachronistic riding horseback along Route 66. On the other hand, I was much too fond of Tip and Kelly to simply abandon them. So, since I was also then going through a mystical phase, I solved the dilemma by reincarnating them in contemporary times!

They were still orphans, and exactly the same physically (the boy is about 5'10" or 11" with blonde hair and blue-grey eyes; the girl is around 5'3", slender-but-attractive, with long red hair and green eyes). But there were differences. They were older (21 and 17); they were no longer related, except by mind and spirit (idea courtesy of More Than Human). The boy was named Jeff Kincade and the girl Jizbelle Bixby (name courtesy of The Stars My Destination).

In my series, Jeff and his younger brother Robin are travelling with Tod and Buzz in their own vehicle (an old pick-up truck). They encounter Jiz about half-way through the "season", in Texas. Jeff takes her to New York at her request. Robin stays with Tod and Buzz. Once they get to New York they go their separate ways for awhile, having experiences completely divorced from anything that was occurring on Route 66. Indeed, as it developed, Jeff and Jiz had a "show of their own" with guest appearances by Milner and Maharis, Cosby and Culp (Jiz had an affair with Kelly Robinson), the cops from Naked City and even Ben Casey. Eventually Jeff wound up in college, studying both psychiatry and psychology. He and Robin are reunited, and live on the houseboat with the cast of It's a Man's World (does anybody besides me remember It's a Man's World?). Eventually Jiz becomes 1) a folk-rock star, 2) Very Rich. Further eventually, she marries Robin, who has taken over the management of the family firm, Kincade Electronics. Jeff marries Katherine Robinson, psychiatric social worker, and younger sister to Kelly. Kelly, under the tutelage of Hayes Stowe (The Senator), goes into politics. Kincade Electronics becomes Kincade Aerospace. The combined Kincade-Bixby-Robinson family, with a little help from their friends, and a little plot line composed of equal parts Drury, Sturgeon and Heinlein, essentially take over the world and guarantee peace for mankind.

Which brings us in good time to Lt. Jiz Kincade of the Starship Enterprise. Yes, I too succumbed to the Star Trek Phenomenon. I will spare you the details. Suffice it to say that I had finally dropped the "older brother" figure completely, one giant step forward for personal integration; that the character was ship's psychologist and that (gasp, choke) she ends up with Spock, although Dr. McCoy pursues her diligently.

Do you, dear reader, think all-of-the-above is crazy? Well, I certainly did. During my childhood and youth, I never told anybody anything about Tip, Kelly, Jeff and Jiz.

Some growing girls keep secret diaries; this is quite acceptable, normal activity. I kept secret scenarios, and I was sure this practice would brand me as hopelessly weird.

Then one bright sunny day, I met a young woman named Sandra Miesel. She was a couple of years older than I, married to a tall chemist, and the mother of an entire child. She was also purportedly brilliant. In short, a GrownUp. We were sitting around her motel room and in the course of discussing God-knows-what, she began singing the Maverick theme song in Latin. And French. And German. I professed amazement, and she muttered something about "Catholic Girl's School" and "that's not all," and proceeded to get out her loose-leaf notebooks, in which she had recorded, in painstaking detail, genealogies covering at least seven generations of marriages, intermarriages, remarriages, births, deaths into infinity among the Buckley (Dandy Jim), Maverick and McCullough families. And, I do mean detail. Physical descriptions; favorite colors; designs for clothing, hairstyles and houses. And the names. Glorious names! Lisa Marie Varenza, Lavender Mackenzie, Melizabeth Reynolds, Aveline Beaumarois, the sisters Barbretta and Lizabret. Plots and relationships which went somewhere beyond complex to multiplex. Maxiplex? It was grand.



SF fans often speak of that moment when they first encountered someone else buying Analog, hesitantly began a conversation and discovered they Were Not Alone. That was the essence of my meeting with Sandra. Gleefully we swapped juicy details. I must admit that the teen-age Sandra had had a much more sensational mind than mine. Her characters had illegitimate children, premarital relations, extra-marital relationships and lots of other neat bad habits. They were also more numerous, and more diversified ethnically. And they were not all projections of Sandra in the sense that Tip/Kelly were me. Rather as she explained later, they were progenitors of her alter-ego which "descended from both Bart and Bret, Samantha, the Buckleys and Flint. The wonders of selective breeding, as it were."

After that, I knew there were at least two of us. Imagine my surprise when Suzle began telling me about her Man From UNCLE character. Now, I should have known Suzle well enough by then to have figured out that she might have an UNCLE character, who would, of course, be Illya's girlfriend (as it happened, she was Illya's wife, separated from him for many years, and now an UNCLE agent in England). But what I didn't expect was Jacqueline Sinclair, who inherited the ranch next to the Ponderosa and carried on a "relationship" with Adam for years. (Suzle says that she and her best friend in junior high school first met in grade school when they both realized they were simultaneously writing Bonanza scripts during recess.) Mlle. Sinclair surprised me as did the girl who was the other scout

on Wagon Train, and Randelle Stuart, who rose to the rank of Captain in the U.S. Army (not the WACS). She came out of Suzle's interest in war movies and inevitably turned up in Rat Patrol involved with Hans Gudegast while making the world safe for democracy. In many ways, Suzle's fantasy life turned out to be the most liberated. Her characters were clearly the equal of the men in their lives, their almost exact female counterparts. Right on, Suzle.

So then there were three of us.

By now, of course, I know there are a whole lot more, really. The Star Trek business proved that. I can't really regard the endless stream of female Vulcan; Starship Captain; Half-Vulcan; Science Officer (check one) stories that pour forth from the Trekkies with the disdain some others give it. They are, after all, doing exactly what I used to do, only they have the peer support to do it openly. No need for Secret Scenarios...

[Another digression: Gene Roddenberry is a very astute man. The original Star Trek featured a very strong female character, who had many of Spock's aloof characteristics, and a youngish, much more "human" Spock. The second time around, the two characters were essentially combined into Spock and there was no strong female role. One wonders if Roddenberry was just buying into the usual adventure series format, or whether he was calculatingly leaving space for both his official and unofficial script writers.]

At this point, dear readers, you may be thinking, "It's cute, but what does it mean?"

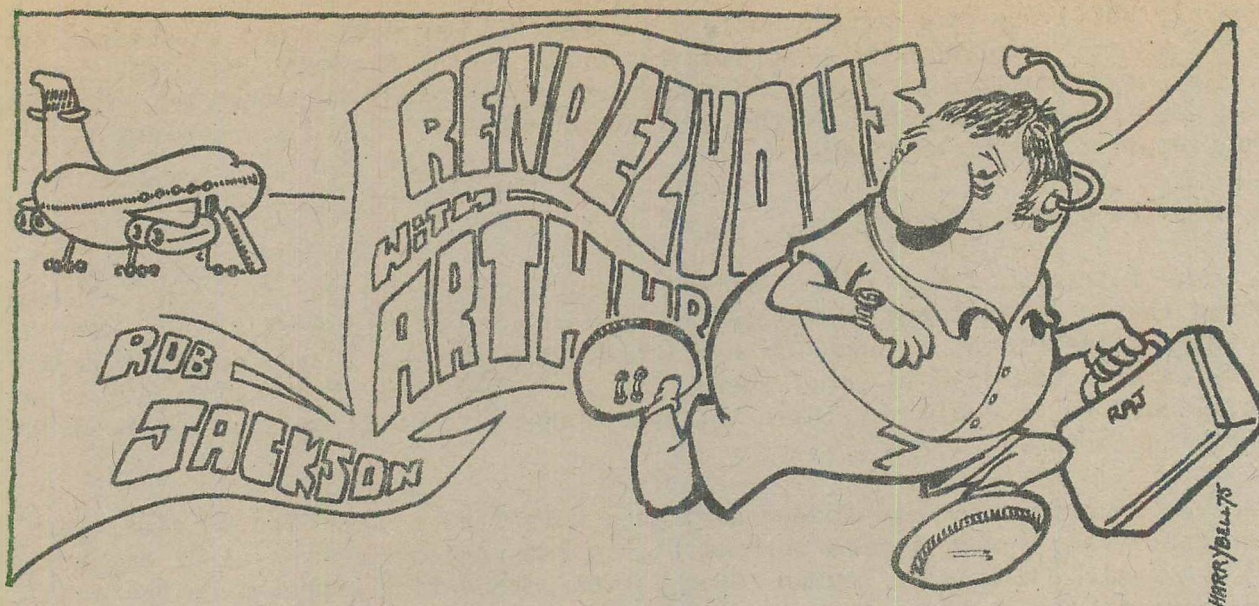
Well, if you recall my original premise was that this mental script writing came into being to provide identification models lacking in the real product.

That's what I was doing. It's what Suzle was doing. It's what I suspect the S.T. ladies are doing. Sandra, when I first questioned her on the subject, denied this, but I quote from a recent letter, "Looking over the Grand Scheme, I'm noticing things I didn't when writing it--such as how female dominated it is...The stories are all from the women's viewpoints and they have the more interesting dramatic conflicts."

Can I generalize from my experience, and the experiences of a few friends, to say this is how it was done, this is why we didn't grow up to be Lucille Ball? I'm afraid not--a lot of us did grow up to be Lucille Ball, and My Little Margie and Annette. At the risk of sounding intellectually snobbish, I can speculate that what happened was that those girl children who had some sense of the wild possibilities used the media as a creative springboard, and became, in essence, self-made women. The others, the majority of the inhabitants of McLuhan's Global Village, swallowed the message of the medium whole, and are now busily running about campaigning against the ERA, deluging CBS with irate phone calls after the Maude "abortion" episode and boycotting Jane Fonda movies.

Well, I suppose they are my sisters as much as Sandra and Suzle. But I'd still prefer, any day, the company of Jizbelle Bixby.





In July 1973 I travelled to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) for three hot, sweaty and ruggedly instructive months of overseas medical training (in the medical curriculum they call it the "elective" period of one's clinical undergraduate training). You have three months, during which they boot you out with the message: "Learn medicine--but not in Newcastle!" As my father had been to Colombo in 1969 and established contacts which had brought a Ceylonese paediatrician and the ear, nose and throat surgeon husband of the Professor of Paediatrics to Newcastle for valuable training periods, Colombo was the one best choice for my elective.

The fact that Arthur Clarke--intellectual hero of mine ever since the first spaceships swam across my mind's eye--lived in Colombo didn't put me off either.

Before I left, each time I mentioned to an SF fan that I was going to Ceylon, they would say in their fashion (eagerly, deprecatingly, or with appreciative grin): "Going to Meet Arthur?" I couldn't have faced them--or myself--if I'd come back and had to report that I hadn't tried to Meet Arthur.

