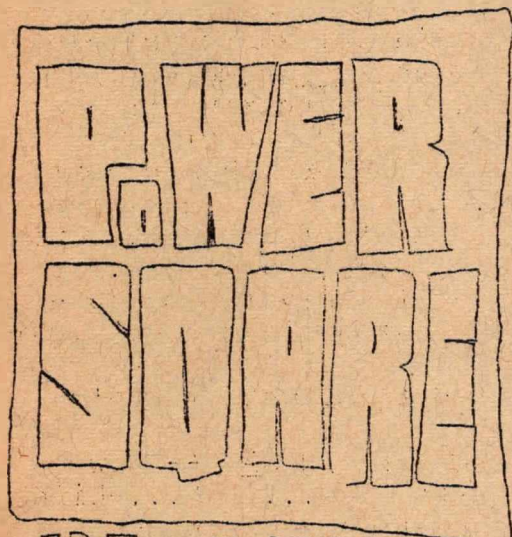


SNAP #1 from Bill Kunkel (84-45 121st Street, Apartment 1-D, Kew Gardens, New York 11415 and Arnie Katz (59 Livingston Street, Apartment 6-D, Brooklyn Heights, New York 10211:::It is being sent through FAPA, where Arnie is a member only because Joyce lets him be and where I am not a member at all and also it is going to a few friends and etc. who can respond with letters and cartoons and stuff and will therefore get future issues. Headings are almost all by Dan Steffan who stencilled em too while he was here in NY. Spring of 73 approx



EDITORIAL BY BILL KUNKEL

WEIRD OR WHAT? Do you like to guess? If so, then guess why I'm starting a new fanzine of all things.

No, that's not why. But guess what, I was just reading the ROLLING STONE and they had a piece on Dr. Hook and one of the dements in his band started jawing about this wino and that bum, giving his opinions, and I had him all figured as a mountebank when out of the blue he starts talking about Larry Shit. That's right, the same Larry Shit of whom I spoke in POTLATCH and who is hands down the finest bum now walking the Streets of New York (and, bum-wise, there is just nowhere else worth talking about). So I realized this musician was nobody's fool & I have even decided I will give their new lp a listen.

CBS has announced the cancellation of two fine series, by the way, and keeping in mind the fine show fandom put on to keep Star Trek out of the garbage (where, in my humble opinion, it actually belonged) I have decided to bring the matter to your attention.

The shows are "Where the Heart Is" and "Love Is A Many Splendored Thing." (You will notice both shows not only have the word "is" in the titles but the "i" is capitalized. I will assume, however, that CBS had higher motives in axing these shows than this might indicate). I can never remember names but the poor woman (she's Allison's sister) who's adopted kid just died on her (and she has subsequently



power square -- II

begun to show the plain signs of mental deterioration) and this is all she needs on top of everything. I just remembered her name is Kate Prescott. Poor woman. As for "Love Is A Many Splendored Thing" it's not nearly so good, but it takes place in San Francisco and is a fine warm-up for "Secret Storm."

Okay fandom, I've thrown you the ball now run with it!

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NORTH TO ALASKA In my youth my favorite singer was Johnny Horton. What a singer! When I heard that James Dean was dead I shrugged (actually I thought he was that dim-wit country singer who in fact was "Jimmy" Dean I think) but when I saw in the paper that JH had lost his life in an auto accident I broke down and wept.

Anyway, my fave Johnny Horton song was "Battle of New Orleans" and now from that very same town comes: Lester Gerard Boutillier!

Lester is new to the fan ranks, but you could not tell this by reading one of his fanzines, you have to know him personally to know this. His fanzine is called "Zeer Ox Zine" -- guess why. Right! And can this boy write! He specializes in the vignette and here's one of his best right from the pages of his second issue:

"You know you're getting old when...an 18 year old kid writes an article called "What Did My Parents Ever See In Jack Paar?" and you remember Jack Paar yourself when he was on The Tonight Show. But speaking of remembrances, in my 22 years of life so far, all spent in New Orleans, I can remember it having snowed only three times here before this recent phenomenon, and the last time was a long time ago."

Ain't that fine? But don't feel bad about Jack Paar, Lester, he was much better back then. I was especially taken by your use of the small "i" -- if only the producers of some newly cancelled tv shows would have thought of that they might still be alive and kicking.

