



THE TIME HAS COME,
THE WALRUS SAID...

EDITORIAL RAMBLING

by

Mike Glicksohn



...to talk of some things and leave a great many more unspoken of. (For I am the walrus, right, boss?) Four years have slipped away since the last XENIUM, four tumultuous years that brought to a close (at least by popular conception) an amazing decade; one that will be remembered for crumbling ideologies, falling walls and departing dictators. But like so many of us, I'll remember the 1980s for the upheavals in my own life as much as for the worldwide political changes that occurred.

Long time readers of my fanzines - not that there are many (long time readers or fanzines, come to think of it) - will know that I don't talk much about my personal life in these pages. None of that Canada Crap in XENIUM. But some things must be said.

My relationship with Doris Berçarich began on June 8th, 1980. That relationship, which framed the decade for me, which produced many positive responses when I wrote about it peripherally last issue, ended when Doris moved out on June 26th, 1988, having sold her half of this house to me.

Regrets? Of course. I regret lacking the ability to make someone else's needs and interests more important to me than my own. I regret my inability to master "we" thinking. I regret how a soured relationship can sometimes re-write history, erasing the good parts and highlighting the bad. I regret a lot of things. But the good times I had with Doris were the best times of my life and I'm glad to have those memories. And I hope she finds much-deserved happiness in her new life as Mrs Doris Thompson.

In the meantime, life, fandom and the 1990s go on.

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE NATURE OF FAN FUNDS When it comes to some things, I'm a traditionalist. If a tradition has merit, I see no reason to abandon or replace it. And traditionally the major fan funds - TAFF and DUFF - were about fanzine fandom.

Now that's always appealed to me because fanzine fandom is where I've spent by far the greatest part of my fannish energy over the last 23 years. Fanzine fandom

created the fan funds as ways to meet in person fans whose creative efforts they'd appreciated on paper. And a major part of the concept of these funds was that the winners - being the sort of fans they were - would enrich fanzine fandom with trip reports, enabling many fans who didn't meet them personally to share their experiences.

I'm pleased to own copies of some of these reports. Walt Willis's brilliant THE HARP STATESIDE (TAFF 1952), Leigh Edmond's excellent EMU TRACKS OVER AMERICA (DUFF 1974), Dave Langford's delightful THE TRANSATLANTIC HEARING AID (TAFF 1980) and almost a dozen others have provided me with many hours of fascinating and enjoyable reading as well as considerable insight into the fandoms from which they emerged. The trip report, I believe, is one of fandom's best and noblest traditions.

Now I may be a traditionalist but I'm not completely dense. I know how much fandom has changed since 1952 and I acknowledge how the concept of the fan funds has changed in recent years. The majority of funding now comes from people who are by and large ignorant of fanzine fandom and of the traditions behind the fan funds. Rather than seeing fan fund candidates as fans who have made outstanding contributions to fanzine fandom through their writing and/or artwork, many current fan fund supporters believe the ideal TAFF or DUFF delegate should be someone who can socialize well with fans in the receiving country while acting as a goodwill ambassador for their own fandom. I don't agree with this sentiment but I understand it.

My objection, though, is that whereas the nature of the fan funds seems to have changed in recent years many of the trappings haven't. The TAFF ballot *still* talks about the winner's trip report even though few have appeared of late. If TAFF and DUFF are no longer about fanzine fandom and trip reports I can live with that; but I think this should be made very clear. Then I won't be so frustrated when I think I'm voting for an old-fashioned candidate and I get instead a new-fangled winner.

Over the years I've raised and contributed quite a lot of money for TAFF and DUFF. After my 1975 worldcon Fan Guest of Honourship I even produced and sold a 40 page trip report to raise funds for DUFF although I'd not been involved in the DUFF race. (To the best of my knowledge, no other GoH ever did this until just recently when Walt Willis and Chuch Harris published trip reports about their visits to small US conventions. And it isn't surprising that both are old-guard fans who were around when TAFF was created.) And my participation in both funds has largely followed two criteria: (a) Has the candidate made a significant enough contribution of written or drawn material or had a large enough impact on the nature or mythology of fandom that they're worth meeting? and (b) Is the candidate capable of producing and likely to produce an interesting trip report? Old-fashioned standards, perhaps, but mine own; and I don't believe I was alone in following them.

Those old-fashioned ideas led me to endorse or be happy with the victories of such TAFF winners as Terry Hughes, Avedon Carol, the Nielsen Haydens, Greg Pickersgill and Jeanne Gomoll, none of whom has yet to fulfill the obligation of producing a trip report. In some instances I'm aware of the reasons of trauma, illness or tragedy that have kept them from publishing those anticipated reports but I'm still frustrated and disappointed by their non-appearance. Excuses aside, fan fund winners who fail to publish a promised trip report are betraying the trust of those voters who supported them following the guidelines I outlined above.

If the trip report is a fannish tradition that has outlived its usefulness then let us by all means abandon it. And let us make the current nature of the fan funds quite clear when promoting them. This would lessen my own interest and involvement in the funds but I'd survive and so would the fan funds.

And I'd no longer feel cheated when I didn't get to meet the winner and didn't get to read about his or her experiences either.

BANFF INTERNATIONAL '89 Over the weekend of October 6-8, 1989 I enjoyed a rare Fan GoH gig at a small and wonderful convention in Banff, Alberta, perhaps the most physically stunning location I've ever visited on this planet. The committee showered me with generous hospitality, Pro GoH Brian Aldiss and his wife were an absolute delight to spend time with, I renewed old friendships with the likes of Charlie Brown, Randy Reichardt and Robert Runte and began friendships with Dean Ing, Lela Dowling and Donna McMahon. All in all it was a marvellous weekend...except for the necessity of giving a speech, of course.

Not being one of fandom's better extemporaneous speakers I wrote some remarks out ahead of time. And apart from the occasional ad-lib or fluff this is what I told the banquet audience at Banff International '89.

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First, let me say what an honour it is to share centre stage with a writer of the stature of Brian Aldiss and I sincerely thank the committee for inviting me to be a guest here this weekend. Recently, one of the fanzines I write to regularly had a discussion as to just what the duties of a fan guest might be. Nelda Kathleen Kennedy, who has been a fan guest and been on a committee picking a fan guest, said: "I think a Fan Guest of Honour's duties could be no more than 'Be there and be nice.'" Well, I'm obviously here...and I promise that later on I'll be nice and let any one of you buy me and Brian a drink down in the bar.

