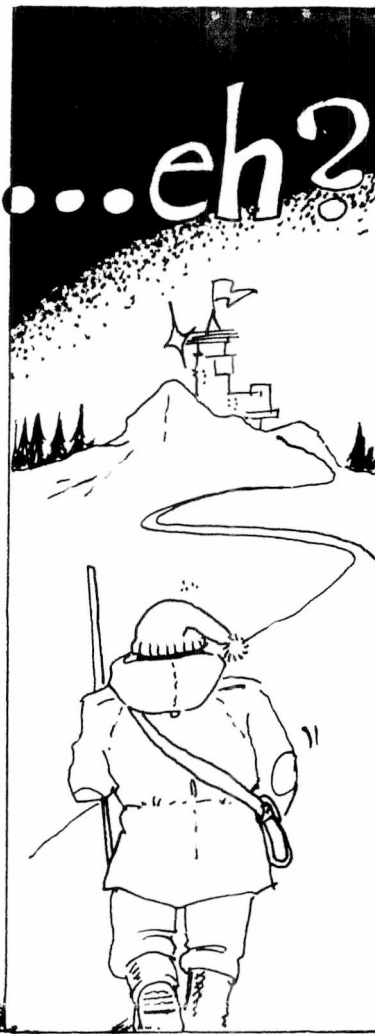
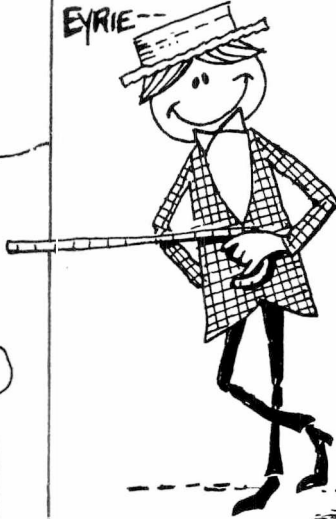


Quaint...eh?

THIS DOWN-CLAD
FIGURE IS
STU SHIFFMAN-
CLIMBING UP TO A
NORTHERN MANHATTAN
EYRIE--

— WHERE WAITS
A SELECT COTERIE
OF OTHER GLIB
AND QUASI-LOONY
FOLKS —
MOSHE FEDER, LISE
EISENBERG AND—



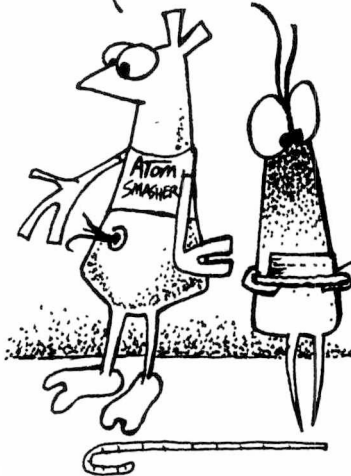
—PATRICK AND TERESA NIELSEN HAYDEN---



SHIFFMAN/05— with apologies
to Ted White, B. Stewart, Ross C.
and the Katzes.



→Ahem←
 -WHILE THE INTREPID
MOSHE FEDER
 WRINGS SENSE OUT
 OF AN OBTUSE
UNIVERSE -



It's the Holidays - be a clown:

Get Silly!

(PEACE AND FREEDOM - that's
 serious, tho!)



Ecumenical
 'thots and
 Pichurs by **SHIFFMAN** ©85

Entitled QUAIN by default, this conglomeration of holiday greetings is brought to you by the shivering remnants of Fabulous Fanoclast Fanzine Fandom, which is to say STU SHIFFMAN, MOSHE FEDER, LISE EISENBERG, and relative newcomers PATRICK & TERESA NIELSEN HAYDEN. Teresa dislikes the title because she imagines everyone will think it's a bad etymological joke and therefore Her Fault. Stu, having already

committed the cover, wonders how he can come to grips with matters as painful as Christmas Cheer without drowning in the self-pity for which he is universally loved. Moshe, ever-punctilious, brought lots of notes and is sitting irritably in the background with his eyes half-shut, contributing immeasurably to the general sense of Good Spirits and High Old Times. Patrick, ever-managerial, wants us all to Get Our Acts Together and Focus On A Unified Theme. Lise is late. As for me, I'm the izzard on the cushion: hoping you are the same, and a verry merry happy to you and yours . . . A Panacea Publication, rhp#63, ee#232, and all that sort of thing. December 1985 -- that's half the '80s over with!

