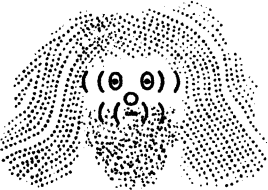




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comes to you from Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Avenue, Toronto Ontario M6P 2S3 in beautiful downtown Canada. As always it is entirely an exercise in editorial self-indulgence wherein Boy Letterhack Plays Faned. XENIUM goes to friends and people who do neat fanzines in a rather sporadic fashion dictated by the indiscretion of editorial whim and is not available for The Usual, I'm afraid. It would not appear as it does without the generous support of many fine writers and artists to whom its editor is much indebted. An accepted contribution may bring another one to your mailbox in a year or so. A letter might also, but then again it might not. Which also describes the chances of said letter getting printed, as it happens. Buying me expensive drinks at cons and telling me what a fine fellow I am will definitely get you on my good side although only possibly on the mailing list. So it goes.

SSScotch Press #47



July 1976

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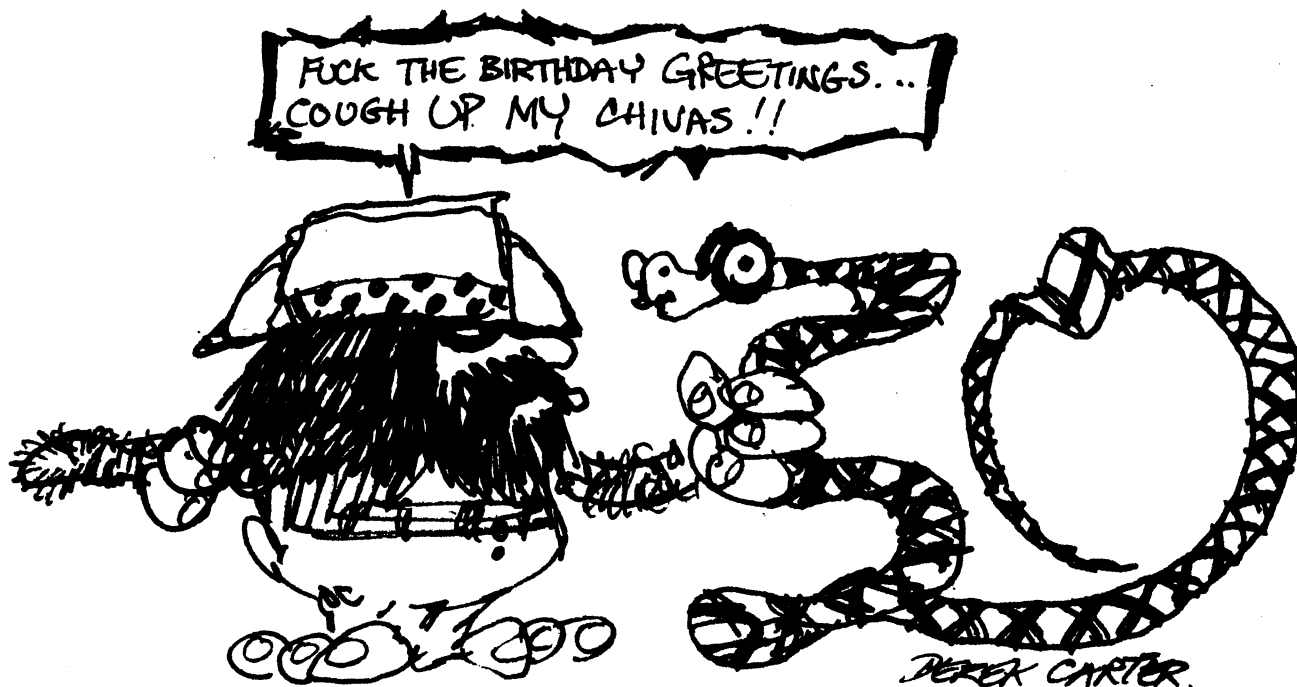
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THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

When you grow up in a generation one of whose catchphrases is "Never trust anyone over thirty" it's hard not to approach that milestone without an occasional thought as to its supposed significance. So as May 20, 1976 came closer, random thoughts connected with reaching this important plateau fluttered through my head. And a few of them escaped that barren prison and found their way to freedom by hiding themselves on departing pieces of paper.

As a result, fandom and friends joined forces with fate and conspired to ensure that thirty would be my best birthday ever. And they were successful beyond my wildest dreams!

They say that as you get older birthdays mean less and less to you. (If that is in any way true, I doubt poor old Bowers even remembers when his is nowadays.) But I am nowhere near that blasé about these events. I enjoy getting cards and gifts almost as much as I enjoy giving them. Coff, coff, sound of arm dislocating from attempt to pat self on back. Ouch!! So I was certainly anticipating the day itself. What I didn't know at the time was that my thirtieth birthday was going to last for seventeen days!

On Friday the 14th of May I gave myself an early birthday present (I'm nothing if not self-indulgent) by flying down quite unexpectedly -- at least to everyone else, I think I'd told myself about it -- to Kansas City to share BYOBCON with several of my closest friends. Some of the details of that small, mellow convention have been written up in the second issue of FLOCCIPAUCINIHLIPILIFICATION, my FAPazine which a very few of you will have seen. Hopefully, seventy of the ninety printed copies are now in California waiting their chance to be collated into FAPA bundles and sent out around the world to languish unread and unloved in dusty garages, dark closets and empty post office boxes. (Although with my luck they're sitting in a warehouse in Teaneck, New Jersey stamped "Undelivered due to being the one in five correctly addressed pieces selected for re-routing.") Anyone who desperately wants to know all about BYOBCON can mug any nearby FAPAn sometime in August: there isn't a one of us capable of resisting even a determined five year old.

Apart from being my own birthday present to myself, BYOBCON had one other, widely-reported, connection with my birthday. On Saturday May 15th, five days short of my

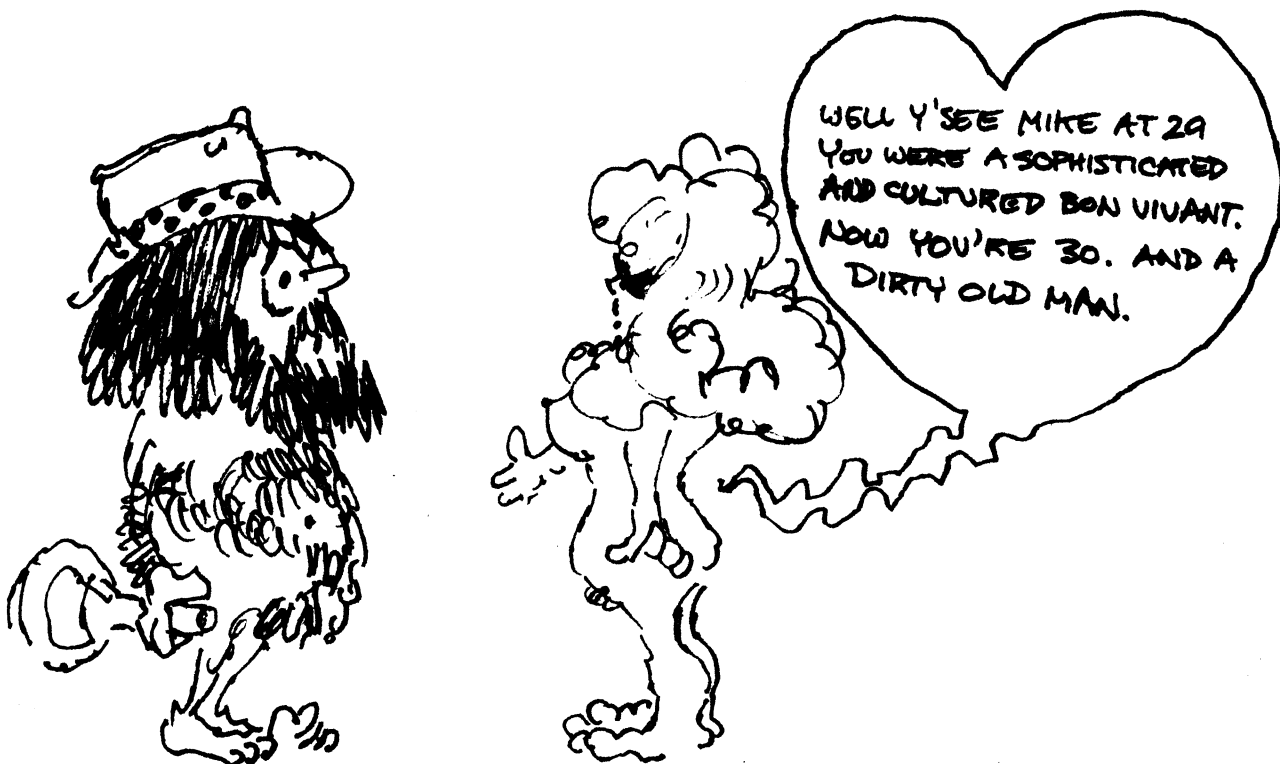
epochal turning point, for the second time that day, a waitress in a hotel at the Kansas City airport refused to serve me a drink until I showed proof of legal age! Bob Tucker, with whom I was sitting at the time, leapt to his feet and led a restaurant filled with fans in a resounding round of applause for this delightfully myopic young lady. (As a matter of fact, I suspect the source of the problem was that I was sitting with the venerable Mister Tucker. Next to him everyone looks so young I suspect even Harry Warner would have been carded if he'd asked for a glass of soda water.)

Nobody likes to leave a good convention and nobody likes to be forced to be the first to leave a good con, but when circumstances force you into such a situation, then I can think of no better way to handle it than to do as I did at BYOBCON. Take your leave accompanied by an attractive member of the opposite sex (that'd be a woman in your case, Bill) who is on his/her way to visit you for a week anyway. It certainly makes the return trip a lot more fun than the usual planeride back from a convention.

By delightful coincidence, a series of remarkable occurrences had made it possible for Stephanie Oberembt, one of the many fine SFLIS people recently attracted to fandom, to visit Toronto for a week that just happened to include my birthday. Having reached the nondescript ages of twenty eight and twenty nine on my own, I found it symbolically fitting to attain the mystical age of thirty with someone with whom I shared a considerable degree of mutual affection. I recommend it for anyone contemplating abandoning their twenties in the near future!

The first half of the week passed very pleasantly, adding to the general feeling of euphoria with which I approached what was supposed to be a traumatic experience. If I'd only known what convoluted machinations my former friends were engaged in, I just might have felt the degree of trepidation appropriate to the occasion!

Finally, and with a whimper not a bang, Der Tag slipped almost unnoticed into being. I remember glancing up while seated on the couch and saying "Hey, look at that: I'm thirty!" And it didn't hurt at all.