For the first part of my stay I lived with a friend of the above-mentioned ENT surgeon, a senior political civil servant of wisdom, integrity and energy which if replicated often enough would pull any country, not just Sri Lanka, onto its feet by the scruff of its neck. As he generally worked in the Parliament, the only typewriter he had at home was a battered old thing with rust flaking off all over, and a ribbon which printed letters the color of dishwater on white paper. I manfully resisted the temptation to drag the desk directly under the ceiling fan (Colombo weather is like a sauna bath with a small blast furnace in one corner) and sweated over a pretty letter to Arthur, telling him how I'd liked his books (still do, in case anybody's feeling argumentative), and was treasurer of next year's Easter convention, and hoped he'd have time in a busy schedule, etc, etc.

The Colombo postal service is surprisingly efficient. Next afternoon when I arrived home, Arthur's Ceylonese secretary had rung to say that Clarke was out of the country and would be so for eight weeks, but would be back three weeks before I was due to go back to England. Which was kind of him as far as it went, but to come to one side of the world, expecting to see someone who is annoyingly on the other whence you have, was

peevish, although it was a prompt and courteous response.

Things then slipped into limbo for a while as far as Meeting Arthur was concerned; I actually became more interested in medicine than in SF--a rare happening for me indeed. Mostly I wandered around hindering the junior doctors on the teaching ward at Colombo's children's hospital. One day I'd just tried to eat the lunch served in the junior doctor's residence (and had my mouth burned off) when the newly qualified doctor I was with introduced me to another doctor hardly older-looking than himself, and said: "This is Dr. Buddhadasa Bhodinayake. He's a famous man in Ceylon. He writes your favorite type of literature, science fiction."

Dr. Bhodinayake had originally met and talked with Arthur Clarke in 1957, when, as both were experts on the subject, they found themselves saying the same thing over the radio in different languages: "Just because Sputnik got up safely, doesn't mean rockets are safe toys."

If you think Asimov is a polymath, you should compare him with Dr. Bhodinayake. My memory on detail is imperfect, but as I recall it he has been or is all of the following things:

- Member of Sri Lanka's Science Advisory Council;
- Secretary of Sri Lanka's national youth club organization;
- Writer of science fact articles in Sinhala--as many as Asimov, and in less specialist circulation--newspapers, etc;
- Writer and translator of SF(e.g. Clarke's) into Sinhala;
- Broadcaster on science, especially space science;
- Part-time doctor at the Children's Hospital, which in itself is more than enough for most people.

He said he'd love to invite me for a drink sometime, but was a bit busy.

No, I was not bewildered after talking to him for a quarter of an hour. You can expect to be baffled by some geniuses but not geniuses at communication. I never got to meet him again, though I should have, and would have loved to. Being in Ceylon was in some ways like being at a three-month-long convention--there were so many half-invitations from people interested to meet one that it was impossible to follow them all up--one had neither the time nor the energy. Energy--something one misses out on altogether in such heat. One doesn't walk; one drags oneself; one doesn't sit; one flops. Unless you get out of the sweltering lowlands altogether, you can only recharge your energy by swimming or drinking vast quantities of soft drink. I did both at the Colombo Swimming Club, a rather exclusive watering-hole used mostly by foreigners on U.N. or commercial attachments. (I did rather a lot of swimming, which was not surprising; I taught myself to swim underwater--whoopee!)

I also got out of the lowlands altogether occasionally; I'd been given postal introductions to some tea planters (estate superintendents) up in the cool central highlands, and visited some of them for a few days each. The British, during their time there, built massive, sprawling, rambling bungalows for their supervisors, usually perched on the top of knolls in the valleys, surrounded on all sides by sweaty cool green teabushes in neat rows all the way to where the hills meet the clouds under cool sweaty grey skies. The planters' bungalows are often close together on the map, but the bumpy terrain and the odd old colonial habit of building roads absolutely flat, so that they wound round every little rill and knoll, makes for long, sinuous, slow journeys between one bungalow and another. The planters' life is incredibly lonely, ensconced in bungalows either filled with bricabrac, or hollow and sparsely furnished, depending upon the acquisitiveness of previous inhabitants. This loneliness is made far worse by the absolutely rigid social stratification--for a superintendent to be close friends even with his own assistant is not really on. One's peers are super-

intendents on other estates ten or twenty miles off round the valley--dinner with a friend means an hour's rattle and bonk in the ancient Minor 1000 Traveller you are forced to keep because you can hardly get a new car at all unless you earn the money for it while you are abroad. (Recent second-hand cars in good condition will sell at five times their new English purchase price.)

For me, visits to the Up Country planters came as a quiet cool relief from the busy sweaty Colombo life. During August I moved into a most pleasant guest house run by Mrs. Pereira, a retired and nearly blind lady doctor--or rather, the house was run for her by her servants. (Labor is cheap, and servants are ubiquitous in the Ceylonese middle classes.) This lady was very much in possession of all her mental faculties, and a fascinating as well as voluble talker. I can't keep my interest in SF secret from anyone for long, and when I mentioned Arthur Clarke she knew exactly whom I was talking about. By the middle of September, I was thoroughly engrossed in social life, and only occasionally thought about the letter I'd written to Clarke. I always came home for lunch as I couldn't at that time take local curries--certainly not the ones they served in the hospital--and the cafes I used were close to my digs.

One lunchtime Mrs. Pereira welcomed me with: "You are very lucky, Mr. Jackson."

"Oh, why?"

"Arthur Clarke rang."

I suppose you could say this made me happy; I didn't notice it at the time, as all it really did was make me nervous! I rang Arthur, managing to make my fingers select the right digits, and told him who I was. I can't remember any exact details except for Arthur saying, in his deep growly voice (yet gentle; if I were directing a radio play I'd pick him for Winnie-the-Pooh's dad) something like: "Are you free this afternoon?"

As far as I can remember, I was expected to see a patient that afternoon, then join a teaching ward round at 2:30 pm. "Sure, I can come this afternoon. 2 o'clock OK?"

At my usual watering-hole, the Chinese Lotus Cafe, I broke my golden rule. (The rule is: no booze, as it gives you a headache in the heat.) I had one-and-a-half pints of shandy with lunch. Dutch courage, much needed. What else I had for lunch I can't remember, though I do remember being surprised that I ate it.

Like the Children's Hospital, Arthur's (then) house is two miles or so inland from the sea. Gregory's Road is part of the upper-class residential area, with tasteful cool palm-ringed houses, originally built far apart but with gardens sold off during occasional family financial strictures for the building of newer equally tasteful houses all around. This two mile trip is as easy by taxi as anything; it costs three rupees (12 pence or 30¢)--only twice as much as a similar bus ride in England, and far safer than hanging around bus stops and off straps in buses with your pocket asking to be picked. I was told many tales of woe about the fiendishly professional pickpockets on the buses, though I never experienced their work myself. Once, though, a couple of smooth youths were standing looking at me at a bus stop, from about ten yards away; I pointedly put my hands in my pockets and gave them a hard stare, and they moved off. Because of the amount of money I was wont to carry at a time (getting money exchanged is a long business, to be gone through as rarely as possible) taxis were worth the worry of keeping one's pocket covered.

Especially if you're going to see Arthur Clarke, and are worried about that instead.

His house turned out to be up a short driveway which led round the side of another, newer house. On the right of it was a double garage with a boat on a trailer--and two Alsatian dogs, chained up and barking like mad, beside it. The house was surprisingly

small, a single story structure with the ubiquitous matt pink walls and open windows, no bigger than an English detached. A Ceylonese chap came and let me in and asked me to wait in the front room directly through the door. This was large, airy and partitioned; the front half was crammed with about eighty bright yellow compressed-air diving cylinders, on racks on one side, and ten diesel air compressors in a row on a shelf on the other. There was just room between all this machinery for some wicker chairs. These are of the type which, if not treated regularly, are invaded by little brown bugs which crawl out and bite any bare part of you when you sit down, leaving a bite-mark which is incredibly itchy--far worse than mosquitoes--then scuttle back inside the chair as you get up, because they don't like light. Arthur's chairs were clear, which was just as well; I could do without being itchy if sitting talking.

On the wall above the yellow cylinders were two or three photos of Apollo rockets and moonscapes, signed by eminent space scientists and astronauts as mementoes. I'd been told that Clarke would be busy for a while, but I was interrupted quite soon--after ten minutes--by a tallish white-haired man with a brilliant red patterned sarong. (Sarongs are the habitual Ceylonese man's dress. A sarong is a cloth rather like a toga, worn from the waist down to the ankles; it's usually white and a bit dirty from the dust of the streets which it drags in. This sarong was indoor wear only, I gather, as it was very clean.) He had an only mildly protuberant stomach--less than mine; his eyes, though behind glasses, were still able to give the impression of fixing one with an unnervingly straight gaze.

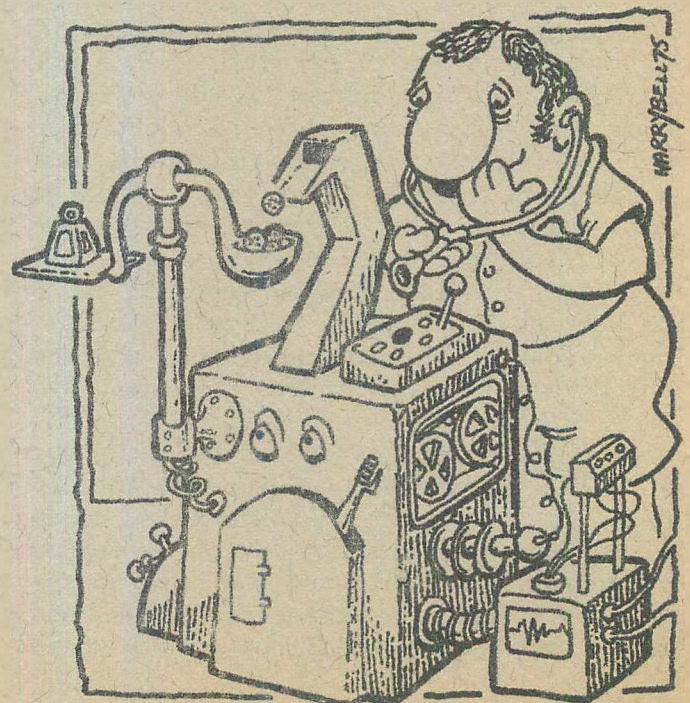
This was Clarke.

(Unfortunately, a time-lag between event and writing has eroded details in my memory; any conversation described below is more in the nature of an imaginative reconstruction than of strictly accurate reportage.)