TO THE MIGHTY AND ESOTERICK
 COLOPHON!
(the short form)
stu

Before fandom was, I am

Teresa



A WINTER'S DAY, in a deep and dark November. I am curled up under a flannel sheet plus the heirloom quilt Tom Weber forgot to take home with him to Seattle, busily getting back to sleep after a hard day that had started at eight in the morning. It is now eleven in the morning. In the distance, Patrick is answering the phone: good. He can tell whomever it is that I'm asleep.

The corner of the quilt covering my head is flipped back; Patrick, thirty feet of phone cord trailing umbilically behind him, thrusts the cold receiver into the bedclothes. "It's your mother," he says triumphantly, and departs. The matter of my telephone phobia and Patrick's glee when he can stick me with a really unavoidable call is something I won't go into here.

"Hello, dear. How are you? Did you do anything special for Thanksgiving?"

"Sleepy. I'm in bed. No, we had Stu Shiffman over." I wind up telling her about Our Thanksgiving Dinner: originally planned as a two-household home-cooking project, in the wake of our working straight through the fourth weekend in a row it miraculously transformed itself into a restaurant outing to Caramba!, a somewhat Mexican eatery on the Upper West Side. First, though, Patrick had phoned to make sure it was open: a quick call. "I got cut off," he said in considerable irritation. "I don't think the guy speaks much English -- he said they were open, but I didn't get to ask how late or whether we need reservations." Then he set the phone in my lap on top of my knitting. "You're the one who speaks Spanish -- you try it next."

I try it next. Patrick is getting good at manufacturing Unavoidable Calls.

"Allo?"

"Hello, - are - you - open - today?"

"Yais."

"Do - we - need - reservations?"

"I doan speak Eengleesh."

"Ummmm . . . ? ¿Necesitamos reservaciones?"

"I doan know."

I can't remember how to say "how late are you open?" in Spanish; doubtless this person can manage neither the question nor the answer in English. "Bien, bien, gracias."

"I doan unnerstan."

"Bien, ¡gracias!" I hang up. We decide to wing it.

CUT TO: Ninety-sixth Street and Broadway, the Upper West Side. (I used to notice before I moved here that, frequently, New Yorkers will give a set of street coordinates on the assumption that this is somehow a sufficient description of a neighborhood. It isn't, but let us continue anyway. I live here now.) Dark street, sparse traffic, cold rain and wind. We walk the two blocks to Caramba!, which turns out to be dark, deserted, and have a sign on the door saying "Closed for Thanksgiving."

"We may never know who it was we talked to," says Patrick as we trudge back down Broadway past a giant unlit sign saying "Nobody beats THE WIZ!".

"Szechuan?" Stu replies.

And down the street is in fact Duck Heaven, upscale Szechuan/Hunan specializing in duck. Moreover, it's open. We have duck several different ways, plus fish, soup, dumplings, and tangerine beef.

"... altogether a very New York Thanksgiving," I tell Mother, and she counters with a long tale of the familial Thanksgiving back in Arizona and a complicated social faux pas involving one of my sisters-in-law, about whom it may be said that the duck we had for dinner was smarter. I won't go into that here, though.

After I get back into bed (Mother, as it turns out, has called to get my measurements since she and Granny have just finished taking a tailoring class, and no amount of ingenuity will enable me to take them lying down), she tells me her story for the week. Actually, first she tells me the epilogue to last week's story, involving the father of one of her high-school Eng. Lit. students, a Jehovah's Witness who'd objected to his daughter being taught False Religions in school (Dante's Inferno, it was). And that was more or less a continuation from the story several months back, about the fundamentalist parents who'd objected to their son being told in class that it's better to reign in Hell than to serve in Heaven, when Mom was teaching Paradise Lost. These guys really know how to pick their ground.