But who wants to listen to me when there's more to be heard from Lester:

[He is speaking here of a NOSFA -- New Orleans Science Fiction Association -- meeting he attended...] "...while I was there a conversation which didn't concern me but which everyone there was invited to join in on found me listening to it outside the door and which I found rather frightening. I won't say anything about what was said, and I didn't hear the whole conversation, but I thought I'd point out here, before it's too late, a couple of truisms that often go neglected today. The more important is that revenge in and of itself is not a desirable end or a respectable motive [How true!]. And the other is that when sexual intercourse between two consenting adults takes place there can be no such thing as a guy 'making a girl pregnant.' In cases of sexual intercourse [Beg pardon, but Arnie asked me to find out if you could send him a couple of cases when you get the chance.] between two consenting adults, the girl has just as much to do with it as the guy does. Think about it. [We will, Lester.]





The first issue of F. Lee Bailey's mens magazine, GALLERY, has occasioned much comment in fandom, which ties into some observations I've been making about the "big four" mens mags here recently

I almost didn't buy the first issue of GALLERY under the impression that it was just another issue of PLAYBOY, which publication I buy only intermittantly. I looked closer and realized that it was a different, though incredibly similar magazine. I usually buy the first issue of anything that looks even half-interesting, because I'm in publishing myself and because I'd want other people to give me the same chance if I ever tried to start a new magazine.

For those who didn't see it, everything said about the similarity of the first issue of GALLERY to PLAYBOY is an understatement. The people directing the graphics of GALLERY are former employees of Hefner and, for the first issue, they just did another issue of PLAYBOY. The contents page is identical as are the layouts for such things as the GALLERY interview. All familiar P'BOY departments -- the ribald classic, the party jokes, Playboy After Hours -- are duplicated almost exactly in the new magazine. GALLERY even found someone who could imitate the Leroy Neiman femlin character used on PLAYBOY's joke page for an identical usage in GALLERY. The newer magazine even put a full-page, full-color carton facing the jokes, a longtime PLAYBOY practice. I showed the first GALLERY to our art director at QUICK FROZEN FOODS and it was only after subsequent issue of GALLERY (in a somewhat altered format...) hit the stands that he totally gave up the idea that GALLERY was meant as a parody of the bunny book.

The damn seems to have been broken with regard to publishing magazines directly competitive with PLAYBOY. There were a spate of imitators back in the 50's, when PLAYBOY published its circulation figures and other men's magazine publishers realized that Hefner had something, but none endured. In 1959, ROGUE tried to class up to PLAYBOY standards but never really made it and similar tries by such as CAVALIER never quite broke that magazine out of the mens mag ghetto.

By and large, however, publishers of men's magazines have been content to stay with the girlie-book concept; soft-core porn stories and plenty of nekkid ladies. The main reason is that few operators in the publishing industry, particularly the men's mag field, are willing to spend vastly now for large returns later. The usual philosophy has been to do it quick, cheap, and simply, rather than spend the huge sums of money needed to publish the first few issues of a magazine hoping to compete for PLAYBOY's audience. Unable to bridge the gap between the usual girlie book and PLAYBOY, they aim for the audience that isn't sophisticated enough for PLAYBOY (or just wants photos of Bosomy Beauties and has no ready access to good grade porn.)



So how come, you ask, there are suddenly three ersatz PLAYBOY's clogging up the news-stands so they don't stock VERTEX? There has been a change in marketing conditions brought on by a revolution in thinking regarding the placement of advertising that has taken place at the ad agencies in the last half-decade.

In former times, the ad-buying decision was made on the basis of one fairly simple criteria: ~~WIKKBAKKA~~ get the biggest audience possible for the ad dollar. Competition for advertising among the media and with each medium used to be based on the claim that the newspaper, magazine, station, billboard or other medium advocated by the space salesman making the pitch offered the biggest audience for the smallest price. I'm sure you can all recall the campaign mounted by radio in the mid-sixties to the effect ~~that~~ everyone always has a radio turned on. What that campaign was saying was, "radio is heard by everyone so it has the biggest audience for the lowest price."

Then one fine day, a day which will go forever mourned in the offices of Life and Cowles Communications, a smart space salesman decided that he would take a survey of his audience to find out what kind of people actually read or saw what he was trying to push. This enterprising space salesman found, let us speculate, that though the magazine he worked for had fewer readers than the competing publication, the median income of his magazine was several thousand dollars higher than that of his rival. Presto! A new argument for advertising was born!

More and more, it is the quality of the audience, not its size alone, that determines where the media buyer at the ad agency is going to spend his clients' dough. This commonsense approach to ad buying has shuffled the pecking order in the publishing industry overnight, making long-running magazines big-dollar losers and swelling the pockets of publishers able to show an attractive readership profile.

Despite claims that soaring postal rates drove SatEvePost, LIFE and LOOK to the wall (and despite the fact that postal rates were an influencing factor...), the main reason all three took the pipe was that they were geared to building up massive circulation much of which they carried at a financial loss and using this huge circulation to draw advertisers into their pages.