Arthur welcomed me, and invited me into a small room where his secretary sat at one side making a typewriterish clatter, surrounded by shelves of books of all sorts--hardback and paperback, including, of course, dozens of editions of Clarke's work, plus tall wobbly piles of magazines--the most strikingly large piles being magazines of scientific speculation and futurology.

Off this room in turn was Arthur's study. A small air-conditioned room with only one wall crammed with books; the others were only a third crammed, as I remember. On the wall were further mementoes--not just photos but certificates of gratitude from such as NASA high-ups and broadcasting corporations. One of them may have been his Kalinga Prize certificate.

On a work-bench were two amazing pieces of machinery. One was an enormously elaborate microscope with five objective lenses (amazing because at first one doesn't think of a man whose domain is the vastnesses of space as being also interested in the tiny). For gimmickry's sake he had a



microscope slide with the whole of the Bible on it; I was very impressed with this slide at first, but less so when he told me you could buy them for a dollar in the States. The other machine was Hal, Jr., his minicomputer, which was presented to him by, I forget which bunch of engineers--on looking it up in Lost Worlds I see it was his friends at Hewlett-Packard. The programs for Hal Jr. are preset on magnetic cards about three inches by one, which you push into it. One of these programs--the one for the solution to the Twelve Golf Balls problem--gave trouble. (Surely you know the Twelve Golf Balls problem? You have twelve identical-looking golf balls, numbered 1 to 12; problem is, one is a different weight, and you don't know which one, nor whether it's lighter or heavier than the rest. You have to find out which one is the odd man out, and whether it's lighter or heavier, by putting groups of them on a pair of scales--and you're only allowed three weighings. You don't know it? Then have a go sometime. Have fun.) As well as the program, Arthur had to feed in the answer to the puzzle (i.e. the number of the odd ball out) before running the problem. Unfortunately, when the program was run the answer it came out with (9), was not the one which went in (4); this puzzled Arthur as much as it secretly half-amused and half-embarrassed me. When erased and reinserted, the program worked perfectly, but that was fifteen minutes of puzzlement over a little random jump or something. I wish the Lloyds Bank Cashpoint computer cash dispensers would do the same thing, giving out 9 when you typed in 4; unfortunately, Murphy's Third Law of Technological Disaster states that when a computer goes wrong it shall always be to the detriment of the consumer.

Sri Lanka itself was another interesting problem we talked about. The country is in a terrible economic plight now, far worse than fifteen years ago when the big Colombo stores were happily importing goods left, right and centre and the country seemed rich on tea. Since then the price of tea has been virtually static, while the price of the average import to Sri Lanka has roughly quadrupled. The country's moneymaking power has been dreadfully eroded--but the less developed countries are attracting less sympathy and foreign aid than ten years ago; Sri Lanka is no exception despite this deterioration. One striking piece of past do-goodery was that of the American charity hospital ship Hope which visited Colombo in 1968. This ship is (or was then) in the habit of sailing to supposedly medically underdeveloped nations and anchoring for a year while they try to heal the country's unhealed sick and educate its poor overworked (and supposedly undertrained) doctors. Sri Lanka was the ship's third mission, and not a very profitable choice for its purpose. The pride the Ceylonese medical fraternity takes in the fine, scientifically advanced job it does (for the whole community--Sri Lanka is ahead of the States in that it provides a truly national government health service) with a pittance of a budget is thoroughly justified, and this pride was dented by the arrival of an insensitive shipload of charitable people who almost seemed to give the impression that they thought they were bringing the benefits of Listerian antiseptic surgery and the wonders of antibiotic therapy to the place for the first time. This attitude jarred on some of the extremely skilled doctors and surgeons--and some of the extremely proud politicians--of the island. (There is an apocryphal tale of a Ceylonese neurologist at an international congress listening to some American and British surgeons talking of a rare operation, and how one had done it thirty times and another forty-five, and so on. The Ceylonese matter-of-factly announced that he had done his three hundred and thirtieth just before leaving for the congress.)

Each of these ship's voyages had been commemorated with a self-congratulatory book by one of the staff. A friend of Arthur's had seen the Ceylon one in an American bookstore and had brought him a few copies. Arthur had heard tales of the friction between the ship and the Ceylonese medics, and was fascinated and appalled by the distortion in the picture the book portrayed, of the shining adventurers versus the natives, obtuse, sometimes fractious, but with hearts of gold beneath it all. I had heard these tales, too, from my own contacts; as soon as Arthur heard I was a medic

he produced this book and suggested I read it. I did, and was as appalled as he was.

That was one of the two books I borrowed from him; the other was a pre-publication copy of Rendezvous with Rama which, of course, I gobbled up with tremendous speed later that evening and the next day. I am rather pleased that, despite my goshwow attitude to virtually all of Clarke's work--which I still have; it's that surely irrational attitude we all once had to the SF we were weaned on, and one many of us never lose--I did at least notice the lack of flesh in Rama's human explorers. Whether this was oversight on Clarke's part, or simply his deliberate wish to keep the beauties and wonders of his thirty-mile spaceship in the forefront of the reader's mind, I'm not absolutely certain. I should have asked him when I took the books back, but I didn't have the time, or perhaps I just forgot, or perhaps I hadn't thought of the question at that time.

I rather think, actually, that Clarke is too clever a writer for this to be oversight, in which case his deliberate neglect of human character is, at first thought, puzzling for those of us who spend ages analysing character and motive in SF works; this includes most of fandom's critics, as well as me (I don't count myself as a critic). It is as well to remember, though, that the vast mass of SF readers aren't hankering too desperately after deep emotional or intellectual immersion in the characters they read about; otherwise they'd be reading Agatha Christie, or Woman's Own short stories. No; they want their sense of wonder tickled. Clarke, as usual, did that superbly, and I have a feeling that the paperback sales are now proving him right on this. (One department store in Newcastle, with a reasonable selection of SF paperbacks, put out around thirty copies on one Monday, and by the time I returned to look at them on Friday there were only five left, and even then the stock may have been replenished.) If anybody wants proof of the care and thought Clarke puts into his writing, may I commend to you a compulsively readable analysis of "The Nine Billion Names of God" by John Curlovich in SpanInq 3?

Clarke had already received some of the reviews of the American hardback of Rendezvous with Rama. I remember a conversation something like this, after I had finished reading one of the reviews.

Me: "That's quite a pleasant one."

Arthur: "Yes, on the whole; but look at that there [points out factual error in description of the book]."

"On the whole she likes it, though."

"Ah, but it means she hasn't read the book properly."

Clarke seems as concerned about accuracy in those who write about his books as he is in the actual writing of them, which I suppose is only fair, although finicky (and an apparent confirmation of his famed Ego) in the eyes of some. (I hope he doesn't mind whatever inaccuracies he finds in this article!)

Clarke mentioned that Sigiriya, the tremendous bread-loaf-shaped rock in the northern plain of Sri Lanka, would feature strongly in his next novel.

"Is it SF?"

"Oh, very much so." I'm not sure which of his two forthcoming novels this refers to, but I rather remember that it was The Fountains of Paradise, rather than his "magnum opus" Imperial Earth which is the one apparently nearing completion at the moment (late 1974).



The subject of swimming cropped up, but not for long, as it was soon superseded by the subject of tabletennis (pingpong, or whatever you call it). After a cup of tea--Arthur had earlier given me a beer, so I wasn't short of liquid--we walked off down to his swimming club (not the one I frequented while in Colombo, but another equally up-market place). As we were leaving Arthur lined up three tortoises--Star tortoises, I think they were--he kept in a pen in the garden. Their sizes

were a perfect gradation from twelve inches to eight inches to four. I now have a very over-exposed photo of Arthur with a grin and three tortoises. Once again I was clutching my ubiquitous shoulderbag with its valuable cargo of books on loan, and some magazines Clarke had given me after he'd finished with them--some futurology magazines, and four issues of Locus--nos. 141, 142, 144, and 145. Arthur said he hadn't received issue 143. Anybody care to look up and find out what the lead item in issue 145 was?

So we played table tennis. I'm fairly nearly as good as anybody in Gannetfandom--I beat Ian Williams twice out of five, usually--but Arthur was better. I thought I was playing well for one who hadn't played for months, and there were some very good rallies, but he beat me 21-5. He said he hadn't played for months either, but that each time he began playing anew he started brilliantly and declined. I need practice to improve, so he reckoned we'd eventually meet halfway.

A crowd of other friends and acquaintances descended on Arthur after we arrived, so he played table tennis with them also, and we didn't have time to put the meet-in-the-middle theory to the test, but it certainly indicated that his rumoured heart attack earlier that year did no permanent damage to speak of.

At strictly five o'clock Clarke had to leave; I promised to ring and arrange a time to return his books. He had to ready himself for dinner with the British High Commissioner. (No, I'm not dropping names on his behalf; another time, I went to a party at the High Commissioner's too.)

I floated home on a cloud. (It was a taxi really, and it didn't float, it rattled; but that doesn't matter.)

Although I read Rama very quickly (and handled it carefully--each time I picked it up I washed my hands), it took me nearly a fortnight to read Hope in the East, the hospital ship book. Eventually I finished it, and rang to arrange a time to take back the books I'd borrowed. Ten next morning it was, so off I went. In Ceylon I had with me a few treasured fanzines. Five of them I'd brought with me, and the other (Siddhartha) Ian Williams had sent. One of the fanzines I had was Sfinx, issues 6 and 7, which I'd brought in the hope of showing off my (lack of) writing prowess to anyone interested. (A surprising number of people were, but only because they were stories by me, not because they were SF.) I reread "Rock of Ages", my story in Sfinx 7, and to my chagrin discovered a silly little inconsistency. At one stage in the story a woman mentions that her house is a bungalow. Later on, the anti-hero listens from the bedroom to the front door being battered down by ambulance men--downstairs.

So on my second visit I mentioned Sfinx to Arthur. Phil Payne had already sent him no. 6, so I gave him a copy of no. 7. I shamefacedly mentioned the inconsistency in the hope of forestalling possible criticism. Arthur replied, "That's nothing; I'll show you a real bungalow," and brought out the plans for the two-story house--nay, mansion--he was in the process of buying. At the top of the architectural drawings it said, I think, "De Soysa Bungalow." Arthur's "bungalow" looked from the plans to be ten times the size of his then house, which he'd had ever since he first came to Ceylon in 1957. I was absolved of my sin of inaccuracy--or would have been, if the

SHEEP BAA in the

[[Welcome to the letter column. This is Jerry again. Since I'll be making all the comments, I'll not be signing them, only marking them like [[so]]. Contrary to the despairing wail on the previous page, the letters have already been edited, and I'm not cutting them wildly. And they are cut considerably. Almost everybody had something to say about mean old John Curlovich and most everybody said the same thing. So we picked out several long comments and some offbeat shorter ones. Believe me, we did read and enjoy every letter we got. As we expected, John got the most comments, but Jon Singer's column seemed to be the favorite item. A good number of people liked Gary Goldstein's covers and Stu Shiffman's comic strip. Every other artist got at least one laudatory mention. Perhaps I should clip and mail comments? At any rate, the DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE is December 31, 1975. This should give all letterhacks, potential contributors and clowns time enough to make it into the next issue.