No, the story for the week was about two families that moved in next door to each other in a new Mesa housing development. One was Mormon, one was Jewish; each had a little boy the same age, and the two kids became inseparable. (My mother got this from the mother of the little Jewish kid, so I figure it's reliable.) Anyway, said Jewish kid one day asked his mother if Robbie could come over for lunch, which was okay with her. They were about to start eating when Robbie asked, "Don't you guys say the blessing over the food before you start eating?"

"Well, yes, sometimes we do," she said. "Robbie, why don't you say the prayer?" So he did, probably the same mealtime prayer I learned as a little Mormon in Mesa, the one that ends "InnanameofJesuschristamen." The woman who told my mother about this waited until about halfway through lunch, then said, "Robbie, when we pray we don't use the name of Jesus Christ at the end. It's still praying, but we just don't use that name in this house." She paused for a moment -- complicated stuff to explain to a kid -- then said, "Do you understand what I'm saying?"


"Sure!" Robbie said. "In my house we're not allowed to say 'Fuck'."

(. . .)

After I'd recovered from the punchline I told Mother, "You don't understand. In a couple of hours we have Stu Shiffman, Lise Eisenberg, and Moshe Feder coming over, and now I have a story to tell them."

Happy ecumenical holidays. (- tnh)

"I just have to learn to think with my typing fingers instead of my mouth."

Lise 

AFTER A RIDICULOUS conversation in which it was revealed that nobody here believes his/her writing is as good/funny/grammatical as everyone else's, Moshe declared that he couldn't follow Teresa's opening, nor Patrick's contribution, if Patrick went next. So I leapt in, announcing that I'd go next and write some awful drivel, thus relieving Moshe's undue paranoia about appearing stupid and, worse, unfunny in comparison. This should not be confused with altruism -- I realized at once that it provided me with the excuse I needed to ~~write/some/awful/drivel~~ get started. I trust the conversation in the background will also provide me a reason to stop.

Brief pause as I grind rapidly to a halt, proving that thinking with my mouth doesn't work too well, either, and that I shouldn't bite off more than I can ruminate on (and should close my mouth while I type, and digest my thoughts carefully, and, oh...bunches more metaphors and like that there).

Patrick announces that he wants to go last (we need a new version of drawing straws here) (although Stu and Teresa would win, being able to draw) (which reminds me that Moshe also claimed that he couldn't write as well as Stu could draw), which he has already violated, having jumped in to type the interlineation above, although I suspect it was not so much to capture the ambience of the moment, with Teresa spreadeagled on the kitchen floor, as it was that Patrick just likes to type all those dashes. In high school we had

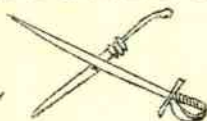
a fad, for a while, of writing all our graffiti in Morse Code. If carried into print, I suppose Patrick could have a grand time with it. At my recent college reunion, a member of Morse College led his old classmates in the Morse cheer, which I had not heard before. (Yes, it goes, "Give me a dat dat, give me a dat dat dat ... give me a dit. What's that spell?")

But enough about reminiscences; there's a topic to cover, or rather, a cover to fill -- Stu having hung the covers with care by the fireplace, waiting for Santa to fill them with non-sectarian goodies. I'm sure he could have gotten Teresa to knit him one, but now she's busy mending my shirt and sweater, after which she'll make Patrick a homosexual, which might be the conversational reason to stop that I was listening for. I will leave it to those who know her talents (and read these words with more care than I compose them) to figure out whether she could knit a cover, a fireplace, or Santa Claus. Although, I suppose, she could use the same pattern for Santa Claus and Patrick's homosexual to save time (what do you think he does with all those elves the rest of the year?) (Not Patrick).

Actually, as long as I'm not addressing the topic, I will see if someone else from our Mutual Admiration and Self-Effacement Society will, at least, address You, Our Reader. Or maybe not. (- le)

"I am too an extrovert, even if no one knows it. I'm a closet extrovert."

