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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.

They threaten to cowhide me, but I will not be sued.

Charles Burbee and the Wave of the Future

"Did sexual oblivion await me...?" Charles Burbee wondered (so he tells us) at the not-too-advanced age of 49, guessing and fearing as he cast his e'e forward a few years. "Would I no longer steal peeks down the blouses of young ladies when they bent over, or bless the inventors of doubleknit fabrics when I was viewing the young ladies from behind?" Apparently he confuses doubleknit with regular knit material that clings and reveals contours, but this is the only auctorial lapse that I can see in "The Poll," published in The Rambling Fap (mailing #142), a contribution that ought to make the pages of any future edition of The Incompleat Burbee with great ease.

He might have added, in the words of Nero, "Qualis artifex pereo!" For he can still write superbly well, although Joyce Katz in her editorial in Tandem #1 in the same mailing speaks of him in the past tense. Certainly "The Poll," though (I presume) written recently, is just as amusing as vintage Burbee, the sketches and articles he wrote in the days when -- to quote Harry Warner -- "he brightened up a whole decade for FAPA members." It is good to see another example at so late a date of that clear and direct expression, that mood of mocking lightheartedness, which looks so easy to concoct but is not (as regiments of other fan writers, past and present, have discovered to their readers' discomfort). I read the piece twice over just to pleasure my tastebuds on its tart and sappy flavor. It took me back to happier days when them apples regularly grew in the fapish orchard.

"Sexual oblivion" apparently has not overtaken Burbee either, despite his fear -- at least judging from "The Poll." His puissance is as secure as his artistry, although a cynic might say, why shouldn't it be, since he equates sexuality only with dirty-old-manism. But something else has crept upon him like dandruff: obsolescence, perhaps, which falls in a gentle powdery shower from the page. Despite the fact that the Chron has told us lately, in hailing "the return of the bra" (as if

it ever went), that there is a "return to traditional looks and values" taking place in this country, Burbee's article seems a little archaic, a little passe, now in 1973. And it's all because of women's lib.

Women's liberation has, I believe, higher goals than the one so far attained: the freedom to wear skirts in the ankle-length fashion of 1915. The triumph of the suffrage movement unfortunately did not bring about a social revolution, but the present movement has the potential behind it to shake mountains and sink whole continents. Great shiftings of matter impend. Our whole social universe will be modified beyond recognition within the next decade. Meanwhile women's lib has already stimulated the growth of a new kind of taste, a fresh awareness, that is spreading everywhere. Nearly everybody in our society has gotten a little sensitized over the past five years to the presence of male chauvinism in all aspects of everyday life.

The tender vibrissae begin to grow and reach out even in FAPA. In mailing #141, Jan Evers referred parenthetically to William Rotsler as one of the few male chauvinists she has met in fandom. Although female fans have said such things about Rotsler for at least ten years in private conversation, Jan's remark was the first time in print, so far as I know. Nobody seems to have marked the tiny fission of such an utterance anywhere in their mailing comments on FAPAZEE #1, but Jan may actually have fractured the atom that will start a new continuum.

None of this has touched Burbee at all; he sounds much the same as he did in 1949. The world has changed around him, but he has failed to perceive, or more likely, has refrained from perceiving as a matter of principle, just as Tyrannosaurus Rex must have refused to notice the sprouting of cacti along the receding edges of his favorite wallow. Burb's clear harp-notes no longer sound so perfectly sweet, though strummed by a master. Listening with an attentive ear, I detect a discord or two.

But then, perhaps I am too sensitive, though my sense of perfect pitch is well-known from Kennebunk to Pocatello. I thought I heard another sour note, of the same sort, in the reprint from Francis T. Laney in Tandem #1, but I suppose I must be mistaken. Terry Carr gave FTL's article, "A Fabulous, Burbee-like Character," an admiring tribute in introducing it as one of the "Entropy Reprints," calling it "One of the mainstays of Insurgent literature," and not adding any disclaimers. And the Katzes printed it without a murmur, except that in her editorial Joyce remarked that she didn't like Laney as much as she liked Burbee because the former was more "cutting" in his humor. But I noticed that Laney's article contains this jarring line: "'Semmy,' I said to him in my best pseudo-Yid accent, 'vat meks you zo febulous and Burbee-like?'"

That's hardly Dachau and Buchenwald, and in the strict sense it may not be antisemitic at all. But as I said, it jolts one a trifle, now in 1973. It begins to look as though the world is changing so rapidly, in the tenuous fashion of the fog swirling through the TV tower on Mount Sutro, that reprinting things from even the recent past will soon be dangerous. One may be damned now to eternal neglect or even castigation in the pages of Bete Noire for the most innocent of remarks in 1961. In

all these years I have not reread The Incomplete Burbee, and while I remember it as a remarkable volume, I suspect that there are many disquieting aspects about it when viewed in retrospect.

I am not picking on Burbee and Laney, except as handy examples of classic fan literature. Examples from other fan writers would do as well, or even better. Does anyone want to delve into the writings of Paul D. Cox or George Wetzel? Towner once told me (in a personal letter) that he himself rather deplored the antisemitic slant that had crept into some of his writings; he defended himself on some specious grounds or other. His antisemitism was not a virulent case, in any event, but his male chauvinism was another matter, for Laney was a very devoted MCP.

Most fans are male chauvinists, of course, despite Jan Evers' polite fiction to the contrary. I have heard it said on unimpeachable authority that fans vie with dentists, cops, men of the cloth, doctors, and members of the Socialist Workers party as the most male chauvinist bunch of scoundrels west of Iraq. Scratch a fan and pork blood will drench your boots. Other women have assured me (to my face) that all men in the whole world are sexists; there hasn't been a single exception -- they tell me -- since time began. Not one. Thus we males are each and all male chauvinists, from Harry Warner and Greg Benford to William Rotsler and Randall Garrett, and exactly on all fours with Burbee and Laney.

