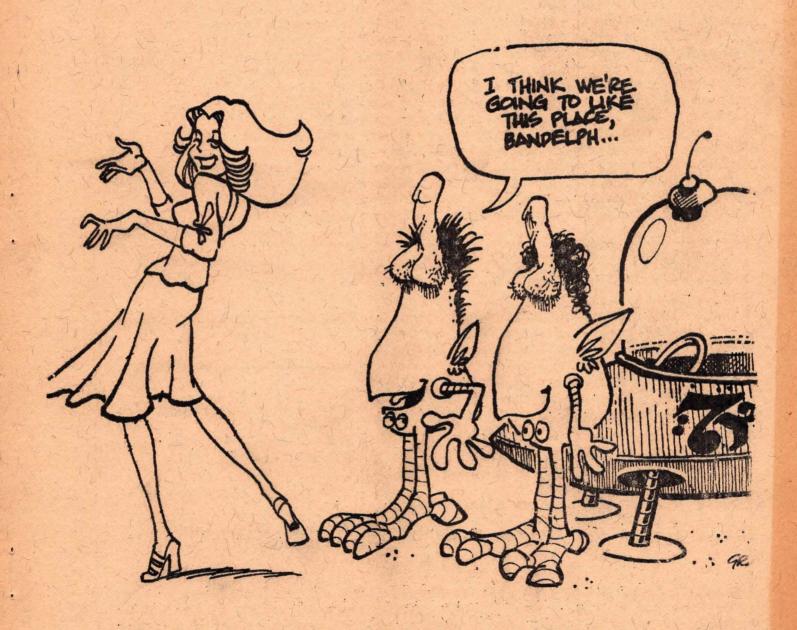
# GIAMBLES.





CAGLE

"Fulfilled desires". Sounds downright loverly, doesn't it?

Wrong. As that legendary pioneer journalist Tyroniis Hammer Walnut once remarked: "Sometimes when you get what you been wanting for a long time, you spend a long time wishing to hell you hadn't wanted it in the first place." Old TH was referring to a certain lady's charms he had coveted, which, when finally acquired, contained one element he hadn't expected. One minor problem can screw up the fluffiest dream-come-true.

One of my first grand desires was a BB gun. Air rifle if you prefer. faunched for one for what seemed like years. On the day my dream came true I listened to the standard safety lecture with frantic impatience, then promptly charged out and shot the dog. I swear it was an accident. Whatever, it got me a ripping good spanking and three weeks of agonized waiting until my BB gun ban had been lifted. No sooner had I been armed for the second time than I rushed out and, in the process of taking a shot at the garage, plinked a neat little starburst in the side window of my grandad's 1940 Buick. He was working nearby at the time, and when he came for me with that hatchet in his hand I thought he was going to cleave my young skull. He merely grabbed the BB gun and flattened the barrel. At the time I would have preferred he pound on my head. After that I shut up about a BB gun, and lo and behold, the next Christmas I received another. The

# prefer. I cam came pa-t was

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FEBRUARY 1976

The Coprophagous Fanzine from

(letters, manuscripts) ED CAGLE Star Rt. Sp., Box 80, Locust Grove, Oklahoma 74352

(artwork, sample copies)
DAVE LOCKE
819 Edie Drive, Duarte'
California 91810

A sample copy of SHAMBLES will be zipped right off to just about anyone for five 13¢ stamps, though we reserve the right to return stamps and tell people to squat on them. Dan't send no cash or checks or money orders, or we'll drink them and send your copy to somebody else. This fanzine supports D.U.E. (Disseminating Unpublished Egoboo). Go and do likewise.



second weapon caused me no problems. attribute it to not having wanted it terribly beforehand.

My next grand desire was a car. I knew about sex, so a car was something it hurt not to own. I'd experienced sex. but for some strange reason

I didn't think it was possible to have a chance at the girls without a car. For what seemed like years I labored and ratholed, scrimped and saved, sweat and fretted, until finally the day came to make the big buy. A 1949 Chevy. Oh what a rod. Unfortunately, by the time I insured it, tagged it, and bought a chrome-plated tailpipe extension (we were cool in those days), my cash reserve had dwindled to a point where buying a tank of gas was a monetarily painful act. But I had wheels (as we said in those days). I blew two tires on the way home, and a hatred for that car was born that exists to this day. I had wanted it with a deep abiding passion, and then it put me afoot the first day out.

During elementary school the autumnal passions were baseball and football. Baseball was organized, whereas football was strictly pickup games played in school clothes. Needless to say football was more fun. Despite the reprimands for torn clothes and skinned bods, every boy with the slightest athletic bent longed for the day when he could at least enter high school and don The Uniform. The uniform was the major desire. Padded and protected we could indulge ourselves without fear of parental wrath or bodily agony.

I remember putting on my first football uniform. It was distinctly thrilling, but with certain reservations. For one thing, it stunk. For another, it was extremely uncomfortable and had a tendency to fall off under the jersey. Then came the unkindest cut of all: the goddam thing didn't prevent pain. Minor annoyances like the intense heat all that crap generated while running two miles, or the raw shoulder pad sores, or the blood blisters caused by overlarge rib pads contributed to the disappointment, culminating in yet another grand desire shot down.

I never found my sexual desires disappointing, on the whole, but instances of momentary displeasure would occur occasionally to mar the beauty of my elementary sex education. Generally this involved an embarrassing situation. Like lusting for a sweet young thing for months and months, suffering the pangs of love-almost-requited, and then upon final conquest discovering my long-sought enchantress to be possessed of physical attributes comparable to a sexual Carlsbad Cavern. Or unaware of the basics of personal hygiene. Or both.

Adult life offers its little sorrows as well, often inspired by too much anticipation, Having always been somewhat mercenary concerning jobs, I rarely gave much thought to what I would be expected to do to earn my pay. This also led to situations where I was faced with learning a new trade, on the job. This can become quite embarrassing, but the benefits far outnumber the few times when there are individuals about who know any more about the job than you do. The worst disappointments, however, are those when fabulous-paying jobs demand a fabulous amount of work. It happens occasionally.

While wearing one of my occupational hats, that of a highly skilled (on the job trained) heavy equipment operator, I could usually parlay my abilities into a reasonably tolerable job. Leave the snit jobs to the green hands, you know, Occasionally, however, I would be blinded by the promise of shameful wages and get stuck with a piece of machinery that might have been built by Roter Fulton. One such surprise occurred when I was put aboard an antiquated earthmover that had been converted into a water wagon; a gigantic tank with wheels. The leverly little rig had no backes, no power and a transmission that defied all attempts to shift it in less than 30 seconds. My first assigned task with this smoky behemoth was to haul a load of water up a very steep dirt ramp to the top of an earthfill 200 feet high. I asked if anyone had driven a load up the ramp before, and the foreman said, "No." I told him I didn't think the thing would pull the grade. He said get it up there. Protecting myself, I stopped at the bottom of the grade and shifted into low gear. Musta taken me a day and a half to get to the top. Next load the foreman demanded a little more speed. "Get that sunuvabitch up there!" is what he said. I loaded and hit the ramp at top speed. Halfway up I was down to second gear, and when I reached for the lowest gear, the old brute refused me. I stepped off, rather than ride the thing to the bottom. The foreman objected to my attitude. I objected to his attitude. We parted company, not the best of friends. Another disappointment,

Are your desires ever thwarted, Dave?

#### LOCKE

I remember getting a licking when I was about five or six years old, and it was over the subject of sex. I was playing out in the back yard with this girl from up the street, and I wanted to put mud in her crotch. At the time it seemed like an exciting idea, but my parents didn't think so when they found out about it. They found out about it before I got to do it, so I am unable to say that I had a sexual encounter at the age of five or six. The whole experience was very disheartening, as well as painful.

Later, when I grew up, or somewhere along the way, I lost interest in the idea of putting mud in a girl's crotch. It turned out I wasn't all that kinky after all. So my desires were thwarted, Ed, and to the best of my knowledge they were never subsequently pursued.

As for fulfilled desires, generally speaking I never found the execution of my sexual desires to be disappointing, either, but just like you I incurred instances of momentary displeasure. However, this helped me greatly in later life. It was during my teenage years that I struck a resolve to never become a garbage collector, the operator of a honey wagon, or a gynecologist.

When I first became a fan one of my desires was to meet others of my "kind," but Indian Lake, New York was not at that time -- and never will be -- a hotbed of

fannish activity. And at the age of sixteen, tied down to working the tourist season at my parents' business, it wasn't too practical to wander off in search of a tender fannish face. However, I soon discovered that another fan lived about two hundred miles from me and we promptly began corresponding. Then, within a short period of time, I made arrangements to visit him.

The fan whom I first encountered lived on a farm, and liked to fuck cows. He told me all about it. In the meantime his mother, who was deaf as a bat, sat knitting in her rocking chair and smiled and nodded as he carried on this incredible monologue. Needless to say, I couldn't get out of there fast enough.