[[We got one letter that missed the last issue, from Stuart Gilson of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Stuart said some amusing things about feminism and recounted some of his dreams. Also left over from last issue was a letter from Patrick McGuire, written while he was still in the Soviet Union. We didn't run it last issue because it directly concerned Sandra Miesel's Maverick imaginings, and would foreshadow Ginjer's column this issue. Here's that letter, with Patrick's current address.]]

Patrick McGuire
28 Wilton St.
Princeton, NJ 08540

Ginjer's mention of Maverick causes me to speculate upon it as a Great Uniter of Age Groups. Maybe of "generations" and maybe not, but Ginjer was born (I deduce) in 1944, and remarks upon its Influence upon her. I was born in (late) 1949, which gives you quite a differential in years when we consider that children are in question, yet I too was a faithful Maverickite, and can follow all her allusions. (And not from reruns, either!) I don't know how things work for the Younger Set (and from here it



WAINSCOTTING ^{BAA}_{BAA}

isn't the easiest thing in the world to find out), but pushing back the barriers of time the other way, we may note that Sandra Miesel was born in (late) 1941, but found herself greatly influenced by the show. In fact, I once found myself busily engaged in the translation of the theme song into Russian to cap the renditions into Latin and German that Sandra had done. (This was back in the US. Never have finished that translation. Can't get anything literal enough to suit me to fit the meter and rhyme scheme.) Though that task was fruitless, in the course of it there suddenly sprang into my head, virtually full-blown, my "Alexandra Schwartz" lyrics to the Maverick tune.

Necessary explanations are that Sandra has this recurrent fantasy about being not Sandra Miesel, suburban matron, but Alexandra (which sounds classier than "Sandra") Schwartz (which doesn't sound too classy at all to the goyish ear, but is the name she was born with, and thus adds some Verisimilitude), flower of the Victorian demi-monde:

Who's the small, dark beauty there?
Alexandra Schwartz is her name.
Beating a path to the Devil's lair,
Passion her companion,
Wrenching hearts her game.

Lithe as a panter on the prowl,
Alexandra Schwartz is her name.
Wild as an elven hunter's call,
Drifting on night breezes,
Soon she'll pounce and maim!

Riverboat, ring your bell--
On down the Styx to Hell!
Alexandra's the person
Miss Schwartz loves the best;

Paris to New South Wales,
Ah, how they tell the tales!
Schwartz in the darkling twilight
Of the West!



[[If any filksingers need material, obviously Patrick could be one of your best sources. By the way, Patrick, if you and our other alert readers are wondering why we have scattered Fred Haskell jokes through our lettercol...better ask Ken Fletcher and Reed Waller, who drew them. We think they're funny, but maybe that's because we know Fred. Anyway, here's something from a later McGuire letter]]

Curlovich's column in 5 is definitely over-strident. Furthermore, several times he makes the mistake of confusing fandom (which, excluding Trekkies--"Trekkers," if that's what they themselves prefer--consists of six thousand people at the very outside utmost) with the sf readership. This is demonstrably false. Success within fandom is not even close to a guarantee of commercial success or even of literary esteem within the sf community. Consequently I find it hard to believe that panderings to the fannish masses (if indeed what we observe can be fairly described as "panderings,"

which usually they can't) are undertaken with the expectation of worldly gain. Indeed, after all his talk about the evils of ghettoization, Curlovich seems to assume that momentous matters hang on the whims of the little world of fandom, which is silly.

Don D'Amassa John Curlovich. Although I agree in general with John's
19 Angell Drive column, I am forced to disagree with some of his special
E. Providence, RI 02914 points.

1. "Most sf fans read little else..." Upon what evidence does John base this statement? My experience of sf fans has been quite the opposite. Possibly my sample is unrepresentative, but it is a well established rumor that most fans don't read much sf any more. I'm one of those exceptions that proves the rule.

2. John appears to be contradicting himself. He stresses that sf people do a lot of mutual backpatting, and that our awards don't really mean very much, as for example, The Gods Themselves. He then uses this to illustrate one of the reasons we are scorned by the mainstream. But in the opening of his column, he ascribes exactly the same falseness to mundanity. If the mainstream is guilty of the same shortcomings (and I agree with him), then this is hardly an excuse of them to snub the genre.

I might point out that Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? was not awarded the Pulitzer Prize a few years back amid a storm of controversy about the committee's personal prejudice coloring their judgement, and that the subsequent awarding of that same prize later to A Delicate Balance seemed to be an apology tendered retroactively, or at least so it was interpreted. (See, John I read outside the field.) So John is right; mundanity is just as hypocritical in its awards as are we, and while that doesn't invalidate the criticism as such, it does make nonsense--or at least further hypocrisy--of the mainstream's alleged use of this to shun us.

3. John's characterization of the hostility of fans to encroachments by mainstream writers is, sadly, all too true. I have read comments condemning such writers as William Goldman, Michael Crichton, John Gardner, Ira Levin, and a host of others for daring to write sf without the permission of us fans. Donald Barthelme has been writing excellent fantasies for years. Darrell Schweitzer wrote recently that much of our isolation from the world of mainstream fiction results from Gernsback's popularization of the field as a vehicle for pulp action adventure and the de-emphasis on quality writing, a point that may well be valid.

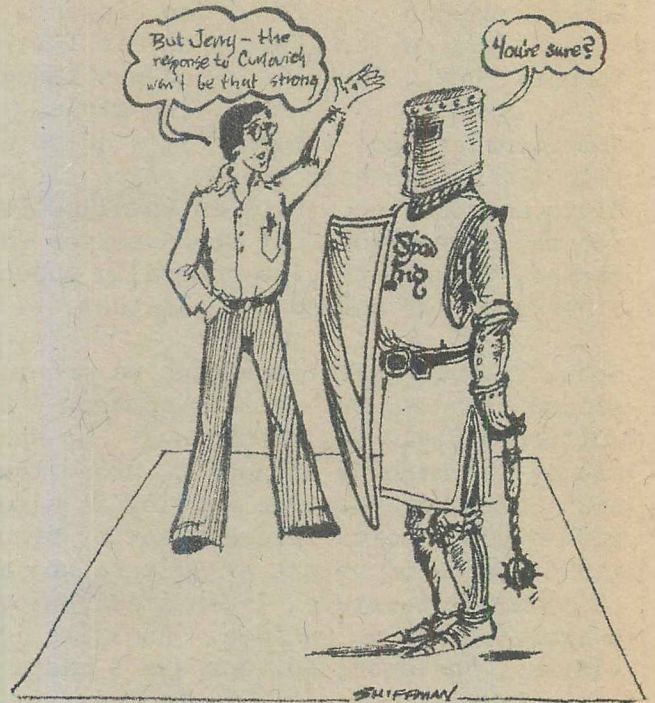
It isn't entirely true, however, that mainstream writers are always rejected. My own criticism of The Andromeda Strain was chiefly that it said nothing new, and I suspected this was because Crichton is not familiar with what the field has already provided on the subject. On the other hand, I recommended his The Terminal Man for a Hugo.

4. I disagree that Chimera is the best fantasy novel in 20 years. I'm not even convinced that it is, technically speaking, any more a novel than is Disch's 334. This is all a subjective issue, obviously, but just offhand I'd select as better recent fantasies The Last Unicorn by Peter Beagle, Grendel by John Gardner, Gog by Andrew Sinclair, and The Princess Bride by William Goldman. All, oddly enough, mainstream writers, with the possible exception of Peter Beagle.

None of the above should be taken as disagreement in general with John's column. Sf fandom is intolerant of the mainstream, partly as overreaction to some unfair criticism, partly out of a sense of inferiority, partly because we like being downtrodden, members of a minority, ghetto residents, with all of the camaraderie and togetherness but none of the hardships. It's a badge of our own individuality, our differentness,

our unconventionality. I admit to these feelings myself at times. The danger is that we have allowed these feelings to color our judgement. We now want to maintain the status quo; we identify with the field as a literary anachronism, any attempt to change the field is a threat to our collective self-image, any statement of an attempt to improve implies that something has been wrong with it in the past. I'm a fan of sf, have been for fifteen years, and I think the field has been consistently underrated by mundanity for years. But at the same time I think that fans have consistently overrated it for at least as long.

[[A few of my own, now. I don't believe for a moment that either the average reader or reviewer, or the intelligent reader or reviewer, have any idea how our awards are arrived at, who awards them or what they mean, other than "good book--buy it." As for 334 being or not being a novel, Jerzy Kosinski's Steps was even less obviously a novel, but was accepted as so.]]



I see the sex role discussion has erupted in yet another fanzine, a sign of the times. Susan Wood makes an excellent point, one that should be given wider coin, that men suffer as much as women from sexual stereotyping, albeit in different ways. If I were to stay home, keep house, watch Davy, while Sheila supported us, most of our neighbors would sympathize with poor Sheila and wonder if I were sick in the head or just lazy. But the truth is that I am temperamentally better suited for staying at home, while Sheila is more interested in working. Unfortunately, I have an unusually high paying job. On the other hand, my job is such that I can get most of my fanac done at work, which allows me to do more (I am typing this very letter on the office typer).

I'm (dare I admit it?) one of those who was unable to finish Dhalgren. In fairness to myself, I must add that I decided that the large amount of personal symbolism was such that before I could read it through with any success, I should first go back and re-read all of Delany's earlier work. Which I have not had time to do yet. I have refrained, therefore, from reviewing it, obviously, though I have responded to some reviews I've seen elsewhere--as in Wyknot. I'm a devoted Delany fan from way back. That doesn't mean I'm necessarily going to enjoy Dhalgren, even though I also like surreal literature. But I really will finish it, one of these days.

[[Promises, promises. Gee, Don, did those reviews in Wyknot get to you, too? As I said last issue, I expect a lot of people to put the book down unfinished or unliked, but Josenhans seemed to pick the blindest people to do the reviews (I think he himself was one of them). Since I've quit writing locs for the moment (as if faneds on three continents hadn't noticed already), I'll say it here: those were bad reviews.]]