Not only the work of the Insurgents (which brightened an insensitive decade) but the work of the rest of us who were so unwary as to blacken paper in the receding past is likely to prove disastrous to us in the looming future. Most fan writing is flapdoodle, harmless in its way, for the motto of fandom is ever and always Non Compos Mentis (which means "Sold Out for Today"), but now and then a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph bristles out of the bosh to condemn the writer as a blackguard (conscious or unconscious): a sexist, racist, bigot, hawk, fascist, or fool of other stripe.

Some notions along this line were expressed in a letter I wrote nearly two years ago to Greg Shaw. He printed the letter in Metanoia #11, February 1972, in mailing #138, where completists with their files tidily to hand may find it. I myself was aghast to behold it in print, since it was intended as a private letter and not for publication (although I should not have been surprised, since it was the 6137th time this has happened to me in fandom), and I will not commit it to print yet again. However, in the letter I expressed amaze that fans seem oblivious to the flaws of fan writers of the past, and theorized that it was that these favored few have been touted as "popular figures" who can seemingly do no wrong.

At this point, editor Shaw inserted a comment between double parentheses which I will quote: "...it's one thing when a figure from the past makes a misinformed statement in 1970, and quite another to judge 20-year-old writing in terms of recent advances in social consciousness. Are you so sure no sexist remarks ever passed your lips? Who was aware of such things a few years ago? Antisemitism is a bit more serious, but ...these writers must be judged in the context of their lives and times.

Otherwise we'll end up burning a large part of the world's great literature, as I have no doubt certain radical interests would be more than eager to do."

Bravely, Mr Shaw. Perhaps I ought to answer here the two questions you posed: (1) I was a male chauvinist before the term was even invented. And (2), as to who was aware of sexism "a few years ago," this is a rhetorical question with a succinct answer: Many people were -- including such famous people as John Stuart Mill. Indeed, a majority of the population was keenly aware of it, since they were its victims. Have you forgotten the women, Mr Shaw? Unfortunately most women never said much about the matter, except perhaps among themselves. Even today most women are silent as they strain on hands and knees to hold up the tottering male-dominated world lest it fall down. They act faithfully as unpaid and overworked house-servants and nursemaids in their husband's house, go uncomplainingly to bed with him, bear his children (often unwanted, and always encumbering), work outside the home for half the salary and little of the security extended to male employees, and in short do all the work needed to keep the world on keel from day to day, and in addition do nearly all the man's thinking for him. But they have always kept their mouths shut, despite all the humiliation, exploitation, and injustice. This lets the male ego flourish unbruised, and peace reigns in the household as a result.

However, as Valerie Solanas wrote in the SCUM Manifesto the results of this self-imposed silence are always bad in the long run: "Most women are already dropped out and dropping out gives control to those few who don't drop out.... it strengthens the system...since the system is based entirely on the non-participation, passivity, apathy, and non-involvement of the mass of women."

This will change. I half-believe that we are standing on the threshold (panting a little) of what Heinlein once called "the first human civilization." As soon as that era begins, what is going to happen to the literature of the past? Perhaps some of it will be burned, as Greg says it might. But mostly it is not a matter of destroying it, but of its being quietly superseded as it sits undisturbed on library shelves, becoming antiquated and neglected, as much of a back number as a Stanley Steamer or Tricia Nixon's clothes. It will be a gentle, sedate process, and books that are flourishing now will curl up and die on the day of the new age's beginning.

The novels of Heinlein himself will shrink and shrivel. The leaves of Farnham's Freehold will turn yellow, the print fading from grey to greyer, and not from eyetracks; mold will overtake the last neglected copy of I Will Fear No Evil. And all the rest of the popular science fiction of today and yesterday, disused, dilapidated, will decay tranquilly in the dusty dark.

Not only science fiction, but all the great literature of the past disappearing forever with hardly a tear shed upon it. Dry rot is a relatively silent process which is not much like the crackle and boom of a big fire, and it is amusing to imagine some of the famous books of the past exploding grandly from the malfunction of their faulty inner workings and making the sounds characteristic of constructive destruction.

War and Peace -- bang! For Whom the Bell Tolls -- crash! Manon Lescaut
-- poof! The Lord of the Rings -- tinkle! Magister Ludi -- phffft!

The entire works of Henry James, James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence, Fedor Dostoevski, Norman Mailer, Gustave Flaubert, John Steinbeck, James Fenimore Cooper, James Thurber, and Henry Miller will tumble down like tenpins or Great Walls under the onslaught of Mongols. Wham! There will be thin dust rising in clouds, the smell of old corruption and advanced decay, and then blessed fresh air and sunlight. Suddenly there will be an open vista across the vast deserts of nonsensicality that constituted the great literature of our traditions, with only a few classics rising like monuments, higher than ever: Shakespeare, Chaucer, and the writings of the likes of Jane Austen, the Brontes, Louisa May Alcott, Virginia Woolf, and others who, whatever their flaws, conceived of and depicted women as free, independent, and thinking entities, and wrote books that, not minimizing and misrepresenting a whole sex, can be read by everybody, not just less-than-half the population.

The physical presence of the old outworn books will be gotten rid of somehow, eventually. They will be trundled off to wherever the old joke-books are from 40 or 50 years ago, the ones containing humor like the following two-liner: "Conductor: 'Lady, will you please move those suitcases out of the aisle?' Colored Woman: 'Lan' sakes alive! Dem's no suitcases -- dem's mah foots!'" There is as much reprehensible in the books that still exist as there was in those that have disappeared, and good riddance to them. Some of the old books will, I hope, be put to good use as ballast, doorstops, window-sash-proppers, missiles shielded at pesky dogs, and similar things. How pleasant to prop open the bathroom door with Finnegans Wake, or to crumple pages from Nine Princes in Amber for the cat box!

