



Number 24

Redd Boggs, editor

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"Improve every opportunity to express yourself in writing, as if it were your last." -- Thoreau, Journal, 17 December 1851.

Whores are legal in America as long as they wear bunny-ears.

Frolic Footnotes to a Life: Some Fannish Memories

The above title replaces the former one ("My Thirty Years in Fandom -- and How They Flew") for this series of fannish memoirs, or notes for memoirs. By now I have been a fan for almost 32 years, and by the time this series drifts to an end who knows how many more years will have gone by? At any rate, the former title infringed too close for comfort on one used once by Jack Speer. Juffus didn't complain about the far echo of a nonce title he used decades ago, but I have no desire to bow to old tyranny, even that of the still pleasant admirations of my impressionable youth.

4. To Conjure With

Just about 27 years ago, as I write -- far, it was, back in the olden time -- I sat down to contemplate the wonderful postwar world.

By then that world was glowing before us like some futuristic city, many-towered and iridescent, out of "The Legion of Time" or "When the Sleeper Wakes," or some other wild tale in one of those crazy Buck Rogers magazines. The time was summer-close in 1945. The war was over in a gaudy burst of fallout. The GIs were on their way home to Hoboken and Topeka. Factories were retooling for critical postwar production of cornflakes and Pepsi-Cola. But the postwar world was still on the misty horizon from where I sat.

That was at a desk in the corner of the personnel office of the 289th Infantry regiment of the 75th division, "somewhere in northern France." (I use the inexact geographical designation for security reasons; I'm not sure whether the information has been declassified.) What a hell of a place (as I often told myself) for an air force noncom to end up. But the 75th division was homeward bound, and so was I. If they wanted to tag along, it was perfectly all right with me. Just now there

wasn't much for me to do except decorate the desk with my alert and soldierly presence. Nothing was going on. Everybody was marking time till orders came to move to Marseille and sail for the States.

Except for making a feeble stab at looking busy whenever the big brass came clomping through the office, I spent most of my days killing flies, and time. Occasionally, of course, I hid my face and burst into horrified tears at the antics of our captain, rosyfaced and girlish, who shrieked gayly at the matachines on the regular office staff on the average of once every 30 seconds. It wore on my nerves, and in self-defense I wrote a scurrilous poem about the captain (and his goddam dog), with both the captain and his dog only five feet away, a poem much later printed in Hurkle #1, January 1950. How I yearned for some pleasant diversion, preferably attending the captain's funeral.

Unfortunately, the postwar world, as nearly as I could make it out from my vantage point on the underside of reality, didn't look one mote more alluring than the old shopworn prewar world -- despite all the articles heralding it in the Saturday Evening Post. And now the atomic doom hung over all. Britain, within weeks of VE-Day, had veered leftward, but no such tendency was in prospect for our kakistocracy in America. To spare my eyes of squinting into the glare and discerning the disquieting details of the same old moribund economic system and shabby political setup, I read a lot at my desk, mostly Armed Services editions of great literature like Look Homeward Angel, Cannery Row, and Green Dolphin Street. But sometimes I turned down a corner of the page in Kitty Foyle to mark my place, having been disturbed by the radiance of that damned mirage on the horizon blazing into my eyes whether I wanted to look or not, and devoted a good deal of time to peering sideways into the microcosm of postwar fandom.

I hadn't done much in fandom since entering the air force in July 1942, but I had thought about fanac often enough, and still considered myself a fan. I had even written a few pieces for fanzines, although I had no place to send them. My contacts in the fan world had slipped away in the past year or so. The Warner-Tucker Fanzine Service for Fans in Service still brought me a wayward fanzine or two, delayed in transit three or four months though they were. Warner himself had folded up Spaceways, thus knocking out the appearance of one fanzine I really looked forward to receiving regularly. And Tucker had dropped me a cheerful penny postcard to tell me that he couldn't send me any (or any more, maybe) issues of Le Zombie under the Fanzine Service because I had not been a subscriber previously. My enthusiasm for fandom had considerably dampened after that, since I was a sensitive wastrel in those days and inclined to brood a good deal about prods of the fickle finger. But now, at last, I began to think actively about fandom again. I held my fanac reserve up against the dazzle to check its ullage. Fortunately I found it brimming and dripping down the sides.