I don't know how many of you have read Gussow's "Divorce Corporate Style" (it's in pb for the thiftier members...), but it's about a guy who operated a string of trade magazines who merged with Cowles Communications just in time to witness the death throes of LOOK. It's a fascinating look inside publishing and, from my own limited experience in such things, a pretty accurate one.

The situation Gussow describes in a modern classic, repeated on various levels of magnitude many times these last few years. Here was LOOK, carrying an enormous circulation at a loss and maintaining an enormous taskforce to maintain and increase it. (I forget how many were employed in LOOK's circulation and subscription department, but it was in the hundreds.) All of a sudden, the media buyers all start giving LOOK salesmen a sad song about how people who read LOOK don't earn enough money, don't spend enough on luxury goods in certain classes, etc., etc.

It's a curious thing about bigtime magazines. When they make money, they pile it up faster than the company can spend it, but when they go the other way..... When ad lineage is off, any loss is multiplied by that immense circulation. The surprise was not that LOOK folded, but that it was allowed to continue to bleed Cowles white as long as it ~~did~~. LOOK and LIFE were actually in a race toward oblivion to see which would die first. LIFE, with the greater resources of Time-Life, Inc., continued publication for an additional year in the futile hope that it would pick up the ads from LOOK it didn't already have and be able to go on. The success of that strategy needs no elaboration.



That's why the big national magazines went down the tubes. So what about PLAYBOY? Well, though PLAYBOY has a giant circulation, it doesn't hand out copies at a loss to anyone. I don't know if this policy still holds, but it was once the magazine's boast that a respectable-sized PLAYBOY could turn a profit on subscriptions and newsstand sales without advertising, with the ad revenue going to make the book larger than it would have been without them. (That is, more pages of editorial material were added for page of advertising.)

PLAYBOY has done extensive readership surveys and established to the advertising agencies (which is where it counts) that their readership buys more of everything than anyone else's readership. You got something you wanna sell, like a car, a stereo, a ~~shirt~~ ~~shirt~~, an airline? Then PLAYBOY, with its high-quality male-dominated readership is a good place to spend your money. Over the last few years, PLAYBOY has made a big deal over the fact that they have significant female readership, too. This is not just because of Hefner's fanatical desire not to be written off as just the publisher of a girlie rag, but because there are some high-priced items that are bought as a result of the wife's tastes, even if the husband lays out the money.

As the profile of the typical reader of PLAYBOY has gotten more and more detailed, gaps have inevitably been revealed. I don't know exactly what they are, but perhaps PLAYBOY is attracting an older and older audience which is buying less because it already owns everything, or something like that.

In any case, once holes in PLAYBOY's circulation have been pinpointed, it makes room for publishers who are willing to spend some heavy money. They target their magazine at the big spenders PLAYBOY isn't reaching as effectively as it does some other quality readership categories, build a healthy circulation within their niche, and rake in the loot from the ad agencies who want to reach that population segment for their clients.

PENTHOUSE is the most successful competitor to PLAYBOY thus far. The differences between the two magazines are fairly obvious, and I don't think they all stem from the fact that PENTHOUSE was started in England. Again, I'm not privy to the approach used by PENTHOUSE in getting advertisers, but there are indications that they contrast their mag with PLAYBOY by saying that they now reach people who are in the same consuming status that PLAYBOY's readers were in a dozen years ago. In other words, PENTHOUSE is probably claiming that it reaches the 25-35 young married better than PLAYBOY, a group young enough to be interested in the swinging sensuality of PENTHOUSE yet old enough to have the mass-consumption habits of the older generations, though adapted to conform to a more modern lifestyle.

GALLERY doesn't exactly have a coherent direction (which may bode ill for it if it doesn't get one soon), but my impression is that it is aimed at people today who are close in attitude to people of the same age ten years ago. Styles have changed, there are new gizmos to desire, but the basic perceptual set of GALLERY readers doesn't seem to differ marketedly from that of the 1960 PLAYBOY reader. GALLERY is aimed at my brother, Ira, I think, though the girls they are featuring are generally small-busted, which does not fit the beauty stereotype of my brother and his friends. GALLERY tries to appeal by being more relevant to what is actually happening today than PLAYBOY which has displayed a tendency to cover fads and trends six months or so after they've passed away or else do a job that would expect from Time Magazine not a supposedly hip magazine.

OUI is intended as PLAYBOY's answer to PENTHOUSE and is reputedly aimed at the same market that reads that weirdo letter column vibrator in hand. I say "reputedly" because that's hard to believe from the few issues I've had an opportunity to read. If



OUI isn't the most offensively condescending and cutsi-poo magazine being published today, it will do nicely until something else comes along. I get the impression that it is partially patterned after the year-end issue of ESQUIRE with its dubious achievement awards, but instead of coming out biting and satiric, OUI gives the impression of being swishy and affected.