Stu



I HAVE BEEN SEVERELY cautioned to suppress my true melancholic self here, so I won't expound on the curious Old World customs my grandfather's home town pursued at this time of year-- Russian Orthodox pogroms, which of course means they're celebrated a month later than German Lutheran pogroms...

No, I won't tell you about that stuff. I've promised to be cheery and spirited in a seasonal manner (paprika and cloves, I think).

Yesterday, having the day after Thanksgiving off, I went downtown for an orgy of swashbuckling at the Regency, a film revival theater. It was terrific: Erroll Flynn and Basil Rathbone (the Greatest Swordsman of All Hollywood) in CAPTAIN BLOOD and ROBIN HOOD, and Bugs Bunny in RABBIT HOOD. Fantastic adventure and sweeping romance, chock-full of anachronism and historical dubiousness. It ain't Jean-Luc Godard or Sidney Lumet, but I know what I like.

So, I mused as I walked down from Broadway and 66th Street (now you know where it is) towards Carnegie Hall, what if someone like Michael Curtiz (director of ROBIN HOOD) had made this new Santa Claus film all the reviewers are panning? I rolled it around in my mind (a musty area only recently aired out). Music by that gloriously romantic composer Erich Wolfgang Korngold, of course. I wondered what he might do with the musical elements of "Jingle Bells" or "White Christmas" . . . or even "O Little Town of Bethlehem." (Which I usually think of as "O Levittown of Hackensack.")

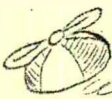
I'd contract George Macdonald Fraser to do the screenplay (from a story idea by Steve Spielberg, of course, since he seems to be ubiquitous nowadays), as he did for his own swashbuckling ROYAL FLASH and Richard Lester's THREE and FOUR MUSKETEERS. I see old Nicholas as he was in the time of Joan of Arc, when his workshop was outside Paris on the current site of Versailles. Erroll Flynn plays the strangely youthful white-bearded figure in love with the savior of the French cause: the Maid of Orleans, Jeanne, portrayed by Olivia de Havilland (named for the airplane). Meanwhile, the evil Gilles de Rais (Basil Rathbone) has been torturing and generally being bloody fucking horrific to several dozen blond, brunette, and redheaded youngsters between the ages of twelve and seventeen. He is a supporter of Jeanne and of the King of France, but he is still an utter rotter. Boo Hiss! Throw popcorn at the screen when he appears. Jeanne, doing her Jirel of Joiry imitation, discovers What Gilles Is Doing In The Dungeon, and gets a message out to Nicholas via postal elf-service before being captured by the Villain. The saintly voices didn't tell her about this! Aha, and Nicholas rides to her rescue on his faithful destrier M. Cringelle, as it is too early in the year for reindeer. He confronts the arrogant swine in his castle and we have a magnificent twenty minutes of swordplay with the trampling of holiday fruitcake underneath, the splash of upset eggnog; and the carnage of a first-rate holiday football game. Gilles dies, but not before revealing that he has sold Jeanne to the English for several top-notch castles and a draft on the Bank of

England. So Nicholas has to do it all over again, riding off to a last-minute rescue of Jeanne at the stake (later hushed up in the history books).

Nicholas and Jeanne, before the final heart-stopping and world-rending kiss, decide to run away forever to Lapland for the skiing.

Next year we'll recount the storyline of the film WHITE CHRISTMAS as done by Sting and Laurie Anderson... (- ss)

"Yes, but I have superior perceptions of objective reality."

Moshe 

FANOCLASTS RECENTLY passed its twenty-fifth anniversary and in typically blasé Fanoclast style the milestone was barely noted by the members. (For the detail-oriented among you, the first meeting was held on November 18, 1960.) Given the history and traditions of the group, this is probably as it should be. Even if it weren't, it's probably all we could reasonably expect. After all, as Patrick says (about the rest of us, natch), "It's hard to be scintillating after you've spent an hour and a half on the subway to get here." Still, being the maudlin, sentimental sort I am renowned to be -- among those who have seen through my coolly aloof exterior -- I can't help regretting this, at least a little. If fandom were in fact the small town it has all too often been compared to, it would have holidays and festivals native to it and established mechanisms for dealing with those Significant Round Numbers we use to demarcate our lives and history. No doubt it would develop all three kinds of holidays I can think of: commemorative, celebratory, and functional.