TO MIKE —

with best wishes for
your Nth birthday...
from Gannetfandom

Rob Jackson

Jon Williams

Ritchie Smith
Annie Mullin
Bkian Rose

Dave Lockfield
Dave Hutchinson

Kevin Williams

Richard Jackson

Gaffney
Harry Bell

Jon Ferman (His Father)
Cathy Gardner

To protect the sensibilities of my younger readers, I shall draw a curtain over the next few minutes in this narrative. Besides, this is being typed on Victoria's Selectric and it's probably set to self-destruct if anyone attempts to type mush on it. Suffice it to say that eventually I got to the actual mechanics of the day, the assembled cards and gifts.

Despite being a typically fannish mail-freak, I've inherited from my father a degree of stoicism where gifts are concerned. I can keep a wrapped birthday or Christmas present or an obvious greeting card around for weeks without even checking the return address or the customs declaration to see who it came from or what it might be. It makes celebrating a special occasion that much more complete if you haven't dissipated some of the good karma beforehand.

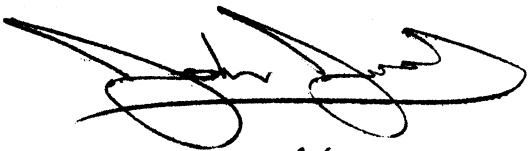
On this particular occasion I was able to enjoy and appreciate the usual cards from relatives and friends, plus two extremely appropriate gifts: a most intriguing and extremely well-down lithograph from Susan, and a for-real, actual professional backgammon game from Stephanie. (For more than two years I'd been playing on a hand-drawn board with dimes and pennies and my Yachee dice. I'd done pretty well with that makeshift arrangement, but it was a delight to have a proper set, complete with doubling dice. Since I once took Barb Nagey for two hundred and forty bucks on her set, I figure being able to play on a proper set of my own should enable me to retire pretty soon! For the sake of propri-

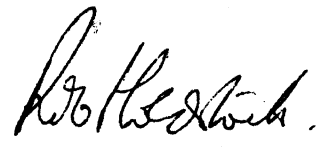
ety -- and my aged yet still sensitive ego -- I shall refrain from mentioning what happened when Stephanie and I initiated the board later in the week.)

And there was more.

If you're reading this, I don't have to tell you how much fandom means to me. All of my closest friends have been made through fandom: my happiest memories are connected to fans and fandom: the men and women I've loved and who've loved me have all been fans. I once heard of some advice Harry Warner gave to the effect "when things seem to be going wrong all across the board and you're tempted to pack it all in, try and hold onto fandom, because fandom can and will see you through some damn hard times and give you something to hold onto when everything else is blackest." To which I can only say "Right on!" Fandom does mean a lot to me: both for the friends I've made through it and the egoboo it has returned to me. The sense of belonging one gets through fandom is hard to overrate.

In a recent DILEMMA from Jackie Franke, Victoria remarked on the importance of those little incidents and gestures which show that "you matter to someone." Answering her in the next issue, Buck Coulson said that his ego was always so large that he never had any doubts in that regard. Well, my ego isn't that large (stop all that


Brian J. Hampton


Bob Hedrick
Boris The Bold.

9 with 9 hrs 30 gam!
Peter Wicks
at Hampton

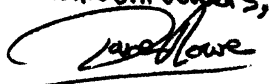
It's only
Twenty Ten!
Love
Simone
XX
San Maul

Who hath not learned, in hours of faith,
The truth to flesh and sense unknown,
That life is ever lord of death,
And love can never lose its own!

JOHN GREENEAL WHEELER

To say that many thoughts
are with you,
and to offer deepest sympathy
in the loss of your loved ~~one~~ twenties

Sorry old man,
Best
Larry.
Ah well, it comes to
us all sometime
Bernie Peck

Just think,
you're catching up
with Bill Bowyer's,


Mike,
What can I say?
Believe me, I'm
truly sorry,
Got well soon

Tough, huh?
Peter Robert
XX
Cause
wider
Too fast to live,
Too young to die?
Cree.

FROM
ALL AT
THE ONE TON



obscene giggling and spluttering this instant!) and I both enjoy and am surprised by such indications of caring. And the first such indications on the part of fandom manifested themselves that night.

I was born in England, and a sizeable number of my relatives still live there, so I expect cards with egocentric stamps bearing no identification other than a silhouette of Elizabeth II. But this year there were more such greetings than I could account for, and I admit my curiosity was aroused.

Well, it was satisfied in a most charming way, when I opened the mystery cards and discovered the multiplicity of greetings reproduced on these two pages. One card is from the Gannets, the fans in the north of England centred around Newcastle and the one on this page is from the Rats, the London fan circle which contains many of the finest writers in fandom today. It was a damn mellow feeling to know that three thousand miles away a lot of people who'd only met me once or twice or possibly knew me only by reputation had taken the time and cared enough to send these cards. It filled me with a warm happy feeling about fandom that not even the events of the next few hours could fully dissipate!

At one o'clock the phone rang.

Now this is not an unusual occurrence. I am by nature a night person, and given the proper financial situation I would probably exist permanently on the time-scale I adopt during my summer holidays: to wit, working until four or five in the morning

then sleeping until past noon. When my predilection for moderately late hours is added in to the fact that most of my best friends live in strange cities in a foreign country and hence have to contact me long-distance which is cheaper after eleven p.m. the phone ringing at one a.m. did not surprise me at all. So I answered it.

It was a decrepid former fanzine publisher from Ohio who just happens to have won one-third of all the FAAN Awards ever presented and also just happens to be one of the best friends I've got. Through a Herculean effort of will and mind over matter he had managed to stay up until that hour and somehow retain the strength to pick up the receiver and dial my number. (I suspect, though, that someone else dialed all but the last digit for him around nine p.m. and he sat there for four hours muttering "Six, six, six" to himself: it's unlikely the old boy could either read or remember eleven digits at that late hour.) Naturally, I was touched, and accepted Bill's congratulatory remarks with the grace and modesty for which I'm famous. Once again I felt a warm glow for the spontaneous affection that sometimes fills fandom and I wallowed in the good feelings one gets from having earned the friendship of people one likes and admires. *If I'd only known!!*

At two o'clock the phone rang.

Now this in itself was not a totally unknown phenomenon. I'm often up at 2 am, sipping good whiskey (or tequila, or a nice dry gin martini on the rocks with an olive, or a Vodka Alexander, or a Gimlet or just about anything except bourbon) whilst tapping away at the typewriter in a vain effort to whittle down the accumulation of fanzines. And my friends knew it was my birthday, and hence I'd probably be up even later than usual so a later-than-usual call would probably be acceptable. And they were right, of course: I was still up, sipping a glass of excellent Chivas and ~~CENSORED-CENSORED-CENSORED~~, So I answered it.

It was a burnt-out twenty year old hippy-freak Hungarian artist from Chicago who happened to be doing the cover for this fanzine and also happened to owe me \$240 from a single backgammon game. As well as being my friend, of course. I was once again flattered and touched by this demonstration of affection, and such is the openness and honesty of the Canadian character that I never dreamed there was anything more behind this call than a simple expression of the awe, reverence and adoration to be expected under the circumstances. Fandom certainly is a wonderful thing, meyer.

At three o'clock the phone rang!

And rang, and rang, and rang, and rang. Now I like a little egoboo as much as the next guy, but there are times when answering the phone has a relatively low priority and this was one of them. (Monty Python fans may now amuse themselves with a thirty second rendition of a well-known Pythonesque schtick.) So I ignored the phone, which luckily is two rooms and two doors away from where I sleep so is relatively easy to ignore. I ignored the first ten rings -- after a momentary debate with myself in which the *con* completely overwhelmed the *pro* -- and then I ignored the next ten rings. After that it was simplicity itself to ignore the third ten rings and then simply lose track of how many more times Alexander's invidious instrument attempted to intrude upon my privacy. (I was later to be told in no uncertain terms that it rang *forty six* times but I suspect that's an exaggeration brought about by fatigue and starvation on the part of the caller.) So eventually it stopped, and so did I, and so I went to sleep.

At four o'clock the phone rang.

It woke me up, I must admit that. But it didn't make me conscious. I groped for the clock and stared in bewildered awe at what it was vainly trying to tell me. I fought a battle to determine whether or not I was dreaming. It was a draw. So I muttered

the title and the first line of a song Spider Robinson wrote which goes "Fuck it, fuck it, anyway" and rolled over and went back to sleep. How long the rings went on I neither knew nor cared!

At seven-thirty the phone rang.

Now I've already mentioned I'm a night person, but when you have to be at school by eight thirty your body develops a tendency to get up relatively early in the day. But that doesn't mean that you wake up, nor does it mean that your brain starts functioning before noon. Still, I was sufficiently pliable at seven thirty that the automatic circuits took over and sent me stumbling and lurching blindly towards the telephone like a shambling bogeyman from a child's nightmare.

It was a would-be hot shot publisher from Cleveland who'd recently hyphenated his name so as not to embarrass his sister with his lack of drinking ability. It's a mark of my ingenuous character (or my sluggardly reaction time) that I didn't connect this call with any of the previous attempts at telephonic communication, but accepted Ro's kind words of congratulations with as much coherency and *savoir faire* as I was capable of mustering after less than five hours sleep. It seemed merely to be a fine way to actually start the day of my thirtieth birthday, with a friendly call from a fan to fill me with camaraderie as the day began. It wasn't until I started functioning adequately in the afternoon that it struck me as odd that Ro, who had only called me a couple of times on fan business in the previous two years, should be moved to extend birthday greetings at such an unusual hour. Things, as you may have guessed, were not exactly what they seemed!

Still, school did not cease to operate just because the token freak on the staff had crossed that magical line into the thirties, so eventually I wandered into class in my usual dazed fashion. And wandered into by far the nicest and most generous celebration of my birthday I've ever experienced as a teacher.

There are many advantages to being a teacher, in addition to the uplifting and unselfish ones we often quote to reporters and graduate students in education when asked why we entered the profession. When you're lucky enough, as I was this past year, to teach four senior classes, and you look a little freaky anyway, and you've retained a sense of wonder, then sometimes you can earn the friendship and acceptance of a lot of really fine young people. There are half a dozen teachers at my school who can usually be found down at the pub with the students after a football



game or a drama night or an athletic banquet and I'm one of them. But I take a certain pride in knowing that I'm the only teacher to be invited to several of the all-student parties held throughout the year. It's a good feeling to be trusted enough that you can be treated as an equal, over thirty or not.

That trust and affection manifested itself beautifully throughout the day, and added to the influences that made this the best of birthdays. It had been known for a long time that Thursday the 20th was my birthday: it also happened to be the birthday of a girl in my home-form who was one of the most popular students in the school and the following Friday was the birthday of the acting math head, also one of the more popular staff members. So we all expected a party in my room during the first period (we averaged a party first period every two weeks as members of the group of friends who'd been together throughout highschool and were about to graduate came of their respective ages: it was hard to get much consistent math done, but it sure was a hell of a lot of fun!) The ad hoc social committee in charge of first period birthday parties didn't disappoint us. They came in with three heart-shaped cakes, filled with candles, each with one of our three names and an appropriate symbol on it. Mine bore the legend "*MIKE PQ/P'Q'* = $|\kappa|$ ", the latter just happening to be a formula I'd inadvertently put on the board upside down a week or so before. It was nice to know they remembered *something*!