One of the first things I considered was the matter of a nom de guerre, which paradoxically I needed again, now that the war was over. Previously in fandom I had used my last name, embellished only by my first two initials. This ploy suitably obscured my first name, which I suffered with in a stolid, familiar sort of misery like that of a sour stomach or an ingrown toenail. I had found, however, that obscuring it

THE ROSE PERIOD

A wood along the road
to Guerneville
as dense with green
as a sunken boat hull
grown over with sea lettuce
and sea weed in a
shallow harbor --

with one artistic touch
like a polyp
of bright coral
in a surfy greenery:

a perfect rose abloom
beside a stump.
Only on second look
it's a geranium. But
it will do.

only excited vulgar curiosity. A letter from Dick Kuhn of Detroit as long before as 1941 first made me doubt that using D. W. Boggs as my fannish byline was a good idea. "Dear D. W.," he had written, adding as part of the salutation, "(Say, what the hell is your name anyway?)." I did not answer his query, except to sign my letter in return with the full salutation of his letter. Later, however, others expressed similar curiosity.

I had D. B. Thompson's example before me. He seemed to prosper using merely his first and second initials, although he did this for no obvious reason, since (as I recall) his first name was the unexceptionable one of Donald. In those long-ago days, of course, F. M. Busby was in Alaska or some other distant outpost of Tellus and incidentally eight or ten years in

my future. At any rate, when he appeared at last he owned a readymade familiar name for friends to use who might be intimidated by initials alone: Buz. In like manner, even in the pre-Busby era, I realized that using my own inevitable air force nickname, Red, might be the answer to my quest.

And then it occurred to me that I might in some way legitimize my nickname in order to forestall the most persistent people who might lust to know my "real name" even when offered my nickname. I cast about for some method of doing this. On some historic day in October 1945 -- I have the exact date written down in one of my old pocket notebooks, inaccessible to me at present -- I experimentally added an extra "d" to my nickname. By such simple means the name by which I was already commonly addressed immediately attained the semblance of a "real" name. There was tough fiber in it that could turn aside the curiosity of about 99 out of 100 fans. Moreover, the name "Redd Boggs" shared with such names as Abraham Lincoln, Wat Tyler, and Mao Tsetung a natural illustriousness that leaped forth like a tongue of flame through an iron grate. A happy invention, indeed, worthy of Genesis ii:19. I paused only to growl silently at the captain and his screeching favorites before adopting the name forthwith. I told myself (since there was no one else to tell who might be interested) that henceforth I was Redd Boggs, the one, the only, the original.

At the time I didn't know of anyone else in the world with the handle of Redd. Not till around 1956, after I had used the name for at least a decade, did I happen upon some sheet music with the composer's name listed as Redd Evans. I had never heard of the man before, although he had written the popular song of world war 2 called "Rosie the Riveter." Mr Evans, whose first name was "really" Lewis, died early in September 1972 at the age of 60 -- only too mortal, apparently, despite his use of Redd as a handle.

Not till about ten years ago did I learn of the existence of the great Redd Foxx. He was, I believe, already around in 1945, and presumably he had made his name famous, or notorious, in all the black nightclubs coast-to-coast long before I adopted the name. More recently -- so I have heard -- he has become a famous TV star. I first saw his name, however, on the marquee of a nightclub in Los Angeles -- Basin Street West, I believe it was -- while driving home from Culver City one evening in December 1962. In any event, despite the existence of these lesser lights with the name, I certify that I thought it up myself, op zijn eigen houtje.