And then a whole new library will have to be written to replace the one that succumbed to inner rot. Ten million new novels, plays, travel books, poetic works! I thought of starting to write a book just now, to get a headstart on the rest of you, but I'm pooped after batting out this article. And anyway, the only people qualified to write the new literature (at least at first) will be women.

"There are three basic forces at work in the universe..."

Dreary Old Miracle department

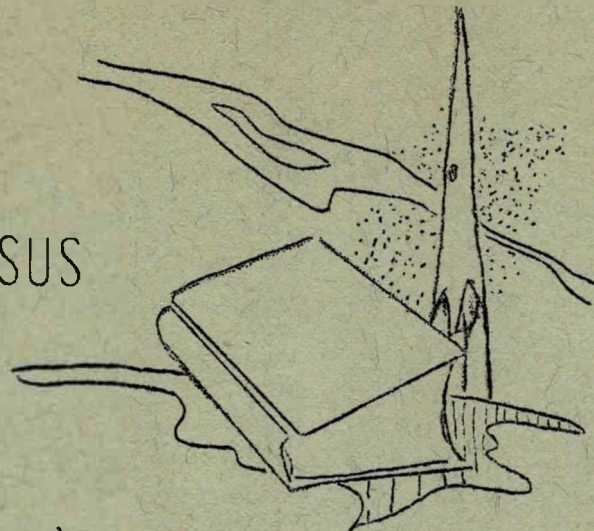
(from the Oakland Tribune, 17 April 1972)

"It was like an illustration from a storybook -- a silvery crescent moon with a shining star just off the upper tip.... The bright point of light was merely Earth's sister planet Venus...."

"The celestial phenomenon isn't really all that rare. Venus passes in front of the moon several times a year, but is visible only twice in 12 months because the transit often takes place in daylight hours...."

...matter, energy, and chopped liver." -- Max Shulman.

PARNASSUS



ON JETS

The Unbounded Stomach

DELIGHTS AND PREJUDICES, by James Beard. New York: Simon and Schuster Fireside Book, 1971. (First published 1964.)

I wish Bjo would conduct another poll of fannish food preferences like the one she did about ten years ago. So far as I recall, the results of the earlier poll were never printed, but preliminary returns (reported to me verbally) indicated that fans -- myself included -- were gastronomes precisely on the order of starving wolves pursuing troikas across the snowy steppes. But food preferences, I suspect, may have changed a lot in a decade, along with everything else. For example, in the interim I have trimmed my hair, shaved off my beard, thrown away my wire-rimmed country spectacles, and donned a pair of unpatched trousers, simply because I am not rich enough to follow the high fashion. Food-wise, since about 1964, I have so largely recovered from my old solitary bachelor ways that I almost never make breakfast on cold pork-and-beans from a can, and lately I have taken to diluting Campbell's soup before heating it for lunch.

There seems to be a gentle uplift in American cuisine these days, even if it has taken the form of crackpottery for the most part: vegetarianism, "natural" foods, macrobiotic diets, and the like. Such fads are often antifeedism at bottom, of course, representing, not healthy gusto for victuals, but sickly moral rejection of pleasure for its own sweet sake. Such aberrations represent a strange late flowering of asceticism and self-immolation in a society more attuned to Trimalchio's feast than to the Desert Fathers. Only a Thoreau or a Bernard Shaw could remain vegetarian when confronted by a seductive roast of standing ribs of beef, and I confess that my own carnality is quite out of hand. I myself am not virtuous enough to resist the lure of such succulence, any more than I am saintly enough to be a homosexual with half the world populated by intelligent and admirable women.

Of course, this is not to say that the gastronomic crackpots are not sometimes capable of touting us onto a charming regale or two we might otherwise have overlooked in our quest for more and bigger T-bone steaks. Kasha, for example, or peppermint tea, of which I have drunk gallons with faint tickles of delight, although the concoction seems not

to work any curative effects on my many disabilities. I occasionally patronized health food stores long before the current plague of natural food stores broke out, for tidbits not available elsewhere.

In truth, though one hears of roving packs of "foodfreaks" on the loose, ravening after epicurean delights ineffable, the nationwide food revolution has not been very sweeping as yet, judging from the crowds of working-class people assaulting the portals of McDonald's everywhere. And I hesitate to guess what sort of tastebuds burgeon in the epiphelium of the tongues of the middleclass people who are forever just ahead of me in the checkout line of the Berkeley Co-op supermarket. They always have their shopping carts loaded to the plimsoll with pints of yogurt, loaves of Wonder bread, six-packs of Diet Cola, and armloads of TV dinners. A juggernaut of null-groceries to shiver one, indeed. What the upperclasses eat, if anything, is unknown to me personally, but Ferdinand Lundberg in The Rich and the Super-Rich points out that youngsters of the wealthy "gorge on rancid hotdogs and hamburgers at ball games like any other red-blooded, true-blue American.... The rich here are often hoist by their own politico-economic petard." It's almost enough to make one shed tears for Mr Rockefeller and his progeny.

Are fans really any wiser than these other zombies of consumerism? Are fans in the vanguard of progress? Have they ever been? The salivating savages who gobble down the botulistic purées of Roger Zelazny and Andre Norton and think it's great literature are likely, I'm afraid, to bolt down frozen tuna pies and consider it good fodder, too. "Food has become a Way of Life," we learn from the fanzines, and reserve our opinion. Bjo, where are you?

The queer thing is: hardly anybody, high or low, ever complains very bitterly about the bad tuck we are offered in supermarket and restaurant. But then, the slob is easily satisfied; the man with a palate, seldom, and we have no palates. Why? We must remember that nearly all of us alive, in this country, who were born since the second world war were weaned on Gerber's baby foods. These dull and insipid concoctions, which taste like the essence of ten years of Analog pulped and canned, must be a great convenience to parents, but subjecting babies to a steady diet of Gerber's must anesthetize the defenseless moppet's palate for life. Many of us live day by day on processed ingesta exactly as bland and unexciting as Gerber's strained carrots. We will not return to the golden days of gastronomy till children are once again teethed on a chicken drumstick and from the age of ten months are hoisted to table level on a stack of Montgomery Ward catalogs and spoonfed with dollops of the same fare eaten by grownups.

