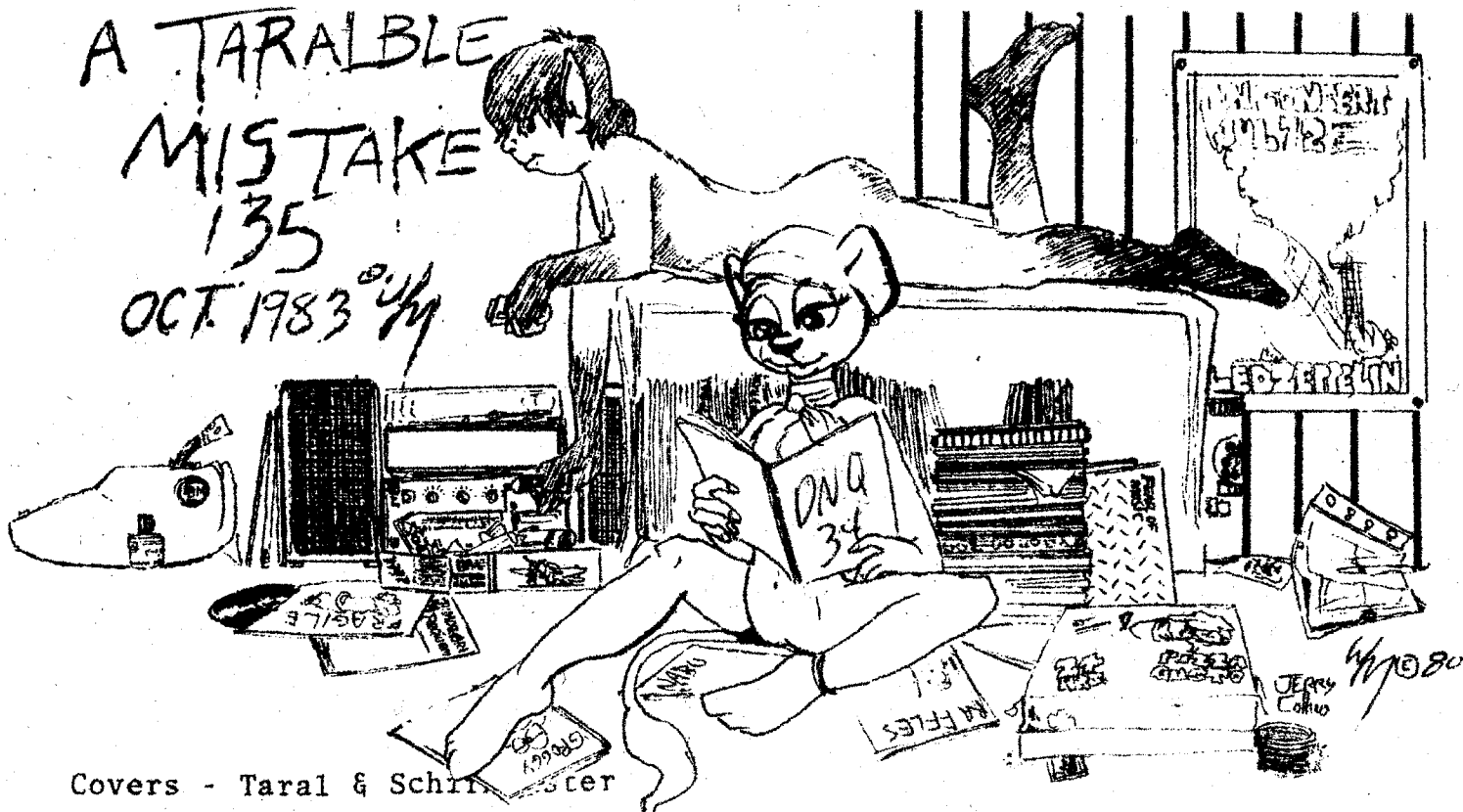




A TARALBLE MISTAKE

135
OCT. 1983 ⁰⁴



Covers - Taral & Schirmeister

ToC - Taral & Jerry Collins — 1 i & ii 2 18 20 23 26 32 36 41 42 45

Album - Marc Schirmeister —

Taraltorial Imperitive - editorial —
art - Barry Kent MacKay & Taral

Sooner Or Later - column by Rich Coad —
art - Taral

Off The Ballot - Eric Mayer —
art - Taral & Harry Bell

The Dead Past - Reprint
A Smile Is A Frown Upside Down by Susan Wood —
from Granfalloon 18, December 1973
art - Taral & Harry Bell