Joe Haldeman, who is also a very good friend of mine but unlike five ex-XENIUM readers I can think of he'll be seeing this because he *didn't* call me on my birthday, once said "It pays to advertise." (I don't think this was original, but that's Joe for you.) My thirtieth birthday certainly proved the truth of that aphorism, at least in as far as my students are concerned.

In fandom I have locs, articles and conventions to establish my fondness for certain fermented grain products. At school I have football games, taverns, a certain notorious aluminum hipflask and a few parties to do the same thing. It worked. Magnificently!

In addition to the cakes, the cards, the photographs, the small personal presents from individual students, my home form presented me with a beautiful German beer stein. And two couples of my favorite students bought me a bottle of scotch and a bottle of champagne respectively. It was a great way to set the festivities in motion, and the resultant party consumed the first two periods in most pleasant fashion. (Needless to say, I was not slow to take the opportunity of kissing several remarkably attractive young ladies. As I said, there are *many* advantages to being a teacher.)

In period four, though, my Computer Science class *did* surprise me with a second party, complete with cake, gifts, soft drinks and munchies. The class was but ten people, but they got together and bought me a 26er of Chivas and a pint of Cutty. It certainly *does* pay to advertise! And one young lady, whose mother owns a pastry shop where she works, made a cake in the shape of a computer card with GL(HIC)KSOHN marked on in the appropriate holes. There must have been fifteen ounces of rum in it, and the



quietest and shyest girl in the class was giggling by the end of the period after two potent slices.

I suppose I have a fairly simple mind so am easily amused and pleased but when I went home for lunch and found that even the Post Office was doing its best to make it a good day by delivering the airmail package from my brother in England containing two hardcover and two softcover English editions of *THE FOREVER WAR*, well it just seemed that for at least one day I was living in The Best of All Possible Worlds. And becoming thirty hardly seemed traumatic at all!

The afternoon was fairly quiet, mostly because I'd scheduled a test for the last two periods. However, the very last period ended on a happy note with the presentation to me of yet another 26er of Chivas, this time by four students only one of whom I had in my class, the other three being after-the-football-game beer-drinking buddies. I thought four bottles of scotch and a bottle of champagne was a rather impressive testament to the extent of my reputation as a connoisseur of the finer things of life. And the best was yet to come!

After school the head and I picked Stephanie up and drove down to the favorite local pub where we sat on the terrace enjoying the sunshine and a beautiful view of the lake and buying beer for those of our students who'd accepted our invitation to join us for a pint or two. My philosophy has always been that I earn quite a bit of money whereas my students are mostly as impoverished as students have always been, so I'm quite happy to pick up the tab on such occasions. The head said he'd split the cost with me, but unlike me he's not aware of what that can entail. I accepted his offer though, even though the fifty eight dollar tab came as quite a shock to him!

I inaugurated my beer stein with four pints of good imported German beer, and enjoyed the looks on the faces of several of my students when Stephanie sat on my lap and I told them no, she was not my sister. It was a mellow couple of hours and a fine way to start the evening of a fine day.

The rest of the day more than lived up to the quality of the parts I've described so far but I'll save you the details as they're primarily of personal interest only. But it was such a good day, and such a full one, that thoughts of the unusual series of phonecalls which had begun it were quite driven from my mind. It wasn't until several days later that I became aware that I'd been the victim of a devilishly complicated plot...which I'd unknowingly undermined by refusing to answer the phone!

It was Nagey's fault. Barb, that is. She'd suggested the every-hour-on-the-hour calls and the idea was enthusiastically taken up by several people I used to think of as my friends. I was told in no uncertain terms that Jackie Franke had sat and counted forty-six rings as I lay in semi-comotose slumber wondering who the hell the persistent ~~fool~~ person trying to contact me might be. And I was told in equally forceful manner that Midge Reitan had gotten up at an ungodly early hour just to wish me Many Happy Returns and why the hell didn't I answer the phone when good friends were trying to share an important day with me? What could I say? I told them they ought to adopt my credo: You should've stood in bed! And write me a letter!



When you get right down to it, a birthday is just another day and the days that follow it are just normal ordinary days, however anti-climactic they may be. The rest of that week, and my first days as an untrustworthy old fan and tired, passed quietly and on the Sunday I saw Stephanie off on a plane heading for that void on the map which bears the label Iowa and hence I turned my eyes to the future. And there loomed AUTOCLAVE!

To briefly summarize what I said in FLOCCI, I am not an up-front performer. I don't get as nervous as Bill Bowers or Randy Bathurst, but neither do I have the aplomb of a Joe Haldeman or a Rusty Hevelin. At AUTOCLAVE I was to have my first experience as a toastmaster and the responsibility of giving some amusing patter followed by an introduction worthy of two such splendid guests of honour as Donn Brazier and Gene Wolfe weighed rather heavily on what passes for my mind. I'd thought about it for quite some time (I'd known about my role since AUSSIECON, after all) and had tried to gather together a few props for my speeches, but I hadn't as yet sat down and actually created anything.

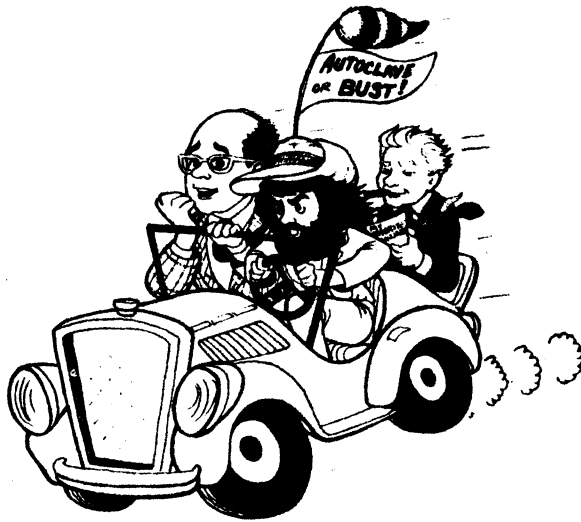
Now I have enormous admiration for speakers who can be given a topic and without preparing a single note can captivate an audience with a witty and insightful forty-five minute speech. But I am not one of them. So I prepare at least an outline, and usually I type out a full speech which will bear little resemblance to the actual words I end up saying but is nice to have around for reference when the icy fingers of absolute panic freeze me totally. (Besides, there just might be some neofan with a very low critical threshold who wants to publish what you've not said, so a prepared text is a handy thing to have on hand.)

In the days that preceded my departure for Detroit, then, I wrote, re-wrote and re-re-wrote what I wanted to say as the AUTOCLAVE toastmaster. And probably got almost as nervous about the con as chairperson Leah Zeldes, although for different and more personal reasons.

Eventually the afternoon of Friday, May 28 arrived and after skipping a class or two, I caught the train to Windsor, hoping to be met by a friendly face willing to take me across to Detroit. Instead, I got Bowers, but at least he was accompanied by the charmingly ingenuous Jackie Hilles. And so began AUTOCLAVE, probably the best damn convention weekend I've ever known!

I can't really do justice to that convention, because I'm not that good a writer. It had an atmosphere that I've not experienced at any other convention I've been to, and that's a large number of conventions. Aimed at fanzine fans, it seemed to bring together a reasonably large number of exceptionally compatible people and the resulting vibrations were wondrously fine indeed. I've never been at a con where so much affection and love was evident and anyone who was in Detroit that weekend probably has some of the most together memories of hisher days in fandom to look back on.

It is a cliché to say that Conventions Are People but like all clichés there is truth behind the triteness. And the mellowness of AUTOCLAVE was certainly due to the many fine people who were there. There are few things less complete or more inane than a list of Ghood People at a con but if you'll allow my senility to take over for a moment, AUTOCLAVE was a great con because of people like Bowers, Barb, Jackies Hilles and Franke, Don(n)s Thompson and Brazier, Madman Riley and Quinn and



Fred Haskell, Larry Downes and Leah Zeldes and the rest of Detroit fandom, Midge Reitan, Randy Bathurst, Gene Wolfe, Ro and Lin Lutz-Nagey and a host of others I'll undoubtedly remember after these stencils have been typed and run off.

It's probably fortunate, considering the length of this article, that too many hours and too many bottles of scotch and glasses of tequila have passed under the bridge for me to do a real conreport on AUTOCLAVE at this point. The banquet sticks very clearly in my mind for future reporting, but before we hit the highlight of the con there are a few vivid impressions I'd like to commit to stencil for my posterity...

AUTOCLAVE...the con where that loud and boisterous charismatic maniac Mark Riley unloaded two hundred and sixty dollars worth of comic books and bought himself a half gallon of Johnny Walker Black which he and I proceeded to annihilate by the end of the con...the con where Randy Bathurst ran interference for me after the skinnydipping so as to protect the sensibilities of mundanes unfortunate enough to be sharing the hotel with the likes of Riley and I...and I pounded heroically on the door of a room that *didn't* contain a Bowers to let me in for a change of clothes...the con where Barb Nagey and Bill Bowers initiated an experiment to determine the permeability of Canadian beards with respect to strawberry cheesecake...the con where "Sex And Science Fiction Fandom" turned out to be a surprisingly worthwhile topic for a panel, and late-night nametags created by fly-by-night artists were a lucrative source of unexpected income...the con that proved once and for all that six appearances by Donn Brazier in more than four decades is nowhere near enough by at least an order of magnitude, and that a professional writer/fanzine fan can give a speech that will stand for a long time as one of the best damn convention presentations of all time...



AUTOCLAVE...the con that proved that a couple of hundred fanzine fans from all across the continent can gather together and generate some of the finest vibes in the history of fandom...and the con that showed that there are some conventions that *no-one* wants to leave!

AUTOCLAVE...the best convention I've ever known!!

That doesn't come close to doing justice to a really terrific weekend, but anyone who's ever been to a really good con can fill in the parties, the conversations, the fanzines, the meetings with old friends and the conversions of paper correspondents into personal friends, the drinks, the meals, the bad puns, and sleepless hours, and the thousands of details that flesh out every convention. AUTOCLAVE had them all and the love that surrounded that convention was beautiful to see and to be a part of.