Of course, considering again what grownups eat, even this desperate expedient isn't going to educate the next generation. We whirl about in a giddy, vigorous circle. We cannot save ourselves because we cannot save ourselves. But lo, into this world of ready mixes, quick frozen gunk, shaking-and-baking, and ready-to-eats in plastic bags comes one James A. Beard* lugging a barbecue-apron full of cookbooks and books about food -- and he has shown up only just in time. The taste of food

* The man who wrote "Five Fathoms of Pearls" (Unknown, Dec. 1939) and collaborated with Theodore Sturgeon on "The Bones" and "The Hag Seleen" was James H. Beard.

we buy these days, not to mention the extortionate price of it (there may be some disagreement whether food is more painful to buy or to eat), had nearly forced me to reduce my own meals to the bare minimum: first swallowing a package of instant mashed potatoes and then drinking a glass of water.

Mr Beard's cookbooks are a pleasure to read and to use. Unfortunately most copies of them one sees around are discolored by spots of some orgasmic mixture splattered by an electric beater in the process of making one of his recipes. Mint copies are found only in the bookstore, which is the place to head for. The present book is an autobiography interlarded with recipes that may turn you off your diet of sunflower seeds forever. Beard is a huge, bald, paunchy fellow with a Pickwickian benevolence, and his tastes are probably too gargantuan to qualify as those of a gourmet. One pictures him contentedly picking his teeth and listening to his belly gurgle. His resemblance to Charles Laughton in the role of Henry VIII is certainly suggestive, and his residence, as described in the book, must remind one of the Frankelney's hall in Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales:

Withoute bake mete was nevere his hous,
Of fissh and flessch, and that so plenteuous,
It snewed in his hous of mete and drynke,
Of alle deynteys that men koude thynke.

As an autobiography, Delights and Prejudices is neither candid nor revealing about the man's life, inner or outer. We learn precious little about Beard except about his gusto for delicious food -- but of course this may be sufficient if you subscribe to the view that you are what you eat. Mr Beard is quite a fellow, if this is the case. "Dis-moi ce que tu manges, je te dirai ce que tu es."

He calls himself a gourmand, and confesses to not teaching haute cuisine, but rather what he calls "cuisine bourgeoise," evidently signifying something a bit more modest than the other. The bourgeois may be beastly, as D. H. Lawrence assures us, but the cuisine may be just what we need at this moment of time when most self-appointed saviors would rescue us by teasing our palates with high French cookery. French cuisine, by which is meant the cuisine of the upper class French, is -- like French wine -- often vastly overrated, and after a while we are like Meg's spoiled husband in Little Women "who grew dyspeptic after a course of dainty dishes and ungratefully demanded plain fare." In the day of frozen dinners, we are less likely to strive after a tournedos aux champignons or a blanquette de veau a l'ancienne than to faunch for something simple yet tasty, like a pot of baked beans, judiciously flavored with salt pork, garlic, and Tabasco. Drowning in the flood, we aspire only to solid dry land, not to the top of Everest.

Beard hails from the Gomorrah of the northwest, Portland, Oregon, which seems at first glance like the most unpromising place for a budding gastronome to be born aside from Ponca City, Oklahoma, Lordsburg, New Mexico, and Toowoomba, Queensland, towns where hundreds of travelers die horribly every year, like poisoned rats, just outside the walls of the roadside greasy-spoons. But he soon shows us that this is not the case. Though to my mind Portland, gastronomically speaking, is chiefly

renowned as the home of that dreadful dish, chocolate cake dunked in tomato soup, Beard tells us that the city in his youth (he was born in 1903) boasted of numerous good restaurants: House's, Huber's, Falt's Quelle restaurant, the Benson hotel, and even a restaurant in Meier & Frank's department store. Most of these are gone now, one assumes, or are wasted shadows of their former selves. The Benson hotel, Beard reports sadly, now boasts only a Trader Vic's.

But even better than the restaurants, Beard in his youth ate well at home, a fate almost unheard of anymore. His mother was an excellent cook who once managed a hotel and its much-admired dining room, and the family also employed a Chinese cook (formerly the chef in the hotel, and trained in French cookery) who possessed great skill and virtuosity. Most vividly of all Beard describes his childhood home and "the array of good dishes...prepared in the most memorable of kitchens."

So far as the reader can tell, no great adventures nor any grand passions (apart from the kitchen and the dinner table) ever befell Mr Beard before or even after he left Portland. At the age of 19 he departed the town for a Wanderjahre in Europe. He seems to have spent much of his time in restaurants. He regrets now that through inexperience he failed to discover some of the great Parisian restaurants of the 1920s, now gone: "I am unhappy every time I think that the great Montagne was cooking in Paris in that era, and I didn't know it." But he adds that he is grateful that he devoted his energies to visiting some of the smaller restaurants, at least, and learning "the basic dishes of French cuisine when I might have been spending my money in the flesh-pots." His life, insofar as we can tell from Delights and Prejudices, was singularly uneventful till he was drafted in World War 2 (when he was close to 40 years old) and spent six unhappy months in the service -- G.I. food must have horrified him! -- before obtaining an honorable discharge. The rest of the war years he was employed by the United Seamen's Service to set up service clubs for the navy at various overseas ports in Latin America and Europe. After the war he was hired to appear on a TV show called "Elsie Presents," doing the first commercial food program ever televised in America (1946), an appearance that led to many encores before the cameras. And then he opened his famous cooking school in New York City.