Having fulfilled my desire to meet a fan, it was a long time before I worked up the inclination to meet another one.

Of course, that was a long time ago. In the fifteen years since I entered fandom I've met a great number of fans. I realize now that the cow-fucker was probably one of the more interesting of the lot.

Another great desire upon entering fandom was to be published. I promptly wrote a knockout science fiction short story and posted it off, then perched by 16-year-old carcass beside the mailbox and waited breathlessly. The story was accepted. I would soon gaze upon my first published item. But a few months went by and along came word that the zine had folded and that my story had been sent along to another faneditor. I again went to the mailbox and waited breathlessly, and soon this other faneditor wrote and said he thought the story was greater than a breadbox and would be publishing it within the current geological epoch. But some large amount of time passed, and I found the manuscript back in my hands again. The other faned had decided he didn't want to publish fanfic anymore. Horsefuck, I said, and sent the story off to someone who had said they were in the market. They promptly wrote me back to say they thought my story was the greatest thing since puberty, and would publish it as soon as they got enough material together for a first issue. Presumably that never happened, because the fanzine never got published and I never saw the manuscript again.

At some point while all this was going on I started getting published all over the place. So my desire to be published was fulfilled, but I can't remember what my first published item was. In my mind that long-lost piece of fiction was to have been it, and I could never quite shake the fact that it wasn't. So whatever was, I disremember. I wound up getting cheated out of a memory.

Which is probably just as well. That story was so bad that even a gynecologist wouldn't touch it.

Well, so much for fulfilled desires.

How about unfulfilled desires, of the practical or semi-practical variety? As opposed to the impractical kind, like my wanting to be taller (I can't afford the expense). One such desire which I have carried around for the past few years is that I'd like to get back into proper physical condition, like what I was before I took up office work and started gaining ten pounds a year. Yes, I carry that around with me, like a spare tire. Wouldn't it be nice if I could accomplish this in a pleasant way, like by reading, screwing, sleeping, promising never to eat McDonald hamburgers, or by mirrors. How about you, Elmo, and your unfulfilled desires?

Disclaimer. This is still Dave Locke, because Cagle has unkindly chosen to report -- in somewhat ringing terms -- to fuck myself, my surgested topic, and anything else I can find that's warm and dry. I don't mind. Though I was trying only to suggest a topic that would make him stand around and cough, just like my reaction to the topic that I had to pick up on a page or two ago, it was prolably unfair of me to create within Ed a feeling that writing about unfulfilled desires would give him a cosmic discharge in his shorts.

It might be amusing at this moment to disclose that I am in the middle of a "vacation," and at the moment am pecking away at one of Ed's typewriters. Peep in the heart of Okie-land. Ed, in the meanwhile, is out in the living room reading a beaver magazine and trying to keep his legs crossed. Sue watches him warily whenever she has the need to pass by his chair.

So much for unfulfilled desires.

In hauling myself up by the shift key to look around for a more suitable Cagletype topic (boy scouts, beavers, booze, screwing in canoes, or Linda Tuchyager), recalled to my frontal lobes is a remark Ed made the other night to the effect that ATMY is better than SHAPPLES. He made me privvy to this astonishing disclosure while peaceful y sipping a gin and tonic. Fuck him. Anyone who drinks gin and tonic wouldn't know a good fanzine unless it publicly and prominently stated in the colorbon that ruce Townley was not the staff artist. Ed thinks that any fanzine with a Harry Warner letter is ok in his book, and he reads them aloud at breakfast. I say all this by way of lead-in to the announcement that AVRY is now in the deep sleep of hibernation (quick, somebody write that down, and we'll sell it to Ellison and may come out somewhere way down the road someplace the next time I go crazy, and in the meantime any fangubbing desires will be fulfilled by pretending that Ed and I are going to crank out another issue of SHAM LES. Other than the fact that I like to write for SHAM LES much more than I dug setting up a stencil for AVDY, it's the precariousness of SMANTING existence that tickles my scrotum (send that one off to Teis). We'll diddle around with it for a year, and then one of us will ask the pressing question: ""ell, should we put it on stencil and get it out now?" The other one will refuse to answer and the panic of the moment will pass gently. It's the only way to keep your sanity in fanzine publishing.

So, as a topic which is ound to haul forth monsters and demons from the dank recesses (who wants that one?), let us cogitate on fanzine pullishing. What does it call to mind for you, Sahib: visions of smudgy LoCs, waking up in the morning and rushing out slowly to see what in Cod's name you put on stencil the night before, the deviousness of setting to type a line that you know will cause hate and distontent, or do you use fanzine publishing as a means to avoid pissing in your boot? Ed? Ed? Where the hell did he go?

CACLE

I would much rather watch flys suck than discuss fanzine publishing, but given the present state of mind and my reluctance to for et that "company must be mollycoddled", I shall endeavor to compose something at least mar inclly printable, obscenitywise.

My only reliable - and I use the word with abandon - point of reference regarding fan publishing is/was/were/I think I did something like that one time a zine called FWALMIOQIA. Many Joved it. Fore regarded it as a singular example of human perversity. Two or three found it a direct attack on organized religion and backyard pitnicking while drunk, or something equally similar....

KWAL ... as I have 'een forced to refer to it in print ( what kind of a dork would type it out every time it occurred to them? Eh?), was begun for the purpose of making me feel like a "igshot. Truly-doo, in retrospect (and I find that a position of maximum discomfort), ... WHAL was be un to compensate for my feelings of inadequate helplessnes in the area of editorial power and response. At that time I was striving to wordsmith salably, with certain success, yet with all the momentary frustrations that beset the semi-serious beginner. Put it this way: I was selling, but not the 'really good shit.' That tends to hurt the new writer. Then, with customary speed it occurred to me that my quest was not to educate, but to entertain. Tickle the troops. Write good, rather than well, if you will. At that moment I probably began thinking about doing something that would give me the feedback I thought I needed (note qualification for future reference) to refine my fictional tickling techniques via first hand response. In short, I wanted power to operate from a position I felt certain I must understand to ever be a wildly successful "working" (indecision??) writer.

Or maybe I was drunk and did it on a whim.

That is how and why I started publishing a fanzine. Why did you start publishing a fanzine, Dave, and by what strange quirk of fate did it lead you to drink vast quantities of chocolate milk for a hangover? (misery is: hating chocolate milk and watching someone like Locke quaff it -successfully- for ahangover while one of more refined tastes sit miserably by and dies in agony.)

#### LOCKE

Actually, the chain of events didn't progress in quite that sequence. I discovered that chocolate milk was great for hangovers when on a long-ago day there wasn't anything left in the refrigerator worth drinking except half-a-carton of chocolate milk. I had to think about it for three or four minutes, at least, before I could work myself to the point of actually touching it to my swollen tongue. But it went down awful slick, coated the walls of my stomach, and gave me a momentary feeling of solace. I promptly drove down to the store and bought a grocery-bag full of the stuff. Chocolate milk has become an old friend, whom I turn to in my time of need. If it doesn't turn you inside out, it cures your hangover.

Fanzine publishing came a bit later.

I published a fanzine before I got into fandom. Well, sort of. The first thing I did when I got into fandom was put out a genzine. Where did I get the material? I wrote and asked for it. And a spirit-duplicated genzine sprang forth from the nubile mind of a 16-year-old Dave Locke. Why I put it out is a matter that defies all logical powers of the cosmic mind. Probably I did it because it looked like fun. Basically that may be why I still do it occasionally, although back then I figured that having done it would be fun, and it's the doing of it that amuses me now. Not cutting stencils, exactly, but connecting my mouth to the type-writer and talking to the stencil. I get a perverse kick out of it. I also like mince pie and a game of rotation, and pulling the wings off of bats. It's the little inconsequential things in life that make it worth shambling through, but not like H.P. Lovecraft.

AMRY got kicked off because I wasn't publishing anything else at the time. It provided much amusement for ten issues, until finally the mechanical aspects of fanzine publishing began to drag heavily against the enjoyment of it all. Ed Cagle, on the other hand, has an electric mimeo which I neither have to crank nor plug in (though I expect to assist this time round), all of which makes the enjoyment much easier to pull around.

So what have I enjoyed about publishing a fanzine. High tide comes into my foggy mind, bringing with it memory of the pleasure of opening a fresh Grennell or Hensel column. Those were always high spots. Watching the letterhacks try to be witty or avoid being hackneyed was another perverse thrill. Dave Piper rose above all the others in this regard -- one time in the long ago he sent me an entire illustrated copy (the only copy) of a fanzine (LoC) called SWRY, which knocked me on my ass and made that day worthwhile all in itself. I've still got that, and haul it out every once in a while. Plugging the Tucker Fund was enjoyable, as well as printing a few items of Bob's. And watching the trades come in is always an interesting part of the game.