Index Expurgatorius - zine reviews by Taral —
art - Taral

The Great Flushing in '80 Movie - Stu Shiffman —
art - Taral

Barrycenter - column by John Berry —
art - Terry Jeeves

I Ching, Who You? - Dave Langford —
art - Taral

Bibliography - DNQ 1 to 34 —
art - Tom Foster/Ken Fletcher

The Miscarriage Of Heaven And Hell - Taral —
art - Taral & August Dore

DNQ
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34

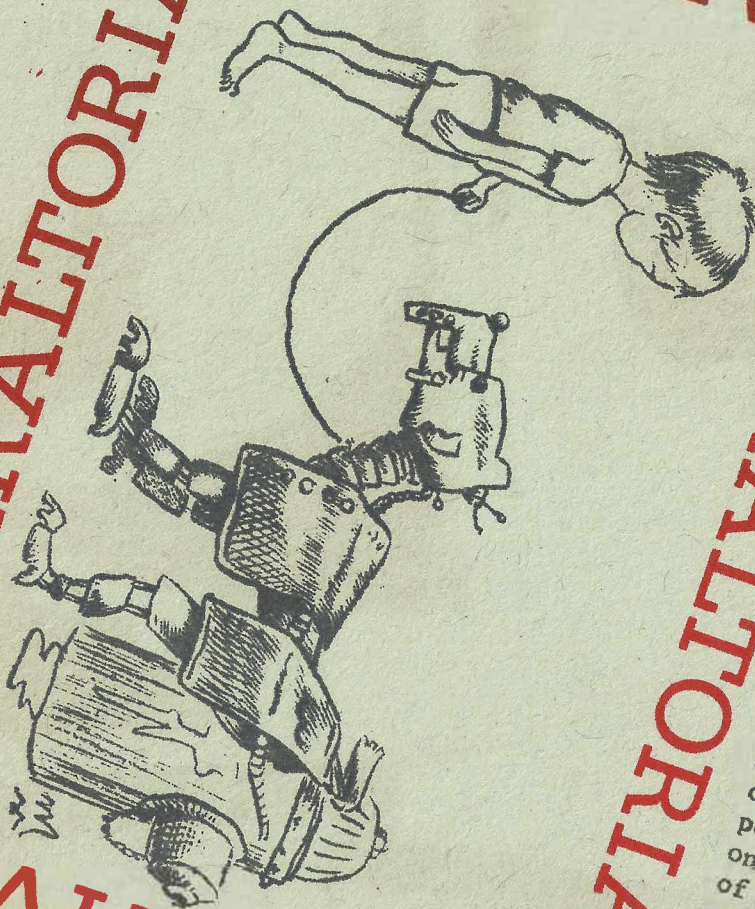




"The time has come,"
 McCartney said,
 "To think of per-
 ished zines:
 Of Quip - and Void -
 and Chanticleer -
 In memory yet green -
 One and all they dis-
 appeared
 As if they'd never
 been."¹

"But wait a bit," the
 trufans cried,
 "The old zines live
 on still
 In every virgin sten-
 cil rolled
 Into a typer's mill!
 No matter how much
 time is passed
 They pubbed and al-
 ways will!"²

- From
 "The Walrus
 and the
 Kjolá Bear"
 by
 Lewis Taral.



THE TARALTORIAL IMPERATIVE

"Indeed the time has come for
 DNQ to join the ranks of the
 blessed. It's time for its edi-
 tors to lay down their corflu-
 their typers, their \$1,500 top-
 of-the-line Model 466 Gestetner,
 and step into the waiting flaming
 chariot to be carried off to para-
 dise. There we will enjoy everlas-
 ting-egoboo with Lee Hoffman, Walt
 Willis, Francis Towner Laney and the
 other elect who attend the celestial
 Worldcon (in faanish spirit if not yet
 in body). On the Earthly plain Locus
 will run a black-bordered announcement,
 for artists will hurriedly draw cartoons
 fan requiems that fan editors will pub-
 lish, and the name DNQ will be dropped in
 punchlines for evermore. That is what fan
 immortality is. But let's face it. This
 is 1983, not 1951, and the old gods are dead.
 The new pantheon is a college of semi-pros
 and star personalities to which the editors
 of a small, faanish zine with under 200 copies
 per ish are not going to be elected. Since no-
 one is going to be sentimental about the passing
 of DNQ, neither are we.