I'm realistic enough to acknowledge that hardly anyone attends a convention because of the fan guest but the program I received did state "Guest of Honour speeches" so evidently I'm expected to say something to you. I promise to be true to myself and keep it short.

A couple of the early flyers for this convention described me as "possibly Canada's best known fan." But when I read the list of pre-registered members in PR 3 I recognized 25 of the 250 names. Even making generous allowances for the way my reputation may have preceeded me, this would still seem to indicate that close to 90% of the people attending The Banff International '89 Science Fiction Convention were asking themselves, "If he's so famous, how come I've never heard of him?" A very telling question.

If you haven't read your program book, you may not know that I've actually done a few things that might almost justify the hyperbole of those early flyers. I helped start the science fiction club that ran what was generally considered to be one of the best world conventions ever held. I was the first Canadian fan to win a Hugo and am one of only two Canadian fans to be Guest of Honour at a worldcon. The main reason most of you have never heard of me, though, is that I have always been, and remain, primarily a fanzine fan. And while fanzine fans essentially created the fandom we all share today, since I became an active fan in 1966 fanzine fans have increasingly become a smaller and smaller part of the fandom they created.

There are those who would say that Barb Scofield is Canada's best known fan and they would be able to make a damned good case. Others might suggest that Mike Wallis was Canada's best known fan (I know Mike himself feels that way) and again there'd be evidence to support the claim. In the last 23 years fandom has fragmented and diversified to such an extent that Big Name Fans in one part of fandom are literally unknowns in other areas of fannish activity. Unlike some members of some fringe fandoms, I do not think this is a bad thing. Fandom is now such a smorgasbord of possible activities that it's impossible for any one fan to participate in all of them, or to be fully aware of the creative talents that are at work in areas that may not be of interest to him.

I can't sing or play an instrument but I admire the abilities of the filkers who do. I have no interest in designing or producing costumes based on the science fiction I

read but I know how much time, energy, money and talent is spent by the costumers who make each worldcon masquerade such a stunning spectacle. I have paid my dues as a convention organiser (and no longer do so) but I'm eternally grateful for the talents and energies of those who year after year give me a place to meet like-minded enthusiasts and friends, to buy the new SF that keeps me going and to indulge in my own particular contribution to the nature of current fandom, the poker game.

And yet my first love remains the fanzine, and in a way I still believe - elitist that I am - that fanzine fans are in the forefront of the creative members of fandom. Fandom was established out of a mutual love of ideas, language and communication and fanzine fans keep these ideals alive. They preserve the myths and history of our subculture and maintain the literary tradition that has always been the backbone of science fiction fandom. The various media presentations of science fiction have their good qualities but they can't match the written word. If science fiction fandom has a purpose - a proposition I've never believed - it can only be to preserve literacy in an increasingly non-literate era.

And fanzines do encourage reading. And writing. In years past most of the biggest name science fiction writers began by writing for fanzines. This is no longer the case but even someone like myself, with no ambitions towards a professional writing career, can hone his skills as a writer to the point where he's invited to be Fan Guest of Honour at a convention, where he can sit up here without paying for his meal and have his very own jacuzzi in his room.

So while the recent history of fandom may have left me a big fish in a very small pond and while I may not really be Canada's best-known fan, I do have one thing in my favour. Longevity. I've been doing my thing continuously for the last 23 years which is longer than any other active Canadian fan. (Albeit a mere pittance compared to the fannish careers of Brian, Buz and Charlie.) So my advice to you is this: look around fandom, look at it carefully. If you like what you see, find the area where the creative energies appeal to you most: there are certainly enough of them out there. And when you find that area, participate and enjoy yourself as much as you are able. The rewards - in friendships, in egoboo, in the enjoyment of the creativity of others - are so much more important than the occasional on-suite jacuzzi that might come your way.

Years ago, fannish pundits created two famous acronyms that supposedly covered the basic attitudes towards this microcosm we call science fiction fandom. The first was FIAWOL - standing for "Fandom Is A Way Of Life" - and the other was FIJAGDH - for "Fandom Is Just A Goddamn Hobby." Both have their good and bad points but I think they both miss the real point about fandom. So my fannish philosophy is: (IF)³ which is short for "If Fandom Isn't Fun It's Futile." Now I can be awfully serious when I'm having fun (just catch me watching the Blue Jays against Oakland later this afternoon) but if a hobby isn't enjoyable why waste time on it?

Fandom has been enjoyable for me for 23 years and by being so it has been very rewarding too, in every sense of that word. So go and run cons, sing songs, paint pictures, write reviews, publish fanzines, sew costumes or just collect the stuff! But the main thing is: have fun while you're doing it!



FOR MY EYES MAINLY In his loc to the last issue of this fanzine, Paul Skelton said, *"My memory is much the same as you state yours to be. My mind is like some poorly made chest of drawers, and memories keep falling down the back of the drawers. Every so often some chain of events will trigger the equivalent of a thorough spring cleaning, where you take out all the drawers and do a first class dusting and there, behind the mental bottom drawer, you find all the incidents that have slipped over the back of your memory, and which now form a kind of inadvertent time-capsule."* I could not possibly have said it any better myself.

I've previously written that one reason I publish XENIUM is as a hard copy of some memories I might otherwise lose track of. What follows, then, is for future versions of me, a random and necessarily incomplete list of memory triggers for the '80s. It won't include Marcos or Noriega, Meech Lake or Free Trade, Union Carbide or the 'Quake, although I'll remember the decade for those types of things. Nor could I possibly list all the people I care about who shared the good times or helped me through the bad times, but you're all there - and you know who you are - in one way or another. But these are some of the people, places and events which made my '80s.

All you Mikes in my future, read this occasionally. Other readers may skip to the next section...

MIKECONS Montego Bay 141 Bakka The Wedge Stephen King "Outworlds" TAFF
 MIDWESTCONS Weddings: Sally & George, Ben & Lowry, Al & Lyn, Mike & Sue (I and II),
 Sid & Linda, Mark & Hilarie, Josh & Luanne, Peter & Julia 1873 WORLD FANTASY
 Susan Wood Loo = VCR Anna SILICON Harbourfront "TLDV" Boots Ben Johnson
 The Playing Field Jack Gaughan CONTRADICTIONS Stephanie 137 The Lake Dis-
 trict The collapse of '87 "Energumen 16" Gentlemen's Tea RIVERCON The whole
 Xenium mailing list (aha: you found yourself) The Metropole GS850G Terry Carr
 DITTO John Duck's Pete Rose Topic A Expo '86 Roxanne WILCONS Humberside
 508 -Bath Harper "Faans" DogBolter A.L.East champs Doris CONFUSION din-
 ners Lemonade The One Tun Harlan Tree Frog Farm Gregory & Leroy London
 SPACECONS Rita The Legion The Hole DUFF Last Call All the Haldemans
 Arkanoid Bill Buckner Edinburgh CONTRAPTION The Wellington SkyDome I.K.B.
 Ferkins KEYCON Conners Banff Chandra

We return you now to your regularly scheduled fanzine.