Nearly everywhere he went during all those years he found good food, wonderful food, sometimes even sublime food. He tells about his favorite restaurants in London, Paris, San Francisco, and New York, an array of superb eating-places to make one envious indeed. I like a good restaurant, a good bistro. I am actually neither highbrow nor lowbrow, but rather hofbrau. I never have had Mr Beard's good fortune in finding excellence, however, partly because he has had more money



My God!

than I with which to indulge his tastes. I usually pass by the Fancy, Expensive Restaurants and settle for modest, inexpensive places (if any still exist these days), ending up at the chop house if not the hash house, or even at the lunch counter on Mission street. But then again, it's also because many of the places Mr Beard mentions are out of business. Some have disappeared just since the book was written, only ten years ago, victims of the chain-restaurant pox. One of Mr Beard's particular favorites, San Francisco's famous Jack's restaurant, lost its owner, Mr Paul Redinger, who had run it for 70 years, by death as recently as May 1973, and one worries what will happen to it as a result.

Beard even liked the food on some of the old railroad dining-cars. I haven't tried Amtrak, but I doubt the food on these relics can compare with that Beard describes. "Meals in the diner were heaven," he says, telling about the Shasta Limited of the Southern Pacific steaming south toward San Francisco, the Coast Ranges rolling past outside the window while he breakfasted on ham and eggs, or sausages and eggs, or perhaps even fresh mountain trout. The contrast of this luxury fare with that on today's airliners is heart-wrenching. The advertised "luscious entrees and delicious desserts" on the latter turn out to be -- so I have heard -- only a variety of TV dinner. Eating such fare is better than starving, but not by much.

A few places in the world he did not find good food: Not on a British ocean liner in the 1920s heading for Europe. Not in the bounteous Caribbean. "I have always felt," he writes, "that food in the Caribbean is perhaps the worst in the world." But almost everywhere else. He was of course living in a different world from ours, and I am glad that he was. To be young and to be Jim Beard in America of 1973 would be as bad as being a youth with a passion for the theater born into Puritan times rather than the age of Shakespeare. In his young manhood Beard lived in Breughel's Land of Cockaigne, with its colors and curvatures of ripeness and plenty. If he was 30 or 40 years younger, he might have come to an ignominious end: a youth unacquainted with good food and without taste, who set up shop as a rock music expert, or an authority on underground comix (sic), or the Tolkien detrius. The mind winces.

Over Delights and Prejudices, indeed, glimmers an elegaic mood, a nostalgic harking back to the days when "good food abounded" and "when no one worried about cholesterol." Today we are glutting ourselves at Barmecide's feast. We have perhaps gained a good deal in purity of food since about 1910, but this was at the expense of staggering losses in the taste and nutritive values of comestibles. Food has become merely a commodity, not a pleasure. Trying to find good grub today is rather like trying to find an honest poker game.

In the realm of seafood, which is perhaps Beard's particular delight, the reader's mood is bound to turn livid and bitter as he scans. The contrast of those days with ours is enough to crumple the pages with tears. Back then, all the coastal cities of America were adjacent to -- as Mencken puts it -- "the immense protein factory" of the ocean. In our own day, though the cities have not moved even an inch inland (and are probably even closer to the water, since the coast is being constantly chewed away), we on the California coast find ourselves offered the same frozen fish that one can buy in Kansas City or Tucson. The amount of

fresh seafood available anywhere is pitifully small, and we can only drool quietly at Beard's descriptions of "the great razor clams, the succulent Dungeness crab, the salmon, crawfish, mussels and trout of the Oregon coast," or the dentón, sardines, anchovies, shrimp, and langoustes he devoured during a summer spent on the Costa Brava in Spain.

Another of Beard's delights is baked goods. While little can be done to bring back the seafood he describes so temptingly (aside from changing our politico-economic system entirely, and perhaps not even then, so late is it), we can do something about the abominable bakery goods we are offered. Beard quotes his mother as saying that baker's bread tasted like cotton batting -- and she was living in the days when boughten bread actually still had some taste left. Nowadays such bread tastes like styrofoam. But there is some hope. A few restaurants in the Bay area, otherwise undistinguished, are baking their own bread, as superior to cello-wrapped bread as Dickens is to Van Vogt. San Francisco sourdough French bread is a pretty good commercial product, found at every supermart hereabouts. But the real answer to the lack of tasty bakery goods is to bake them yourself. Mr Beard recommends hard wheat flour (if you can find it), and suggests starting out with the sourdough method for bread making. He tells how to make Parker House rolls (they can also be fashioned into cinnamon buns or bread), sweet cream biscuits, teacakes, currant bread, oatcakes, seedcake, even crumpets and girdle scones. Anyone who reads this section of the book will soon be delighting his palate with such pâtisserie for the first time in his life (and incidentally gaining a few pounds around the waist).

Not only seafood and baked goods, but even vegetables Mr Beard bolts down with a gusto that is positively unAmerican. Aside from the aforementioned wheatgerm fiends, with their saintly smiles and birdly appetites, Americans are traditionally suspicious of vegetables, either in a salad or -- even worse -- gently boiled in a little water or sautéed as a side dish. Having undergone a spinach inquisition in their childhood they are chary of all vegetables. The rough-and-tough American male likes to show that red blood flows thickly in his veins by rejecting salads of whatever sort and demanding (with thumps on his chest) only rare and reeking steak. Beard will have none of that, but here again the mood is sad and elegaic, for the great vegetable markets he describes are nearly gone. But perhaps one can find good produce by shopping carefully -- vegetables these days are often particularly yummy with Monitor 4 -- or even better, by growing vegetables in the backyard.

Beard's book (and his cookbooks) contains plentiful information about preparing these succulent delicacies once they are grown and plucked. For instance, he likes to nibble raw artichokes prepared the Italian way: with a garlic and red pepper dressing; he also dotes on dandelion greens with a mint-garlic-bacon dressing, zucchini cut into julienne strips and deep-fried, cole slaw mixed with an herby oil dressing, cabbage braised in white wine and butter, and many other vegetables "considered outlandish by most people": among them, cardoons, broccoli, baby turnips, fava beans, and leeks. He likes corn (i.e. maize) in many forms, even hominy -- including a couple of canned brands -- used as a garnish for chicken or pork. One of his oddest recipes is for puréed parsnips, flavored with nutmeg or Spice Parisienne and baked till brown on top. I am a little timorous about trying this myself.