Eight or nine months after I adopted my nom de guerre, by which time I was again a happy civilian and back home in Minneapolis, Van Splawn of St Louis wrote me, accepting something I had sent him for The Star Rover. He remarked that he remembered some things I had written four or five years before, and asked permission to byline the article D. W. Boggs, as of yore. I was overwhelmed by the egoboo of being remembered, but when I could totter to the typewriter I wrote him that henceforth I wanted to be bylined Redd Boggs. And so I have been. Long since, the name has also transcended the fan world and emerged into the mundane universe. Except for my family, and an old army buddy, Larry Green, in Los Angeles -- and of course Virginia Kidd, to whom I am always happy to grant a special dispensation -- I have in the past quarter century almost completely doffed my legal given name, and answer (if at all) only to the name of Redd.

"The best tunes of all go to Carnegie Hall."

Promises, Promises department

(Harry Warner's "President's Message," Fantasy Amateur, November 1971)

"I'm also going to make sure we have candidates for next year's election. If nobody files for a given office, I'll start persuading some people to run for it, and if persuasion is useless I'll resort to forgery...."

Bebe Rebozo for FBI director!

Telling This With a Psi

Berkeley is a place where anything can happen. One can emerge from the house in the morning with one's head still cluttered with dreams, tatters of strange visions of strange worlds, to find an uncanceled check blowing around the front yard, careless money mingling in the wind as naturally as butterflies or dead leaves. That the check is made out to a vaguely recognized name, that of Gray Barker, one of the towering prophets -- the Ezekiel, perhaps -- of the flying saucer, is only a minor marvel, hardly worth remarking in an Oz like Berkeley.

This very thing happened to me, three or four years ago, and I am willing to vouch for it on a stack of Martin Gardner's Fads and Fallacies in the Name of Science. I was reminded of the event just the other day when I found the check again. I told you anything can happen in Berkeley, and even something lost on my desk, desolate upon those vast steppes of papers and fanzines with basaltic layers underneath of books and manuscripts, can sometimes see the light of day again. Looking at it curiously and remembering it, finally, I decided that I should return the check to the maker (a man in Redwood City) whose address was printed upon the check.

Therefore I made out an envelope, and solemnly penned the following return address up in the corner: Blue Yapper, 123 Littlemen street, Saueria, Mars. Romance at short notice is my specialty.

THEN I noticed that evidently I had had the very same notion of returning the check when I first came upon it several years ago. For, looking closer at the waste of papers on my desk, I discerned a note addressed to the very maker of the check I had just rediscovered. I had not noticed it till I had addressed and return-addressed the envelope a few minutes earlier, and I am sure I had not looked at the note since I wrote it. I picked it up and unfolded it, and read: "You made the check out to 'Gray Barker' and my name is -- 'Blue Yapper.'"

"Blue Yapper," I had signed myself once before, in this old whimsy of mine! Talk about ESP! My fine mind must have esped the words in the folded note as it lay among the fallow clutter of my desk unreadable to anyone but me. In a single moment of maturity and triumph my psifaculty had flashed into existence like tendrils sprouting or testicles descending. Suddenly I was a superman after an age of childish innocence and impotence, and I was not one whit less marvelous than Al Ashley himself! What I tell you three times is true: Berkeley is a place where anything can happen.

"It's the final conflict! / Let each stand in his place!"

Last Gasp department

(from The Mark of Zorro, by Johnston McCulley, chapter 6)

"I have a servant who is a wonder at the guitar," Don Diego said. "Tonight I shall order him to come out and play beneath the señorita's window."

"And not come yourself?" Doña Catalina gasped.

"Ride out here again tonight, when the chill wind blows in from the sea?" gasped Don Diego. "It would kill me. And the native plays the guitar better than I."

"I never heard of such a thing!" Doña Catalina gasped....

The National Fantasy Fan Federation / Shall be the fannish race!"