When reading OUI, I always get the feeling that I am being smothered by to my chin in a pile of bullshit. The copy with which they surround their nudes is so bad it's almost good; never have so many tits and asses been surrounded by so much puffed-up verbiage.

Perhaps OUI is aimed at ex-readers of the Rolling Stone who want something a little more chic now that they are concerned members of the local PTA.

As I said, this is all a bunch of my guesses and not to be taken as gospel, but I hope it gives at least some idea as to why we're suddenly waist-deep in pretentious tit mags.

-- Arnie Katz

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finger lickin' good  
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A WORD FROM OUR SPONSOR which is me, Arnie. One day, while the whole Insurgent gang was over working on RATS! and TANDEM, Bill Kunkel asked me about franking in FAPA. No special reason, he just wanted to know how it worked. It got me to thinking, however.

TANDEM is, at the moment, the fanzine that I consider my primary contribution to FAPA. But because it is also a genzine, there are things which I would like FAPA to see which I don't feel fit well in a widely distributed fanzine. Ideally, a fanzine directed at FAPA with no significant non-FAPA circulation would be the answer, but I enjoy TANDEM too much to kill it, which restricting it to FAPA would do.

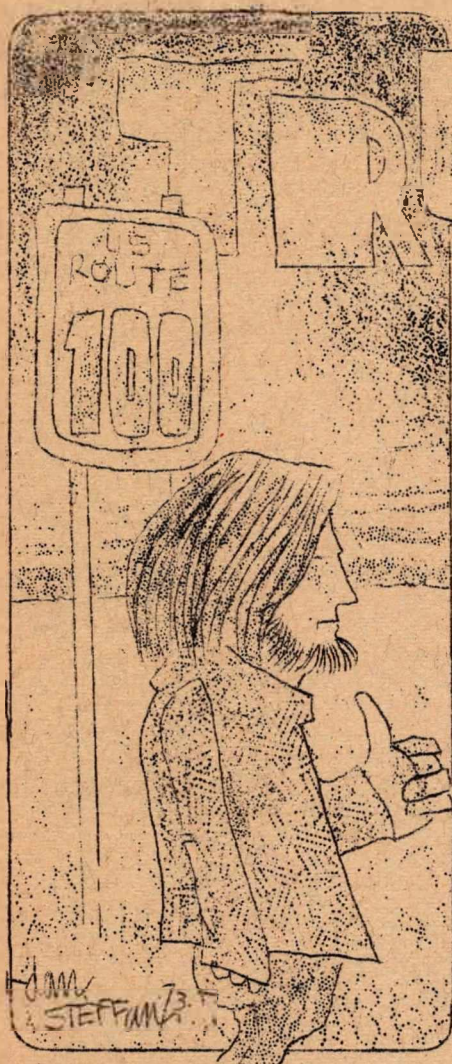
I asked Bill if he had a desire to contribute to FAPA. He said he did, so I explained my situation and SNAP is the result. I am nominally co-editor, but basically this is going to be more Bill's fanzine than mine. I'll help as much as possible, but such nifty goodies as the Berry trip report in this issue appear here through Bill's resourcefulness.

Since it's about as easy to run 100 copies as 68, that's what we're going to do. If you're receiving this and you're not in FAPA a letter of comment or contribution of usable material will get you the next issue, otherwise don't count on it. Neither Bill nor I have the time to get tangled up with the details of running another fanzine, so if we don't hear from you, the chances are we won't think to send you a copy.

And that's what comes of writing an article that doesn't end neatly on the bottom of the page the way they do in HORIZONS.....



# TRUCKING



by  
JOHN D.  
BERRY

After the LACon, Terry Hughes and Alice Sanvito and I walked a few blocks up Sepulveda from the con hotel to where California Highway 1 branched off heading north. We set our bags down at the side of the road and stuck out our thumbs. I dug my old spiral notebook out of my pack and flipped to a well-used sign that read "S.F." And we were on our way.

Well, not quite. We waited there for half an hour or so. Neal Goldfarb was also hitching up to San Francisco, but separately, and he had gone off to find materials to make himself a sign; we were still standing there when he walked up with his pack towering over his back and his bush hat on his head. He walked on a little past us and found a good spot. Before too long a man in an old car stopped and picked us up; as we pulled away, we saw that Neal was also getting a ride.