Eli Cohen
2920 Victoria Ave, #12
Regina, Sask., CANADA

Are you serious about a live fanzine? I can see it now-- Jon Singer kicking and screaming as you drag him off to be electrostencilled. Fans bleeding from multiple staple wounds. The whole convention busted for attempting to collate together

unconsenting adults. (Not to mention corfluing the morals of minors.) You fiends, you.

Patrick Hayden
206 St. George St., #910
Toronto, Ont., CANADA

Jon Singer's column impresses me greatly. I met Jon at FanFair III (he contributed a great deal to my one-shot), and was immediately impressed by his smooth, natural writing style. And articles like this are truly up my line...

Some corrections, though. It's quite possible to do extremely fine corfluing with a thin 10¢ camels-hair brush. Also, I've never noticed Liquid Paper to not work on ditto masters--the trick is to allow it to dry thoroughly and then use fresh carbon for the correction. It works better when you're typing on the Thermo-Fax variety of master, though--they're generally superior all around, particularly for fine work. Finer grade of carbon and all that.

John Curlovich also impresses me greatly. I can find no rebuttal for his eloquently stated attacks, but still...somehow I find myself muttering, "So what?" So what if Kuttner's style was monotonous? So what if Bradbury's introduction to his work was clumsy and made no attempt to prove the claim made? I see no need to compare Kuttner with Solzhenitsyn...the writing is aimed at a completely different level of reader, with a completely different set of standards. And while I can appreciate and applaud the attempts of recent sf writers who are aiming for the standards set by the greats of modern literature, I can still enjoy a simpler story of the Campbell era that was a story--based on an idea. And with ideas, abstract intellectual games, mild speculation, and such, Kuttner was a master. Bradbury can be forgiven.

We need more Curloviches, though. By all means, keep him writing.

[[Patrick, you sent me thumbing through Linda's zines to find last SpanInq, which put me in a nasty temper, as I found two zines we are supposed to be trading with, and which never came. Grr. You may see no need to compare Solzhenitsyn with Kuttner. Neither does John. It was Bradbury who did so, if you'll reread John's column. By the way, why do you move so bloody much? Didn't you start out in Arizona?]]

Ben Indick
428 Sagamore Ave.
Teaneck, NJ 07666

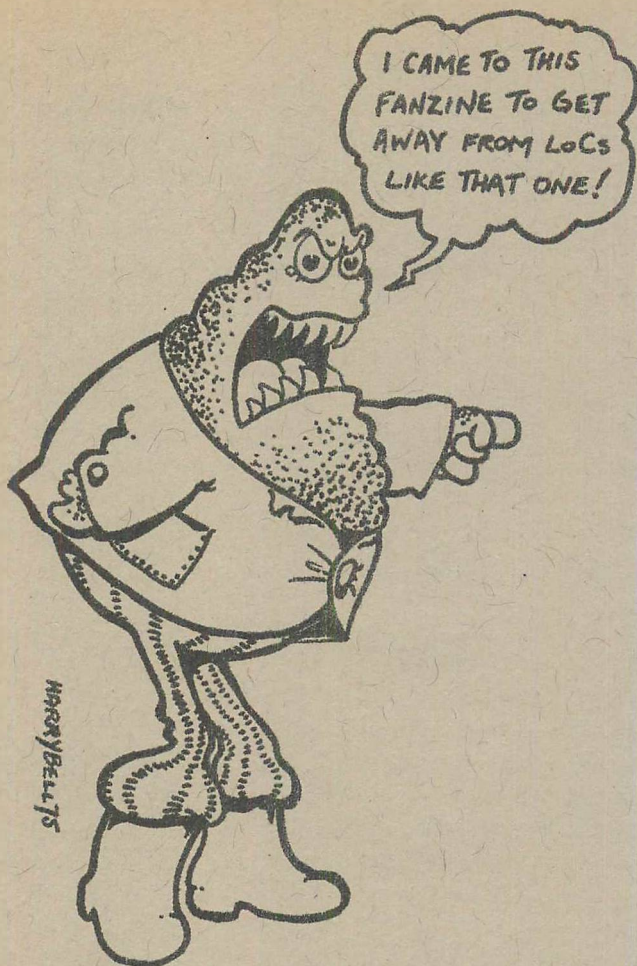
There were a number of utterly fine things in SpanInq 5:

1. No Feghoots.
2. No list of reasons why I received the issue (uh, why did I?
3. No articles or locs continued pages away, except Blast's, which arrived in Section II.

[[You got the issue because you are one of fandom's finest letterhacks. As for Section II, that was produced by Frank Balazs himself, because he couldn't bear to see any of his brilliant words deleted from our pages. I believe it was sent to the Parenthesis mailing list only.]]

One of the nicest things about a fanzine is the opportunity to meet old friends and find out some new things about them; another is to meet new fans; a third is to find some old ones back. In the last, I welcome the name of Jay Cornell, the old Scunger himself, of whom I have seen no mention in so long a time, at least in the zines I receive. Happily, he is writing about one of my favorite subjects, the Arcologies of Paolo Soleri; by chance I just sent a brief, introductory article about Soleri to Wyknot, who had requested it. I hope it may influence some fans to look into this most science-fictional of visionary architects and his superb graphics, as well as his awesome, somewhat frightening vision.

[[The last address I have for Jay is at Arcosanti in Arizona, so I'm begging him for a personal account.]]



Mike Meara ...And the
61 Borrowash Rd zine itself?
Spondon, Derby Well, near-
ENGLAND half the
issue was

letters, of which I'd ordinarily approve, but this was my first ish and I'm a bit in the dark as to what's going on. I feel it's a mistake to tie the content of the lettercol too closely to previous issues. Of the rest, 15pp of Curlovich was too big a meal for me. I dislike the back-and-forth style of 'Divers Hands', and it became tedious long before the end. It seemed to me that everyone was right, in hiser own way, but what's it matter?

[[We thought the locol last contained tons that had little to do with the previous issue. As for 'Divers Hands', it mattered to the participants, and in fairness to them, we printed their defenses.

[[Could you tell me how crucial the English mailing code is? I'm in the habit of using the American zip code, and I purposely leave off the Canadian, having heard that the post-union will delay mail that uses it.]]

Al Sirois
533 Chapel St.
New Haven, Ct. 06511

draw hands too good.
on page 8.

"Feder of the Fannish Faction" convinces me that Stu is not well in his mind. I loved it. Why does the Kaufman figure seem to be dropping a lot of lemons? Is this symbolic of publishing SpanInq? My only gripe against Stu is that he can't Too well. Decently...I also liked his dancing corflu bottle

[[The lemons are symbolic of junk, that's what they're symbolic of. See our back cover or the illoes with Singer's column for examples. Also they're symbolic of my tequila habit.]]

I must admit I agree on all points with the opinions expressed in "Close to Critical". I think The Gods Themselves ate shit, and I think the same of Rendezvous with Rama and I am very bored indeed with shallowness in sf, even though I read too much of it for my own good. Inferior writers use the excuse "The Story is the Main Thing!" to

not attempt depth of feeling in their works, and others drown their "prose" in cute typographical tricks and quotations from the Bible, to lend their "work" an air of vitality. Tripe and trash. I use the tricks too, sure, but that duality of nature is my nature. (What?) I mean, I'm as bad as those guys--I'd get my stuff published if I could, but since I can't, I'll gripe about their use of literary trickery. If I had my crap published, I would most likely rationalize its literary worth from here to Rama and back. At least you can't call me hypocritical about it. I admit I'm a turkey. Will Asimov? Will Malzberg? Will Delany?

Leah Zeldes Many thanks for the egoboo in your method of delivery of Span
21961 Parklawn Inq #5. People don't often come up to me in elevators, say "So
Oak Park, Mi. 48237 you're Leah Zeldes!" and shove fanzines at me. Just doesn't
[[Only until Aug 14, happen too often at all. What usually occurs is I get a new
she says.]] fanzine in the mail with "If you'll send us a lengthy, elaborate
loc which we consider good enough to give you credit in the WAHF column for, maybe
even just possibly print a few paragraphs of, we might consider sending you another
copy (we're not promising anything, mind you!)" checked off in the Why You Got This
column (sometimes along with "We have deigned you have finally become important
enough to receive our fanzine"). This was a refreshing, if not shocking, change.
Maybe I'm not a neo anymore!

There seems to be more activity in New York than I had realized. Eight new fanzines, you say? Heretofore I had pretty much associated New York (State) fandom with the Albany crowd, which is vocal, to say the least.

[[Look, if you ever say that to my face or the face of any NYC fan, you find your shoes corflued to the floor and your body pierced with staples. And you'll get a look that could kill. Frank Balazs attends Fanoclasts in the summer; that is the only connection between the two areas. So far, three of the zines I hinted at have appeared. Alyson Abramowitz has published AlVega just before leaving for Pittsburgh, Gary Farber has published Drift, and he and Joe Siclari have published a zero issue of Fanhistorica. So things are moving.]]

Jon Singer's column was delightful. The Xerox ditto master cutter (or whatever the hell he wants to call it--Xitto?) idea intrigues me, as I am a ditto freak from way back. (It's easy and cheap; I'm presently trying to figure out the used Roneo I recently bought and it seems so much more mess and bother than simply sticking in the master and cranking, not to mention how much cheaper masters and fluid are than stencils and ink.) You'd have to find a way to keep the color from fading, however, the way colored ditto masters do. There is a correction fluid on the market especially for ditto (Heyer puts one out, I think), but a razor blade is faster once you get the hang of it.

[[You can get far more copies with mimeo and you can do electrostencils and patch them into stencils, thus freeing yourself to do complex art and layout. That's my understanding. By the way, I just noticed that you got me excited enough above to blow my format. Watch it.]]

Neil Belsky At last, a voice of reason and sanity which cries out from the
249-14 147th Ave. quagmire that New York fandom is rapidly becoming. It brought
Rosedale, NY 11422 back fond memories of the George C. Scott speech at the Academy
 Awards a couple of years ago. John is right, the field has be-
come as closed as any institution in the real world can be. But there is one point
that is unclear to me, and perhaps John can clarify it. I am of the belief that no
man is fit to judge any work of art of his fellows, be it novel, play, painting or
film. Far too much strife has come out of this sanctimonious judgement. After all,
who is to say that anyone else is better or worse than they are?

[[John is crying out from Pittsburgh, actually. Just what is going on in New York that I don't know about? What sort of quagmire? Be more specific. As for judging, I believe that people judge almost as certainly as they breathe, and only a saint (of the Taoist persuasion) doesn't judge. And I believe there are standards we can judge by. One damned good reason for judging is that our time is limited, and we have to decide what we are going to give it to.]]