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ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS Everyone knows about JOE HALDEMAN's award-winning professional writing but some may be unaware of other aspects of his multi-talented personality. In addition to being a gourmet cook, musician, songwriter, artist and poet, Joe is also a teacher. Each fall semester he conducts two of MIT's most popular undergraduate courses, usually courses in SF writing and genre fiction writing. Since each course requires the students to submit manuscripts, Joe provides every student with a sample manuscript, both to show correct form and to point out what not to do. He sent it to me as "possible fanzine fodder" and you'll find it on pages 8 to 10.

Joe's not-entirely-whimsical poem on page 11 speaks for itself.

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TIM BLACKMORE is a Toronto science fiction enthusiast who will soon begin his PhD thesis on the works of Joe Haldeman. In addition to his academic credentials, he is also a fine artist who is collaborating with Joe on a graphic version of Joe's novel-la "Seasons". It is hard to believe but this is his first fanzine appearance.

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ELESSAR TETRAMARINER is only himself. He first appeared on my fannish horizon

in a letter in NITWIT 5 in March, 1976. It was a juvenile, pretentious letter and I said as much in my loc in the April issue. Our initial reactions to each other were hardly positive. I met him a couple of months later, though, in a quonset-hut-cum-bar at a tiny disastrous attempt at a con on the campus of Erindale College. There was something about this powerfully built, long haired weirdo with the full-face multi-coloured make up that I liked. I think it was our mutual love of tequila. In the intervening years we've become pretty good friends...although I'd be the first to admit he marches to the beat of a whole different set of instruments.

As of my anticipated publication date, Elessar will have served about 18 months in a variety of US prisons for some naive and injudicious indulging of his hobby of taking pictures of willingly naked people. Since he discussed the nuts and bolts of the case in another fanzine, I asked Elessar for a more fannish, more personal view of his situation. You'll find it on page 12. Elessar should be released later this year and I'm looking forward to meeting the new version of one of fandom's true originals.

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I thought a lot about the order of contributors to the issue and finally decided it had to be Joe first and Elessar second: a perfect demonstration of the pros and cons of fanzine writing!

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CHRISTINA LAKE is one half of a team of active British fanzine fans who won the 1988 TAFF race and attended NOLACON, the New Orleans worldcon. Shortly after NOLACON, I helped put on a small convention for fanzine fans, held here in Toronto, and since Christina and new husband Peter-Fred Thompson were in the area they attended the first two days of DITTO. We had a panel on the non-appearance of fanzines and when it was my turn to rationalize my failure to publish I explained that the usual motivation for a new XENIUM was my receipt of a piece of material so good that I couldn't bear the thought of not sharing it with fandom right away. Then I pointed at Christina and proclaimed that if she'd send me a segment of her TAFF report I'd start typing stencils for XENIUM 15 the day I received it. (I am...er...somewhat keen on the idea of TAFF reports.)

Time passed. Early in 1989 Christina sent me not a piece of her TAFF report but a report on DITTO itself. (You are working on that TAFF report, right Christina?) Relieved of my promise to start an issue right away I promised to have a fanzine out within a year (which qualifies as Real Soon Now as far as the Vast XENIUM Publishing Empire is concerned.) Christina's article starts on page 15 and it looks like I'll just make it, too.

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Oh, yeah: **MIKE GLICKSOHN** is a long-time Toronto fanzine fan who drinks far too much and appreciates the concern his undeservedly-many friends express on the matter.

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And now, just as soon as you turn the page, heeerrreeee'ssss Joe...



Fred Revenant
666 Wrong Way
Moose Groin, MO 01947

About 3500
words

LINCOLN'S MOTHER'S DOCTOR'S DOG GOT CANCER
FROM AIDS AND WAS CURED BY A FLYING SAUCER

by

Ferdock Fetzter

The shambling corpse of Fred Revenant shambled through the editor's door. He squished up to the desk and pounded his fist on the teak surface, leaving the last two joints of his little finger. The editor looked up, bored.

"All the time I was alive, you spurned me," Fred said in a grave voice. "Now, you *will* publish my posthumous memoirs. Or else -- "

"Sorry." The editor turned his attention back to the stack of papers in front of him. "Dead men sell no tales."

Fred reached across the desk and grabbed the editor by the throat. "I'll take you back to the grave with me. 'The grave's a fine and private bed; it / seems to me that none there edit.'"

The editor made a strangling sound, and indicated by pointing that he could speak better were he not strangling. Fred released him. "Thank you." He flicked bits of rotting flesh from his lapel. "I would have published your stuff if you had followed proper manuscript form.

For instance, up there you put 'will' in italics. You should underline it, the way I did 'would.'"

"B-but my way looks better."

"Shut up. Always send things double-spaced on white paper, typed with a black ribbon. Avoid a dot-matrix printer unless it has a high-resolution mode like this one."

"Why did you have two hyphens after 'high' there?"

"You notice a lot for a corpse. That shows the typesetter that I want the hyphen preserved." He sat down in his swivel chair and rubbed his throat, dislodging bits of soil. "Let's see. You always forgot the self-addressed stamped envelope, too. You think I'm made of money?"

"I just -- "

"That erasable paper. No no no! It smudges and it's slippery as grease."

"But my mother gave it to me!"

"And those god-damned tiny margins drove me up the wall! Give me an inch on the left and an inch on the right. Top and bottom, too. Gotta have room to screw up your prose!"

"Okay. Guy in the next grave has a fancy word processor -- "

"That's another thing that gets my goat. Don't send me any of that right-justified crap. How the hell can I do a word count that way?"

"You don't have to," Fred said meekly. "The computer can count -- "

"You tryin' to tell me my business? Take that damned computer count and round it off to the nearest hundred, and put it up in the right-hand corner of the first page,"

The corpse turned, dejected, and shambled back out the door.

"I'm gonna stay dead," Fred said.

The editor watched Fred leave and turned the air conditioner on high, waving his hand in front of his face to dispel the olfactory echo of dead prose. Then he turned and looked straight into the metaphorical camera. He thrust a finger at you.

