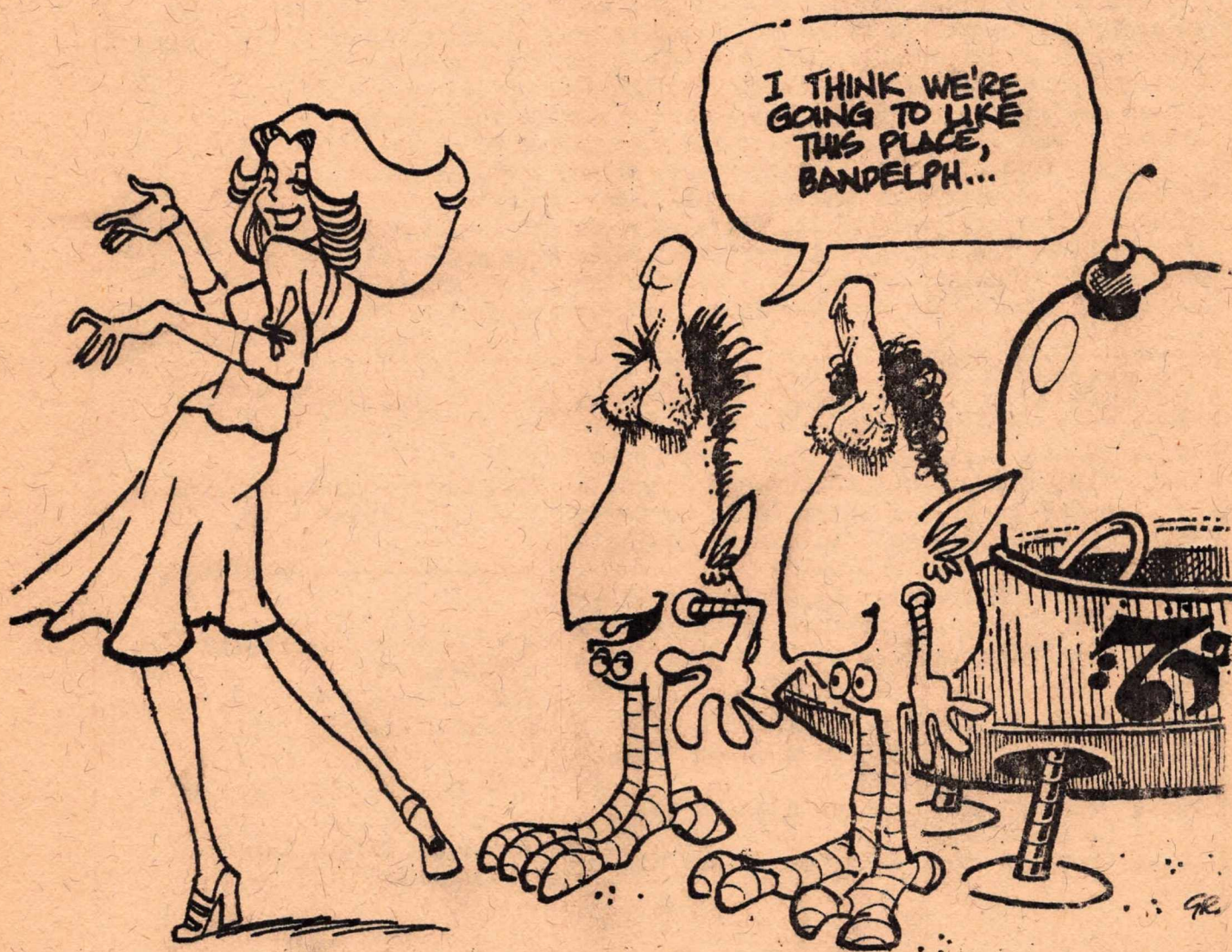


SHAMBLES



Dialog with 2 HAMS

CAGLE

"Fulfilled desires". Sounds downright lovely, 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. I 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 granddad'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