He admits to being "inordinately fond" of potatoes, and provides us with several useful recipes for such delicacies as hashed browns -- which taste little like the frozen kind -- Swiss raclette and roesti potatoes, and Potatoes Anna ("nothing in the entire potato world can excel them"). He likes tiny new potatoes cooked in their skins, and suggests eating baked Idahoes with only salt and freshly ground black pepper, no butter. He mentions many varieties of potato salad, including one with mayonnaise. Since commercial mayonnaise is with only a few exceptions an abomination one should make his own -- Beard provides a good recipe. It includes tarragon vinegar, lemon juice, and Tabasco sauce. But better yet, one should try potato salad of another variety, such as the kind using a sour cream dressing.

Beard also describes his passion for fresh fruit, but let's say no more about it. The chance for amelioration here is bleak indeed. Only by great good luck is it possible to buy tasty -- indeed, even edible -- fruit in the supermarket. The fruit sold almost everywhere, including roadside stands in this area, has little taste at all, and having been picked green is as hard to digest as Bouvard et Pechuchet. One needs to grow his own orchard, although as a minor substitute Burpee's offers California residents, at least, orange and lemon trees in pots that will flourish in a small backyard or even a front.

The list of provender that Beard likes and praises almost to the verge of scharmerei is long and impressive, but not everything gastronomic meets with his approval. His book is in many ways parti pris; as the second half of the book's title suggests, Beard is as much scoffer as Escoffier. Among his prejudices are milk (aside from some dishes using it as an ingredient), Swedish meatballs, Christmas cookies, home-made candy, cranberries, quick-cured hams, chicken livers, frozen turkeys ("Scientifically plucked, which removes part of the skin and practically all the oil sacs, and frozen in a plastic case, today's bird has about as much flavor and texture as a piece of asbestos. To market these turkeys is a crime against good food and an insult to the consumer"), cocktail party hors d'oeuvres, and punches of all varieties, including Tom and Jerries and eggnogs: "I may have had to dispense a thousand different punch recipes in my day, but I haven't had to drink them, by God!"

His book also has a few omissions and shortcomings perhaps not due to prejudice. If not haute cuisine, most of the cookery mentioned here is French or at any rate European. Despite the Chinese cook in the Beard family when James was a boy (Let, the cook, was trained, as has been said, in French cuisine) little attention is paid to Oriental nurture. No mention at all is made of Japanese cookery, which I am fonder of than rock fans are of loud noise. Nor does the great Jewish cuisine especially fetch Mr Beard, who barely alludes to it, and does not make us privy to a single secret of concocting such delicious mungey as tzimmes, knishes, challah, or blintzes. I was obliged to burgle the office of the psychiatrist who was treating a graduate (summa cum laude) of the kitchen of a New York delicatessen in order to wrest from the Learned Elders of Zion the mystery of latkes. From perusing the same psychiatric transcript I also learned that no kosher delicatessen worthy of the name exists west of New York, aside from three in Chicago which are good but lesser. Their identity this scholar of Hebrew eatibles dared not to divulge even to his shrink. Since New York or even Chicago

is slightly beyond the computer-ruled hegemony of BART, I must depend on Solomon's (non-kosher) in San Francisco for chopped liver, potato salad, and stuffed breast of veal. (Kindly omit get-well cards; just send New York salamis.) Langer's, on Alvarado street in Los Angeles, has slipped quietly from third-rate to fourth-rate in recent years. The rest is wasteland.

While not dwelling in the airy regions of Brillat-Savarin, James Beard at least remains many fathoms above the depths of the Betty Crocker cookbooks, out of which have seeped tons of badly cooked grub in the past 25 years. His book is written with a fine disdain for the usual gourmetise; one can endure only so many recipes for Tire-bouchons en-gourdis and Baleines enjambees a la Cousteau. Sometimes I half-suspect that much of French cookery is a put-on by the rich, designed to foist upon their unwary inferiors the most disagreeable of foods as great delicacies: escargots, for example, or pressed duck. I'll take veal scallops with lemon or pork chops Normande, thanks. They're both fully described in Mr Beard's book.

If summer comes, can fall be far behind?

Confusing Concepts department

(Male Chauvinist division)

(from an ad for Royjel Inc., Greenwich, Connecticut)

"Scientists find that Royal Jelly is responsible for the extraordinary Virility in the Queen Bee and other animals...."

Life is just a Pousse Café.

Richard Eney and the Wave of the Future

I have not, I admit, been the most avid reader of the works of Richard H. Eney in recent years. Since 1959 or thereabouts his writings have stopped evolving in style or content. Immured in or near Washington D. C. for much of his life, while our civilization was dying and where propaganda and government reports in jargon substitute for ideas and rational argument, he gladly embraced toryism, militarism, and know-nothingism, and turned off his mind. His heavy-handed whimsy never changed, and his gropings toward discussion and criticism became predictable to Eney watchers. We might better look to the bull in the field for fresh insights into the nature of things than to Richard Eney.* In reading him, we found ourselves in the position of travelers across the

* I would hesitate to say this in print except that Eney wrote of me in 1964 that "...as for Boggs, Gerber, and the rest, they are simply bad jokes -- what they 'think' is as irrelevant as what tadpoles think." Thus my remark cannot wound him.

endless Mojave, forever in sight of one bare dreary mountain, stopping again and again at the same tediously familiar gas station.

For once, however, in the spring 1973 mailing, Eney wrote a piece for Target: FAPA that was easily funneled into the mind and even reasonably comfortable to hold there for serious contemplation. It recalls to us an Eney full of youth and spizzerinktum we thought was lost forever. The flavor of the piece, which tells us "just what (Eney) was doing" in the last two years, indicates that Eney was happy and even enthusiastic about his work in Vietnam, as described, and was probably sincere in his convictions, as revealed in the article. I suppose that we should therefore take him at face value and -- in this case -- impute nothing unsavory about this particular aspect of the Vietnam debacle -- or rather, about his share in it. For apart from that, the content of the article deserves some comment.