Frodo Baggins: Establishment Pig

This magazine ordinarily does not reprint articles, but I think the following item deserves wider circulation than it received when it appeared in The Bay Area Socialist, December 1971, published by the Bay Area Local of the Socialist Party and the Norman Thomas chapter of the Young Peoples Socialist League. In its original form, the article was printed anonymously, along with a notation that it was "found crumpled up at the bottom of a shopping cart at the Berkeley Co-op." It is reprinted here by permission, in a slightly edited form.

All opinions expressed in this article are not necessarily endorsed by the present editor.

The 1960s revealed "liberal" anti-communism for what it was: merely another disguise for Amerikan imperialism. For the military-industrial complex, no weapon is left unused to spread Amerikan imperialism over the world and maintain the control over Third World peoples now enjoyed by Standard Oil and its Pentagon allies.

That Amerikan Kapitalism, its hands reeking of blood, could presume to criticize the popular liberation fronts of Vietnam, Palestine, and Czechoslovakia * is intolerable. What is worse are the fiendish devices Amerikan imperialism will use to accomplish its piggish ends -- from the Tribal Zionism of the blood-crazed Israelis with their long tradition of bloodshed and war to seemingly harmless literary fantasies.

The most reactionary piece of imperialist propaganda posing as harmless "literature" is the Lord of the Rings trilogy by pig J. R. R. Tolkien. Superficially, the story concerns the efforts of one Frodo Baggins and his eight odious "companions" to destroy the "Ring of Power" belonging to an "evil wizard" named Sauron.

Pig Baggins is a "hobbit from the Shire," and is helped by three other hobbits: Sam, Merry, and Pippin. In addition to this clique, there are a "good" wizard named Gandalf the Gray, an elf, a gold-loving dwarf, and two humans -- Aragorn and Boromir -- professional soldiers.

Helped by Gandalf's magic, vast, well-trained armies of humans, elves, dwarves, and other reactionaries, as well as a quisling named Gollum who is an obvious schizophrenic with a split personality, the companions battle the "slaves of Sauron." These "slaves" are Orcs or goblins who are "black-skinned" and "slant-eyed." They specialize in night fighting and ambushes. They speak several languages, tend to live in hills and mountains, and owe allegiance to Sauron.

Sauron himself is called "the Great" even by his enemies. He lives in a land in the east called Mordor, which is a land of "smokes and fumes" -- apparently an emerging industrial economy with a severe pollution problem. He has succeeded in gathering immense armies of Orcs, "Eastrons" and "Southrons," and is assaulting the white city of Minas Tirith when the Ring is destroyed, his power ended, and his armies scattered.

* This word crossed out in the original. [Note in the BAS printing.]

The real meaning of this piece of counter-revolutionary art is clear to those whose consciousness has been raised and radicalized by the confrontations of the past five years -- years which have seen so many major reforms as a result of our activities. The trilogy is a glorification of Amerikan imperialism and a piggish put-down of Third World liberation movements. Oinker Tolkien has glorified armed reaction, counter-revolution, imperialism, racism, and sexism. The "fantasy" is aimed at sapping the fighting will of the young revolutionaries who otherwise would dedicate their lives to smashing this fascist state.

One need only consider who Frodo (dog pig) Baggins and his "allies" are in order to strip the mask from under the rock. He is a bourgeois land-owner! He is a capitalist with no gainful means of employment who travels with a valet, whom he abuses at regular intervals. The hobbits are addressed as "squires" and "sirs" by the working-class hobbits (who approve, abet, and profit from their imperialist adventures).

The other companions are even worse. The dwarves are gold-mad (the gnomes of Zurich). The elves and the Riders of Rohan are feudal and are ruled by a landed aristocracy. One of the humans, Boromir, is a mercenary, and the other, Aragorn, is a deposed king. Gandalf possesses tremendous technological skills and firepower, conducts aerial reconnaissance with the help of eagles, and is obviously the General Westmoreland of the epic.