We got a series of short rides up the coast; I even kept count as we went, but I've forgotten now, which is pretty reasonable. Counting rides is about as trivial as you can get. We all felt really good about getting on the road, and Terry and Alice had never seen any of the California coast, so they kept their eyes glued to the ocean as we went through Malibu and the towns and country beyond that. We had deliberately chosen to take Highway 1, although it's slow, because it's a beautiful ride and we weren't in any rush. We figured on taking two days for the trip, and I hoped to make it about halfway the first day. Hwy 1 is mostly not freeway, so you can stand right along the side of the road and hitch; in California you can hitch from the freeway entrances but not from the freeways themselves. While Alice and Terry marvelled at the ocean, I watched the folded brown hills on the other side of the road. I'd been away from California for three months, which is about as long as I stay away from anyplace, so I felt a sense of homecoming as we wound our way up the coast. I don't feel at home in Southern California, but there are reminders there of the northern hills, and the country felt more familiar the farther north we got.



trucking -- II

We didn't get very far. We almost got stuck in Oxnard, where Hwy 1 rejoins US Route 101, the main coastal route between Los Angeles and San Francisco. We were on a freeway entrance ramp where very few cars seemed to enter going north. But before long a woman about our age stopped, in a nondescript American car a few years old. She was going as far as Santa Barbara, but she kept having trouble with her car. There was some kind of pin missing in the throttle, she told us. We would get up to freeway speeds and go over a bump and the engine would die. If she pumped the gas pedal sometimes the engine would cut in again. If we hit another bump it might work, too. Or it might not. Every few hundred yards we would have to pull off to the side of the road and stop, then restart the car, after which it would run for a few minutes. When a car you're riding in does that, you don't feel as though you're whizzing along the highway. You don't think of distance in terms of time anymore. You start looking at the country round you and noticing every yard of the way. If the car dies here, how long a walk will it be to the next town? Of course that wasn't really our problem; we could have hitchhiked on with someone else if the car really broke down, but we probably wouldn't have left the woman with a dead car. It did make it to Santa Barbara, though. She let us off at the south end of town at a freeway entrance. It was very late in the afternoon.

Santa Barbara is in a unique position. On either side of it US 101 stretches for miles and miles as a freeway, where you can only hitchhike at the entrances. But for about half a mile in the middle of Santa Barbara, 101 becomes a local street, with about three stoplights. You can hitch along the highway there. And everyone does. I think everyone hitchhiking between LA and San Francisco must get stuck in Santa Barbara. It seems like a perfect place to hitch, because every car going along that road must pass you by, but there are so many hitchhikers along the road that people are reluctant to stop. Alice and Terry and I took up a position between two groups of hitchhikers and held out our sign. The people in front of us got picked up, but not us. We feasted our eyes on the beautiful hills behind Santa Barbara, the crests brushed by high banks of fog as the sun set over the ocean. About the only interesting thing that happened to us was being accosted by an old drunk, who went down and joined his buddies with a bottle under some trees, after panhandling all the hitchhikers on our side of the highway. It got dark and cold. Alice said it was never this hard to hitchhike in Missouri. We got hungry.

Across the street was a Sambo's restaurant, one of those cheap eateries that dot main thoroughfares across the nation. Sambo's isn't any good, but what the hell, we were hungry. So we went across. They must get a lot of their business from hitchhikers, because there was a sign on the door that all packs must be left outside. We grabbed the big table by the window so we could watch our packs, but the waitress said we had to move to a smaller table; that one was only for big parties. Instead of moving we persuaded another group of three hitchhikers to join us. The whole place was full of hitchhikers; one of them, in fact, was a guy who had been standing just down the entrance ramp from us in Oxnard. The food was about what you'd expect. I ordered a breakfast assuming it would be the most nourishing meal. (I kept remembering the name Neal Goldfarb had coined at the con: "Sambo's Soul Food Restaurant.") There was another sign directed at hitchhikers: "No Traveler's Checks Accepted." But the waitress explained that they really took traveller's checks; the sign was just there so they could refuse them if they didn't trust you. We paid in traveler's checks.