In the piece called "Down to Mischief" -- certainly an appropriate title -- Eney reports that for the past two years he was employed as "Director, Land Reform Division, Region IV" in Vietnam. As he explains it, "That's the advisory side of the so-called Land to the Tiller program," under which, by 26 March of this year, 1,003,325 hectares of land -- that's over 2,500,000 acres, he adds helpfully -- has been "redistributed." Most of the land, he says, lies in Region IV, the area of the Mekong delta, "where most of Viet Nam's riceland is located." Title to the land, he writes, was given over to the "small farmers who formerly held the land as tenants: approximately what we'd call 'sharecroppers.'" The program worked "by giving the farmers the land they are actually cultivating and paying direct compensation to the former landlords."

On the surface, over which Director Eney skims so blithely, this sounds good, even utopian, though immediately one is caused to wonder by what lordly right Americans are "redistributing" land in Vietnam. The Gulf of Tonkin resolution, approved by congress in 1964, only gave the President power to "take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against the forces of the U.S.," though Eney speaks of a "law" that imposed land reform on the people of a foreign country, thousands of miles away. Who passed the law, and by what authority? For myself, I think that the Vietnam land reform program merely adds hypocrisy to the fraud of the war fought largely, it seems, for the benefit of the American "defense" industry. Having committed murder, we now assume the role of coroner and even of judge of the probate court where come the inheritors of the victims of our crime.

Even while granting Eney's sincerity and innocence in the matter, one must also point out that the whole land reform program has as many strings as a pizza. The chief rub in the program lies in the nature of the economy itself. Mao Tsetung tells us that "In capitalist countries, agriculture develops in a capitalist way," but on the contrary Eney himself implies that he (heretofore a true-blue redblooded American) was actually doing something in the Land to the Tiller program that a socialist government would do if it had the power! He writes parenthetically, "(Other people talk about dispossessing the exploiters for the benefit of the people; I go ahead and do it. Eat your heart out, Wollheim!)" Eney almost seems to be hinting that he has become a (gasp!)

communist -- but that he would embrace such an alien system is as impossible to imagine as H. P. Lovecraft making love to Linda Lovelace, and for similar reasons. And of course the Land to the Tiller program is not socialistic at all, since the land is being handed over to private owners.

Furthermore, the program is not even modern in concept. Indeed, Director Eney is about as unrealistic as the ignorant hippies who swarm to the countryside to take up farming as a way of life. Edgar Snow, in The Other Side of the River (p 168), writes:

While American politicians continue to pay homage to the mystique of the free farmer as the backbone of rugged individualism, the truth is quite otherwise. For more than a generation the American farmer has been "managed" (and mismanaged) by the state by means of price supports and other controls. With a working force of more than 67,000,000 today, American farm workers are less than 8 percent of the total, and farm production itself is largely under state and urban-capitalist management and manipulation. In 1962 President Kennedy formally proposed to plan the entire crop production by further reducing acreage. He sought to utilize state subsidy to convert the farm economy into a factory-farm combination basically not very different in content from the Chinese commune goal of integrating industry and agriculture in the countryside.

That "In capitalist countries, agriculture develops in a capitalist way" means, in any case, that urban-capitalist management and manipulation presents many difficulties for the property owner that Eney barely alludes to. He tells us nothing, for example, about the mechanics of the compensation procedure which permits the former owners to bear the pain of losing over a million hectares of valuable riceland. He does not tell us who these people are, and says nothing about how they were persuaded to part with the land. Perhaps we can guess that they were rich landowners who in more recent times have been building new fortunes in war business and expect their futures to lie in business rather than in land. Director Eney calls them very clearly "exploiters," after all, and making as many bucks as possible out of the people is of course the characteristic that defines the breed.

As to how much was shelled out for all that land, and whence came the money, we are not informed. Presumably it came out of the pockets of the American taxpayer. Nor are we enlightened as to who appraised the value of the land and how a sales figure was arrived at. We are not even told what size parcels the land was divided into for redistribution. No doubt such recondite matters fall into the "classified" category (which Eney indicates actually exists), no doubt for good reason.

Eney talks a lot, and with incredible optimism, about one aspect of the urban-capitalist management and manipulation that jerks the strings of the whole shebang. Most of the new owners are not rich enough, obviously, to acquire the necessary tools and equipment needed to farm the land, though perhaps we can assume that some of the former tenants already own some of these things. Certainly most cannot afford to buy



materials to build roads, dams, canals, and buildings needed to farm their holdings profitably. (Director Eney calls the necessity of improving their property the concept of accepting "advanced farming practices," a delicate way to express it.) At any rate, the answer to the difficult problem of acquiring supplies, equipment, new housing, and other structures is -- inevitably -- floating a loan. Though the farmer cannot feel the same way about it, Eney is very cheerful about the matter, almost as if the loan business were the *raison d'être* of land reform -- as indeed perhaps it

is: "The total farm and farm-related lending has also increased, and its incidence has shifted from farm-related business...to loans for individual farmers acting on their own initiative." Loans were given out in plenty to the farmers for "operating supplies and durable goods," he reports, and we cannot doubt him.

He stresses that the loans given Vietnamese farmers are not "government handouts," which evidently are Bad, but rather are loans he rather vaguely describes as being "handled on a businesslike basis" -- such handling is far beyond the abilities of a governmental bureaucracy, apparently. Presumably the money-lenders are Vietnamese banks, though again we aren't told, but we are told that the repayment rate of the loans is over 90 percent, which indicates that the lenders are possessed of strong arms and cold hearts. You know what loans made on a "businesslike basis" are like. How much of that redistributed land is already heavily mortgaged, and how long is it going to remain the property of the new owners?