I've never seen a convention that ended the way AUTOCLAVE did. Or rather, almost didn't! Monday afternoon saw the mezzanine filled with fans who simply did not want to leave: they sat there, talking about departure times, and travel times, and how they really *ought* to be leaving, and every now and then some Herculean soul would rise, mutter a few words about going, kiss everyone else goodbye and *sit right down again because heshe was having too good a time to leave!* I'm sure I said goodbye to the same people at least six times, and I certainly wasn't complaining! The feeling of being part of a family has never been as strong as it was at AUTOCLAVE and I hope everyone in fandom can experience the feelings that filled those who shared that Monday afternoon session. To paraphrase page six, fandom certainly can be a wonderful thing at times!

I was so struck by the uniquely warm nature of this convention that when I got back

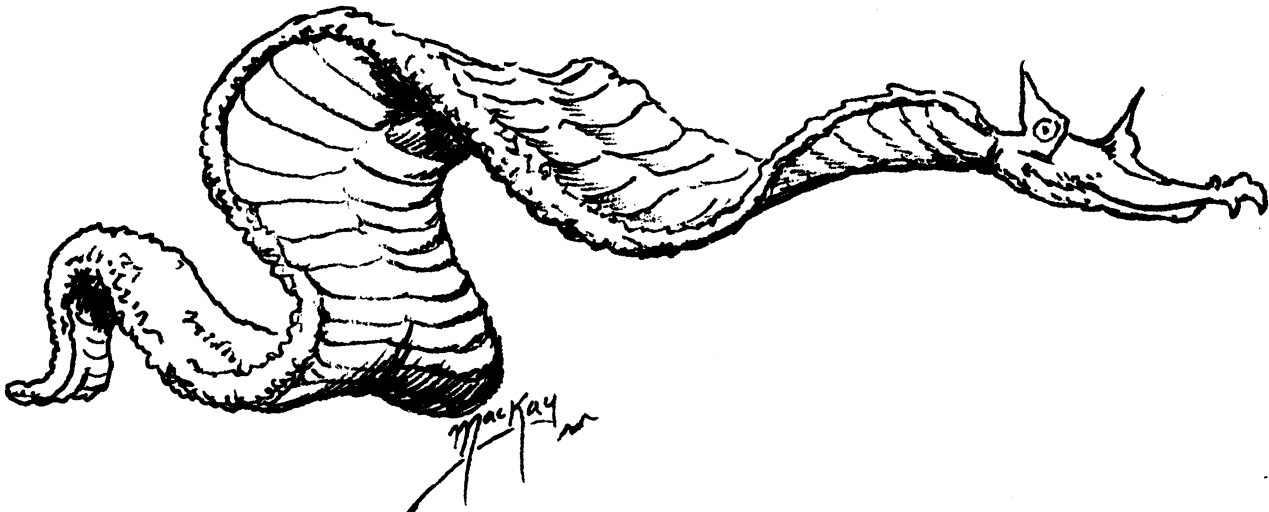
to Toronto I used the lesson of AUTOCLAVE as the basis of an article Tom Reamy had asked me to write for the MIDAMERICON program book. I wrote an article about the warmth, and the friendship, and the closeness and the affection that can exist in fandom. And I gave it a title that had come out of AUTOCLAVE for me: I called it FIAWOL and that stood for what the con had shown me, Fandom Is A World of Love.

But enough of this maudlin sentimentality! Put it down to hardening of the arteries, cirrhosis of the liver, incipient mushiness of the forebrain and other symptoms of old age. We, or at least I, were, or was, talking about my birthday. Believe it or not, AUTOCLAVE is germane to the supposed topic of this dissertation.

I've mentioned the nervousness with which I approach any public speaking engagement, fannish or otherwise. I also have a remedy for this shakiness, one that will not come as much of a surprise to most people reading this. (Assuming, of course, there is anyone on the XENIUM mailing list with the youth, strength, stamina and perseverance to still be reading at this point.) It comes in a clear glass bottle, has a warm brown colour and provides the fortitude my own lack of self-confidence fails to make manifest. Anyone who thinks I'm talking about cola may leave the fanzine.

I'd already been on a panel during the afternoon (the "Sex In Science Fiction Fandom" panel, as it happens, representing the sublimation-through-fanac viewpoint, of course) so I approached the banquet with less than my usual degree of stark terror. I also had a small bottle of Chivas with me, just to augment the almost total lack of flavour in the rubber chicken (or possibly it was turkey...or beef...then again it might have been fibreglass insulation, gypsum panelling or unclaimed copies of the program book) so the meal in the company of Guests of Honour Donn and Gene went by in a rather mellow fashion. By using the mental powers I've mastered through the pages of ODYSSEY I was even able to ignore the fact that I was shortly (aha! how freudian) to be called upon to perform my first (and I fully expect last) public performance as a toastmaster. My friends, however, were not so forgetting!

When I accepted the offer of the AUTOCLAVE toastmastership, during a rare moment of near sobriety in Melbourne, Australia, I imposed the condition that my appearance would be predicated upon the simultaneous appearance of my good friend Johnny Walker and the committee graciously accepted those terms. When everyone had exhausted the possibilities for inventiveness inherent in the plastic meat and bouncing potatoes, and I'd procrastinated long enough to the point where everyone likely to fall asleep had done so, I wandered up to the dais that had been prepared for the speeches. (There was no head table at the AUTOCLAVE banquet, but a dais and a couple of chairs had been set up at one side of the room for the eventual speeches.) True to their word, the committee materialized a pint of Johnny Walker to see me through the coming ordeal, and though my glass was full I gratefully and graciously accepted it.



Then came the deluge! From all across the room smiling figures wended towards the podium and, with a grin and a wisecrack, deposited bottles of Chivas Regal on the table before my astonished eyes. Within less than a minute I was gazing at enough of my favorite source of inspiration for me to have given the Gettysburg Address!

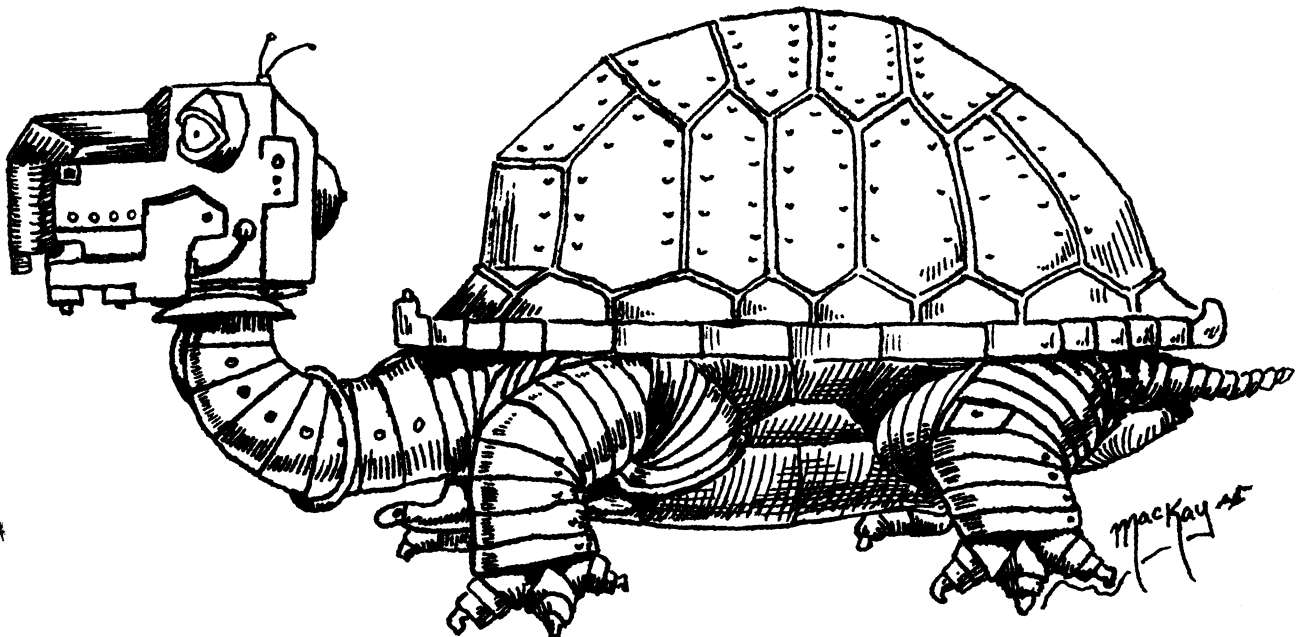
Bowers started it (which was fitting as he probably understands my need for a little Dutch courage when speaking in public better than anyone else) and was followed by Randy Bathurst, Jackie Franke, Ro Lutz-Nagey and Barb Nagey. And Midge Reitan topped it off with a large strawberry cheesecake. To say I was surprised would be a classic understatement and there's really no way I can adequately express my appreciation: I *did* forgive them their participation in The Singularly Unamusing Affair of The Ringing Telephone which I thought a gesture of magnanimity in keeping with the thoughtfulness of their gesture of affection. (This pardon was later rescinded in the case of Bowers and Nagey after The Even More Unamusing Affair of The Last Piece of Cheesecake And The Beard. Sic gloria transit friendship, I guess.)

But the best was *still* yet to come!

I don't know if the sight of six bottles of good scotch improved my first, last and only performance as a toastmaster but apart from being too verbose it seemed to go over moderately well. Besides, I lucked out. Gene Wolfe's speech was quite easily one of the best banquet presentations I've ever heard and ended the proceedings on such a powerful note that I doubt my own contributions will be remembered at all. Which is as it should be and probably a damn good thing.

When Gene had finished reducing the audience to helpless puddles of lime jello and the eyes had been wiped clear of laughter-induced tears and a moderate degree of order had been restored, I stood up to dismiss the gala affair so we could start in on important things. Like *drinking* some of those six bottles instead of looking at them. But Bowers caught my eye by jumping up and down on the table, waving his arms and mumbling incoherently: when he took off his shoe, I realized something was afoot. So I introduced the Aging Wonder of Ohio and ceded him the podium. (Afterwards Bill was to claim that Chairperson Leah Zeldes had told me before the banquet to introduce him after the speeches but if she did the message certainly didn't get by my first reader and languished unrecognized in the slush pile.)

For weeks prior to the con Bill and certain others of my friends had dropped tantalizing hints that *something* was planned for Autoclave. Even Stephanie entered ingen-



Moshe Feder (I told them.)
 Stuart Sheffman
 Sue-Vae Kasenfeld
 Faye Ringel
 David Hartman
 Hans Stoff
 Benjamin Hammond-Sternbach
 Joni Joyce
 Suzie Tiffany
 Ric Meyers
 Eck Sternbach-Hammond
 Susan Cooper
 Judith Weiss
 Dan Paul
 Rusty Berlin
 Day
 Lisa Eisenberg
 Jim Freund
 Jim Siskin
 Seth Tribant
 Hope Leibowitz
 Lenie
 Joe Chelun
 Joe W. Hablen
 Selma Lovet
 Welcome to the land of
 the Oatrustworthy
 Elliot AM
 Run the Branden name

ously into the
 titillation by writ-
 ting "Gay mentioned
 something was going
 to happen to you at
 Autoclave but I
 don't remember what
 it was which is
 just as well since
 you're not supposed
 to know about it."