What I don't like about fanzine publishing is being asked: 'When is the next issue of DWARF'S ENTRAILS (or whatever) coming out?" I could live comfortably for days on end without hearing that. Trying to find something to print in the letter-col, something that's worth my reading it for the second time, has always been a problem. Letters are fun the first time around. After that you cut them into pieces and send the pieces to the people whose material is being commented upon. But the only bits worth publishing are those stories and anecdotes and hunks of amusing personal trivia that can stand up on their own merit as pieces of writing. I also dislike anything connected with fanzine publishing once I've gotten beyond the point where the zine is on stencil. It's all shitwork then. Some like it, but I'd rather sit around and listen to "Amazing Grace" done on the bagpipes if I ever encountered the situation where I had no choice but to pick between the two. It's all tiresome to do it alone once. More than once can cause me to have second thoughts about the value of putting out a fanzine. That's why I need coeditors who like some things better than I do.

Fanzine publishing can be very rewarding if you can manage to stick with the fun parts and avoid gathering about you any more unnecessary 'obligations' than could be considered absolutely necessary. I haven't the slightest idea what I just said, but somewhere in there is an uncut piece of wisdom that, properly cut and polished, might sell for five bucks a ton.

Speaking of stupid but enjoyable things, as we just were, this visit with Ed and his family is just chock-full of them. As a Cagle houseguest, mollycoddled or otherwise, we have sat around swapping outrageous stories (Ed tells me he puts chickenshit on his lips to keep them from getting chapped), and much of the time is spent drinking from a flask while bouncing around in a blue pickup truck (Old Blue) on camproads covered with gravel the size and general shape of one of Raquel Welch's tits. I also enjoy opening the bedroom door in the morning to watch four cats bound into the room, leap up on the bed in a giant pile-up of cats and go to sleep. Getting cronked and calling up people like Jackie Franke and Mike Glicksohn would be more amusing in retrospect if either Ed or I could remember any of the conversation afterwards.

I am also amused at Ed's politeness when I tell him it's his turn at the type-writer...

Ed, it's your turn at the typewriter.

CAGLE

I protest typing on stencil during the morning hours.

What were we talking about? I suppose I could read what Dave has just written, but judging from the fact that there is but one tiny corflu splotch up there it must not have been composed with unhackamored enthusiasm. Oh yes, fanzine publishing. To hell with that. I would much rather relate how Dave narrowly

avoided being deported from Okieland yesterday afternoon. I was down in camp where a contractor was repairing a water line break, when here comes Duarte's favorite son, ambling down the road. Anticipation bloomed, but when we asked him for the flask we discovered he had not thought to bring it along. (!) We rushed to correct the oversight before the troops revolted, and managed to end the project belting down tequila and gin with the workmen,...chasing it with cola. A close call.

Much of the relatively sober conversation Dave and I have had since his arrival has concerned California fans. Most fascinating subject to a Backgoods fan. And in all sincerity I must admit that Dave has a certain flair for describing the many quirks inherent in his fellow Westcoasters. His descriptive expertise has given new meaning to the term 'Yoyo', and I find myself idly speculating about the possibilities of there being a boy scout camp in the LA area that might need a Ranger.

Last evening Dave, The Old Bird and I broke off telling dirty jokes and other obscene reminiscences long enough to watch Monty Python. Dave and I agree that it was easily the worst segment either one of us have seen, but last night, The Old Bird, quite lubricated on numerous Tequila Sunrises that Dave had gleefully prepared for her, spent the entire 30 minutes laughing hysterically. Dave and I amused ourselves exchanging bemused glances. It is amazing what a few well-prepared drinks can do for a bad TV show.

#### LOCKE

Differences in taste are what keeps the world lubricated, too. If everyone had the same taste I doubt that Scotland could increase production to the point where I might continue to enjoy my sins at basically modest prices. So it's encouraging that some people drink other things. Even gin.

It always gets left up to me to defend myself. It is true that I was ambling down the road without a drop of liquor anywhere on me, but I was secure with the thought that Ed would never have left the flask behind. When I learned that he had left it at the house I was thoroughly as disgusted as he was. To get even with me he poured out the last mouthful of rum and refilled the flask with tequila, and to get even with him I drank most of it myself. Ed was left to be content with a bottle of gin which he had thrown in the truck along with the flask, and somehow managed to make do with it. I'm glad I hate gin. If I liked it I'd drink it, and I hate it.

Ed is a study in expert laziness. It was educational beyond description to watch him as the contractor was repairing the broken waterline. For openers he was always standing in a ready position, as though he could go into action and actually lend a hand at a moment's notice. He would pick up a shovel and clench it lightly in one hand, moving perhaps a half-step forward toward the work in progress. I never saw him actually do anything, but that was only because I watched him so closely. To the casual observer he probably appeared to be doing the job single-handed, so great is his talent at practiced deception. Myself, I always look as though I'm not doing anything even when I'm doing something, and I find it hard t resist the urge to pull out a few dollars and give it to Ed as a teacher's fee. Ed should make his living by displaying this amazing talent, but, when I really stop and think about it, I suppose he already does.

Right at the moment Ed is standing by the mimeograph, ready at a moment's notice to slap on a stencil and set the machine into rotary motion. I thought he had already run everything off except for this page, but I see now that he hasn't actua done anything except drink. So great is his power of deception. (cont'd page 2



## T.B.M.K.

# COLUMN BY DEAN GRENNELL

In accord with its basic theme for this issue, SHAMBLES has negotiated columnist Dean Grennell into consenting to be interviewed. Which is not to imply that we are home free, by any stretch of the imagination. Grennell, whom some have termed the Dorcas Bagby of the Upper Midwest -- among less flattering epithets -- started out by taking the fifth, Tullamore Dew with two straws, and the interview proceeded to disintegrate from that point, going from bed to verse, from Tinker to Evers, leaving nothing to Chance.

#### \*\*\*\*\*\*\*

S: How did you get into the fanzine columnist business in the first place?

G: Well, in the first place, I got into it in the second place. What I had started out to do was sell SF to the prozines. It turned out to be about as simple an operation as, for example, selling a shopworn tape recorder to Dick Nixon. What I got was one of the finest, most exhaustive collections of rejection slips in existence, up to that time. I've always cherished the memory of a personally written rejection slip I got from Sam Mines.

S: What did it say?

G: "We regret that the enclosed manuscript is unsuited to our current needs and apologize for its condition, as I barfed all over page two."

S: Even that didn't discourage you?

G: Well, it didn't exactly spur me to new pitches of endeavor. What really stung was getting a printed r-slip from Lawrence Hamling, saying the story wasn't even good enough for IMAGINATION. Considering that I couldn't bull my way through the stories Hamling considered fit to print, it seemed the unkindest dut of all; up to that time, of course.

S: That made you sore, no?

G: Like unto a toad with its warts filed off. Sheeg!

S: So how did you find out about fanzines?

G: I had bought a copy of STARTLING STORIES, so as to have the address to which I could mail my star-sorcelled sagas and I happened to notice the fanzine reviews in the back, so I decided to squander a few dimes. Those were the days when they not only reviewed fmz in prozines, but most of them sold for ten cents apiece.

S: Can you time-bind that a little?

G: Yeah. It would have been at some point during the winter of 1952-3. Some of the mags I got out of that first batch were Joel Nydahl's VEGA, John Magnus's SF, Bob Silverberg's SPACESHIP and Charles Wells' FIENDETTA.

S: And these inspired you to send in some contributions?

G: You could say that. Filled with inspiration, I besat me foreninst the old Underwood and baffed out a thingy entitled WE HAVE ROBOTS, and dotted it off

to Joel Nydahl, who (bless the lad) published it in his next issue.

S: It was a big thrill?

G: Sheeg, was it ever! No hound-dawg, rolling in overripe carrion, was more bliss-sodden than I was while reading that rather banal little effort. I'll bet I read it forty times. It was my first taste of egoboo and you know how that goes?

S: How did VEGA's readers react to it?

G: I've been dreading you might bring that up. As a matter of fact, most of them ignored it and one, name of Larry Balint, said it stank. I should have quit while I was ahead. Balint was a contemporary and compeer of Peter Vorzimer.

S: Have heard the name, but don't know the fellow.

G: Give thanks to providence and the powers that be. Knowing Vorz (in the non-biblical sense, of course) was one of the prices one had to pay for being in fandom during the '50s.

S: Pretty rough, eh?

G: Well, really, not much worse than a bad cold. He intended well enough, but was incredibly short on empathy. For an instance, there was an active fan in those days who lived in Belgium, by name of Jan Jansen. Jan sent a letter to Vorz, commenting on one of the issues of Vorz's zine (I think it was called ABSTRACT, or was it ABSARKA?). Vorz took exception to Jan's comments and prefaced his rejoinder with the phrase, "Of course, you, being of foreign extraction..." Tucker pounced upon this with raucous whoops of sodden glee and, for a long while after that, used the phrase, "dirty extracted foreigners," in a most intemperate manner.