"Don't let this happen to you!" He shook his head and sank back into his chair, which squeaked like a bad simile. "Fred wasn't the worst writer in the world. Just the dumbest."

He reached into a drawer and pulled out a yellowing manuscript. Happens that this is the first manuscript I got from Fred, twelve years ago. Still have it. No stamps.

"Look at this." He held the first page up to the metaphorical camera. "Guy didn't know to capitalize and center the title, about a third of the page down from the address block up there -- and he always used that damned 'Ferndock Fetzner' pseudonym, but he didn't do it right. You put your real name up in the corner, and your pseudonym under the title. The one thing of his we published, he got it wrong. Wrote out a check to Ferndock Fetzner and never had to make good on it.

"He didn't know to space twice after a period, question mark, or colon; once after a comma or semicolon. (Actually, he only used one semicolon in his life, and that was a typo.)

"He always wrote "First North American Serial Rights" up there above the word count -- musta got it outa some book. Same book that told him to write "THE END" or "-30-" at the end of his stories. Think I'm brain-damaged, don't know the goddamned thing's over?"

He opened a deep drawer and pulled out a bottle of Ole Ernie's Real Stuff. Poured a finger (vertical) into his coffee cup. "Don't do this stuff yourself. A mind is a terrible thing to waste."

He sipped. "Paper don't grow on trees, either."

Owed to a Urologist

(A poem Ogden Nash Would Have Discarded)

Nothing will convert a man into a sympathetic feminist
quite so fast as a visit to his unfriendly local urologist.

Lying there with nothing on between one's wrinkling shirt and one's stirrup-bound ankles,
trying with all one's might not to think about the receptionist whose figure was so thankless-

ly ample that by leaning forward she could raise a reaction upon a dead gentleman, or even a fossil
(doing times tables, remembering presidents in order, trying to think of words that rhyme with "fossil"),

and then in comes this gent whom you've never even been properly introduced to,
who proceeds to do things down below that you wouldn't even let your spouse do . . .

You have to wind up with some sympathy for all those folks with ovaries and uterus,
who have to submit to this torture ten times as often as we who dangle outside of us --

Oh, it takes balls to go to a urologist,
but more than that to be a woman.

-- Joe Haldeman



SCRIPT

The question I always got more than any other at cons (besides, possibly, "What kind of name is that?") was, "How do you get all these people to take off their clothes for you?" Author Ted Reynolds addresses this and related subjects in a marvellous mid-1980s introduction, and fans Wendy Council, Halina Harding, Kathleen Conat and Joanne Radelt examined it too. But it all boils down to this: ASK. Do it politely or creatively or enthusiastically or with the Muse burning out of your eyeballs, but ASK.

COMFORTABLY NUMB

But make sure you're at least as sober as they are, that you know how to use your camera properly and that you don't let your libido run the show. Treat your model with the respect you'd expect if it were you taking off your clothes. And don't forget to thank your model, with whatever is appropriate and mutually agreeable. And for heaven's sake make sure they are overage and sign a release.

HAVE A CIGAR

Being a big name fan is a many-splendored thing. It's all the egoboo without the contractual obligations. It's getting a drink passed to you before you're dry when they're ten deep at the consuite bar. It's playing hide and seek with the worthwhile comrades who are busy with coteries of their own. It's going through a whole weekend without having sex and being convinced you've made love a dozen times. And when you see a pretty stranger but you walk on by, dollars to donuts the answer to her anticipated question is, "THAT one's Pink!"

CAREFUL WITH THAT AX, EUGENE

In early '88 I was busted for child pornography and was sent up for three years (now four) in August. But that's another story. Meanwhile, the archives, which had just turned 18, are in limbo for a few years. All dressed up and nowhere to go. And changes are coming, even to the archives.

CHILDHOOD'S END

I've sworn off photography, commercially, forever; personally, for a number of years at least. My innocence is gone and it's time to pack the Peter Pan persona in a Hope Chest. So, though the archives will resume growth when I'm a free man, more attention will be paid to political concerns - the death of the American Dream of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness - in the mainstream archive. I've closed up the visual shop and gone fishin'. I won't ever be able to work and play as I did, simply because I'm not the same man I was, by a far cry. No bad thing - just a change.

ON THE RUN/RUN LIKE HELL

My first and strongest impulse upon becoming a free man will be to hide away for a while to complete the changes in private. Prison is crowded and noisy, full of pain, anger and frustration. Them green hills and sleepy hollows are calling me. But... I'm a sucker for reunions. At least for curtain calls. I'm sure I'll be back in fandom eventually, if not immediately. At least north of the Mason-Dixon line, east of the Mississippi.

REMEMBER A DAY

But those were the Really Good Years; they will not come this way again. I wish

only that Mike hadn't been so willing to separate me from my ill-gotten gains at a host of card tables. And that Jolt and I were still strangers. All in all, it was more fun than any man, even a Pink Rocker With Rainbow Earrings, has the right to expect.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

No, not really. This experience isn't for everyone. But for one who indulged in Intimations of Immorality (or Imitations of Immortality), it's the route punched out on the Trip Pak. But what the hey.

SET THE CONTROLS FOR THE HEART OF THE SUN

A word or seventy for Joe Fan:

Be brave. Try new things if they could lead to your enrichment.

Cover your ass. Nobody likes a guy with droopy drawers.

Aspire to greatness: your excuses are more plausible when you fuck up.

Illegitimi non carborundum. And never open on natural trips in Diablo unless it's the first hand.

Be gracious, and happy in and of yourself. You'll have to beat 'em off with a stick.

And if you see a hairy guy wandering around a con in an Aussie bush hat, for Chrissake don't buy him a drink. Proposition him instead. You'll both be pleasantly surprised.

And I'll see you on the Dark Side of the Moon.



FUN ON THE TAFF TRAIL DITTO IN TORONTO

A NON-TWIN NON-TAFF REPORT

by

CHRISTINA LAKE



It was Lise Eisenberg, I think, who first told me there would be a fanzine convention in Toronto. Which was rather ironic, since in the end Lise couldn't make it, and I did. In any case, a group of us were eating in a restaurant in New Orleans, and Lise mentioned the con, and a quick piece of mental arithmetic - without even having to resort to Moshe's calculator - confirmed my first suspicion: it would be taking place the same weekend I was due to be in Toronto.

Full of excitement, I rushed back to the hotel to write a postcard to Peter-Fred (a wholly futile action since the British post was already on strike, but I didn't know that at the time) then went to find out the details from Catherine Crockett.