If I thought about
 those suggestive
 hints at all while
 toastmastering I
 undoubtedly thought
 they had been in
 connection with the
 inundation of Chi-
 vas at the start of
 my remarks. But my
 lack of imagination
 had undone me again
 and I was once more
 completely over-
 whelmed by what was
 to follow.

In a true demon-
 stration of friend-
 ship and affection,
 Bill overcame his
 fear of public-
 speaking and lied
 about me for a
 while, spicing it
 up with the usual
 derogatory remarks
 about my height and
 age. And if my re-
 actions on the roll
 of pictures Barb

took are indicative, then he did a pretty devastating job. Still, the best was yet
 to come and it did with a special presentation following Bill's deft character ass-
 assination.

THE BEST IS YET TO COME is a special fanzine prepared for my thirtieth birthday
 and it's easily one of the nicest presents I've ever received and one of the nicest
 things that's ever happened to me. Conceived and edited by Bill and Jackie Franke,
 it contains contributions from most of my best friends, purporting to celebrate my
 seventy fifth birthday. I've thanked every contributor personally, of course, but
 I'll thank them all again in print for caring enough to contribute to something that
 will always be one of the brightest memories I have. I was almost speechless and
 damn close to tears when I realized what I held in my hands and if anyone ever had
 a better thirtieth birthday thanks to his friends then I'd be very surprised.

Bill had collected all the original material (including a full-colour portrait of
 Mike Glicksohn OBE IPA by Harry Bell that left me breathless when I first saw it) and

after running off 25 numbered contributor copies had mounted it all in a special presentation binder. It was this he had to give me at the banquet, but first he read out one contribution. It was a raunchy reminiscence of the origin and development of my bionic sex-life and I was only one of many trying to guess the name of the author. I guessed either Dave Locke or Joe Haldeman (both of whom were in the fanzine as it happens) and was as croggled as anyone to learn it had come from Harlan. It's friends like those I'm privileged to have and moments like the one they gave me at Autoclave that make fandom such an important and rewarding part of my life.

The rest of that evening proved the truth of my fanzine's title. With a little help from my friends the number of bottles of Chivas was reduced by two and cries of a for-once justified

smoooooooooooooth filled the halls. Bill presented me with a second magnificent birth-present, this time a copy of *THE INGOLDSBY LEGENDS* with tipped-in illustrations by Arthur Rackham which he'd brought up from Sheryl Birkhead for me. Sheryl knows of my enthusiasm for Rackham and the book was an outstandingly beautiful gift. And the world's longest and greatest thirtieth birthday went happily, if a little drunkenly, onwards!

The rest of the weekend went just as well as the Saturday; in fact, freed of the tension of having to give my speech and fantastically buoyed up by the events after the banquet, I was probably able to enjoy Sunday and Monday even more than the first day and a half of the con. I remember parties, bottles of scotch, skinnydipping, an intimate association with a piece of cheesecake, the almost farcical collation of 25 fanzines by several of fandom's foremost feeble-fingered faneds, and a general feeling of warm mellow friendliness and a sense of belonging that made Autoclave possibly the best convention weekend I've had in my decade in fandom. It was a proud and not-at-all-lonely thing to be a fan in Detroit that weekend!

Apple Susan
you're not getting older, you're getting better!
Peace & love, I see!

were you better?
Mark, Big Brother, Moore
Frank Belzer

**flag lowerings,
 barn raisings,
 large people,
 test patterns,
 Marx Brothers,
 hedgehog vaccinations,
 salad tossings,
 weekdays,
 wigwam warmings!**

Sheryl
GINJER + JOHN (THE COMPARTS)
over the hill? why hell boy, you is hardly a dirty old kid!
Deja
hello & happy bk. from Scott - Harlan
sonovuv, Nade Dawn
wendy cimble
Treff (just married somewhat, by ring and dragon)
Merby McCauley
Donkey
Doctor R. [GOAT-FUCKER] Pozzio
GOOD! YOU MADE IT!
Dennis N. McQuinn
9/10/70m - John

Eventually, though, and sadly, even the Con of Cons must end and as I knelt on the floor of Mark Riley's room and drained the last few drops of Johnny Walker from his tiltable half-gallon bottle on Monday afternoon, so too did Autoclave drain reluctantly away. Lingered goodbyes could only be prolonged for so long and finally the locals and a few diehard confreaks were all that was left of a fabulous fannish weekend. With a body and a mind laid waste by three days of supercharged activity and massive overdoses of alcohol, adrenelin and egoboo, I was carried comatosely back to Toronto to recuperate from my excesses, write up the weekend for BIG MAC and wonder what it was I'd done to deserve the affection and friendship of so many fine people.

And that just about concludes the story of How Michael Crossed The Great Divide And Became Mature And Respectable. But there was one last touch, one final gesture on the part of fandom. A couple of days after I got back from Detroit I received one last birthday card, the one reproduced on the previous two pages, signed by over fifty friends and acquaintances from Disclave, the Washington regional which unhappily coincided with Autoclave. It was rather nice to know that even as I was experiencing my rushes in Detroit, my friends who couldn't be there were sharing in the celebrations in their own way. And it's a warm feeling to know they took the time and cared enough to be a part of my thirtieth birthday.

I spent all but three months of my twenties in fandom in one way or another and although things weren't always wine and roses I owe fandom all my dearest friends and a great many of my fondest memories. The two and a half weeks surrounding my birthday this year showed me just how much I owe to fandom and how much it means to me. Everyone should celebrate birthdays like I did!

It seems almost impossible that I could ever top a celebration of the sort its taken me fifteen pages just to touch the highlights of, but my friends wouldn't deceive me so Goodbye, Twenties and Hello, Thirties and let the good times roll!!

Because the best is still to come.....

He lights yet another cigarette, takes a bubbling sip from the full tumbler of scotch that he--all good intentions--had brought into the office at eight, determined to make the most of the morning. When this is done he will have to go to the bottle itself and it is going very fast. In the good old days, of course, scotch seemed to act merely as a conductor, a set of filaments through which the writing could charge; now it seems, rather, to be loosening connections...but he needs it more than ever.

HEROVIT'S WORLD, Barry Malzberg

One of these items really aroused my interest: it was a description of how various women had been tortured in some South American pest-hole and it included the following: 'One girl told how several rats had been introduced to her vagina.' Now you've got to admit that's pretty mind-boggling and conjures up all sorts of weird images. I mean to say...'several rats'! What sort of woman is this who can entertain several rats? And what sort of incredibly patient torturer would spend all that time 'introducing' a number of struggling rats to someone's vagina? I mean, it can't be easy. Just getting a finger up can be like fighting World War II all over again much less a horde of sodding rats.

SCABBY TALES 2, John Brosnan

Joe played with her with a Donald Duck puppet, and made up all kinds of awful stories, which she loved. ("Once upon a time there was a little girl who wanted to be a duck. She pasted feathers all over herself and swam out in the middle of the lake. And drowned.") He had a whole bunch of different characters: Professor Duck, a good Donald, a bad Donald, and even Bruce Duck, who talked with a lisp.

---Gay Haldeman describing a Nebula Award winning novelist at play.

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1. IN SEARCH OF WONDER -- GARY HUBBARD

Nearly got arrested a few days ago. Not my fault. I was completely blameless in the matter. I just hadn't realized how completely paranoia has taken over in these late great United (sic) States.

It all started when Mel Brook's movie BLAZING SADDLES came to town. I'd missed it the last time it was here, and since all my friends had raved about it, I thot I would check it out. Usually, when I want to see a movie, I just go, Bam! I buy a box of popcorn, plopp myself down in the front row near an exit, and pretend I'm the hero in John Brunner's THE WHOLE MAN. But this time I thot I would do something *avant garde* like ask a girl to go with me. So I chose one of the Wayne Third Ladies, Marge Parmeter (I'm sure you've met her.)

Now, Marge lives in Royal Oak which is a moderately posh suburb just north of Detroit and a long ways from the Jack Zill's Home, but, nothing daunted, I hopped into the Scuzmobile, pumped it a few times, and I was off. Was I ever! Marge had given me complete instructions, and I knew her house number and phone. But I didn't realize until I saw the "Welcommen to der Royal Oak" sign that I had left all of that above-mentioned and vital information on my desk at home!

Well...not to worry. All I had to do was find the street. Marge said her house was the first one on the right, a big white house. That shouldn't be hard to find, and, in fact, it wasn't. I turned onto Linwood and, sure enough, the first house on the right was a big white one. So I parked my car and cheerily sauntered up to the porch and rang the door bell. After a good long time, a woman came to the door, but she wasn't Marge. She was a young woman in her early twenties, I guessed. Perhaps she was Marge's sister or something. But when I inquired as to whether this was the Parmeter residence or not, she shook her head.

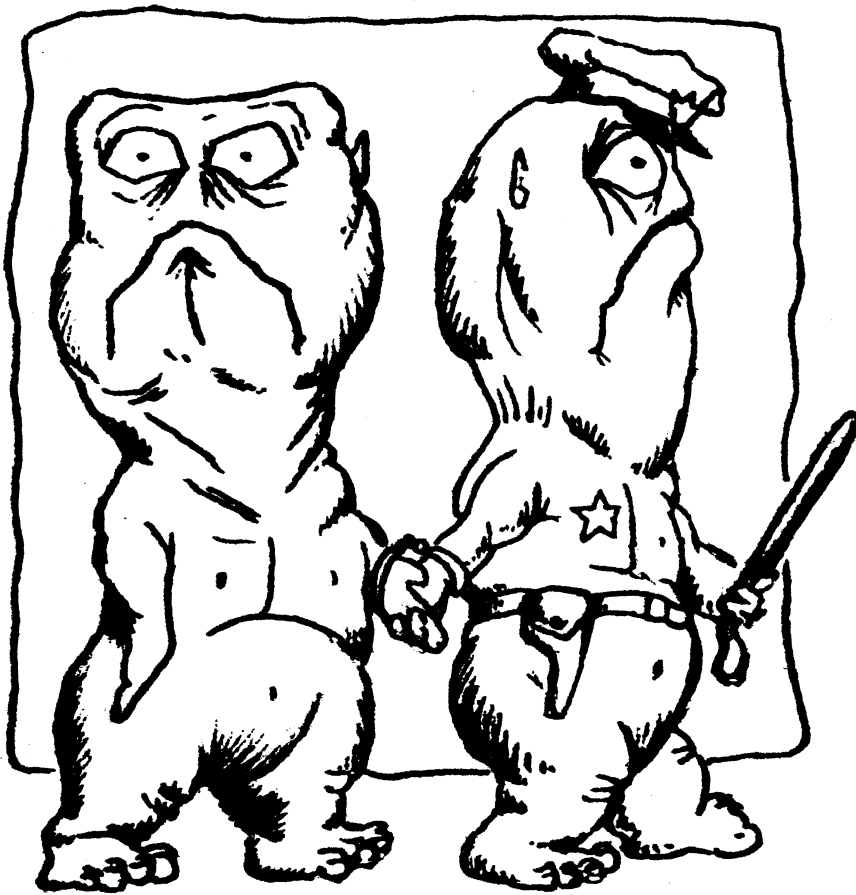
Not Marge's house? That was strange. It should have been, by rights. What to do? Could I have gotten the instructions wrong? Maybe it was the first house on the left, or the second one on the right. Well, one way to factor a polynomial is by trial and error, and the problem before me was not dissimilar, so I crossed the street and started ringing doorbells.