S: You continued to send contributions to the fan press?

G: Mais oui and yes-indeedy. It didn't pay for kaddukkus, but one didn't get many rejection slips, which tended to make one's pelt sleek and glossy. After hardly more than a few months, I started doing a regular column for Joel Nydahl. It was called THE MURKY WAY and it was received with no more than a token volley of brickbats.

S: What happened to Nydahl and VEGA?

G: Thought you'd never ask. He came out with a giant monster gargantual annish and wasn't hardly ever heard from again after that. In fact, he lent his name to a fannish malady which has come to be known as "Nydahl's Syndrome," though I've not heard the term in years. It's the name for what happens when a fan overreaches his interest and enthusiasm.

S: So what happened to THE MURKY WAY?

G: I transplanted it into various other titles, but it was rare for it to appear in two consecutive issues before the carrier would fold. Finally, I sent an installment to a fan by name of Kent Moomaw, who committed suicide shortly after receiving it. I like to think there is no clear-cut example of cause and effect in that, but the upshot was that I retired the column title as of that episode. About that time, I commenced to do a column for Bill Danner's STEFANTASY, and it appears the baleful effect didn't carry over. I still get a STEF every few months, but haven't written a TANK in years.

S: Have you done any extensive columnizing for other zines?

- G: Rarely to vast depths. I did a series of thingys for Gregg Galkins' COPSLA! under the heading of GRENADEAN ETCHINGS, but that was long ago. I did manage to create a neat title for a column in my own zine, written by Lee Hoffman. I called it TALES OF OFFENBACH. It ran for one installment, if treacherous memory serves.
- S: Is it true that an item from your fanzine, GRUE, was reprinted in F&SF?
- G: Yes, although I'm sure they didn't know they were doing it. What happened

was that Redd Boggs had received a tongue-in-cheeky essay from James Blish, who did the critical items for Boggs' SKYHOOK under the nom de plume of W. A. Atheling, Jr. The work in question was inspired by the news that Ray Bradbury was to do the script for a film version of MOBY DICK. Which, as one hapless newspaper commented, was to have Gregory Peck in the title role. This inspired NEW YORKER to reprint the bit, footnoted in italics: "Wearing snorkel and swim-fins, of course?" At any rate, Blish's effort was a broad pastiche of the more salient mannerisms of both Melville and Bradbury and I bylined it as being by Y. Y. Flertch. It turned up in F&SF, fairly much verbatim, some few months later.

S: Would you rather do columns for someone else or publish your own magazine?

G: Well, there's a great deal to be said for the cowbird approach. You don't have to do all that bookkeeping and peel the scotch tape off all those sticky quarters, for one thing. Of course, if you publish it yourself, you've no one else to blame if it gets scrambled in transcription. I grit my teet, now and then, when some obliging faned doesn't seem to know enough to indent the third line of an ersatz Omar Khayyam quatrain, even after I indent it scrupulously in the original mss. But that's the price one pays for getting out of having mimeo ink clear to the elbows, I guess.

S: Not indenting the third line of an ersatz Omar Khayyam quatrain is a crime which must be fully as serious as mopery with intent to gawk. But tell us: looking back, what is your estimation of the efforts expended in the fanzines?

Was it worth the effort?

- G: I'd have to say yes to that. Fanwriting provided a motivating and more or less encouraging effect that inspired me to desecrate enough paper to represent several acres of pulpwood and it seems to have knocked the more prominent of the rough edges off of my writing, to the point where I've been able to sell the result of my keyboard maulings for enough to live upon for the past several years. When it comes to the project of becoming a writer, I continue to believe there is no satisfactory substitute for putting in a lot of hours in front of a typewriter. It helps if you improve a little as you go along, of course, but I think it's ever so much more effective than spending the time reading books or listening to lectures.
- S: Do you have any words of sagacious counsel for aspiring writers among our readers?
- G: Surely. How about, "avoid cliches as you would the plague"--? And then there is, "sedulously eschew hyperverbose obfuscations and pleonastic supererogations."
- S: Really?
- G: Have I ever lied to you?
- S: You'll be back, next issue?
- G: Same street corner. Same time, same station. You'll be glad you didn't touch that dial and won't you wish everybody didn't?
- S: Which way to the egress?
- G: They went thataway.

EdCo Doodle

# CAGLE --- DAUE LOCKE

QUESTION (Locke): Why did you become a boy scout Camp Ranger?

ANSWER (Cagle): The girl scouts wouldn't hire me,

Q: Why did you get into fanzine publishing?

- A: I wanted my mailman to think I was important. It didn't work. After I began to get strange looking mail in volume he reported me as a subversive.

  He retracted the accusation after I put a rattlesnake in the mailbox.
- Q. If you had to be trapped with a fan for six months, who would you choose?

A: Any femmefan of loose moral fiber.

Q: Would you want your sister to marry a fan?

- A: As much as I would like my brother -- if I had one -- to become a US Senator and sponsor as his first piece of legislation a bill advocating the legalization of incestuous pederasty.
- Q: Is fandom a goddam hobby or a way of life to you?

A: I regard it much the same as picking my nose.

- Q: Have you ever published nude photographs of yourself in a fanzine?
- A: No, but I once answered a question on a list you sent that didn't exist.

  And this is it.
- Q: Don't you think that's a little too ingroup when you and I are the only ones who will understand it?
- A: Understand what?
- Q: I don't remember.
- A: Did you have another question?
- Q: Yes. How did you get into fandom?
- A: I sent for either SFR or PSYCHOTIC. Geis did it. This proves he's done worse things than admitting in print that he screws an artificial vagina while watching lesbian porno flicks.

Q: If you had your life to live over, would you?

- A: Yes. I missed a chance with a baby sitter when I was six or seven, and I'd like another shot at it.
- Q: What bugs you the most about fandom?
- A: Mel Brooks isn't a faned.

Q: What would you change about fandom?

- A: Establish a rule demanding that the method of repro fit the quality of the published material. Boring arkles would be done in bleary ditto, the better stuff by offset, even in the same zine. Bill Bowers would save a lot of money, and in the case of this interview we could just spill finger paint on a page or two and collate it.
- Q: If you had your way, would you take Bruce Townley's pencil away from him or

cut off his fingers?

A: Both, and pull his teeth so he couldn't hold a pencil in his mouth.

Q: Why is he on our mailing list?

A: Townley keeps getting it only so long as he promises not to send any of his artwork.

Q: What are your feelings about sf conventions?

A: I've never been to one, but I'd like to go to one to get drunk and chase pussy. Maybe after that I could do something the rest of the attendees weren't doing.

Q: Do you have any plans for attending a convention?

A: Depends on whether or not they plan to hold one in Locust Grove,

Q: Probably more room there than in Kansas City. Would you attend if it were held in Locust Grove?

A: Maybe.

Q Under what circumstances wouldn't you?

A: If no one came to drag me to it,

Q: Name one good reason for living in Oklahoma.

A: The tarantulas are on their Fall Move again. Enormous bastards, and docile, they are one of the more interesting local items, at least for me. The average is as big as a clenched fist, and has far more personality than the average Okie. After a small amount of investigation I've reached a point now where I can pick them up without too much heart-flutter. The first time, though, was dicey. Anyway, if you ever want one, let me know. Alive, that is; they're too friendly to kill. Not so friendly are the small red scorpions that have been coming down my fireplace chimney. They cross the hearth-stone and head straight for me every time. Or so it seems.

Q: If I ever get a package from you, I'm going to test out a reload on it first.

A: Do you have any more questions, or can I get another drink now?

Q: Taken from what you write, you enjoy the more frivolous aspects of life. Did the doctor drop you on your head at birth?

A: I was born from a standing position, in a Kroger store, and they had concrete floors. It happened near the poultry section.

Q: What do you think the first alien contact will really be like?

A: I hope it is warm and wet, but if NASA has anything to do with it it'll probably be cold and dry.

Q: Based on your writings, sex is a major motivation in your lifestyle. Do you have sex on the brain, rather than a more auspicious place such as a bed or couch?

A: I haven't yet, but I'll give it a try and tell you how I like it.

- Q: Is your low volume of fanac really attributable to the fact that you are Donn Brazier's Mr. Hyde, and only come out during the full moon?
- A: No. It is impossible to mix a potion strong enough to produce such as vast difference in intellectual powers. I am merely Old Bone's bastard son by a lady wrestler, Pansy "Crotchlock" Panther, and resemble him only superficially, without his vast mental gifts and bumbling literary style.

Q: Upon what do you base a first impression of the people you meet?