John Brosnan
4 Lothair Rd.
South Ealing, London W5
UNITED KINGDOM

Very interested in all that talk about old tv programs...not many people know this but the coming of tv to Perth, Western Australia, prevented me from being the first man on the moon. Perth didn't get tv until 1959 (I believe the Eastern States got it a few years earlier) and we didn't get one in our house until 1960, the year I started high school. I had planned to become an atomic scientist and be the first man on the moon (for some reason I thought astronauts would have to be atomic scientists--don't ask me why) but as soon as we got a tv set I gave up studying and spent every night watching the box. My fascination with tv didn't end until after I had left school, and by that time it was too late to learn how to become an atomic scientist, or even an accountant or a road sweeper. Tv definitely rotted my brain and made me what I am today--a hack who writes books about old films...and badly at that.

Looking back, tv was pretty terrible when it started in Perth (I went back for a visit last year and it was still terrible, but there was more of it). There was only one channel, a commercial one, and it showed mostly American shows. Things like Perry Mason and Leave it to Beaver (whatever happened to Jerry Mathers?). At first they used to show things like Jet Jackson and The Huckleberry Hound Show during prime time! Jet Jackson, by the way, was what Captain Midnight was called in Australia. I don't know why they changed his name--perhaps because of the bushranger with the same name (a bushranger, in case you didn't know, was someone who, in the early days of Australia, used to range about in the bush making sure that the wallabies had enough to eat and that the billabongs were all full). I remember that Jet Jackson's sidekick was called Iggy and I'm pretty sure that was the same name he had in the American version as I don't think there have ever been any bushrangers with that name.

Of course there were a lot of good American tv shows too--like Maverick, Sgt. Bilko, I'm Dickens, He's Fenster, The Twilight Zone, 77 Sunset Strip (where are you now, Kookie?) [selling records on tv], Have Gun, Will Travel, Man and the Challenge and The Shari Lewis Show (she goes back a long way). Of course, the lousy shows far outnumbered the good but I watched them all with equal enthusiasm--things like The Donna

Reed Show, Bachelor Father, Cheyenne, Candid Camera, People are Funny (Yuck), The Red Skelton Show (double Yuck), Father Knows Best (triple etc) and Sea Hunt.

After about a year the government channel started up in Perth and attempted to stem the tide of American rubbish by showing a lot of British rubbish. Those were the days before Australia had pride in its own national image--today Australian tv leads the world in producing its own rubbish.



Ah nostalgia, nostalgia! Sniff. Whatever happened to Will Hutchins who used to play Sugarfoot, or Dwayne Hickman, who used to be Dobie Gillis? And whatever happened to all those little shits who used to be in the kids shows? Such as Rusty in Rin Tin Tin, the one in Fury, etc. All real estate agents, now I suppose. I think I shall sing the Mickey Mouse Club theme to myself and then get drunk.

Don Lundry
18 Karen Drive
Cherry Hill, NJ 08003

The fan GoH at
Balticon is a golly
wow thing and I
hope you enjoy it.

If it had happened two years ago, I would have said it's similar to being GoH at a funeral. But last year's Balticon was a really superb con--well run, well organized, and a good intro for new fans. Light on the party side, but heavy on the programming side. Of all the East Coast cons Balticon and Boskone (this past year) were probably the best run ones. It's interesting to note that both had real hotel hassles even though it may not have been too obvious to most attendees.

(May well be that the mark of a good con is how well the committee handles hotel hassles. I'm not sure that's totally valid when I think of Disclave where the hotel appeared to go out of its way to be annoying.) But Balticon has another hotel lined up and it sounds like the con will be even better than last year's. Good luck.

Is it possible to forget this constant debate over Trekkies being THEM versus US? The program is long gone and most of the people who were introduced to science fiction by Star Trek can now be considered to be science fiction fans with special interests in Star Trek just like others enjoy Burroughs, Heyer teas, and other special interests. Those that choose to keep their narrow vision on Star Trek cons; the rest of them seem to be nice people.

Loren MacGregor
Box 636
Seattle, Wa 98111

I wonder, somehow, how far the fan press should be trusted as an indicator of true reading habits among fans. A primary example (and one who will probably respond for himself) is Don D'Amassa. Don reviews a great deal of sf in fanzines, and to my knowledge has seldom reviewed a non-sf book. And yet, his apazines, and his own fanzine Mythologies, show that he reads a great deal of other material.

Myself I know: my own reading is approximately 50% non-fiction; half of the remaining 50% is sf or sf-related, and in addition I read mysteries, westerns and almost anything else I can lay my hands on. I like sf; I read a lot of it; I am by no means consumed by it.

Curlovich, while decrying people who claim sf as god, makes an almost 90° turn, and (almost) claims "the mainstream" as god. Sf writers, by and large, are not as great as--Curlovich says--most sf fans say they are. Mainstream writers invading sf--Curlovich says--are ignored, even though what they write is lightyears ahead of the poor, misguided sf pro,

Bull shit. There have been examples of stories largely ignored by sf fans--off hand,



The Man Who Fell to Earth, by Walter Tevis, presents itself--but there have been, similarly, novels that have been adopted by sf fans and ignored by mundanes, or embraced by both mundanes and fans. (Of the latter, Watership Down springs to mind.) John makes some valid points, but throws up an awfully large paper tiger, which quite effectively drowns out what he has to say.

How the hell can Curlovich state, authoritatively, "this writer is using arty things for effect," or, "this writer is writing strictly for the Hugo," or... Has the great J.C. ever considered that maybe, just maybe these writers may honestly be striving to improve their writings? That maybe they're just trying something different? Christ, not every attempt is a success--not every failure is the result of a "cheap trick" designed only to "impress" some nebulous, gullible reader.

Granted, some writers may try this type of thing. But, by god, that's no reason for a blanket indictment, which is what Curlovich seems to be attempting. Ellison, offutt...whomever...you might name. Yes, these people are entertaining. But, damn it, that entertainment is bound up in the individual, it's part of the man or woman, it's not really meant to add or detract from the stature of the writing itself. If Ellison is a salesman...well, then, it's because he really believes in what he has written, and wants you to take a look at it. If Andy Offutt stands up at a convention and delivers a well-written speech, well, by god, he's up there because he enjoys it, and not because he's trying to hype his stories.

A live fanzine. Ack. The only problem is, I can see it, floating somewhere in front of my eyes. (seriously, if you're serious--and I have the horrible feeling that you are--I'll write something for you, and even show up in Baltimore to deliver it. That's a promise. *choke, sob*)

[[Yes! Yes! Yes! See, everybody, I told you I had it in writing!]]

Jon Singer reminds me, suddenly, of a rather horrifying experience I had the other day. I went over to Gene Perkins' house for dinner one night, and found both Gene and Les Sample, smiling foolishly at each other. "We, uh, built a mimeo today," Gene said. "Do you want to see it?" "You built a mimeo," I said. "Yes, do you want to see it?" Gene repeated.

"I don't ever want to build a home mimeo, and I don't ever see one, ever," I said, as calmly as I could under the circumstances. I consider home-built mimeos to be a blot and a blight on the landscape. It's bad enough that people could think of making one; to actually do so is more than I can take.

Jon Singer's article, by the way, was very enjoyable...

Tim Kyger...well, Tim asks whether or not a color-blind person dreams in color. I can't really say, but I can sure quibble with the definition of "color-blind" in a lot of cases. For example. I am (ahem) pastel-blind, so they tell me. Also, I'm partially red-green-blue color blind. So they tell me.

So how come the first question anybody ever asks me is, "Really? Then what color is this?" and howcome, when I say "It's purple, or magenta, or fushcia, or black with orange spots," I'm usually right? I see colors fine--I just don't see exactly the colors everybody else sees, is all. So I can't identify the little triangles and numbers and letters filled out in colored dots in those strange funny little books at my eye doctor's office.

I not only dream in color, I dream in stereo, with Todd-AO.

Sam Long
Box 4946
Patrick AFB, Fl 32925

Suzanne's nickname brings to mind a similar nickname bestowed by me on a British femmefan, Hazel Reynolds, whom I invariably refer to as Hazle (pronounced haze-ley), rather to her annoyance. But she's got used to it now, and raises little protest.

The zine's beautifully produced, and the artwork is excellent. And the contents are worthy of the title, "first-class." Your editorial, Jerry, brings us nicely up to Jon Singer's excellent article on repro, which is one of the clearest expositions of the subject that I've seen. It's been years since I studied chemistry, but as I remember, there aren't too many things that react with vinyl that don't also react with everything else in sight, such that Jon's chemical electrosten wouldn't seem to be very practicable. I've also thought of hooking up a fax machine to do electrostencils. (A fax or facsimile machine works on the same synchronized-rotating-drums principle that an orthodox electrosten does; it's used to transmit/receive weathermaps.) But it would be no faster than electrosten: the only advantage is that I, as a weather forecaster, have more access to fax machines than to electrostencil machines. Oh, and has our Technocrat read the article in (I believe) Terry Jeeves' Erg a year or so ago --which article was itself a reprint from the '50s--on how to turn your bicycle into a mimeograph? A scream, it was.

Frank Balazs' tale of the Pinafore production reminds me of an exchange on Stan Freberg's comedy lp, The United States of America, where we're on board Columbus' flagship. Lookout: "Land ho!" (Music: tada, tada.) Columbus: "What was that?" First mate: "French horns." Columbus: "No, no, I mean before that..." The gag crops up three or four more times in the record, the final time at the Battle of Yorktown, where they're English horns, instead.

Aha! Mike Glicksohn [and Susan Wood and Rosemary Ullyot and John Douglas, Suzle wants to add] turned you on to Monty Python years ago, eh? Well, I'm one up on you and him, too, because I was a Monty Python fan from the time it first appeared on tv--in Britain--and I remember it even before it was a television series--there was a BBC radio program called I'm Sorry, I'll Read That Again, which was not only Full Frontal Radio, but was in many ways funnier than the MPFC because you could imagine your own insanity --and insane it was. Ghad, it's been almost six years since MPFC first came on. Hard to believe.

I'm a letterhack and I'm ok.
I read all night and I write all day.

Steve Miller
119 Willowbend Dr., 3A
Owings Mills, Md. 21117

Singing songs of technocracy makes me think of the day the IBM super copier that the library used to have caught fire. The potential for the machines suggested by Jon Singer are tremendous, and he's right about the technology of so many of the currnet copying techniques. My question, though, is what kind of a fire extinguisher will I have to keep nearby for the day somebody playfully introduces a roll of mirro-finish aluminum foil to a machine that's supposed to eat roll-paper and which immediately tries to cut the stencil in the ceiling? Now, if I had some money and a patent lawyer, I'd get started immediately.