DITTO, I thought, what a strange name. So called because it's meant to be some kind of Canadian copy of CORFLU? I didn't like to display my ignorance in a country where duplicators are called mimeos and toilets restrooms, so it took a while to discover that a ditto machine is one of those horrible-smelling spirit duplicators that my mother used to run to make work sheets for her school. I am still none the wiser - why should anyone have a convention to celebrate these contraptions?

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Peter-Fred, neither forewarned nor forearmed, joins me in New York, and we hire a car to see some of America and drive to my relatives in Burlington (a little-known city near Toronto.) Leaving behind us a trail of parking tickets ("I hope the Quebec police don't talk to the Ontario police, dear!"), we embark with enthusiasm on the local GO train (so named because it doesn't, or at least not very fast) to Toronto. We go to check out the hotel for signs of life, only to find, according to a notice in the hotel lobby, that there will be nothing happening until six at the DITTO "meeting". Oh well, back 'round Toronto to pass up the opportunity of a trip to Jupiter at the CN Tower (only eleven dollars fifty), to eat Polish hot dogs and buy comics at prices we can't afford.

We arrive back at 6:30 and wander confidently - or at least as confidently as one can in an underlabelled hotel in a foreign country - to the room where the con is supposed to be taking place. We see someone hovering outside, and think, ah yes, this is it - the committee, the overflow, the harbinger of life, action and the kind of fun you can only get from days of not sleeping and alcohol abuse.

But no. There is just one person there, and he is as baffled as us as to where the rest of the convention is. In Britain it would have been easy. We could have said, with some confidence - "Oh well, they'll be down in the bar!" But I've been in North America long enough to know that more than likely they won't be. We look, and sure enough there is only one large group, and they're all women. So unless it's the Toronto equivalent of a women's apa meeting, I guess we're out of luck. Peter-Fred

has an alternate brainwave; we'll try and get some of the committee's room numbers out of the hotel and ring them up. We do so, and after a short conversation with Catherine Crockett, we're in possession of the vital information: consuite in Room 901. Simple when you know where.

Up in the consuite, Mike Glicksohn is holding court, bottle of beer in one hand.

"How did you enjoy New Orleans?" he asks, astutely recognizing me.

"Great," I say.

This is clearly the wrong answer. "Well, you're the only one who thinks so."

"The con was badly organized," I agree, "but the parties were good." I smile suggestively, and hope to be let off the hook. Mike starts making introductions, most of which, after five weeks training in meeting new people, I forget straight away.

Meanwhile, Catherine Crockett turns up and Glicksohn decides that an hour late could be a good time to open registration. We stay behind for a beer (not to be taken out of the consuite under any circumstances - unless your name is Mike Glicksohn). The room is now quiet and intimate, and Catherine, Hope Liebowitz and San Francisco fan Gary Mattingly start exchanging ratings on various drugs/drug experiences. Eventually it gets too much for Cathy and she has to rush back to her room for her supplies. "This is going to be an interesting evening," chuckles Hope. Indeed it is. Slightly out of touch with reality, I drift downstairs to the programme room, where the convention fanthology is being collated. "We'll just watch," I suggest. "We don't want to spoil your system." But they insist on making room for us anyway, even though they're on practically the last sheets, and we each collate a full copy.

The registration pack includes a useful list of eating places, and I decide that food might be a good idea. On our way out, we bump into an incoming Moshe Feder, straight off the plane from New York, sans Lise who is ill. We agree to wait for him while he rushes off with his normal New York energy to book into his room and say hello to the convention. We eat Indonesian and give Moshe a blow by blow account of what I've seen and done since he left Lilian and me eating hot fudge sundaes in Times Square.

Back at the consuite, the hospitality is in full swing. All this free booze would never work at a British convention, I muse. It'd bankrupt the con committee in one night. There are also fresh vegetables to nibble, a box full of apples and a plate of ripe peaches (yum! No, I didn't eat them all!) Lucky for them they got me as TAFF delegate, rather than champion Lambrusco-drinking artist Martin Tudor, I reflect.

I ask Taral how his DUFF campaign is going. "What campaign?" he asks gloomily. He seems to be having his doubts. "I'm no good at talking to people I don't know," he explains. "I mean what do you say?" "I don't know." He then spends ten minutes talking quite fluently about American/Canadian history. "But that doesn't count. It's all right when you're interested in the subject." I decide that Taral would probably do all right in Australia, even if he doesn't drink lager.

I give out my last remaining copies of Caprician 3, kicking myself for not remembering to tell Peter-Fred to bring some more to America with him when he came. Colin Hinz, in an amazing t-shirt, just pips Bill Bowers for the last copy, and when I give him the copy of TNH 11 I hadn't sent earlier because I didn't have his new address, World War III almost breaks out between him and Michael Skeet (Canada's ace reporter, first encountered mugging Taral for his DUFF nominees at registration.) "More back numbers tomorrow," I promise, and then get intercepted by Moshe with an even more unusual request. "Could you take a coca cola sign back to New York for me?" he asks with eager innocence. I look around desperately for Peter-Fred, while Moshe explains that it should probably fit on the back seat - if we're lucky. "But we weren't going

to bring the car in tomorrow," I stall. "I'll pay for the parking," Moshe promises, dragging me over towards Taral. I catch Peter-Fred's eye and the negotiations begin. Apparently, Moshe bought the sign ages ago on one of his previous trips to Canada, and it has been stored at Taral's place ever since, awaiting some mugs with a car, willing to take it back to the States. "What on earth shall we say to customs?" I wonder. But Peter-Fred is sanguine. We'll manage. And Moshe is so keen to get the sign integrated into his collection we don't have the heart to refuse. At least it will save us coming in on the GO train next day.