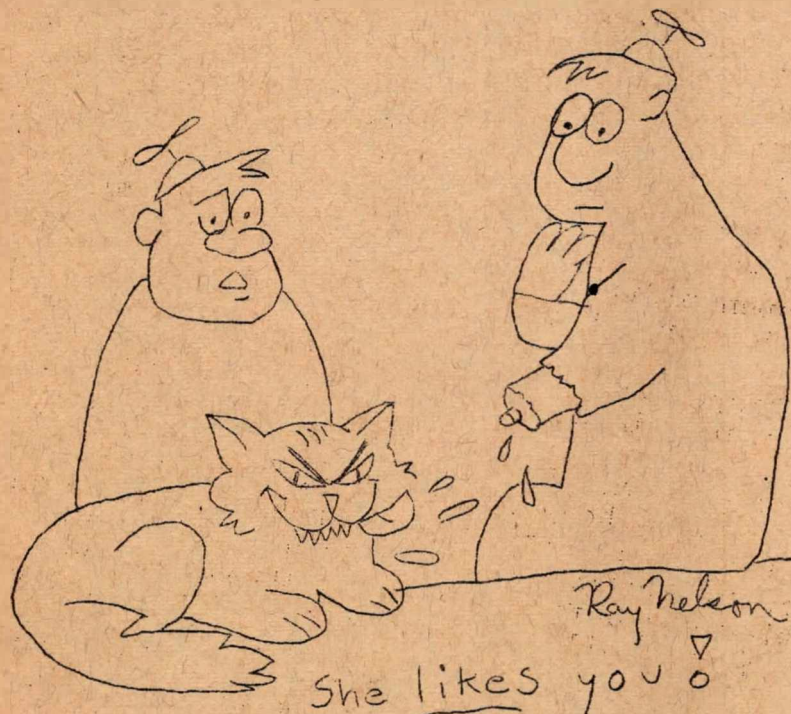


trucking -- III

Back out on 101, night had fallen, so we took up a position under a street-light where we could be seen. We were just past an intersection, so the cars stopping for a light could see us pretty well. As the cars and trucks passed us by, we started hopping around and pantomiming. We called out to the cars, "Stop! Pick us up! We're nice hippies! We're friendly! We can tell you exciting stories! Or we can be quiet! We like you!" We put horrible curses on the cars that passed us up. We started dancing. Alice knelt down and held up her hands prayerfully. She looked soulful and waif-like. I spread my arms and grinned. Terry and I started doing softshoe routines. I trucked down to the corner like a Robert Crumb character and danced back. We were entertaining ourselves and each other, if no one else.

Finally a car pulled over. We gave it a standing ovation. Then we saw that it was a Highway Patrol car. We got nervous. But the cop was friendly; he had probably never been applauded for pulling over before. He just told us to stand back further from the pavement. "I don't want to have to make out a 9-page accident report on you," he said. When he drove on, we did a few more routines, but we were getting discouraged. All we wanted was a ride out into the country, where we figured we could bed down somewhere off the road. Only Terry had a sleepingbag, but we had other warm stuff, and even though I knew how the temperature drops at night in California, I thought we could keep warm enough.

We didn't have to camp out. A pick-up truck pulled to a stop just beyond us and two freaks asked us where we were going. We piled our packs and our bodies into the back of the pick-up and they drove off. Actually, they didn't get very far before the truck stalled, but they had a friend who lived nearby and came out with his car to push-start us. The guys in front passed us a gallon of Red Mountain Burgundy, but it's pretty awful stuff and we didn't drink much. Red Mountain was the only California wine that Alice had ever had; she'd drunk it once before at a party back in St. Louis, and she thought it was a crock of shit. I assured her that all California wine wasn't like that.



The dudes in the front of the truck asked us if we needed a place to stay, which of course we did, so they said fine, come along with us; you can stay at our place in the mountains. They lived in a little house up in<sup>7</sup> the San Marcos Pass. From Santa Barbara, you see, the coast runs almost due west for a while, then cuts north, forming a right angle; 101 follows the coast. But there's a road that cuts right across that angle and goes through the San Marcos Pass. That's where we went. The truck left the main road just beyond Santa Barbara & began climbing into the mountains. As we got higher, the temperature dropped. Terry had a heavy jacket on, but all I had was a light wool jacket, and Alice just had a hooded shawl. I dug into



trucking -- IV

my pack and found my space blanket, which is one of those thin, metallic things that reflects heat tremendously; it was developed for the space program by NASA, but it's on sale now for campers and hunters. I'd bought one last spring but never used it before; it was my only piece of camping equipment. While Terry sat up against the back of the cab, staring back and looking like a windblown Captain Ahab in the headlights of the cars behind us, Alice and I huddled under the space blanket, trying to keep the wind from blowing under it. The space blanket was not big enough to cover two people very well. It was cozy, but cold.

As we climbed into the mountains, the sky became a tapestry of stars. Stars everywhere. I'd been traveling out in the country, but I hadn't looked up into a full night sky in months, maybe years. It blew my mind and held my eyes. "All the stars you can eat for 24¢" I said, and Alice nodded.

Yeah, it was cold and bumpy and our hair was getting hopelessly tangled and wouldn't keep out of our eyes, but I love riding in the back of a pick-up truck. We went over the summit of the pass and down the other side, into a broad upland valley, where the drivers of the truck lived. They stopped first at a big house to get some dope from their friends, then we drove on to their house. It was supposed to be some kind of resort or guesthouse; there were a bunch of other cottages along the road, all owned and rented out by one person. The rooms in the house even had numbers on the doors, but it was otherwise a pretty normal small house. All the people in it were freaks, who seemed to smoke dope and drink whiskey indiscriminantly, but they told us the rest of the houses were rented to straight people. We smoked a little and sat around talking for a while, but we were all tired and we curled up on the floor as soon as we could.