Yes, I can see it now, Duper Day, the annual anointing of the mimeos with ink and dittos with vodka, circle dances and the flying of kites made of authentic Japanese kite paper; the Feast of Corflu, when blue-tinged blog is drunk and traditional oneshots (with the same contents year after year) issued; Collation Day, when once a year one's friends have sanction to invade one's premises, gather up the uncollated pages of your zine and mail them out (this is held on the anniversary of the first FAPA blitzkrieg); Real Soon Now (a.k.a. Cunctmas) every February 29th; Fansgiving, marked by an exchange of gifts and banquets held at Chinese restaurants (Indian restaurants in the U.K.) to thank Roscoe for the birth of fandom itself; and of course the High Holy Days, better known to us as Worldcon. Can't you hear them singing?...

Margin bells, margin bell, dinging all the way
Oh what fun it is to type a fanzine night and day
Margin bells, margin bells, ring at every line
Keep the caffeine coming and you know you'll be just fine.
Dashing down the page, fingers fairly fly
Typos here and there; we'll corflu by and by
If egoboo you want, there is no other way
It can feel like work at times, but think of it as play...

Or so I keep telling myself in all the odd hours we must find to squeeze a bit of fanac into our lives, somehow always the times when sleep must be fought off and wits are near their ends.

In reality, of course, there are no fannish holidays, and we're limited to celebrating celebrating the mundane ones. But that's no reason to limit our enjoyment of them. So all we frenzied oneshotters wish you a mundane holiday season so enjoyable it's positively, well, fannish. (- mf)

"Man, isn't this one of those days that makes you wish you were alive?"

Patrick



"FRENZIED ONE-shotters", Moshe? Umm.

When I was six, I remember, Christmas was sudden, confusing, and marvellous. Young enough to not quite grasp what was going to happen, my string of largely identical days was broken by its disorderly and amazing passage. And I remember being fourteen, with Christmas heavily anticipated, avaricious, and somehow, afterwards, disappointing. Later, I remember being twenty:

poverty and foul weather, family a long way off, and Christmas an unavoidable unemployed unpaid day or three. Downtown, the day before the day before the Day, stores and trees would be tarted up with foil and tinsel; I worked my way down the sidewalk (dodging the shoppers, the carollers, the bellringing St. Nicks with their kettles), hands in my pockets and the rain squishing into my shoes. The hell with The Holidays, I recall proclaiming when I got home, and while I'm at it the hell with Charles Dickens in all his manifestations, too. Scrabbling through temp jobs is hard enough without having an entire industry full of wallies exhorting you to celebrate (i.e., buy and consume) a good cheer you certainly can't afford. Given the days off, paid or not, I'd rather spend the time catching up on various writing projects.

Admit it, truly: in your heart of hearts you know there's something utterly...nauff... about the whole business. Sure, it's a useful excuse for the sort of blowout party that, say, Seattle fandom is prone to at this time of year (though who needs that much excuse?), but aside from that sort of thing The Holidays and our own odd subculture have rarely mixed well. What Moshe missed back there is that we do have our own liturgical calendar, our own high holy days over Easter or Labor Day and a new year that starts in September. Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah and the rest all celebrate other ties and other communities, and seem like an intrusion here. Certainly, the modern American Christmas we've come to know and loathe is the sort of thing a lot of us are hiding out in fandom to get away from. So here we are, three floors up with the coffee and the typewriter on, barricaded against winter and the world with all its nut cases down there in the shopping district, working on this contradiction in terms: that most funkily fannish of artforms, a oneshot fanzine forgodsake -- commemorating the bloody holidays? Dissonance, right?