I was only on the fourth house when the cops showed up.

I was standing on the sidewalk wondering which house I should try next when three police cars converged in the street in front of me. Seems like the lady in the white house had seen me going to the other houses and had come to the conclusion that I was a prowler and peeping tom. (Really! She'd told the cops I was sneaking around peering into windows and trying to pry open doors.) Well, I tried to be as pleasant and submissive as I could as I explained that I was merely trying to find Marge's house. It wasn't easy, though. This one cop was a prick of the first order! He kept waving a flashlight in my face and barking accusations at me.

And I mean accusations, not questions. He didn't say, "what were you doing here" or "what were you doing there?" He said, You were doing that, weren't you?" and "You peeked into the window of that house, didn't you?"

I put up with it as patiently as possible. In fact, I was a little flattered that



they that I was worth three patrol cars. Eventually they concluded I was harmless and decided to let me go. I was relieved but the guy with the flashlight was pretty disappointed. He really wanted to burn me for some reason or other. He almost got his chance, too.

You see, I drive a very noisy car. I keep meaning to have the muffler fixed, but you know how it is. Anyway, all I wanted to do was get out of there, so I jumped into the car, stuck the key into the ignition, and the car roared into life. And then the prick roared down on me. He yelled at me over the sound of my engine that if I didn't get out of town fast, he was going

to impound my car.

Well, I got out of town fast...but not too fast. They followed me all the way to the city limits, and I was afraid they'd slap me with a speeding ticket.

First time I'd ever been thrown out of a town. I've been thrown out of a few hotels and even a gay bar once, but never a town. Needless to say, I'm not ever going back to Royal Oak. I may avoid travel altogether and also asking girls to go out with me. I mean if it's going to get me arrested...

{{Other than that, Mr. Hubbard, how did you enjoy the movie?}}

#####

2. THE WAY IT WAS -- BJO TRIMBLE

Without seeming in any way to attack Rotsler, who is a very nifty person, I have to take some exception to his letter to your zine, thanking people who gave him a Hugo.

It is true: I don't have a Hugo (came close, once...was nominated, but some flashy young upstart name of George Barr got it instead!)...but it is *NOT* true that my artwork output for fanzines has been stopped because nobody gave me one.

In fact, I have been doing artwork on a very low-key scale for Apa-L (not likely to get any attention for Hugo votes and I know it) and every now and then YANDRO pulls an oldie of mine out of the files and publishes it. I just don't have the time, anymore.

But the thing that keyed off my nearly stopping entirely was finding out that Katwen was definitely, irrevocably retarded. This occurred just before Baycon (as the main

date of the time) and I simply caved in, mentally. I would not show it; I would not give up (or in) nor would I budge an inch from at least trying to appear 'normal'... but it hit me very, very hard (naturally).

I lost all interest in lots of things; took all my energy to just get up each day and face life. I certainly had no time or interest in doing fannish things at the time. As people may recall, we sort of went about being FAPANS in a desultory way, until John finally just let our membership lapse. We dropped out of local meetings, we went to conventions only because we had the obligations of the Art Show...but otherwise, I mentally vegetated.

It has taken all these years to pull myself out of this, and make something out of the bitty li'l pieces of my life. Katwen is (and always will be) our Elf-child: a sweet changling who cannot ever quite understand what is going on, but who knows that all the people wearing convention badges are FRIENDS (and for that I am grateful to the fans who have made her feel so). Now we have Lora, who is 8-going-on-35 --a bright, curious, and constantly invigorating as well as exasperating child; it is probably her growing need for answers that has caused me to snap out of 6 years of doldrums.

At any rate, I find myself with the willingness to draw but no time. I am *NOT* sulking in a corner because nobody ever gave me a Hugo, however; I never really expected to ever win one against the field of other top artists, since my work isn't even close to theirs in excellence. I am basically a cartoonist: cartoonists don't win things, they just get laughs. That's what a cartoonist is for. That's probably why ATom hasn't won a Hugo either: people think more of 'serious' art when they think of awards.

I cannot speak for ATom on why his work dropped off; I do know that times were not easy for him, for a goodly while, and perhaps he just got out of the habit of knocking out a dozen or so cartoons and sending them out. I know I did; I just never got past the rough-rough stage of working up some art...it seemed like too much trouble, and too much work for just a fanzine. I was in such a state of depression that fandom's opinion of me didn't matter much; awards or no. Then, by that time, a whole new group of artists had made the scene. Nobody needed me; they had all the artwork they needed, it seemed.

Along with that, I am still attacked by severe depression that brings most of my creative works to a stop. Recently we have had our integrity, our reputations and 15 years of hard work criticized publically, with only one person (Juanita Coulson) to bother to come to our rescue, so it seemed that sending out any artwork after that resounding display of "well, those bastards! They've been stealing from us artists all these years" would be a dead-end.

And so I send artwork to the local Medieval fanzine instead and I keep it for the children and I polish up a piece now and then to send out...but I don't do it. I don't know why. It has nothing to do with a Hugo: if I wanted a Hugo, I could just settle down to publish a knock-out fanzine long enough to win one... But why? What have I to gain? A metal award...for what?

It isn't that I don't value the Hugo. Once it would have been very nice to have had one; and I'd be thrilled to earn one now, given the right circumstances. But since the attack on our Art Shows, I have been pretty soured on fandom.

And that, my friend, is why little artwork has been seen by a Bjo in some time.

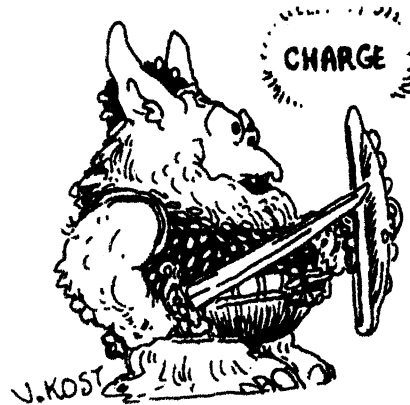
(You'll be interested to know that the psychologist at Katwen's school thinks Fandom is 'healthy'...how's that? He says that Kat is more alert, less clinging, more willing to adjust to new things, outgoing, likes to talk to strangers, and is more curious than any other mentally retarded child her mental age he's ever met. He ascribes

it to her having gone to conventions all her life. How about that? He was fascinated by my description of fandom, and says it sounds great; to keep up that kind of 'stimulation' for Katwen; it will bring her along faster than ordinary schooling could! Too bad it hasn't been as beneficial for some fans who consider themselves 'normal' or 'super-intellectual'!!!)

{{I can understand your feeling soured because of the actions of certain fans but I hope you'll overcome those feelings as you've overcome the depression caused by the news about Katwen. Fandom owes you a great deal, and I personally owe you much for hospitality and friendship extended freely in the last eight years. I'd be sad if that went by the board because of a few hasty remarks by what I'd still like to think were basically good-intentioned fans. Surely all the good things fandom has done and been and given are worth so much more than this one unfortunate incident?//One thing I'd question though: I'm not sure even your talents would make winning a fanzine Hugo merely a matter of publishing a knock-out fanzine for long enough. Bill Bowers has been doing that for five years and he's no closer now than he ever was. Unfortunately.}}

3. THE WAY IT IS -- BILL ROTSLER

It was very inaccurate of me to say that Bjo and ATom stopped drawing for fanzines because they didn't get a Hugo. It was not what I meant, even though that seems to be the way it came out. (Well, my perfection guarantee ran out last year..)



What I meant was that fandom did not acknowledge the work of people like Atom and Bjo and eventually their productivity dropped. As I said in the previous letter, people think that Bjo and Atom and myself somehow got our Hugos way back when, when Hugo-giving started. But such is not the case, as Fan Artist Hugos are a fairly recent addition, starting only nine years ago.

Bjo is right in saying that cartoonists don't win things. Just like only two Hollywood musicals have won Best Picture Oscars. The trouble is, people don't really understand how difficult it is to be funny.

Point to any actor and say, "Be dramatic" and they can go right into something--probably a set piece they have memorized. Point at the same actor--or any actor--and say "Be funny" and watch what happens. It is not easy to be funny, but it looks easy. Try it yourself. Sit right down and write or draw something funny. Measure that against how easy (or difficult) it is to write or draw something dramatic. The French understand this and rate the comedian, or comedic actor, and playwrights, as the highest.

I hope you don't think this is a ploy for me saying "Hey, look, I'm so good that--" I don't care about that. I really don't. Fandom has produced a number of artists. A few are truly unique; a number are damned good, a lot are so-so. Just like any field. Sturgeon's Law is always right.

But I think Bjo and Atom should have won Hugos long ago. I think Grant Canfield should get one--and probably will this year.

I have been an artist all my life--in one field or other. I have been a fan since 1944, an active fan since 1948. I have been a professional artist since 1950 or 51--

sculptor, photographer, filmmaker, writer. I have seen thousands of fanzines and even more thousands of drawings. I've been to hundreds of museums and studios, gone to thousands of films. I think I know artistic talent when I see it.

Fandom has a lot of talent. The trouble is that most fans simply aren't sophisticated enough to know how *difficult* it is to do funny stuff. It looks easy. But how many *cartoons* do you remember against how many "straight" drawings? And the ultimate test is to try it yourself, as I said earlier.

I hope that Bjo resumes activity within fandom. I think it is shameful and stupid that people don't realize what a contribution the Trimbles have made to fandom by doing the art shows. Again, the trouble is that it looks easy. You go to a con, you see an art show. It somehow magically appears for our pleasure, and then it goes away. But try it yourself. Get the artists, get the displays set up, guard and transport the art, handle the sales and auctions--and do it year after year without much (if any) applause. Then rethink the contribution the Trimbles have made to fandom. Again, try it yourself.

The biting shots from the cheap seats are easy to do--but it is a different matter on the other side.

If fandom drives the Trimbles out of fandom and out of handling the art shows I think it will be a loss. I'm not saying that there aren't others who could turn out a good show--it is just that the Trimbles have *consistently* produced high quality, well-run exhibitions. Perhaps others --undoubtedly building upon the procedures and professionalism founded by the Trimbles--will be able to carry on.