In a capitalist economy, in a situation like this, the power plainly lies in the hands of the capitalist with money to lend, and not with the small land-owner. Unless some revolutionary event intervenes soon, the bulk of that redistributed land is going to be back in the hands of a few people. Perhaps we may even conjecture that it will be the same people, or their families, who owned the land before. And they will be all the richer by that time, through the cyclic process of compensation, usury, and foreclosure.

Eney says nothing at all about taxes, certainly a prime worry for property owners. What is the tax rate on fertile ricelands in the Mekong delta?

Finally, we are left in the dark about the condition of the land being redistributed, after many years of war and wartime difficulties. Some land may be in good shape; other land may be flooded, pocked with bomb craters, cluttered with the lethal litter of dud artillery shells, undetonated mines and booby-traps -- there are supposed to be 300 to 600

million pounds of "live" explosives lying hidden in the fields and forests of Vietnam. In the Eney-meenie-minie-mo of redistribution, the new owner of ruined or ravaged land may have to go to work for a more fortunate neighbor who has better land in order to survive, and this will re-establish the tenant-farmer system. The unlucky farmer may also have to borrow money or seed or equipment from more fortunate and prosperous neighbors and in exchange give up claim to his land or livestock or future crops.

The "spending decisions" -- this is Eney's own bureaucratic jargon -- of Vietnamese farmers show that "the Vietnamese expect their future to be reasonably stable and expect their country will not be absorbed by the Communist Empire," Eney tells us. This expectation seems to me to be unduly optimistic on the part of the south Vietnamese or of Director Eney -- or both. Anyway, why shouldn't the investments the farmers make in housing, small industry, farm machinery, etc., be just as useful in a communist economy as under capitalism? And there is the further incentive that the banks may go under soon, when the communists take over, and the loans will never be recalled.

I would venture to predict that Director Eney's valiant work of redistribution will have to be done again, on a different basis, not too many years from now. This time the Vietnamese farmers will do the job themselves, probably with even more enthusiasm and energy than Eney expended on it during 1971-3. And after they are done, the 906,000 hectares of riceland in the Mekong delta will be owned communally, village by village, by the farmers on the land. Eney talks a good capitalist game of benefitting the people of Vietnam. But the people will go ahead and dispossess the exploiters forever by collectivizing the land. Eat your heart out, Eney!

Never trust anyone with a security clearance.

Do You Suppose She's Annoyed at Him or Something?

(from the Oakland Tribune)

"Norristown, Pa. (UPI) -- Ellis Kay, a retired manufacturer, is suing his ex-wife, Bernice, for \$110,000, charging that she:

" -- Painted the windshield of his Cadillac black once, and gun-metal grey three times.

" -- Broke the windshield, aerial, and rear view mirror four times.

" -- Scratched the entire surface of the car with a sharp object three times.

" -- Poured glue between the window and the door and painted the headlights pink.

" -- Telephoned dairies and had large orders of butter, eggs, and milk sent to Kay's apartment.

" -- Telephoned doctors on four occasions during early hours and told them Kay needed immediate attention.

" -- Ordered phonograph records sent to Kay while he was ill. All the records were funeral dirges."

Figs and Thistles

"I was just going to say, when I was interrupted" -- you remember the famous opening line of The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table -- that notes and clippings for this column accumulate at an accelerating rate, the world being the mad place it is, while space for this department appears at a diminishing rate, though I am not sure which natural law accounts for this. "Figs and Thistles" has not found a place in this fanzine since the winter 1970-1 issue (FAPA mailing #134), and the reason my file folder full of material is wedged so immovably into place in my desk drawer is that scraps of newspapers and scribbles on memo pads have been crammed into it, item by item. What a clutter, what a bulge! The only way to reduce the poundage and thus manage to pull the folder forth, thereby finding the other material for this issue (printed elsewhere in these pages), is to choke off this introduction and start using up some "Figs and Thistles" twippledop.

Some of the things I wanted to mention here have been waiting a l-o-n-g time for publication. For example, this yellowing clipping from the Co-op News of Berkeley, which tells about an incident that happened at a Geary Road book sale: The huckster mentions science fiction, and the female browser says: "You like science fiction?" He (enthusiastically): "Yes, indeed, I've just finished one by Arthur Clarke and now I'm reading one by Robert Heinlein. And of course I like Ray Bradbury and Fred Hoyle and Poul Anderson and -- oh, by the way, I just learned recently that Poul Anderson lives right here in Orinda." She: "Yes, I know. I'm his wife." That clipping is dated 25 March 1968. Here is an item of more recent date: 6 December 1972, the day Apollo 17 went up. I found it on the bulletin board of Eshleman hall on the UC campus, a hastily scrawled notice saying: "APOLLO MAN'S DESTROYER." Interesting? # I don't remember when I found the next item: a slip of paper that had been used as a bookmark and was still inserted at pp 168-9 of Sinclair Lewis' novel Free Air (1919) when I checked it out of the UC library. On it is written "Simak, Sturgeon" -- a notation that does not seem to have anything to do with anything in the novel. # Here's a definition I like, from Star Parade, edited by H. K. Bulmer -- as he calls himself -- dated June 1941, although it hasn't been in my files that long. He says a sf fan is "One who, by reason of activities arising out of Science Fiction, has no time to read Science Fiction." # I am fascinated by the rather menacing tone of this message from a Chinese fortune cookie: "A change for the better will be made against you." # I liked this item from Herb Caen's column in the Chron, about the fellow who saw a woman driving past in a car with the license plate "LJB," and gasped, "Say, do you suppose that's Ladyjohn Birdson?" # And did anybody else notice the ad for a new book, American Film Criticism, in the New York Review, 25 January 1973? The book is said to be "edited by Stanley Kauffman, with Bruce Henstell." Yeah? The gent from Tigertail road?

Plants don't grow in order to reproduce, but reproduce in order to grow.

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