A: The presence or absence of weapons in hiser hands, attire (or lack thereof), alcohol breath, pelvic development (female), feathered hats, and various other things effect my first impression.

Q: What is your favorite form of fanac?

A: Is this a serious question?

Q: It depends on your answer.

A: Okay. Writing editorials. I like that best.

Q: A non-serious question, is what it was... What are your future fanac plans?

A: I plan a series of arkles for at least three zines, voluminous material for SHAMBLES 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, a long LoC to every fanzine received and a satire of every known sf writer.

Q: Do you ever lie?

A: Only when asked about my future fanac.

## LOCKE

#### AS INTERVIEWED BY ED CAGLE

Question (Cagle): Why did you become a fan?

Answer (Locke): Well, Ed, I come from a very poor family. The next-door neighbors used to give us all their used pulp magazines, including AMAZING, WEIRD TALES, and other SF and fantasy mags. We used to use them as a substitute for toilet tissue, back in the corncob days. It was quite a number of years before I learned to read faster than my family could make use of these pulps for more utilitarian purposes, and consequently I was fourteen before I finished reading an entire story. But once I did, I was hooked. Science fiction led me to fandom, because mimeo paper works much better than the paper used on SF mags today.

Since entering fandom, have you written anything you consider seminal? QI

I've written some things that people said were "pretty fucking bad", but that A: was back in the old days before I learned to write better. I haven't written anything like that for a couple of months now.

What, in your opinion, causes the odd unity of fandom? Q:

The fact that all fans are Slans causes the unity, and the fact that all fans A: are odd causes it to be an odd unity. Once in a while someone will question the statement that fans are Slans, but it seems so obviously true to me that we really are. After all, look at what great successes we are in the outside world. Some of us are clerks, dishwashers, janitors, lab assistants, boy scout camp rangers, middle managers, computer operators, porno film makers, librarians, thieves, and science fiction writers. The cream of the crop. That's why we band together.

In your opinion, is fandom of benefit to the individual in intellectual Q: terms, or do you regard that as a rhetorical question?

Oh. I think fandom is definitely of benefit from an intellectual standpoint. A: I used to have an inferiority complex, but fandom changed all that. Now I know that there are people who are even more inferior than I am.

Are there any fans whose writing you find excellent, but who only say some-Q. thing interesting every 40,000 words?

That's a hell of a question, but I cherish it for its cleverness. Next A: question, please.

Answer my last question. Q:

It's too much of a nitpick to draw a distinction between saying something A: interesting and saying something in an interesting way. An interesting subject can bore me if it's badly presented, but material and presentation can often be too closely interwoven to say which is the vehicle and which is the driver. My own approach to the subject is that good writing is where one finds it. This may not be a philosophy which appeals to literary critics, but it is an impregnable one. I like what I like, even if I have to enjoy it alone.

- Q: Do you think Dick Geis is for real?
- He's a large, quiet fellow with a hangdog look about him, and he didn't impress me as being anything at all like his writing personality (but then, a lot of fans don't, and the time I saw Dick was exceedingly brief and many years ago). Personally I find his writing to be extremely uninteresting, and feel that his popularity is probably due, in great part, to the fascination which some people feel when he strips down maked in print and then proceeds to abuse himself. One might consider his to be an extremely open personality, or then again you might consider him a flasher. Of late he seems to have drifted away from detailing his experiences with auto and mechanical sex, which I suspect was partly a gimmick to draw the voyeurs and pad out his mailing list, and resultantly I find his material to be a little easier to take. Perhaps he's learned that it's not the mark of a good writer to overuse shock-value for the purpose of drawing readers. For whatever reason, he's a better writer now.
- Q: Why do you persist in drawing those terrible cartoons about that round-headed fan? What's his name?
- A: I was asked to. Go interview Jackie Franke and bug her about it. The character's name is Ben Fan, and the round head is strictly a gimmick. No one else in the cartoon has a head which was fashioned by tracing around the circumference of a nickle, a fact which just goes to show you the degree of my versatility in art. Don't you think?
- Q: Have you ever written a LoC or an arkle while drunk and had an editor praise it to the sky?
- A: No. Have you?
- Q: Yes. Now, is it possible that you have never written an arkle for a zine while drunk? If not, why not?
- A: I drink less while writing for publication, and ignore my intake while writing anything else. Alcohol has a tendency to sometimes open up certain capacities such as the ability to make interesting correlations between seemingly unrelated bits of data and the ability to strip a situation of everything except its absurdities, but alcohol also makes one a poorer word mechanic. You can't go too far chasing the ball or you'll be off the field altogether. So you have to either achieve a balance, or do your outlines while drinking and your writing while relatively sober.
- Q: Can it be that you don't enjoy writing while buzzed?
- A: Drinking does very little to alter my degree of enjoyment in doing anything. The only real exception to that is swimming. Night swimming, when the water is like india ink and when I'm at the point where I almost feel that I can walk on it. It's quite a sensation, and one of those little inconsequential things that I would rate up there on my top ten list of Things Worth Doing. As a strong swimmer I feel that my risks are negligible, but I would not recommend that anyone else try this without the minimum precaution of being accompanied by a sober and knowledgable swimmer.
- Q: Fans view you as a humorist. What kicked you off on writing fan humor?
- A: I used to write serious material, but fans wound up laughing at it. I decided that I would appreciate that kind of reaction a lot more if I were purposefully shooting for it.
- Q: How do you view other fan humorists?
- A: There are some very good ones. My favorite fan humorist is Irish John Berry. When I read his stuff I don't just smile, or chuckle. I laugh out loud. John has a gift for the timing and portrayal of comedy situations, and it's a shame that he doesn't write much anymore. Some other top humorists, to my way of thinking, are Charlie Burbee, Dean Grennell, Tina Hensel Jones, Bob

Bloch, Arthur Wilson Robert Bob Tucker, Milt Stevens, Rosemary Ullyot, Ed Cagle, Bob Shaw, etc. etc. Mike Glicksohn has been turning his writing talents toward fan humor of late, and has had some good successes at it, and doubtless will be well-known for fan humor within the next couple of years or less (if he doesn't waste all his energy on letters of comment). Yes, there are some very good fan humorists around, and the more the merrier.

Q: What do you think of Arnie Katz?
A: The same as most everyone else.

Q: I read somewhere that you don't think too much of fan history items. Please elaborate.

A: They bore the shorts off of me.

Q: How about fanzine reviews and convention reports?

A: They cause me to launder the shorts.

Q: What do you think of comix fandom?

A: Live and let live. Comix are fine for kids, and I presume adults can occasionally get caught up in a nostalgia kick. Otherwise I would question whethere or not a grown body has yet reached puberty, but to each his own.

Q: Okay ... now, whatever happened to your crabgrass?

A: At first I was fighting it, but then I decided that it didn't look too bad if I kept it moved close to the ground. So I started watering and caring for it. That's when it died. With all the badminton I no longer have a lawn in back. I have merely a back yard. Sometimes when we run out of badminton birdies we use the tumbleweeds just to keep the game going.

Q: Henry Kissinger reminds me of a man who would pick his nose and eat it.

What's your opinion of him?

- A: I don't follow the news all that closely, so I tend to avoid giving impressions about people whom I'm not overly familiar with. Who is Henry Kissinger?
- Q: What's your bottom dollar to bugger Kate Smith in public while she sings God Bless America?
- A: This would be a correlation of data which would take me at least a full quart of Chevas to achieve. It would take considerably more quarts to execute.
- Q: Are you still drinking coffee flavored brandy, and what other atrocious personal habits have you acquired in the last few months?
- A: I've been drinking Sombreros, which is coffee flavored brandy mixed with milk, quite regularly since Autumn of 1973. I find it an astonishingly good drink. Pat Boone would never endorse it, though.

I haven't picked up any atrocious personal habits at all in the last few months. In fact, the last bad habit I picked up was in 1957. Since then no one has invented any new ones.

Q: What are your feelings about sex?

A: I'm all for it.

Q: Do you believe in an afterlife?

A: I believe that when I die I will be reincarnated as a hektograph in Brooklyn.

Q: That's an afterlife?

A: Better than yours. You're going to be reincarnated as a Bruce Townley illo.

Q: How do you feel about science fiction?

A: Is this a serious question?

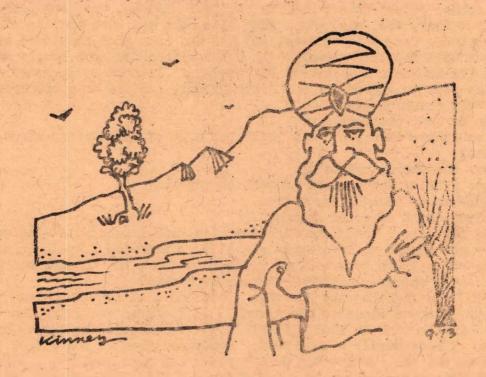
Q: Sure ... why not. It's a serious question.