* * * * *

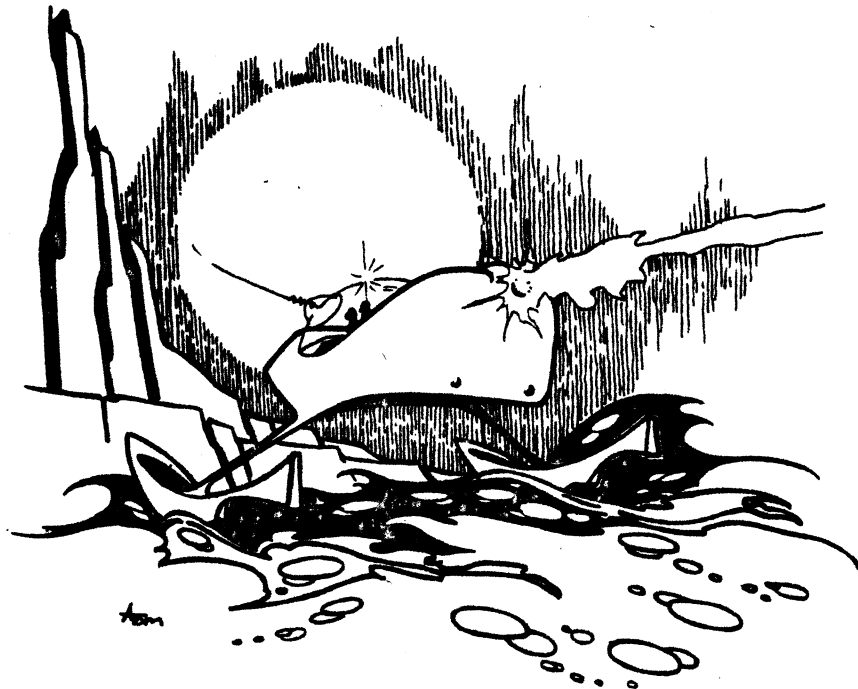
The sign is truly huge. It's the first thing we see as we rush into the hotel for the opening ceremony (yes, three pages into the con report and they haven't had the opening ceremony yet.) Did we really agree to transport this thing? Surely not. Moreover it is thoroughly wrapped in black bin-liner so it could be *anything*.

"Did you know we're sharing this hotel with a meeting for friends of the schizophrenics?" I ask Peter-Fred. It says so on the notice downstairs.

Mike Glicksohn opens the proceedings with his normal bonhomie. "There are only two t-shirts left and they're both extra large." I wonder if we should buy one for the coke sign, but don't imagine Moshe will let it wear one. Mike also explains the philosophy of DITTO, which is not as I had previously thought, to allow people to buy designer Taral t-shirts, but to provide an alternative fanzine convention in some place far from where CORFLU had been held that year. Gary Mattingly bids to hold the next one in San Francisco. "Any alternative bids?" asks Glicksohn. "Bristol, maybe, Christina?" "No, we'll bid for the one after," I joke. The weekend after the Dutch worldcon, I think, then there'll be plenty of Americans around. The idea of holding an American fanzine convention in Britain really appeals to me; but will it count as "the other side of the continent" if the 1990 CORFLU is held in New York? Before I can pursue the thoughts any further, Taral is on stage, announcing the scavenger hunt, and appealing for quiz teams. Moshe volunteers, and so does Colin Hinz, but filling up the rest of the places is slow work. I excuse myself on the grounds that all the questions are going to be American, and accompany Peter-Fred to pursue the rumour of cakes and bagels in the consuite.

When I get back, they're knee deep in a debate about who blackballed Dave Langford from some Canadian apa. I settle down, realising that although the quiz has, like all the programme items, only been scheduled for half an hour, it could quite easily run all day. And probably would have, except that David Palter, evidently thinking the same, makes a plea for some semblance of time-keeping. Taral reluctantly puts away his huge pile of remaining questions, Moshe's team is declared the winner, and personnel are assembled for the next panel. This Mike Glicksohn does by simply calling people from the audience until he is comfortably surrounded. This time I don't get out of it, and go and join the team at the front.

Soon I am battling with a feeling of *deja vu*. Didn't I have this discussion at the worldcon on the Future of Fanzines panel? Or was it the one on the Economics of Ego-boo? I conclude that whatever the title of the panel, two things will be discussed: the theory that fanzines are not as important in fandom as they once were and the impossibility of getting twiltone paper. I can't really relate to this American hang-up over fuzzy paper - as long as the paper doesn't stick to the mimeo drum and yields legible copies, what the hell does it matter? But I get the impression that half of American fanzine fandom is prepared to give up in disgust if they can't have their twiltone. No wonder potential new recruits find this all somewhat alien. I begin to get impatient with the endlessly futile discussion on how to recruit new fanzine enthusiasts. To me, it's not a matter of spoon-feeding, advertising and competing with the other media; it's not about preserving our fannish heritage - it's about us, we who are here now, caring and having the enthusiasm to put in the creative effort. If fanzines are a good place to be, people will find them. If they're



brain-dead, or living thirty years in the past, no amount of exposure will attract anybody.

The next panel, aptly enough, is an accusatory session. Taral goes 'round the room taking excuses from former fanzine producers as to why they don't pub their ish any more. The conclusion seems to be Mike Glicksohn's aptly put M&Ms - marriages and mortgages. It must be true, I think to myself. I've only put out one fanzine since I got married, compared to 22 before. But I guess there's still time. Bob Webber gives a slightly disjointed airing to the electronic fanac argument, and then it's my turn to get up on stage and talk about TAFF. Giving talks is not my favorite activity, but this one's okay. People fire questions, and I answer them. Hey, this is quite good, I begin to think. I get to have my say, and they all listen. I can talk about consumer fans, and they all think it's a neat expression I invented. If this goes on much longer I'll get to thinking I'm important or something. By the time they've finished with me, the programme is well overrunning, and we decide to postpone the TAFF auction until after everyone has eaten. The joys of a single-stream underprogrammed convention - you can actually do these things. I like it, we have a group feeling here, not a monolithic organisation, planned to the nth, ready to bulldoze across the mood of the moment in the name of logistics. Maybe I will run the Bristol DITTO after all.

Moshe has got together a party to eat at a local Mexican restaurant. It's quite an expedition to get there; those of us too lazy to walk have to take a combination of subway and streetcar, relying on our native guides to supply such arcana as tokens and transfers. Once the party of twelve or so has reunited at the restaurant, it becomes clear that certain among them are suffering from preconceptions. The restaurant has just changed hands, and Hope keeps talking about the things they used to have on the menu. Meanwhile, Moshe is sidling up to the waiter and asking what has become of the coke machine owned by the previous management. Hope takes out her frustrations by telling the waiter that the salsa isn't hot enough. I have a theory that the new owners don't actually want to run a Mexican restaurant at all. It's what they inherited, but already they have integrated some Caribbean dishes to the menu, added strawberry to the margueritas and failed to teach their staff how to pronounce "chimichangas." On this basis, I order Caribbean, chicken jerk, and don't