Ro Nagey is very right about the change in the pinball emporiums. My most recent haunt closed up a few weeks ago, forced out by the pressure of local parents afraid that their children would be perverted by the group hanging out there in the evenings. The fourteen and fifteen year old women seem much more alive than some of their male counterparts, yet so many of them eventually go over the edge or get pregnant and have a boy-friend at the same time and decide to marry the guy that by the time (or if) they reach 21 they will have lost their creativity and settled down into the standard middle class that they fight so magnificently against.

It's incredible to watch a 30 year old man trying to pick up a fifteen year old girl for an hour in one of these pieces--he doesn't seem to know whether to offer free games on the machines or a nickel bag. And for honest to goodness pinball freaks, it's a rough thing to see your machines beaten and pounded useless by five guys high on something that they bought somewhere and don't know what it is, but gee, it really gets you off...

Jerry, I'm glad you managed to finish Dhalgren. I read the book in virtually one night. That night was the night my roommates left, taking all the furniture but my bean bag chair, my sleeping bags, and a few odd tables and boxes. They also took all the curtains, drapes, shades, etc., so I got to peer across the rooftops at dear old Westbury and into the windows of a) the fifteen year old girl who always undresses in the window when she gets mad at her parents, b) the shrink who entertains his patients all night long now that his wife has moved out, c) the man who was getting ready to go into the hospital for a possibly fatal open-heart surgery. Also that night rain and sleet fell and a full moon shone. And on top of all that, one of my roommates had taken the cat, and not told me he was doing so. At 11 pm I talked to a friend in New York, at about 1:30 am a close friend called me to read me a great passage she had just discovered in a book by Herman Hesse, and at 4:30 I had the last of the food in the house that wasn't in cans: the Cheerios and milk. In the meantime I was reading Dhalgren as a way of avoiding writing the last three paragraphs of a short story I was working on. I thought the book was very sane, somehow, that night/day.

Bruce Arthurs
920 N. 82nd St., H-201
Scottsdale, Az 85257

Singer: Ah, so that's the idea behind the full color mimeo Moshe Feder made a passing mention of in TAPS! The major fault with it wouldn't be the expense, though, it's that it's too much like a drum mimeo. If you've ever worked with a drum mimeo, you may have noticed that all those little holes in the drum...clog. And with Singer's idea, it would have hundreds more little holes, and much smaller in diameter...you might be able to get two or three good copies before the tubes clog up.

Cornell: One of these days when I have \$25 extra to spare, I'm going to get a copy of Soleri's The City in the Image of Man, which is a three foot wide book of sketches and designs for his various arcologies. A really fantastic book. Sf fans would probably go ga-ga over the design for Asteronomo, which is a plan for an artificial satellite, Rama-style...but published a number of years before Clarke's book. (I wouldn't doubt that Clarke may have known of Soleri's work, and been highly influenced by it.)

Pauline Palmer: For funny team names, try the Scottsdale Artichokes. The local Scottsdale Community College used to have a more mundane name for their football team (the Trojans or some dull such). For the past two-and-a-half years, each semester the students would vote to change the mascot to an artichoke (a pink-and-white artichoke, no less), but the board of deans would kick it out every time the proposal crossed their desk. They finally got tired of seeing this last spring semester and approved it. Great celebration ensued.

If Mike Glicksohn really would like to try cat as a foodstuff, tell him to ask Ray Nelson for the recipe for "El Gato Soup". I came across an old 1960 fanzine a while ago with a Nelson article within, telling how he lived for several months one time without spending a penny. He ate cat soup, roast dog, rat stew, and the like, lived in a condemned building, lined his shirts with newspaper for warmth, etc. Really fascinating.

doug barbour
10808 75th ave.

edmonton, aberta, canada

some lovely letters, with the remarkable Wood filling us all in a bit more on her addled youth. poor thing, no wonder she grew up weird and won a fan Hugo. that should

be a lesson to us all. and then as some sort of strange role shifting, i remember that early in my reading life, shortly after WWII (which sureinhell dates me) i found a copy of an American comic book my brother had somehow brought back from the states. it was i believe Sheena, Queen of the Jungle. i dont remember much about it but she was a very tough lady, and if i identified with anyone those days it was with her. or maybe i just fell in love. but that's the only comic i remember from back then. a very strong lady.

Alan Bostick
7656 Dumosa Ave

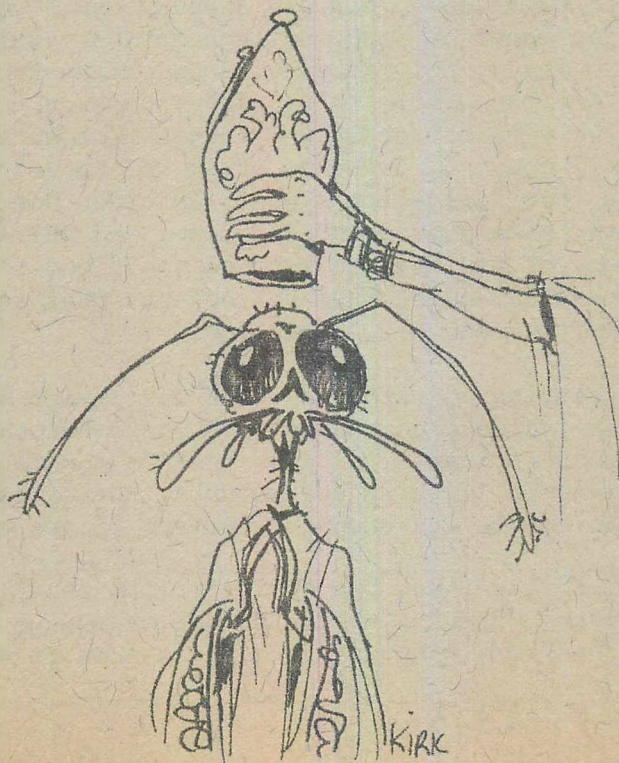
Yucca Valley, Ca 92284

Your lettercol is stunningly long. I like long lettercols, so, much as I sympathize with the poor souls who have to type up the stencils, I would like to see more in the future. One thing that surprises me, though, is the great number of printed locs compared to the amount of WAHFs. Are you some of those compulsive neurotics who must try to print every letter that comes in?

[[Yes. Well, last issue we were. This issue we heard from Alyson Abramowitz, Mike Baker, Harry Bell, Mike Bishop, Joan Bowers, Richard Brandt, Larry Carmody, David Gerrold, Alexis Gilliland, Mike Glicksohn, David Griffin, Maurice Harter, Rob Jackson, Dave Jenrette, Richard Labonte, Arlene Lo, H. Warren Miller, Jodie Offutt, Brad Parks, Peter Roberts, Sheryl Smith, Mae Strelkov, Laurine White, Terry Whittier, Susan Wood. And di t print one bit of their letters, postcards or phonecalls.

[[Now, what have I forgotten? I have to apologize to Ken Josenhans. I forgot that I knocked Wyknot last issue. I don't mean to harp on it. I'm sure there's something else, but I can always throw a note onto the end of Suzle's editorial (typist privilege) or the table of contents. By the way, in the illo below, the headline is from a Minneapolis newspaper, not from our make-up department. See yez all]]

Roach installed as archbishop



SUZLECOL

Part One--Shaw(n) Hides Behind the Mimeo; Suzle is Attacked by a Dog

This Suzlecol (by the way, my 'nickname' is Suzle, that's S U Z L E--okay? It's not Susie or Suzzel or anything else. Pronounced Soozel. As you might have guessed, I'm having trouble again) is coming to you from beautiful downtown Philadelphia. Literally, in this case, as I am composing this at my temp job which is not, shall we say, terribly demanding. Last week I read three books in two days, including The Dispossessed. I'm listening to the radio, too.

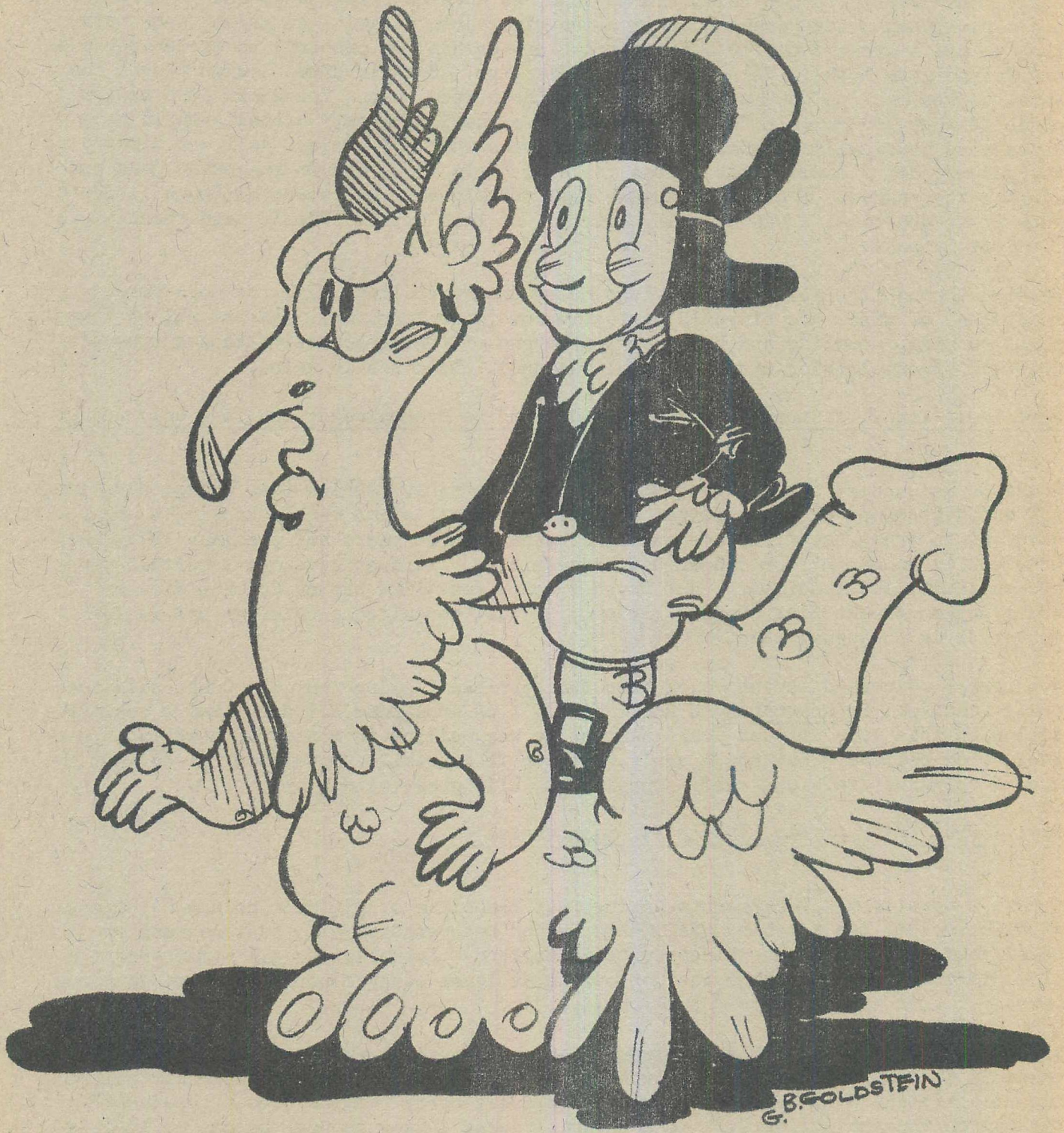
At the last minute I balked at the idea of moving to Pittsburgh sans job or apartment as it was at the very least too nerve-wracking. [She pauses briefly as she has just sprayed herself, her typewriter, the carbon paper, the bond paper, the telephone and the editorial-she-is-supposed-to-be-writing with diet black cherry soda; she is not amused.] Although I had allowed two weeks in early July to find both a job and an apartment in Pittsburgh, I was unable to do either because the union that delivers Pittsburgh's two (and only) newspapers decided to go on strike the same day I arrived. Have you ever tried to locate a job and/or apartment without a newspaper?