These nine companions, armed to the teeth with weapons superior to those of the Orcs, launch a military expedition which fights its way through mountains, swamps, and dense forests. They kill the peace-loving Orcish inhabitants who are trying to unite their lands and expel these invaders of another race. Gandalf's staff burns down any opposition with bursts of deadly fire. Remind you of anything?

The imperialist nine who are on this mission are all males who feel that woman's place is in the hobbit-hole. They refer to the Orcs as "savage," "slant-eyed," "foul," and "black" in derogatory ways. Pig Tolkien consistently refers to the colors black and red (as well as the word "dark") as evil and sinister, while white, silver, gold, and other light colors are regarded as good and wholesome. A more naked example of racism and counter-revolution would be hard to find.

The reactionary nature of their ultimate goals is seen in the treatment accorded Aragorn after Sauron is liquidated. He accepts a crown, not from the workers and peasants, who are forced to kneel before him, but from Gandalf. This setting-up of a puppet regime is a direct reference to the Thieu-Ky clique installed by Westmoreland against the wishes of the Vietnamese people. Death to all such paper tigers!

And what are they trying to do? This motley collection of feudal overlords, mercenaries, landed petit-bourgeoisie, and supporters of monarchy and reaction are, by their own admission, going into areas once "theirs," which are now held by Orcs. They slaughter every Orc they meet, although no Orc ever offs a hobbit. The dwarf and elf even play a game defending a strategic hamlet! Thus, the nine companions, on top of being sexist and racist, are obviously fighting an imperialist war of aggression and genocide. The "quest" is nothing more than a search and destroy mission!

If the companions are representative of Amerikan imperialism and racism, who then are the Orcs? Again, Tolkien has stated the facts for all but fools to see. The Orcs are black (or sometimes yellowish). They fight from ambush from mountain sanctuaries. For the most part they are poorly armed and must travel at night. They control fortresses, strategic hamlets, and cities of their enemies. They are on the offensive everywhere under the inspired leadership of Chairman Sauron, and are aided by other Third World peoples -- trolls, werewolves, "Southrons," and "Eastrons." They have liberated large areas which were formerly occupied by feudal nobles, and are building "mills" and "forges." One of their favorite colors is red. They live in the eastern part of Middle Earth.

One does not have to stand in the sun to know that there's sun. The Orcs are obviously Third World guerrillas who are in alliance with other formerly colonial peoples (trolls and werewolves) in a Popular Front -- the Orc Liberation Front.

Controlling the countryside, they wage a war of liberation against the reactionaries who once controlled their lands and are now everywhere on the defensive. Well, almost everywhere.

Sauron is a leader of great brilliance, of a stature with the other great twentieth century liberationists, Mao Tsetung and Ho Chi Minh. Practicing a form of democratic centralism with his nine "Nazgul" advisors, themselves trained in past colonial wars, he has survived initial military disaster (like Mao and Fidel) and is trying to industrialize Mordor as rapidly as possible, despite some damage to the environment. Protected by the armed might of the Orcish workers and peasants, he creates a modern, progressive state along communal lines, and shows the greatest compassion to his enemies, to whom he offers treaties of friendship and nonaggression. The hobbits are never killed when captured, but are fed and permitted to travel with the guerrillas. His reactionary enemies take no prisoners.

What then is the Ring, the ultimate weapon possessed by the imperialist agents of counter-revolution, which eventually totally destroys the O.L.F. and their revolution? The weapon which the imperialists do not hesitate to use to regain their former colonial empire? Tolkien feebly tries to disguise it by falsely attributing its manufacture to Sauron. But there is a dead giveaway which takes the wool off the bush.

The Ring of Power has another title -- the Ring of Fire -- nuclear fire -- the ultimate weapon which capitalist imperialism alone can unleash upon the world.... (At this point the narrative breaks off in a large stain of avocado juice.)

Organic gardening sounds like a lot of shit to me.

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