I hope so, as I really enjoy art shows. I am just sorry none of us--and I include myself--has been really as appreciative as we should have been. I took the art shows for granted for a long time. I *knew* the trouble they were, but it just didn't really penetrate. It should have.

I thank you, Bjo and John, for years of pretty much thankless work. I am also sorry if I gave the wrong impression regarding your decreased art production. It was dumb of me to attribute my conclusions to your actions.

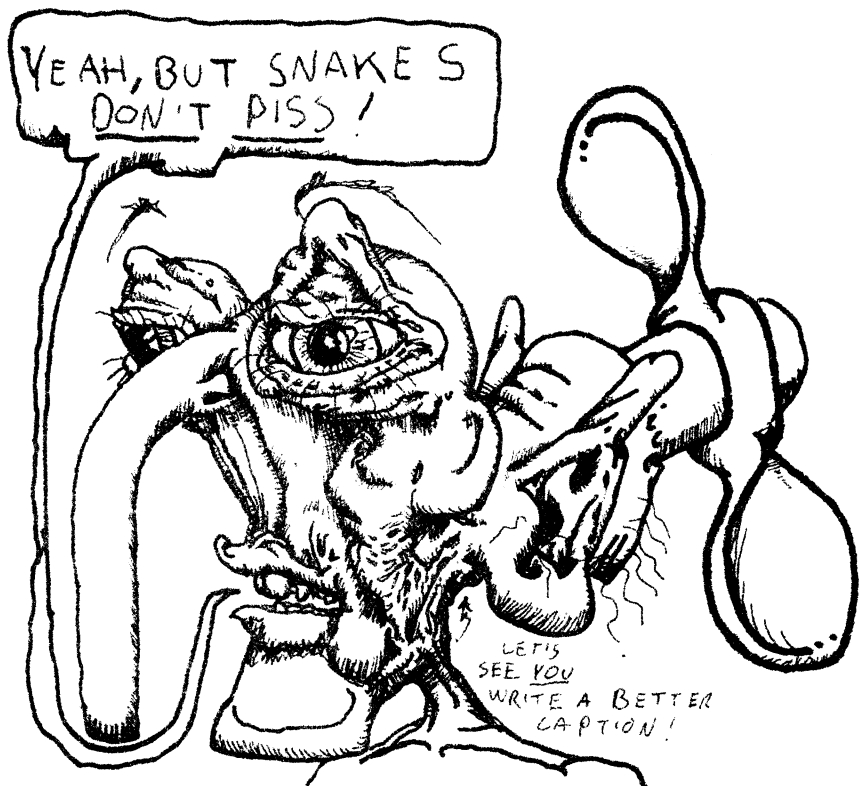
4. IN PRAISE OF CATS AND VODKA -- LEROY 'MUSH BRAIN' KETTLE

I was amused some time ago to note your ill-disguised hatred, or perhaps exaggerated disdain, for the highly admirable cat, and your never-ending and foolish support for the horrific whisky substance. Even worse, by virtue of your publication (with the permission of United Features, no doubt) of the Snoopy cartoons, you also appear to be in favour of the disgusting and foul-livered dog.

I am not one of those people who does not know his place in the fannish lowerarchy-- I have brushed kneecaps with Ian Williams, my God I have--but occasionally there are times when even the whisky-sodden giants of American fandom have to be challenged, when I say to myself Mike Glicksohn? MIKE GLICKSOHN? SO WHAT?! Am I not also a human bung? Am I not also a messy conglomeration of evil intentions, blurred thoughts, aging bones, unfulfilled desires, offensive secretions, tender gestures and occasional merriment? I am. So I denounce whisky and I denounce dog.

Having said that I shall back it up, not with mere Vodka labels and Ogden Nash feline poetry, but with subtle rhetoric and drunken innuendo. Cats are good things, Glicksohn, even after their metamorphosis from cuddly and playful kittens. They are soft, sensual creatures with many of the more pleasant aspects of women, plus a quieter presence and fur. They have a pleasing individuality and independence, which dogs

don't have but whisky might, but in addition cats are cheaper to run than a whisky habit or a dog habit. I reckon I can get more catfun per week (I won't go into the sordid details) than I would whisky fun for the same money. That's moneywise. Otherwise, I reckon I do well enough by cats without ever feeling bad than I ever would by whisky, though, I must admit, even an ill-considered whisky high is higher than a cat high. However, and here I emphasize the word, the road to whisky highs is paved with stinky-poo breath and bad tastes.



Yes, I don't like the taste of whisky. This is something which is probably a

faux pas par excellence to be mentioning to you, but it's true. God and my tongue have ordained that even 105 year old Chivas Regal (or any other alcoholic jelly) is not enough to make me feel GOOD prior to the seemingly pleasant brainrot taking over, whereas with something simplistic and inoffensive and apparently unamerican (and doubtless effeminate too) like Vodka I feel a sort of tasteful rapport that builds up into exactly the same expensive mind-stroke as any other spirit or beer (except American beer) taken to near-excess but by a nicer route. My God, where was I?

Cats? How -- Oh yes, well dogs are faithful because they're stupid and don't realize they're basically killers who should be going around ripping out throats and tearing into fleshy thighs instead of sitting up and begging for more Bowsy Wowsy Softbones in Nourishing Puke Jelly and rolling onto their backs exposing their revolting bellies in exchange for cubes of white sugar which destroy their teeth right up to and including their brains.

They lie there with tongues like leaky bags of melted fat hanging out and ask for respect? Dogs can be taught any pathetically amusing trick by being kicked sufficiently hard on the side of their heads for long enough. They are either huge, bumbling and noisy, or small, vicious and noisy. Whereas cats are consistently quiet, or just off-quiet at worst. Dogs are obscene extensions of their owners' snotty personalities, beaten into submission by chasing sticks and balls, and shouted orders and whippings and castrations (and iron maidens and small nuclear devices in the case of Dobermanns.) They shit everywhere, particularly exactly where you don't want them too, and they don't bother to hide it or even seem ashamed. Cats have more respect for the environment and others and cover up their poopies.

Dogs would probably drink whisky if you gave them half a chance. Cats are loveable, arrogant, intelligent, neo-magestic and something else and would probably quaff vodka. This is a good thing. Whisky is the urine of the masses and should be eliminated before passing through the digestive system. God preserve cats and vodka. Long live something. I'm really into this locing-after-a-few-drinks bit...Did you know locing is almost an anagram for logic? Whoops, God calls. Must go.

write about, and for no other reason. As a result I could not tolerate a workshop such as Milford or Clarion, even presuming I could qualify to attend one. (And that is presumption of a first class sort -- I think I could write a pro quality story if I sat down determined to do it, but freely admit I might be wrong.)

I don't know what point it is I'm trying to make. Maybe that I don't like the sound of Joe's workshops. They sound unfriendly, tense and deadly serious. The participants are intensive, determined people. But I am an "underachiever". I prefer a relaxed, forgiving, unambitious way of taking the world. I could not work hard at anything for long. Anarchistic me; I could not take instruction either except on the basis of equal to equal. For the mutual benefit of workshops and myself, I will avoid serious workshops for all I'm worth.

Or the point might be that Once Upon A Time writers became writers because they were inspired by what they read, so they wrote and wrote and wrote until one day they sold their first story. Now, it seems, writers are interested in writing only as writing, and not as exciting stories, so that while the average quality of the writing is enormously improved, the content of the average story is of meager interest. This is open for discussion.

{{Your first point is primarily indicative of lack of motivation. You class yourself as a dilettante, so it isn't surprising you lack the ambition to benefit from a Clarion type experience. But I think you've misread the workshops in a couple of places: from all I've read they are not unfriendly, nor do they lack for their lighter moments, and Joe's article showed clearly that instruction is often on an equal-to-equal basis.//Unless your fiction writing has improved as much as your non-fiction writing since the days of DELTA PSI I'm not willing to comment on your chances of writing a pro-quality story. However, I'd be highly dubious if you couldn't write at least a saleable one.//The nature of workshops strikes me as such that they can only 'teach' technique, not inspiration. A would-be writer without ideas is probably going to turn out the sort of well-written fluff you were describing, and indeed this is a common criticism of the Clarion anthologies. However, enough new writers exist who are both good writers and good story-tellers that I'm not too concerned about the future of the field. (And it's also possible that close association with a group of like-minded creative people may bring out ideas and inspirations that the writer never knew he was capable of.)}}

GARY HUBBARD I enjoyed Joe Haldeman's article on writers' workshops. You may or may not know that I quit my job back in September and am currently engaged in a race to see if I can get published before my unemployment benefits run out and I have to find another job. I remember talking to Seth McEvoy and Howard Devore on the subject of Clarion and they were both a bit negative about its usefulness. What staggered me, though, was the price tag. I recall that it was around three hundred bucks. With that sort of money, I could live for five months or buy myself a string of floozies. I doubt, too, that any workshop could overcome my overwhelming laziness. Joe mentions that the University of Oklahoma program requires its students to write a thousand words a day. That doesn't seem so hard. I could do that if I wanted to. I know, however, that I never would. I'm lucky if I can whip up enough energy to write a thousand words in a week without being sidetracked by something else, but then, all I really want to do with my life is indulge in my various vices. I only got interested in writing because I thought it might be an easy way to earn a living and not interfere with my other interests.

{{Welcome to the MacDonald Academy of Dilettante Scribblers. The moaning and tearing sounds you hear are writers like Joe Haldeman, Jay Haldeman, George Martin, Spider Robinson and Gardner Dozois reacting to your last statement as they tear hysterically at their thread-bare rags and munch on their food stamps...}}

PHIL STEPHENSEN-PAYNE

How dare you say that a wombat is 'scarcely a pet'. They are the most loveable, cuddly and intelligent pets around. (OK, so I haven't got one, but I'm working on it and am an honorary member of NOW - Noble Order of Wombats - for my services to PAW - Promoting the Appreciation of Wombats.) Throughout the history of mankind, the wombats have been unfairly persecuted. They are destroyed in Australia - because their nests are used by rabbits! That's like arresting all the Salvation Army Hostellers because drunks and criminals have occasionally found a bed there.

Lovely scene in 'On Every Sunday' - a mediocre film on American motorcycling. A desert bike race, with one contestant stopping because of a tortoise in his route, picking it up and putting it in some scrub where it'd be safe. Give the man a GHOST - Grand Humane Order for Services to Tortoises.

{{{Monty Python would love you, Phil. "And now for something completely different...a man who thinks wombats are intelligent!!"}}}

HARRY WARNER

I feel proud and humble to know that you've shared your favorite pet with me. The only thing that worries me is what you may do in the future. After reading this issue I realize you are still affected by the loss of Larson E, and I sense that you really aren't satisfied with the turtle that you obtained as his successor in your affections. You seem unwilling to make sufficient allowance for the terrapinish failings of the new pet, inclined to dwell on the irritation and commotion that Hillary has been causing you to experience. Then you publish that poem.