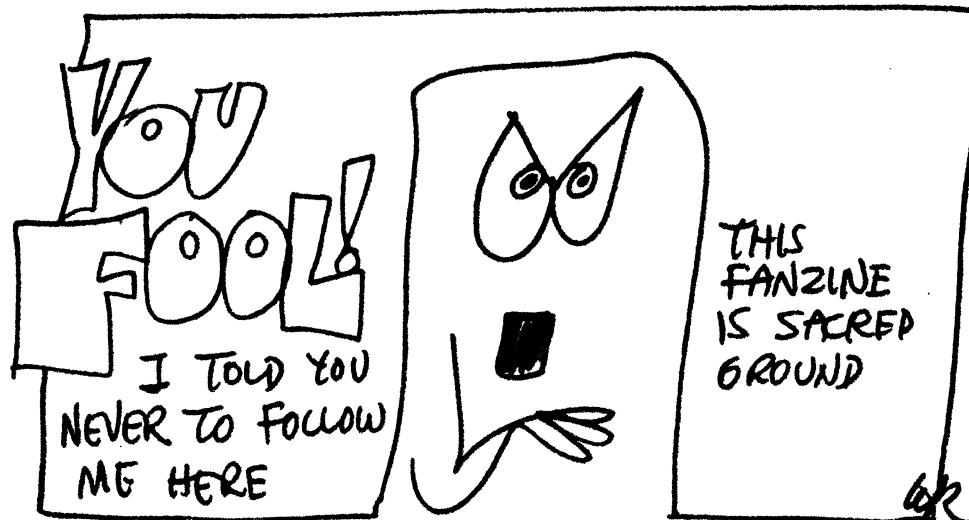
regret it. In fact, it's probably the first meal I've finished in a week but that might just be indicative of the slowness of the service.

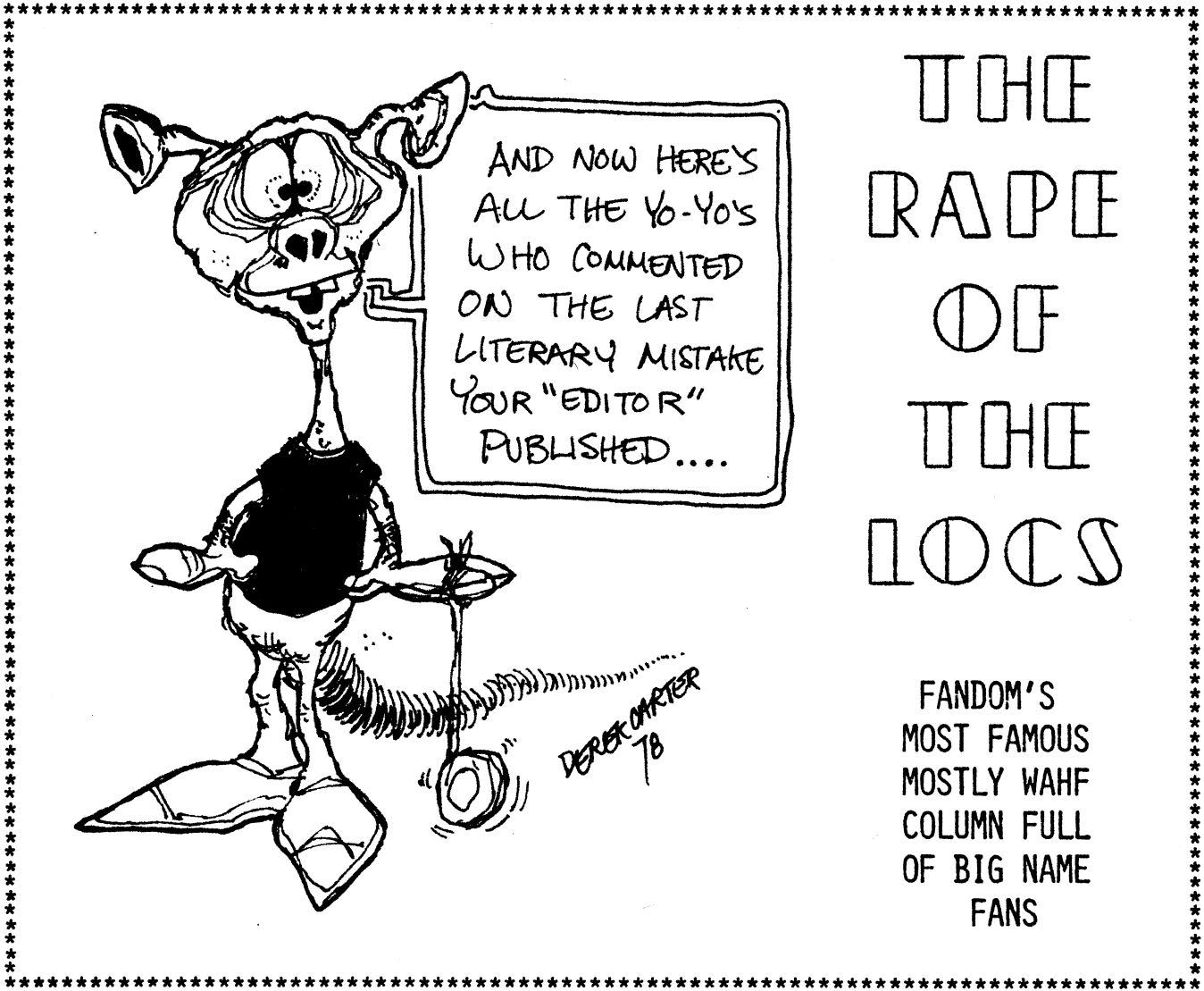
Catherine Crockett has to rush away to prepare for the auction, while the rest of us sit around saying things like, "They can't start without us, we're half their potential income." In fact, we nearly don't make it away from the restaurant at all when we find ourselves ten dollars short, despite painstaking calculations by Moshe - only to be saved by David Palter emerging from the restroom to ask how much he owed. Coincidentally, ten dollars.

We're right. The auction doesn't start without us. Velma Bowen and Mark Richards are still sorting out lots when we come in, and the auction has been put back half an hour. Mike Glicksohn gives a demonstration of how it should be done, effortlessly selling off some of his own personal books and fanzines for DITTO. Then it's up to me and Catherine to rally the troops for TAFF. I volunteer to auction the British material, if only because I know more about most of it than anybody else in the room. I still find myself waving things in the air, saying, "You should get this, it's really good stuff," then failing to find anything to prove it to the sceptical audience. Convincing them that they are really missing out by not buying Anne Hammill is hard work; selling the lyrics for the Ian Sorensen rock opera 'Neo' almost pathetically easy. Owen Whiteoak is impossible to sort out: I am so bogged down in his ever-changing titles that I totally fail to notice that I've just sold a new issue of 'Kamera Obskura' that I haven't seen myself. In the end, we decide we've fleeced the audience for as much as they can stand, Catherine gives me my share of the loot and I go off to the consuite for a much earned drink. By this time, I'm glad Moshe persuaded us to bring the car into town - it means we can sit around talking, helping Mark Richards eat his birthday cake and discovering that people with names like Covert Beach really exist, without having to worry about the train times.