Next morning we took some time to wake up, go outside and look at the countryside in daylight. The people we were staying with suggested that we take a day to hike back into the hills, but we wanted to push on, so one of them drove us in the pick-up truck down to Hwy 101. We weren't there long, standing in the dust at the beginning of a new day, before a huge truck pulled over. We were all amazed, since truckers seldom pick up hitchhikers these days because the insurance companies get on their backs. The driver wanted somebody to talk to, though; he'd been up most of the night repairing the wiring in the truck, and he needed a way to keep awake. The cab of the truck was huge, with a wide shelf behind the seats; it could easily have seated a couple more people. We tossed our bags onto an open platform behind the cab, and we watched them apprehensively as we rode to be sure they didn't fall off.

The trucker took us as far as San Luis Obispo, where Highway 1 branches off again from 101 and heads up the coast toward Big Sur and Monterey. Or rather, he took us almost to San Luis Obispo. At his suggestion we went off the freeway with him to a truckstop along a little local road, where he figured it would be easier to hitch. It was not. Nobody passed along that road but truckers, worker's wives in curlers, and local farmers and ranchers. We figured that if nobody else picked us up, our trucker would give us a lift into town when he came back out from getting his coffee. No such luck. He came out, got into his truck, waved at us and pulled away. We had very mixed feelings about him after that.

At last some longhairs in an American van with Colorado plates stopped. They lived in San Luis and gave us a ride through town to Highway 1. They let us out across from a cheap hamburger stand, so



trucking -- V

one by one we crossed the street and got some breakfast, leaving one of us with the sign and the bags all the time. We had plenty of time to eat before anybody picked us up.

An old car pulled over, driven by a dumpy, black-haired woman. We happily piled our bags into the car, but we had some misgivings when we noticed what was written on the side of the door. "ROAN-DOKE OF GOD," it said, "Christian Commune." Well, what the hell; it was a ride. And so we discovered the Roandoke of God.

The woman was heading back to the commune, which was in a valley just inland from Morro Bay. It wasn't a very long ride, but it took us in the right direction. When we got near her turnoff, she asked us if we needed anything. "Do you have a water bottle?" she asked. We didn't. "You ought to have one on this road. It gets awfully hot." So we agreed to go to the commune and pick up a water bottle.

The Roandoke of God was just off the highway and looked much like any other farm commune. The men were mostly out in the fields working, but there were lots of women around, who were friendly and not pushy. A young girl showed us around the place, introduced us to the people, and gave us a bunch of fresh-picked strawberries as well as the water bottle. She was an Indian from Washington, and she told us she'd just been passing through one day and had decided to stay. She showed us the big shed where they raised rabbits, and she said that much to her surprise she had really gotten to like skinning the rabbits. We visited the building they had erected as women's quarters -- and a very well-built building it was. The men were living in a big tent. Everyone we saw was calm and friendly; they didn't have any wild-eyed looks at all. There was a daily schedule posted on the wall of the main building, and it seemed they lived a disciplined life. The man who headed up the commune was the sort who could build anything out of everything. We were shown his contraption for digging up the ground so seeds could be put in. It wasn't a plow; it was perhaps more of an automatic hoe. It looked like a Rube Goldberg motorcycle, and since it hadn't been used since the last planting season, it looked kind of rusty. The girl assured us that it worked. You sat on a seat and drove the thing forward and it dug holes in the ground. Perhaps you needed a certain amount of faith to run it.

The Roandoke of God was a pleasant place, in a pleasant valley, but we had no desire to stay, so we walked back to the road with the water bottle. Before long we started wondering about the wisdom of hitchhiking on Highway 1. Nobody would stop for us. Most of them didn't even look. We would watch longhairs in VW vans whiz on by, and we'd cry in their wake, "Turn in your van and your hippie credentials!" It got discouraging. I doodled fan characters on the road sign near us. Alice sat down and started reading Thomas Merton. Only Terry stood gamely out there, holding up our sign. It was afternoon, we were all feeling hot and tired, and we hardly spoke.

We got one short ride, in a car so full of various junk that some ingenuity was required in order to fit our bags in the back and ourselves in the front. The driver was friendly, but he was only going a few miles past Morro Bay, along the coast. He let us off just where the road becomes freeway again, and we settled down under the sign that said, "Pedestrians, bicycles and motor driven cycles prohibited."