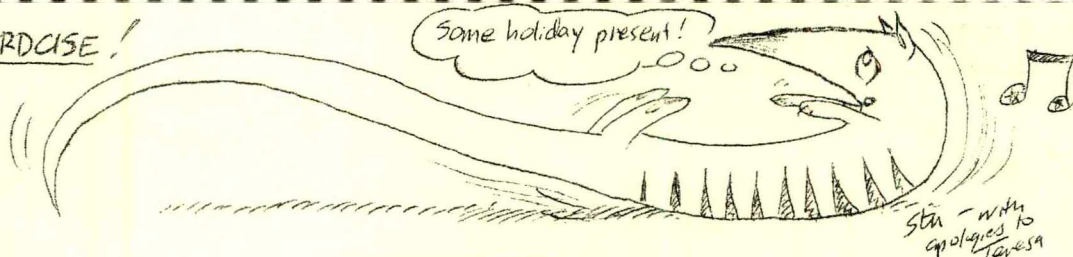
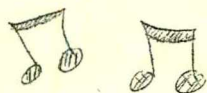
Well, set your mind at ease. Contemplate the Midwinter Holiday Merchandizing Season and repeat after me: "Fuck that." And then: "It's our holiday, too." One of the pitfalls of fandom (not invented by fandom, either) is that edgy, knowledgeable cynicism, that sophistication born of a bunch of Real Smart Guys busily reassuring each other that we won't get fooled again, etc. etc., this time anyway. This is what gives us those odd, empty moments of feeling cut off from everything ("alienation", they called it, before the word died of overwork). Like it or not, the fact is that we're all part of the stream of years and lives, of civilization, carried along in the flow; no matter how much of it you reject it's hard not to notice that for thousands of years people have observed at this season that (1) the sun is going away, and (2) it's getting awfully dark and cold outside. Panic! Turn on all the lights, pour another round, get the party going! Anything is better than staring out the window at the rain.

Get the party going, indeed, we say, and get some conversation up. And while you're at it, unpack some of that despised, tawdry holiday sentiment. Underneath years of accumulated grunge is still some original flash, some literal meaning for our wordy clan. Peace on earth. God rest ye. Hark.

Take back the season; it's yours, too. Have a good one. (- pnh)

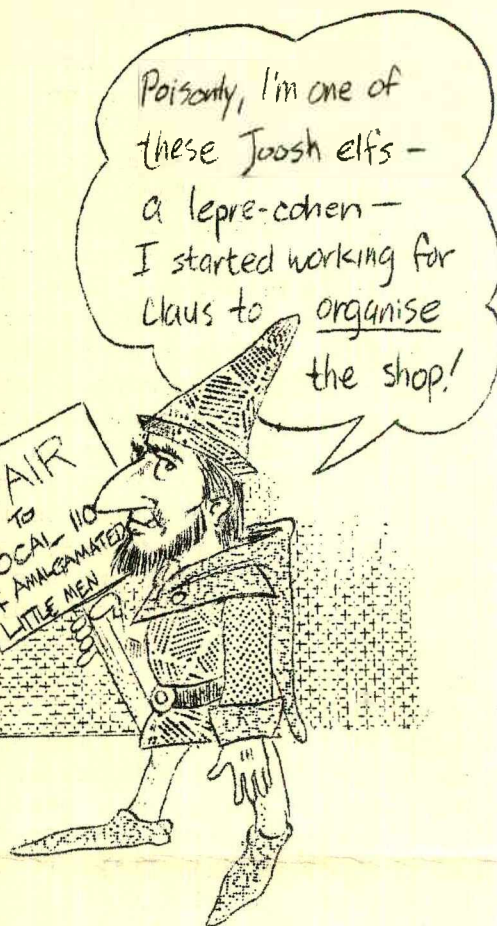
"Why, the universe was created for egoboo."

WELCOME TO IZZARDCISE!

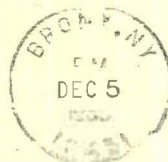


"If everyone in the world were simultaneously given five minutes' warning of impending sudden death, five minutes to say what it had all meant to us, all the telephone lines on the planet would be jammed by people trying to call up other people and stammer that they loved them. You would want to tell a whole lot of people that you loved them, but had been too clumsy and shy to admit it."

-- Christopher Morley



Greetings of the season from SFNH (& E)
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