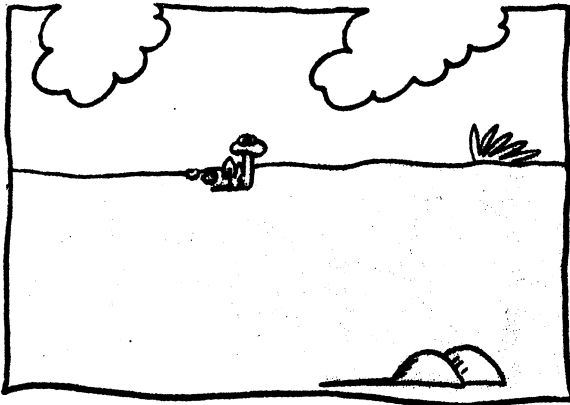
Don't you think it's possible that what you really want and need is an elephant? I'm no psychiatrist, but I wonder if Larson E might have been so loved not only for himself but also for his symbolism, elephant-trunkish rather than phallic. Somewhere I read that the fans in South Africa are talking about staging the continent's first con. You'd better not go to it. You might return to M6P 2S3 with the first elephant you find on the road to Johannesburg.

I remain unconvinced about the usefulness of writer workshops for a substantial proportion of all aspiring writers, and about their value for the science fiction field. They obviously have benefited a few people, but the Marines accomplish the same feat without providing any real contribution to the improvement of the species. There's also the question of whether the workshops teach people to write good science fiction or how to write science fiction that will sell, and how much they are helping to channel creativity into a certain pattern. I just can't imagine an Ursula LeGuin emerging from a workshop and writing the kind of science fiction that she has created. Maybe it's significant that almost all the absolute topnotch writers who have emerged in the field in recent years are people who came out of nowhere, with little or no contact with the science fiction establishment beforehand. The writers who



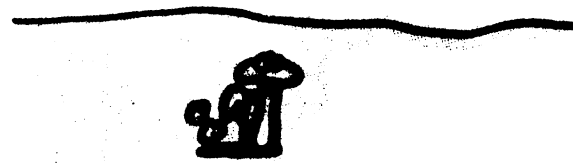
have emerged from the establishment during the last few years may know a bit too well exactly what editors are buying and may be inhibiting their full abilities to conform.

I'm saddened to see you take XENIUM out of FAPA but I suspected that something of the sort would happen. I've done an article for some fanzine or other that describes the innovations I'd like to see someone put into a newly-created apa, to determine



if radical changes could halt the creeping rot that seems to affect all the large-membership, quarterly-mailing, unspecialized apas. I'd like to test an apa that would be invitational, to keep the roster congenial, and would have no elections except when an officer wanted to quit or the members petitioned for his ouster to keep politics out of it, and would poll members each year on whether to retain or oust those who had produced the least activity or finished lowest on the egoboo poll in the previous year, as a discouragement to freeloaders.

{{{It certainly sounds viable, Harry, but as I pointed out in my recent FAPA-zine, my own feeble participation in that apa is due primarily to the amount of time already tied up with general fanac. Even were I invited into such an apa as you describe, I doubt I'd have the time to earn my place in it.}}}



SUZLE TOMPKINS

I cannot refrain from commenting on your

questionable comparison of cats to whisky. I mean really! Does a bottle of whisky curl up on your shoulder and purr in your ear at five a.m.? Does a bottle of whisky lick your elbow until you get up to feed it at six a.m.? Can a bottle of whisky get sand all over the bathroom floor? Can a b of w rearrange all your Christmas decorations while you're at work??? Hmm???.....?.....?.....?

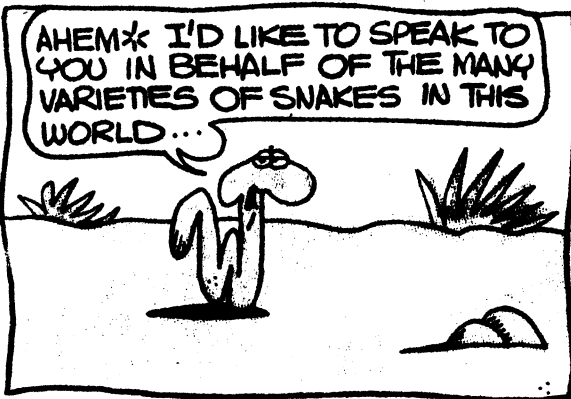
I seem to have lost my grasp of the argument.....

{{{I rest my case...of whisky, naturally...}}}

GINJER BUCHANAN

Not that I like cats but...They reproduce. Johnny Walker Black Label don't!

{{{I do believe you've put your paw on the single positive difference between cats and bottles of whiskey. It's true that enjoyment of a bottle of whisky can make its remaining fellows appear to



proliferate but this delightful delusion has little lasting value, I admit. On the positive side, though, when you don't want any litter around the house, you can trust a whisky bottle much more than you can a cat. Come to think of it, perhaps the notoriously over-sexed nature of the feline explains its popularity in certain segments of fandom...}}

ERIC BENTCLIFFE Thoroughly enjoyed XENIUM and particularly

your short treatise on tortoises. Once had one myself many many moons ago. A quite remarkable one in that it went and laid an egg after we'd had it for about three years; and there were no other tortoises in the area! A sort of Holy Mary of the crustaceans (if that's what they are) {{{Good god, no! Reptiles, dear chap, reptiles.}}} Unfortunately it never hatched which is why all turtles are still infidels...you can prove this: just hold a Cross up before any tortoise; he'll just ignore it.

JOHN CARL I enjoyed the newest XENIUM almost as much as a hydrogen balloon hates a raging armadillo with a match. Unfortunately I also have nearly as much to say of it as the match has to say of Portugal.

MIKE MEARA Belated thanks for XENIUM. I enjoyed every word. Why couldn't you have put them in the right order? Sorry this postcard is so short, but I couldn't find any longer ones. You'll just have to take my unstinted grovelling admiration as read.

{{{Now that's the sort of honest candour one likes to end a lettercol with...}}}

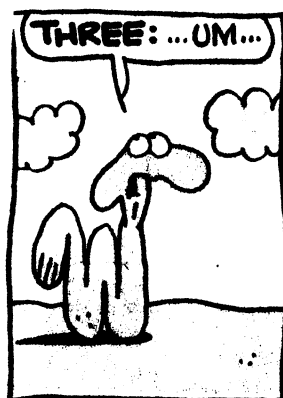
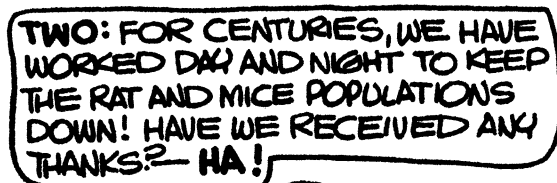
 I ALSO HEARD FROM JON SINGER, JODIE OFFUTT, SHAYNE McCORMACK, BRUCE ARTHURS, GEORGE FLYNN, MIKE CARLSON, ERIC LINDSAY, SUSAN WOOD, JERRY KAUFMAN, TERRY HUGHES, ALYSON ABRAMOWITZ, IAN WILLIAMS and PATRICK HAYDEN. May the great god Chivas smile warmly on all of you!

To eat a meal, to complete a day's work, to come home tired to a fire, to greet a girl, talk and listen -- a man free to do these things, he thought, should wear his blessings like a garland.

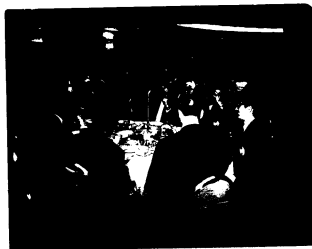
Richard Adams, SHARDIK

 At this distance it almost looks like a snake with a hat on.

Bill Bowers, observing Hillary



SOMETHING EXTRA... A LITTLE CONTACT FROM THE PAST



An awareness of and interest in our own history as a subculture has always been one of the signs of the trufan. In keeping with the growing enthusiasm for time-binding which exists in today's fandom, XENIUM, The Fanzine That Gives

You Something Extra, presents a small slice of yesterday's fandom. How this came about is a little piece of fanhistory all by itself.

The no-longer-ubiquitous Jay Kay Klein used to be a very familiar figure at conventions, several cameras slung around his neck, flashing everyone and anyone, capturing every incident for posterity regardless of propriety. In particular, Jay covered the worldcons and for several years he went home, sorted his hundreds of pictures and made up and had printed a photographic memory book of the con which was one of the best souvenirs any con attendee could have. I bought a copy of his TRICON (1966) book and I treasure it to this day: it's fascinating to go through it and see what your good friends of today whom you didn't even know then looked like.

So after NYCON in 1967, I constantly bugged Jay Kay about the memory book for that con. At con after con I'd inquire as to how much progress had been made. Eventually, Jay Kay took to hiding from me, but I sought him out for the inevitable grilling. He sent me two copies of proposed pages but I was not placated. I wanted to get a copy of that memory book no matter what, and I refused to abandon hope. Years came and went, worldcon after worldcon passed into history, and still I'd occasionally check to see if he'd found the time or energy to do the book.

But it was not to be. Regrettably, but understandably, Jay Kay's other commitments prevented him from putting in the hundreds of hours needed to prepare the book so the NYCON III Memory Book remains just a memory. But not quite. At Boskone this year Jay Kay invited me to his room with that conspiratorial leer known so well to femmefans throughout the country and handed me a large white envelope filled with the contacts of the pictures that *might* have ended up in that fabled volume. I suppose I could have kept them all and claimed I had the one and only copy of Jay Kay Klein's NYCON souvenir picture book, but I'd rather share them with you.

So here, for your amusement nine years later, is a tiny piece of the past, a window into fanhistory. Look closely, maybe you'll recognize someone. And where were you in 1967?

COSMOLOGIES-YOU'D-ALMOST-LIKE-TO-SEE DEPARTMENT *They proceeded with the speed of rockets to the northeast corner of the universe, which George now perceived to be shaped exactly like a pint of beer in which the nebulae were the ascending bubbles. He observed with alarm a pair of enormous lips approaching the upper rim of our space. "Do not be alarmed," said the Devil. "That is a young medical student called Prior, who has failed his exam three times in succession. However, it will be twenty million billion light years before his lips reach the glass, for a young woman is fixing him with her eye, and by the time he drinks all the bubbles will be gone, and all will be flat and stale."*

John Collier, "The Devil George And Rosie"



.. BUT I WANTED TO
BE ON THE FRONT
COVER...

MAYBE... BUT
YOU'VE BEEN
OUT OF
FANDOM FOR
SO LONG

GAFIATING
NIGNOG!

JEREMY CARTER

Xenium 9 (2.6) Original Colour Paper

Xenium 9 (2.6) Original Colour Bacover