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SHAMBLES no.2

FEBRUARY 1976

- 2... DIALOG Cagle and Locke
- 10... T.B.M.K. ... column by Dean Grennell
- 13... CAGLE as interviewed by Locke
- 15... LOCKE as interviewed by Cagle
- 19... THE 2000 YEAR OLD FAN

as interviewed by Cagle and Locke

- 22... BON MOTE article by Lon Atkins
- 25... CROPCREAM a comment or three

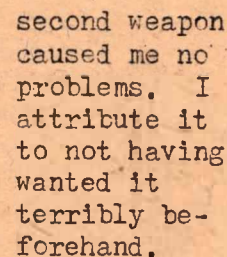
The Coprophagous Fanzine
from

(letters, manuscripts)
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Grove, Oklahoma 74352

- 1... Cover by Grant Canfield
- 3... Portrait of Cagle as a young fart,
by Jackie Franke
- 10... Portrait of Locke as a young fart,
by Dave Haugh
- 18... Portrait of the 2K Fan by Jay Kinney

(artwork, sample copies)
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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. Don'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.



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 tail-pipe 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 lustng 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.

[illegible]

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 shift 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 lovelly little rig had no brakes, 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

[illegible]

Disclaimer. This is still Dave Locke, because Cagle has unkindly chosen to report -- in somewhat ringing terms -- to fuck myself, my suggested 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 probably 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. Deep 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 Cagle-type topic (Boy scouts, beavers, booze, screwing in canoes, or Linda Pushyager), recalled to my frontal lobes is a remark Ed made the other night to the effect that ARRY is better than SHAMULES. He made me privy to this astonishing disclosure while peacefully 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 colophon that Bruce 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 ARRY 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 fanpubbing desires will be fulfilled by pretending that Ed and I are going to crank out another issue of SHAMULES. Other than the fact that I like to write for SHAMULES much more than I dug setting up a stencil for ARRY, it's the precariousness of SHAMULES 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: "Well, 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 bound to haul forth monsters and demons from the dank recesses (who wants that one?), let us cogitate on fanzine publishing. 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 God's name you put on stencil the night before, the deviousness of setting to type a line that you know will cause hate and discontent, or do you use fanzine publishing as a means to avoid pissing in your boot? Ed? Ed? Where the hell did he go?

CAGLE

I would much rather watch flys fuck than discuss fanzine publishing, but given the present state of mind and my reluctance to forget that "company must be mollycoddled", I shall endeavor to compose something at least marginally 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 KWALKIOQIA. Many loved it. More regarded it as a singular example of human perversity. Two or three found it a direct attack on organized religion and backyard picnicking while drunk, or something equally similar.....

KWAL ... as I have been 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), ...KWAL was begun to compensate for my feelings of inadequate helplessness 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 a hangover 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 typewriter 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 SVERY, 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 lettercol, 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 typewriter...

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 Backwoods 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 to 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 actually done anything except drink. So great is his power of deception. (cont'd page 2

[illegible]

S: It was a big thrill?

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

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

S: Pretty rough, eh?

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

S: What happened to Nydahl and VEGA?

S: So what happened to THE MURKY WAY?

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

S: Is it true that an item from your fanzine, GRUE, was reprinted in F&SF?

[illegible]

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

[illegible]

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 hearthstone 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 articles 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.

[illegible]

LOCKE

AS INTERVIEWED BY
ED CAGLE

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.

A: I've written some things that people said were "pretty fucking bad", but that 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.

A: The fact that all fans are Slans causes the unity, and the fact that all fans 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.

A: Oh, I think fandom is definitely of benefit from an intellectual standpoint. 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.

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

A: It's too much of a nitpick to draw a distinction between saying something 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.

[illegible]

Q: Do you think Dick Geis is for real?

A: 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 naked 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 over-use 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 knowledgeable 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

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?
2000: 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 femme-fans 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?
2000: 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 --

[illegible]

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 concealer, 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 somethingor-other. 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: Medieval 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 gaffiated except me.

LOCKE: Why?

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

[illegible]

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 undesirable 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 ~~with~~^{with} 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.

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 conglomming 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.

BON MOTE

article, by LON ATKINS

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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 STOCHASTIC 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. Myself, 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

22

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 ecstasy 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 blow 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 sewer system? Is Bill Buckley a skating rink? Is Steven 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 laugh, 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 Boston social or in a tuxedo to rebuild Volkswagen 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.

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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. Do 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.

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:

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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 threshold 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.

[illegible]