So, as Linda and Ron had been kind enough to offer me a temporary home, I took them up on it. Philly has changed a lot since my boarding school days in the area. I've been very favorably impressed with the whole area, although I don't know if enough so to relocate here permanently. One thing to consider--the subways here are scarier than they are in New York City.

The most difficult part of the move was the cats. I took "custody" of our two--Shaw(n)* and Holly--and they had never been outside before (except for their individual quick trips from the New Jersey home of the Kagans when they were still small Mocka-kittens), let alone travelled a long distance by car. Once in the car, old Shaw(n) mewed piteously for about an hour and then got very quiet, not moving from the cat-carrier for the entire drive; Hol had crawled under the front seat where she stayed mewling equally piteously for the entire trip. But you never know about cat psychology. Little Holly, who is very shy and always hides from strangers, was ready to explore Linda and Ron's big house a few hours after we arrived. Whereas Shaw(n), usually very outgoing and inquisitive (or a pest, in other words), hid behind Linda's mimco for two days, staring glassy-eyed and drooling, and scaring the hell out of me. I guess it wasn't the shock of the trip so much as the sight of Linda's three huge cats (he'd never met another cat aside from Hol before) that sent him into catatonia. All five cats are doing pretty well now. Considering.

While the cats have been getting adjusted to their new environment, I have been getting used to mine. It now includes something I've never had experience with before, extensive walking in a residential area. I grew up in a downtown apartment above my parents' business so I've never lived in the suburbs. Here there are daily walks to and from the train station and to the shopping center. Linda and Ron don't own a

* Shaw(n) was named for T.E. Lawrence, who in later life legally changed his name to T.E. Shaw. When Ginjer heard "Shaw" over the phone, she thought I said "Sean", which sounded better. The "n" was kept, but with the () to show it was an addition.



car, so here where everyone drives everywhere, we walk everywhere.

This has taught me something very interesting and useful. Not all furry dogs are my friends. Some, in fact, are large, vicious, growling German Shepards who leap upon you, biting and clawing, because you are walking down the street minding your own business on the sidewalk that happens to run in front of their property. Let me tell you, I was exstastic to get this information. As much as I love dogs and ^{am} more of a dog-person than a cat-person when it comes right down to it, I certainly know better than to pet a strange dog or even approach one on his own property no matter how sweet and friendly he looks. This is courting disaster. But his brute I didn't even see until he was bearing down on me from about three feet away. You know, I've always wondered what I'd do in a "moment of danger" situation, when I actually would be threatened physically by something. Well, guess what? I panic. As I was sinking to the ground, all I could think of was to yell, "Help!", whereupon the owner came running to the rescue. I could have made real trouble for the owner; although I didn't know it at the time, I was actually bitten. At this point, I don't need trouble, so I've let it pass.

Walking through the neighborhood gives me an uneasy feeling. All the dogs here, regardless of size, are fiercely protective of their territory. Almost all of them come running, growling and barking, to the end of their respective fences (there's a lot of strong-looking wire fences all around). It's really weird.

Part Two: Isn't It Strange for the Worldcon to Be Over Already and It's Only August 25?

Those of us who oft sit around discussing such terribly fannish-type things have long ago noted that one of the stranger aspects of fandom is not merely knowing where you're going to be every Labor Day weekend for the next three years and possibly 1979, but what you'll be having for dinner next August 31st. It does give one a certain sense of continuity and tradition. But maybe I won't feel like eating Chicken Kiev or whatever, on August 31st of 1977. (Sorry, I just consulted a calendar and in 1977 August 31 is on August 28th.)

Now that I've reread the above, I have the horrible feeling that Eli Cohen said something identical in Kratophany a while back. I do know that Eli and I had a conversation on this very subject years ago, as he was mailing in money for a worldcon banquet, I do believe. But now I can't remember if he really wrote about it or just that I think he did. Oh, Well. Forgive me, Eli, great minds, etc...

Part Three: Raspberries, That's It, Raspberries!

I have a note from Peter Roberts saying that the title of Ginjer's column, "A Handful of Blueberries" isn't a bona fide Monty Python reference at all, just because it seems that they don't have blueberries in England. Actually, we all remembered the line differently and blueberries won out as at least being a perfectly good-sounding berry. ("...A lovely berry for the role...")

I, for one, didn't realize that blueberries were particularly American. Perhaps they exist in England but under a different name. Lots of foods are inexplicably called one thing in the U.K. and something else entirely here. Having done a great deal of reading on the subject of G.B. as a child, I guess I know as much as one could without having lived there (one week certainly doesn't count), but when I was given an English recipe book, I discovered all sorts of fascinating discrepancies in what I thought were commonplace terms for things here and there. Even when I do have time to cook from new recipes, the book is almost totally unusable. But you might just

stop on your way home, would you, and bring back a two pound aubergine...

Part Four: Suzle's Ire Is Raised

Last night, in the middle of working on this issue, I had the strange experience of being flattered and insulted by the very same phone call. A fan friend of ours called to give a verbal loc on the last issue of SpanInq, as it was impossible for him to write one on time.

He said some really great, marvelous, egoboosting type things and, coming from someone whose opinion we respect, we were both flattered tremendously.

However, I was made painfully aware of a way of thinking that has never really affected me greatly. At least not as much as other women. I've never been heavily involved in what has become known as "Women's Lib", although I believe in everything it stands for. That is, more than just equal pay for equal work, but changes in the whole way of thinking about things. (I shan't make this section my platform, so I'll go on...)

In doing this fanzine, Jerry and I do equal work and have an equal say on contents, layout, etc., and Jerry has always stressed this point with everyone. He gets as upset as I do when I seem to be ignored as half-the-editor, but I've never harped on it. But this call really threw me.

It was obvious to me that our friend had called to talk to Jerry, not to me. Now, here I have absolutely no complaint. A person is more than entitled to prefer speaking to Jerry than to me. But Jerry insisted that I get on the extension phone to listen to the, uh, what is a phone call of comment--a "phoc"?--and to make a long story short, Linda took the phone from Jerry to say hello for a minute, and I heard this supposedly liberal and ghodd-type fan explain to her that he had called to tell Jerry what a good fanzine he had, how much he liked his fanzine, etc. It was difficult to keep from either making a comment right there or crying.

Well, I've gone on long enough. I just have the one point to make. I wasn't upset that someone preferred talking to Jerry rather than to me. That would be nonsensical. I got upset at a third party referring to SpanInq as Jerry's fanzine in such a way that made me feel like one step above the dirt on the ground.

There now, that feels better.

Part Five: There Is No Part Five

In anticipation of either a deluge of letters on Ginjer's column this time, or none at all (scardy-cats), I'm refraining from commenting on my part in it until next time.

Like I forgot to tell Ginjer that my character for Bonanza, Jacqueline Sinclair, was French-Creole and spoke with a slightly French accent because it was a long time ago and it slipped my mind until typing up her column.

The whole thing is so complicated...

So, as John Douglas would say, TTFA.



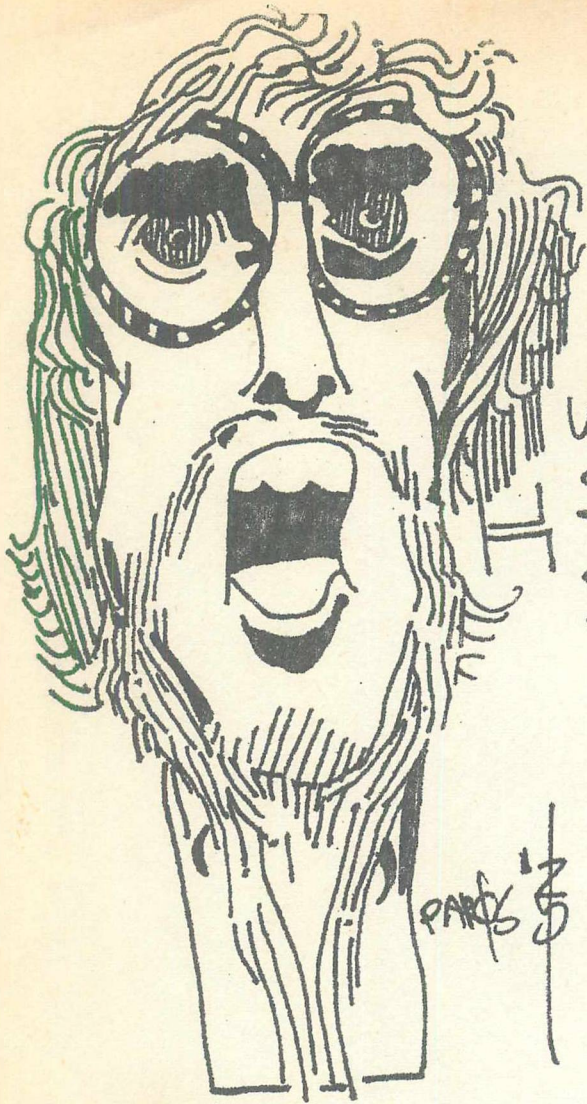


(P) Foglio



WHEN YOU'VE
SEEN ONE
SI ROIS...





WHEN YOU'VE
SEEN ONE
SI ROIS ...