With our apotheosis in doubt, this is
 obviously not the time to sit
 back and gaffiate. The
 we plan to. The
 time has come,
 rather,
 to

change direction, and DNQ 33 is only the last step along an old path. Since we wanted to finish with a flourish, DNQ 34. (Or, since DNQ 40 differences between DNQ and RSN may not be apparent, compare this issue with the one before last, DNQ 39, and last, DNQ 38. The focal point of incompatibility was likely Toronto flavour of early issues, and a number of faux pas that antagonized people. On top of this, our mission to refocus fandom was performed for our brand of self-indulgence since we seemed to have less trouble from that point on. These somewhat formalized middle-period issues were probably as close to a 100% realization of our aims as possible, barring that DNQ still wasn't a focal point. After coming back from a sabbatical from issues 18, 19 and 20, the newszine format felt increasingly like constraint. The spontaneity and feedback of the first issues was missing in the new, more successful formula, and the zine could continue indefinitely as it was gaining John Berry as a columnist in DNQ 24. Taking an active hand meant regular changes, and experimenting again. The first change was eventually replace the news from the tent entirely. Then a series of regular cut-outs, folios, genzine issues, anniversaries, record inserts and hoaxes that kept both the subscribers and Victoria guessing what would come next. Of the last 10 issues, five were ordinary news and the other five off-beat in some way. Obviously, by the time of the second anniversary I was only bidding time until DNQ could be killed off. Victoria was also feeling impatient, dispiriting as the subs and decay of fanzine fandom was, and urged me to fold three issues earlier than planned. So we did. Our new aims for DNQ are no less presumptuous than our old ones. While we no longer expect to be anyone's focal point, we think we might fill the current generation vacuum with something a little better than Holier Than Thou or The Bi-Monthly Monthly or Graymalkin, the current crop. All quite readable, but neither Fabulously Faanish nor Fancy Pretentious. A cross between Mota and Simulacrum may seem absurd on the face of it, but that's what we've set our sights for. Now one of the things that we wished to improve about RSN was the amount of feedback we were getting through DNQ. And while there have never been large numbers of locs, there have been enough for a Typo and, moreover, reviewed favourably. As will making RSN available for loc as well as contrib. A regular letter column will no doubt stimulate every third issue or so and they have almost all of them been encouraging. A regular trade or sub. These simple stratagems might well raise an average response of five or six per issue as high as ten or fifteen! Still, I can't say I'm happy with those figures, to which my complaints in previous editorials would attest. The fact is that the art of letter writing has declined over the last two or three years, and that fans aren't writing as many locs as they used to. At first glance this doesn't seem true, since it is easy to cite zines with letter columns that are, if anything, overlong and wagging the dog. But with the statistical sciences at one's aid, anything is possible! Have you counted them? Divided them into groups according to age, sex, state or N3F membership? Have you applied the results to devious operations and subjected the obscure mathematical operations to statistical operations? No, of course you wouldn't. Only a person with the genius, and, incidentally, the spare time of some one like myself

would attempt such an imposing task. I began with all the zines that arrived between two issues of DNQ, some 50 zines or more, and listed each person with a letter printed or WAHFeD in them. Of course, there are zines I never see, and there are letters that aren't WAHFeD, but neither of these shortcomings would introduce systematic distortions, so I take my figures as representative. There were over 250 names on my list, writing a little less than 400 letters. This is an average of about 8 citations per zine. Taking into account those which had good reason for poor response you might raise the average for most zines to 10. Title, three years ago, boasted nearly 100 some issues. Of the 250 "letterhacks", 74 managed to write more than once, and of those only 33 wrote more than twice. In fact, 41 fans wrote two letters, 21 wrote as many as three, 6 wrote 4 locs, 3 wrote 5, Barney Neufield and Seth Goldberg wrote 6 apiece, Harry Andruschak wrote 7, and Harry Warner Jr. accounted for the other 14 by himself. Who are our proven "letterhacks"? Mentioning only those who wrote three or more, I counted Harry Andruschak, Neville Angove, Jan Brown, Avedon Carol, C.D. Doyle, Richard Faulder, Adrienne Fein, Jan Howard Finder, Gil Gaier, Mike Glicksohn, Seth Goldberg, Deb Hammer-Johnson, J. Owen Hanner, Teddy Harvia, Greg Hills, Irwin Hirsh, Arthur Hlavaty, Marty Levine, Tim Marion, Jim Meadows III, Barney Neufield, Joseph Nicholas, Marc Ortlieb, Dave Palter, Dave Szurek, Sally Ann Syrjala, Roy Tackett, Faral, Laurine Tutihasi, Dave Wixon and Harry Warner Jr. The list is not all-inclusive, and must change from month to month, but in the main that's who to send your zines to for a better than average chance of a letter. My findings were of such little help that, when Victoria and I sat down to update our mailing list we discovered there were very few changes we wanted to make at all.