Eventually, though, remembering how much driving we will have to do the next day, I start saying my goodbyes. This takes a long time, what with failing to think of a good one-liner for the convention one-shot and embarking on my first real conversation with Colin Hinz (hey, this is interesting - why didn't we start this earlier?) I don't want to go, or rather, want to come back the next day. I don't want my TAFF trip to be almost over. I want to carry on travelling, meeting new people, intersecting with old ones. I want to hold onto the feeling of connection I've had out of DITTO. But I can't; I'm flying out from New York in two days, and all that will be left will be the fanzines.

But perhaps, in the end, that's all you need from a fanzine convention.





THE RAPE OF THE DOCS

FANDOM'S
MOST FAMOUS
MOSTLY WAHF
COLUMN FULL
OF BIG NAME
FANS

((XENIUM has never had a regular letter column and I'm certainly not going to begin with one that's already four years old but I send my sincere thanks to all those letter writers who took the time to comment and distribute egoboo to the creators in last issue, despite knowing that most of their words would never be read by anyone but me. The cream of the egoboo will be duly disseminated.

Just to refresh your memories: XENIUM 14 began with a dedication page in memory of Jack Gaughan and Jack Haldeman, moved into my lengthy trip report about England in '85, saw Paul Skelton develop a cosmology based on hedgehogs and ended with Avedon Carol's powerful impressions of her move to London. Herewith the responses...))

ROBERT LICHTMAN ("What I like the best about your trip article is the insight into your and Doris' relationship. It made me happy that you two have each other in such a nice-sounding way, also somewhat envious because I don't currently have something like that myself. I hope this will be a part of this letter that, when your next issue comes out in 12-24 months (unless you surprise us), I will look back on and chuckle...") ((*Surprise, surprise. Chuckle, chuckle.*)), **ROBERT BLOCH**, **AL CURRY**, **DAVE D'AMMASSA**, **PAM WELLS**, **HARRY WARNER JR.** ("Skel's contribution might serve as the most typical example of his uncanny ways with essays. His method of organizing an article reminds me of what it's like to have a cat in the house. You find yourself thinking about the cat: 'How did he get up there? Now where's he going to? Did he slip out? No, he was under my chair the whole time, but I know I saw his tail flashing past that window. Hey, cat, you mustn't do that, you'll kill yourself. Whew, he lived through it....' Skel seems always to be on the verge of

allowing his succession of topics to fall into total chaos and in the nick of time, when I arrive at the end of the article, I realize it was a natural if unexpected sequence of ideas and connecting links after all."), JERRY KAUFMAN, ERIC MAYER, SKEL, BRAD FOSTER, WALT WILLIS, ROB JACKSON, TERRY HUGHES, DON AYRES, LLOYD PENNEY, DAVE YODER ("My pulse quickens as I see the manilla envelope mixed in with the other junk. Damn it, it looks like a fanzine. It feels like a fanzine. Open it, yah, count on Mike to open with a pair of Jacks.") (*Yeah, but I immediately went to trips!*), NIGEL RICHARDSON ("I enjoyed the trip report because it wasn't just the usual list of people you met and the "really incredibly witty" things they said. Most fans have the innate power to make a trip to a foreign country sound like a visit to the shops, or worse. There were things in your report about the UK that I didn't know (some that I could have lived without knowing, but that's just me) and a lot of those things clicked into place exactly right."), WENDY COUNCIL, ERIC LINDSAY, JEAN WEBER, PATRICK NIELSEN HAYDEN, LAN, RICHARD BERGERON, LUCY HUNTZINGER, JOYCE SCRIVNER, KEN LAKE, ROB GREGG, DAVE COLLINS, IRWIN HIRSH, COLIN HINZ, DAVID BRUCE, RANDY MOHR, PETER GRACE, MARTHA BECK, RON GEMMELL and M.K. DIGRE who responded on paper to XENIUM 14 in precisely that chronological order. Many thanks, one and all.





"The first fact one must accept about Britain is that all British literature, no matter how improbably it reads, is realistic. You meet its most outrageous models everywhere you turn, because Britain is full of improbable people, behaving in what an American or a Frenchman wrongly suspects is a fictitious manner."

"A British author snooting American food is like the blind twitting the one-eyed."

--two by A.J. Liebling

SOMETHING EXTRA? WELL, ONCE I GOT A CHARGE OUT OF THIS...

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The first Something Extra appeared in XENIUM 2.1 (whole number 4) in August of 1973. The ten issues between that and this all contained some memento of my personal life. Taken together this series of lagniappes says a little about the sort of person I've been. But it's getting harder and harder to extend the tradition. For some years I have been saving the boarding passes of all flights I take but even in the years before The Mortgage I didn't fly often enough to be all that close to even the minimal print run of XENIUM. And at \$15 a pop my collection of Blue Jay stubs is also growing rather slowly. But as we enter the last decade before the new millenium the attached credit card slips seem an appropriate symbol of modern technological fandom. (And the facsimile signatures may prove useful for some Phil Dick-like project by a 21st century fan historian.)

Credit cards are a perfect example of the way society changes in quite profound ways almost without our noticing. I've been using plastic for less than half my life and yet I really cannot remember what it was like in the days when you had to carry cash if you intended to buy something. (For that matter, how did I manage to survive before automatic banking machines?) Some changes are so convenient and so pervasive you wonder why it took so long for them to occur. It's science-fictional enough one wonders if the disappearance of actual money and the rise of the thumb-print economy can be all that far behind?

The slips themselves will say a lot about me personally. If I let them. Most will undoubtedly be from bars, some from convention hotels and airlines, and maybe a few from bookstores. Most will have some relevance to my life in fandom and some may be personally relevant to the readers who receive them. But don't worry if they don't seem to relate to you: my mind is capable of some tenuously esoteric connections.

It's been four years since the last issue of XENIUM and as this issue shows there've been some slips along the way. But Joe Haldeman has promised me his worldcon GoH speech so another issue may reach you fairly soon. Two a year, that's not too many?



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