The signpost was covered with scrawls and carvings left by previous hitchhikers. Across the top of the sign was written "Did you ever have the feeling you were invisible?"



trucking -- VI

Have you ever spent hours trying to hitchhike and not getting a ride? It's a drag. It's worse than missing the last train or bus and waiting all night for the first one the next morning. In that case at least you know how long you're going to wait, but when you're hitchhiking you know that someone might stop at any moment. Each car that passes you by is an individual disappointment. We had a lot of them. The afternoon wore on and on, and it wore us out. We sat or stretched out by the side of the road in hopeless postures of waiting. There was some solace in that we could talk to each other, but we weren't feeling witty and energetic as we had the night before. We were beginning to forget what it was like to be anywhere but there, north of Morro Bay. Rides? What're they?

We were utterly flabbergasted when a ~~px~~ pick-up truck pulled over and stopped. We grabbed our bags and ran toward it, afraid it would vanish like a mirage. (Perhaps if we were really high on a spiritual plane, we could hitch a ride in a mirage truck and get all the way to San Francisco. Think about it.) There were already two people lying in the back of the truck, but we tumbled in too and filled it up. There were two guys and a girl up front, and they were driving to Los Gatos. That's in the hills southwest of San Jose, and it's practically in the Bay Area. We were grinning with joy.

It was crowded in the back of the truck. The two guys who were there before us had set themselves up against the back of the cab, wrapped in sleepingbags and protected from most of the wind. They didn't talk much, although one of them said as we got in, "This truck is a miracle." They had been waiting a long time too. Alice and Terry and I arranged ourselves as best we could in the remainder of the truck's bed, leaning against the sides. And so we began riding up the coast.

The land was rolling and open for a while, with hills rising to the east. Out over the ocean the sun was low in the sky, heading toward a thick layer of clouds near the horizon. It looked as though we'd be getting fog further up the coast, and I looked forward to a long, cold ride. We passed San Simeon and the Hearst Castle up in the hills to our right; we could see the castle in the distance, shimmering on a hilltop.

We were beginning to feel the chill of the wind when we reached the first cliffs. The road started to wind, and the truck started to climb, and I said to Alice and Terry, "It's going to be like this all the way to Monterey." The mountains came down to the sea along that stretch of the California coast, and the twisting, slow Hwy 1 clings precariously to the cliff-face. At some ~~xxxx~~ points the road runs high over the surf, and at others the road runs down along the rocks. There aren't too many trees along the southern reaches of the coast, but it becomes more forested the farther north you go. We all kept our eyes glued on the cliffs and the sea, but after a while the chill began to seep into our skins and Alice pulled the hood of her shawl over her head and huddled into it. We went on and the wind kept blowing.

It was a long, cold ride. The cab of the truck was warm, and the people up front were in tee-shirts. They were laughing and talking and having a good time, while we were wind-blown and very cold. When we stopped once to change drivers and take a piss in the bushes we started hopping up and down to warm ourselves up. It was cramped as well as cold back there, with five people and too many packs. But there was the Big Sur countryside, and that was worth it all.

I had driven that route once, but I had forgotten what it was like. The mountains rising behind the coast are majestic, brown and sunburnt, taking the brunt



trucking -- VII

of the seawind. Jagged canyons stretch back into the mountains, filled with green trees and beautiful, rugged slopes. It's the kind of country that sounds in my soul.

By the time we reached the town of Big Sur, the sun had set behind the clouds. There the other two hitchhikers got out, and we moved up against the back of the cab, where there was less wind. After a while one of the guys up front offered to give up his seat and ride in the back for a time, so Alice went up front. Terry and I talked with the guy, who told us about his travels up and down the coast and his plans for taking a motorcycle trip across the Northwest next summer. He huddled down in a sleeping bag and eventually fell asleep while Terry and I tried to keep the wind from getting under the space blanket and watching the dark trees and lights go by.

Past Monterey, we whizzed along the flat farming lands between Monterey and Santa Cruz, again on the freeway. But the road left the freeway and we found ourselves driving through Castroville, which had a banner across its main street proclaiming it "The Artichoke Capital of the World." We had trouble handling that concept. We stopped for gas at a station that didn't even have a coffee machine, and I switched places with Alice. Even though they had the heat turned all the way up in the cab, I kept my coat on and it took me quite a while to really get warm.

The country began looking familiar as we went through Santa Cruz and headed up Route 17 over the mountains toward San Jose. The drivers wanted to stop once at Scott Valley, up in the mountains, so we took time there to get something to eat. We went into a Denny's, where one of the guys had worked a year or so before, and both of them joked about running into a local cop there with whom they'd had a few run-ins. They were home, and I was feeling nearly so.

We got to Los Gatos, and they offered to drive us into San Jose, where we could catch a bus up the San Francisco peninsula. We changed into a car, with lots of heat, then we drove down out of the mountains into the freeways with the lights of the Bay Area. We had arrived.

-- John D. Berry



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