A: Then to hell with it.

- Q: If this were a bona-fide interview, what question would you most like to be asked?
- A: You could ask me if I'd like another drink.

#### THE 2000 YEAR OLD FAN

an interview



LOCKE: It's a great honor to be here with you, and to have you consent to do an interview with us.

2000: Of course it is.

CAGLE: Are you comfortable? Would you like another drink?

2000: You learned that question from the last interview. And yes, I'll have another.

LOCKE: Let's get on with the show while Ed's fixing another round. Answer me this: What was the first fanzine?

2000: THE COMMANDMENTS. That Moses was one hell of a fan editor. Screwy guy, though. Said he had a co-editor -- some neofan called Jehovah -- but I think it was just a hoax and Moses did the whole zine himself.

LOCKE: How big a circulation did Moses have?

2000: Only one copy. Didn't have twilltone around too much in those days, and the cheap tablets that Moses was using wouldn't go through his mimeo too well.

LOCKE: Then he didn't have too big a readership?

2000: Yeah he did, actually. He put a routing slip on the one copy. Also a lot of fans reprinted most of the eleven articles he printed.

LOCKE: I thought he printed only ten articles.

2000: Say what?

LOCKE: I say, I thought there were just ten commandments.

2000: No, there were eleven. The one didn't get reprinted too often.

LOCKE: What was it?

2000: The eleventh article?

LOCKE: Yes.

2000: "Fandom is a way of life."

LOCKE: Who, then, originated the expression "Fandom is just a goddam hobby"?

2000: Some old fan named Lucifer. I think it was the title of his zine.

CAGLE: Here's your drink. Was Lucifer an actifan?

Not as far as publishing goes, but he used to attend a lot of cons. Held some dandy parties. Strange guy, wore a costume all the time. Never once won a prize. Not a bad guy, but most fans shunned him because he had this raunchy smell about him. And then there were these five little bitty bastards who used to follow him around, causing trouble, goosing the femmefans and poking people all the time.

CAGLE: Were you familiar with any other oldtime fans?

2000: I've clutched a few butts, yeah.

CAGLE: No, I mean did you know any famous oldtimers in a fannish way?

2000: Clutching butts ain't fannish?

CAGLE: Did you know any goddam big name fans away back when!

2000: Okay, okay. Don't get your bowels in an uproar. Show a little respect. Yeah, I knew a few BNFs.

CAGLE: Were they fanzine or convention fans?

2000: Both. Either way the really active fans had a lotta horses.

CAGLE: Horses?

2000: Well, it was tough to get a Chevrolet back in those days.

CAGLE: I see. To get to cons you needed a horse, right?

Yeah, and to deliver the fanzines, too. Rural Free Delivery is a new thing in case you didn't realize it. So's the Post Office, for that matter.

When you hadda ride four days to deliver a zine you made sure you really wanted the person to get the zine.

LOCKE: I guess most fanzines had a very small circulation in those days, then.

2000: That's right, Jack. Except for Oscar's.

LOCKE: Oscar's?

2000: He had a very large circulation. About 500 fans or so, maybe.

LOCKE: Must have been a large, local club.

2000: No, they were scattered all over Europe and Asia. And Oscar didn't have no staff, either. He delivered them all himself.

LOCKE: That's a little hard to believe, that one man could do all that.

2000: Well, he didn't publish very often.

LOCKE: How often did he publish?

2000: Whenever he got back.

LOCKE: I see. Tell me, did they ever have anything like the Hugo in those early days?

2000: Yes we did. Sure did. Over the ages we've had a lot of them. The Franklin, the King Henry -- we had eight of those -- and a whole bunch some of which I forget. But I remember the first one.

LOCKE: Tell us about it.

2000: It was the Jesus.

LOCKE: Oh. come now.

2000: That's what it was.

LOCKE: The first fan awards were named after the Lord Christ?

2000: Well, they weren't named after no Mexican.

LOCKE: Are you trying to tell us that Jesus Christ was a fan?

2000: Sure he was. And I can remember him when he was just a punk neo. Dressed in rags, didn't have a dime to his name. Published a crudzine called THE CHRISTIAN.

LOCKE: If he didn't have any money, how could he have afforded to publish?

2000: He had the damndest gimmick. Used to take plain, ordinary water and turn it into --

LOCKE: Mimeo ink ...

2000: That's right. How did you know?

LOCKE: A wild-ass guess. Were you around when he was killed?

2000: Sure was. Told him he was making a mistake getting into a feud with those Romans. Say a few cross words to those boys and they'll really nail you.

LOCKE: Were you around to see him rise from the dead?

2000: Nah. I don't think he did, either. Those rumors got started because a couple issues of his zine came out after his death. But I think they were just hoax issues that that crazy Oscar put out.

LOCKE: Is it true that Christ wore a seamless robe?

2000: Yeah, and it was a beauty. Won first prize at Babylon II.

CAGLE: Did he wear anything under it?

2000: Yeah, his immaculate conceptor, dummy.

CAGLE: Speaking of that ...

2000: I don't know nothin' about his sex life. I didn't know him too well and I never did read crudzines too closely.

CAGLE: Did fans in those days become explicit in their zines?

2000: Nah. Not too often. There was a guy, though. Richard of somethingorother. He would print some pretty flappy stuff once in a while.

LOCKE: What did you consider to be "flappy" in those days?

2000: He had one of those artificial vaginas, and he used to keep boring us with his enthusiasm about it.

LOCKE: They had artificial vaginas way back then?

2000: Well, sort of. Old Richard cut the crotch out of his sheep, hung it up for a few days to let it cure, and then put Vaseline on it.

LOCKE: Why did he bother to cut up the sheep?

2000: He was shy around sheep. Besides, it had died. And nobody would let him near their own sheep.

LOCKE: I see. What did Richard do for a living? 2000: He wrote dirty tablets about screwing women.

LOCKE: Did it pay well?

2000: It paid better than writing dirty tablets about screwing a dead sheep's twat.

LOCKE: Were there many femmefans back in the early days?

2000: Yes, several. Joan of Arc was probably the best known. She was pretty hot stuff.

LOCKE: I guess there wasn't anything like Women's Lib in those times.

2000: Sure there was. But nobody took it seriously.

LOCKE: Why not?

2000: One of those libbers was trying to push that Immaculate Conception business, and it was a couple of centuries before that died down enough so that anybody would pay attention to them.

LOCKE: What about you? What was your biggest fannish achievement?

2000: Well, I had quite a few. One of the biggies was having the longest string of mailings hit in MASA.

LOCKE: MASA?

2000: Medievel Amateur Scroll Association.

LOCKE: How long was your string?

2000: A hundred and forty years. Five hundred and sixty mailings.

LOCKE: What caused you to break your run?

2000: Everybody in the asa gafiated except me,

LOCKE: Why?

2000: Black plague. An early form of Twonk's Disease.

LOCKE: Does it feel at all strange to be the oldest fan alive?

2000: I'm not.

LOCKE: You're not the oldest fan alive?

2000: No, Bob Tucker is.

LOCKE: Bob Tucker is older than you are?

2000: I believe so. I think I saw him in the bar when I was a neofan at my first convention.

LOCKE: That's amazing. But tell me, where was the first convention?

2000: In Rome. Some dude named Nero chaired it. It ended in a catastrophe, but that was one hell of a filksong session old Nero threw.

CAGLE: We've run out of liquor.

2000: Is that a question? CAGLE: No, it's a statement.

2000: Well then, I guess the interview is over.

#### 

#### DIALOG (cont'd from page 9)

It confuses me as to whether this issue of SHAMBLES is a genzine, a personalzine, or a one-shot. Perhaps it is a combination of all three. We must keep ourselves loose, as the title demands, and ride the waves as they swell and peak. And, as my mind wanders, I cast a small tear over the disheartening circumstance that there are no Waves in the immediate vicinity of Okie-land. I am getting horny, you see, after being five days away from home, and the woods have only rabbits to offer. It is a doubtful question that the rabbits have anything to offer me in the way of solace, and Ed informs me that it makes them taste undesireable in the extreme. The first thing the Boy Scouts do when they come here, I've noticed, is to set out rabbit traps.

Let's talk about being horny. Ed is out there reading another beaver magazine, in preparation for the golden moment when I will turn this typewriter back to him, but for the moment it is left to me that I entertain \*\*Mid-11\*\* you/My song and dance. Ed pointed out to me the other day, as we drove along the highway in Old Blue, a chubby little Indian girl who couldn't have weighed more than three or four hundred pounds, but I demurred gently. I thought about it all the way back to camp, though.

Ed has finished his beaver magazine and has sat there for three or four minutes so I suppose it is safe for him to get up and finish this stencil now.

It's your turn at the typewriter, Ed.

#### CAGLE

The bit about the Indian maiden is true (lovely child, she) but while the above was being composed I was not reading a beaver magazine, I was preparing a mere 15 pounds of succulent venison for abrbeque and congloming the appropriate sauce therefor. In fact I haven't read as many beavermags as the flow would indicate. I have spent a lot of time reading other things, however, ... like the latest Stobcler mailing. I marvel at how difficult it is for Dave Hulan to express himself regarding his opinion of other fans. It enthralls, it do. If Dave Hulan were Secretary of State we would all be embroiled, but loving it.

This has been most entertaining, doing a zine this way with whatisname. If things were this way all the time I might publish a zine more often, like twice a year.

#### article, by LON ATKINS

I've always been convinced that to write fiction of genuine worth one had to be insane in a very pragmatic way. Perhaps not noticeable to the World, but apparent to the reader like a subtle wink. Documentary work may tell it straight, but fiction must have its madness.

Because at times of life I've desired to be a writer of worth, it's been my habit to pause along the path and observe the techniques of my lords -- the published writers. I knew I had the madness; any fan must. That other thing, the mastery of words, was what I sought.

Long ago I discovered the secret of the critics: that it is easier to discern the reasons for failure than it is to grasp the magic of success. (Though those of unctuous throat essay to understand both.) Such a secret is of use to those, like I, who blunder towards the Grail. Once the mechanism of negative lessons is apprehended, the universe lies quivering at one's feet.

This article is prompted by my recent attempt to read THE STOCHACTIC MAN by Robert Silverberg, as serialized in F&SF. It may be unfair to Silverbob, but I gave up quickly. What derailed me here, as with other Silverberg works, was the dearth of depth. I don't mind simplistic works -- they can be very enjoyable. I do dislike dog-and-pony shows wherein Insight and Erudition sound like assigned memorization from somebody's sophomore year. I don't relate to stunning emotional revelation that must have sprung from last Saturday's matinee. So I put three F&SF's back on the shelf and said goodbye to THE STOCHASTIC MAN.

The prefabricated constructions, taken perhaps from journals and popularizations, had turned me off the novel. Yet one phrase had struck clear to the opposite end of style in its topic. I was reminded at once of Harlan Ellison, and grateful that Silverbob could spark an article by writing: "Adolescent cynicism is mainly a defense against fear."

Yes, good old Harlan. He knows gut feelings. Everything he writes is a cry of pain. If a four year old could work a typewriter and you caught it protesting an extinguished light, you might get an Ellison story. Lots of emotion would be projected, but not much content. That's how Harlan writes so fast, you see; he doesn't worry about content. Just throw a few symbols and myths into a nightmare and offer it as a story. The less discerning critics all throw up their hands in awe. The more discerning critics just throw up.

Yes, here I am attacking at full speed. I've blasted Silverbob for exclusion of the emotional wellspring, and I don't like Ellison for sinking in it. What are my standards of good writing? They're much akin to Matthew Arnold's "touchstones" in essence, though I forsake the absolute sense that Arnold was fond of invoking. Lyself, I don't believe that deathless prose is an energy source to replace plutonium. Good writing is engaging and navigable.

I'm happy with that last simile; let's expand on it. If fiction is like a body of water, having depth and breadth and navigation hazards, then the reader is like

unto a vessel. There's a profusion of waterways. There are many kinds of boats. We may even own a variety of styles to enhance our yachting pleasure.

Much Silverberg work reminds me of those lakes in the South where a creek has been dammed to flood some lowland. The lake may extend over ten to fifteen acres, but it's about two feet deep. Maybe tree stumps stick up from the water. It might be fun to take a flat-bottomed rowboat onto the lake and examine the stumps or perhaps try for a fish. You might zoom around in a shallow-draft speedboat or a swamp buggy. If the sun is bright, the water surface shines right pretty. But you could never take a boat that drew much water on a lake like that.

Harlan, on the other hand, is very much like a well. There's no denying that the water's deep. Difficult to sail on, though. I suppose you could float on an inner tube and yell a lot. Echoes are pretty wild down in a well. You might put on a scuba outfit and dive to the bottom (it's a long way down). Some people say it's ecstacy to see the rusting beer cans left there from the days before aluminum (though I hesitate to take Harlan's word for it).

I prefer the seas of Lawrence Durrell, where your ship needs a broad vocabulary, a philosophical rudder and a knowing heart to weather the natural storms that may blo up in those waters. I delight to paddle an elven boat up the great broad river of Tolkien. Or shoot the rapids of Raymond Chandler's mountain rivers, on their way to the ageless Pacific. Or sail a fleet near the magical shores of Mary Renault's Mediterranean.

(Amuse yourself with these similes. Is Henry Miller the Paris sever system? Is Bill Buckley a skating rink? Is Stven Carlberg a birdbath? Is Dave Hulan the Baldwin Hills Reservoir? Is Don Markstein a baptismal font? Is Dean Grennell the fountains at Versailles? Is Ed Cagle a broken waterline? Is Dave Locke a bidet? Stretch your imagination. Insult your friends. Make a big splash.)

That was fun, but did little to further our investigation of writing. Let's dry our hands of simile. Our next topic will be Uncle Lon's Infallible Laws of Literary Merit. These empirical observations, known to enlightened man since Plato's time, were only recently made available to the general public through an article in the December 1975 issue of PLANET STORIES.

The first law is stated as follows: "All of these laws, without exception, have exceptions." Some call this a logical paradox. Others call it spoilsport, as they wave their Exception and demand to confront wiley Uncle Lon. I just call it "cover your ass."

The second law says: "Know what you're writing about." Once upon a time science fiction was an island of imagination, where authors could make up even the science as they hacked away. Things got a lot tougher after the invention of physics, so various writers began to deal with the human element in their stories. Unfortunately, this led most of them afoul of the second law.

Knowledge is more than just the big things. Sure, Jerry Pournelle writing on the agonies of share-cropping in Mississippi would be a real laugher, but many authors blow it on much smaller things than theme. In one detective novel the hero says: "I used my penknife to dig a .45 shell out of the oak paneling." If the author won the Golden Casing Award of the American Hand-Loaders Association, I'd still not believe that detective knew what he was doing. That tough untutored man could have ordered sauterne with his steak, misquoted Balzac or thought a Hobie cat had fur and I would have understood. But not to know that a slug comes out of the business end of a gun while a shell is ejected from the chamber -- that was inexcusable.

Behind surface verisimilitude lies another Truth that is the province of that pragmatic madness. Each writer must tell his own Truth. Those with faulty understanding, or none, will fail. In practice this usually means they'll address their work to an audience that knows even less than they do.

Uncle Lon's third law states: "Choose an appropriate style." Artistic success was never achieved without a lucid style. Neither was readability (which really isn't very different). The style you pick will clothe the body of your work. Don't dress in overalls to attend a Poston social or in a tuxedo to rebuild Yolkswagen engines. Be in harmony:

Style is a lot of fun in itself. Some writers get so carried away that their books are like the elegantly dressed dummies in clothing stores. Much eye appeal; no life. This extreme may reflect the difficulty in acquiring a genuinely distinctive style. Fledgling writers sweat to create, not copy. After much hard work, they perfect a tool -- style. How human to then confuse that means with an end.

Most of us have only one style, which we use without thinking. Because we're usually writing about things that interest us, the style will fit. That's fine, as the best of all styles is a natural flow. This isn't to say that writing is effortless. What is easiest to read may well have been hardest to write.

The fourth law is brief: "Be cohesive." The elements within a work should be related in meaningful fashion. Asides to amplify a point are fair, but simple diversions diminish impact. The art of ridiculous juxtaposition has been mastered by Snoopy, typing atop his doghouse. It's also practiced by the authors of those 25,000-page best sellers that are bought to be displayed on coffee tables as evidence of erudition. Threads of many disparate colors become a rich fabric only if woven together.

This law is also an admonishment against too much ambition. The making of complex structures requires perspective and considerable control. Our objectives should encompass no more than we can manage cohesively. As skill increases, so will complexity grow. (For example, Alan Hutchinson has worked his way from obscene phone calls to dirty limericks since joining fandom in 1953.)

The fifth and last law says: "Start where it feels good but stop when it ends." This is really a law of nature. There's a proper size inherent in everything. Instinctively, the writer in touch with his creation knows how big to write it.

Abuses of this law are common. We know the ten pounds in a five pound bag trick. We've suffered with the poor short story stretched on the rack-frame of a novel. (Especially in pay-by-the-word environments.) Thus, we surely agree. When it's all been said, just stop.

DIALOG (concluded from page 21)

#### LOCKE

All my illusions are shattered. Here I go and spend several lines to set Ed up to talk about being horny, and he chooses to ignore the topic. Maybe he thought I wanted to talk about my being horny. At any rate he has missed the chance, because this is the end of the Dialog section. Ed is cheering as I type this. Po you suppose he's trying to tell me something I don't already know? Tune in next time we do this, and maybe we'll have it figured out.

## CROPCREAM

141 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ont., M6P 2S3

Having always been on the (relatively) small side, a card-carrying coward, and possessed of an abnormal fear of pain, I've always tended to fight my battles verbally rather than physically. Sarcasm was my main weapon as a kid, and my brother, who was considerably more massive than I at the time, would beat the crap out of me anytime he could catch me. The only fight I can ever remember being in (beyond squabbles in the schoolyard at recess, that is) resulted when I enraged a drunken punk at a dance by deriding his physical and mental abilities. He waited outside and jumped me when I came out, and a very minor set-to resulted, in which I handled myself rather ineptly. (Where were those daydreams of disabling six Thugee assassins to the admiring glances of the lovely heroine when I needed them?) Had he not been rather stupid and pretty smashed, I might have suffered much more damage than I did. So as a defense mechanism, I do not recommend the use of sarcasm. If I had a sense of humour, I might try your tack but I guess I'd better keep a low profile instead.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

- + Mike has as low a profile as anyone around. Subsequent to his being +
- + pounded out and left by the attacker, someone told him that it was safe +
- + to get up. Mike replied: "I am up."

700 Farkview Ter., Minneapolis MN

I was in the hospital at the tender age of thirteen, for knee surgery. My only strange experience as such was when I got into a wheelchair race with the incumbent champ of the 6th floor. I would have won, too, were it not for the fact that someone sabotaged my chair, causing the right front wheel to begin wobbling, which caused me to careen out of control and spin into an IV unit an orderly was propelling along. Just as I managed to free myself from the mess of tubes and bags. I saw Miss Esmerelda Binklestein cross the finish line, which brought on a cheer from the senior citizens who were taking in the race via closed-circuit television. I retired from wheelchair racing that very day, because I had to leave the hospital and go home.

- + Word has reached us that Chris has gone back into the hospital and has
- + once more entered wheelchair competition. Cagle and Locke are pleased
- + at his good fortune. Informed sources tell us that Chris is running
- + rings around the competition, but that's mainly because he broke his + left arm and doesn't have the use of it.

DAVE PIPER:

7 Cranley Dr., Ruislip, Middx HA4 6BZ

Y'know, ever since his column started in YANDRO and especially since he started AWRY I've had this mental picture of Dave. Tall, slim, devilishly handsome bloke with a slightly sardonic Simon Templar (not R. Moore, the books ST) type wry smile, wicked gleam in his eye and a languid, fluid, slightly-world-weary air, sitting out there in California with the surf crashing, sun shining, slurping away (languidly) at his scotch to the Beach Boys good-vibrationing in the background and, all the while, wittily poking fun at the world in general and fandom in particular with all the time in the world (seemingly) with which to play.

Right? Right. That's how I pictured him.

Butbutbut ... if Jackie's wanted poster is, even in the slightest possible way, like life, like ... omigawd!

He looks like the geezer who's in charge of putting the light bulbs in a Brooklyn depressed-area-type-high-rise-flat-type-tenement who don't see the sun from one blue moon to another, rushing about like a blue-arsed fly, grabbing brief moments from the hectic rat race for a quick gulp of a warm beer and only ever coming down (Coming Down) for 9 minutes a week to trim his Douglas Fairbanks'-type growth under his nose. Which is probably crooked.

How do you picture him?

Will the real D. Locke please stand up.

- + Rumor has it that the real Dave Locke wouldn't be caught dead listening +
- + to a Beach Boys' record, living in New York City, or drinking beer other+
- + than Dos Equis unless there weren't anything else of an alcoholic nature+
- + in the reasonably immediate vicinity. His mustache is crooked because +
- + his nose is crooked, and also because he shaves about two hours before +
- + he begins to wake up. The only similarity between Dave Locke and Simon +
- + Templar is that they both lead lives concerning which no one is able to +
- + achieve a willing suspension of disbelief. And they're both English. +
- + To understand the real Dave Locke, we must refer you to Tina Hensel
- + Jones, who has known him for about 7 years and who resides perhaps two +
- + or three miles from his surf-side residence.

TINA HENSEL JONES:

835 W. 6th St., Azusa CA

Since Ed is unacquainted with Dave, I feel it my duty to explain some of Dave's apparently harmless statements. Dave does not feel like Gallagher when he drinks. He is Gallagher. No one else would lie down on the couch, assume the fetal position, and slurp beer through clear plastic tubing with an o.d. of 1/2 inch. The tubing stretches clear from the living room to the keg in the kitchen. After forty-five minutes of sipping and listening to George Carlin records, Dave does know the secrets of the universe. If you are unfortunate enough to be present, he will insist on sharing them with you. One of his favorite secrets is. "I are!"

He will shout it at the slightest provocation, But that's okay. We love him anyway. You should too.

- + There is one major error in this story. Dave Locke does not drink beer +
- + through plastic tubing. Scotch and soda, Tequila Sunrise, Sombrero, Rum + Cola, yes, but not beer. Other than that, it can be stated without fear +
- + of contradistinction that the above story is totally contrapuntal.

19 Angell Dr. E. Providence RI 

The army stationed me at Fort Sill in Lawton OK; until then I had thought that any part of the US would be better than Phu Hiep, South Vietnam. Little did I know. The fanciest restaurant was the Holiday Inn. The movie theatres ran heavily to porno -- not even good porno. The library had some books that could only be taken out by people who had library cards, other books that could only be taken out by people who didn't.

There was one fairly decent bookstore, much to my surprise, but only a few blocks away the combat zone was so full of prostitutes that I once had to chase two out of my car, which I'd inadvertently left unlocked. They insisted there wasn't enough room to stand on the sidewalk. Peaceful Sunday afternoons were punctuated with explosions from the nearby firing range. On certain days and at certain times, they closed certain roads, because artillery shells were flying over. Periodically a shell would land in the local wildlife refuge, and if they were lucky the Officers Club served buffalo or venison the following weekend. A great place to move out of.

We had one neighbor who objected to the bi-racial couple across the street and kept sending them hate mail. Another was a postal employee who seemed to have an uncanny knowledge of his neighbor's private affairs. Another got into an argument at a nearby bar and came home. A few minutes later a car pulled into his driveway, headlights on, horn blaring. When my neighbor came out to investigate, his argumentative friend drove the car over him, then backed up over his head. Persuasive argument. The next night another neighbor accidentally shot his wife through the head. Quiet suburban community life, yes,

+ It's the little uncertainties in life that make it interesting.

SHERYL SMITH:

1346 W. Howard St., Chicago II

I think pricks are lots of fun to play with.

RICHARD BRANDT:

4013 Sierra Dr. . Mobile AL

I heard the story about "profound revelation while under the influence" in a slightly different manner. The great author experienced an earth-shattering revelation while gassed, jotted it down, and awoke to discover he had written: "there's a funny smell in this room." This comes from Jack Margolis & Richard Clorfene's 

marvelous book, A CHILD'S GARDEN OF GRASS. Jack and Dick have never smoked grass, but they asked their friend Ernie Lundquist and he told them all about it. Included under "profound revelations" is the time Ernie was stoned and made the astounding discovery that "pickles may not be all that great, but they are, after all, the only thing one can do with cucumbers." Ernie was so stricken by the importance of this pronouncement that he attempted to call the President and tell him about it.

- + Sliced raw cucumbers, sprinkled with a little salt, are reasonably
- + tasty. It is no doubt true to state that there are other things one can +
- + do with cucumbers, also, but let's shy away from that subject for the
- + moment.

DAVE ROWE:

8 Park Dr., Wickford, Essex SS12 9DH

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Talking about almost getting televised with a naked female reminds me of something that happened back in April. Janice Wiles & I were at a party with the Oxford SF Group, it was a large affair and plenty of mundanes were present. At about 1 o'clock a.m., Janice & I felt really fagged out so as we were staying till noon, we decided to hit the sack. Trouble came in the form of a couple fondling in front of the bedroom door.

"Excuse us," I said. "We'd like to get in."

"Really?" said this dumb blonde, who recognizing us as not being the house-holders reckoned we must be using the room for a quick nookie.

I assured the blonde that we indeed had had enough of the disco, and wanted to get in to the solitude of a room whose threshhold she (and here obviously unwanted fondler) was blocking.

"Can we watch?" she giggled drunkenly but purposefully.

"Only if we can watch you two afterwards," I said.

She didn't like that idea, and in letting us pass mumbled something innocent about "watch what?"

About an hour or two later we were awakened by people talking outside and the same dumb blonde in a loud whisper saying: "They're still in there!!!"

Now, that's how to get yourself a reputation without even trying.

+ Your story is a hell of a good snow job, Dave.