Knowing that little could be done to improve DNQ's response by seeking out prolific letterhacks, we tackled the problem from the other end and wondered what could be done with the zine itself to enhance the response rate. Comparing DNQ to the classic successes of faphistory -- Title, Cry, and VoM -- we formed an hypothesis. In our zine, our thoughts tend to be complete; we leave few questions unanswered. Our writing style too is less evocative, as we tend toward non-interrogative structures such as "Richard Bergeron, a pen-name of John Lennon, was shot leaving his costly New York apartment last week", or "Request Denvention transfer your membership to ChiCon 4 now!" Fans are naturally garrulous beings, and such practices stifle their urge to communicate. Better you should ask their opinion than tell them things. In this light I have constructed a sure-fire method of eliciting response. Merely include in your zine topics which enable you to ask the following questions. Better still, dispense with your zine, simply xerox the following questionnaire and mail it out all by itself. You will be guaranteed a near-perfect response, failing to hear from only those who are just gaffiated, suddenly struck dislexic, or recently deceased. No longer will you have to waste time, effort and money on non-productive matters such as you've mistakenly filled your fanzine with over the years, i.e.: wit, perspicacity, and good writing. Save those for occasions that really count, like filling in your tax form.

1. How are you?
2. What is your favourite drink?
3. Ever had a spayed gerbil or Smooooooooothed?
4. What colour caftan do you wear? Silk or velour?
5. Do you like the dragons best, the elves, or the unicorns in artshows?
6. However, did you outbid ...
7. Mike Glicksohn; or was he auctioneering?
8. Was that the 8th or 14th con you saw that summer?
9. Which filksongs did you sing on the way home in the car?
10. Or if you flew, was there a charming member of the opposite sex next to you?
11. Were you fatigued and glad to be home?
12. But happy to have seen all the people you love again?
13. Are you depressed by getting by with a little help from your friends?
14. How are the parties you hold? Or go to?
15. Do you win or lose at poker?
16. How are the Kids/Cats? What have they been up to?

17. Are you keeping up the payments on your Betamax or home computer?
Or can't you afford one until you pay your phone bill? Or air fare...
18. Can you drop a hint about the secret apa you belong to and drop some names of people in it?
19. Who outside of your circle can you make an overpersonal joke about?
20. What is your favourite colour?

One or two people I have already shown this questionnaire to have suggested that a slightly different version would probably be more effective for feminists, Brits, sercon fans, or Dorsai. I'll work on other versions of my sure-fire response cues at a later date... In the meantime, in one form or another each of these comment hooks will be cleverly incorporated in the rest of this issue. Watch for them and write!

• • • • •

The problem with any beginning is that no story has one. A writer gives literary form to events by choosing beginnings and endings out of a continuous stream of happenings. What falls between is his narrative, and is never the full story. In the general sense, then, this isn't a story. The beginning isn't: Every year I have a party the week before Christmas... I've held it for three or four years, and can't claim any originality for the idea. People have had Christmas parties since a shepherd in the next stall discovered you could have a blast on myrrh and frankincense. Where credit may be due is that I realized the value of such occasions to me and my friends. As a fan group the Derelicts were iconoclasts, and our celebrations could be found on no calendars made, not even the ones with Tom Bombadil or Miss Piggy on them. We honoured Lunar Landing Day — and shame be on you who've forgotten it — toasted my alter ego on her Parturition Day, met for Coffee & Chips every month at a convenient bistro, threw parties for our comings and goings, and held Symposiums when everyone who could came and crashed for the day or the week. As far as it went, our iconoclasm was harmless and encouraged our inventive bent. Things wound down though, as Derelicts left for strange climes or drifted out of fandom. The clock was set back, once, by starting DNQ when all about us were issues due Real Soon Now. (And now DNQ is expected RSN...) The clock was set back again with a Writers' Unworkshop. The trick, though, is to set the clock ahead. More than just pushing back elastic social horizons, I thought that we who are left of the Derelicts and our newer friends should have a chance to show our feelings toward each other. So I had a party the week before Christmas and we gave presents. Victoria Vayne was there, whom you remember as once co-editor of this zine. Bob and Janet Wilson, once fan writers and OE of A Woman's Apa, were there. And Phil Paine, who forgot about the party and learned about it again an hour before he was to be there. (Phil of many travels. Phil of too many ideas to see them all through. Phil of nevertheless many fine personalzines and tremendous influence on many people.) Bob Webber was there, who published soulful little zines once. Grant Schuyler too, "he of deep feeling". And I. The Old Gang (c. 1976). We'd met others as our numbers depleted, and they were there too. Bob Hadji, the erudite. Do Ming Lum, the universal collector. Alan Rosenthal, poor little rich kid. Robert Atwood, nephew to Margaret. Ken Rosser, looking forlorn. Dave LeBer, looking new wave. Simon Claughton, looking ministerial. Cathy Crocket. Paul Taylor. Lexi Pakulak, exiled to Calgary but in town on temporary reprieve. Phyllis Gotlieb, our token writer, and her husband Colin. Hope Leibowitz from New York, now married to WebBob. There was plum pudding for those who came early, and the gifts were given then. These were mostly records and books, with a couple of 1/72 and 50 proof exceptions. Do Ming was the recipient of what was probably the most unusual present given that night. I'd put it in a lunch bucket from McDonald's — the one tied-in with the opening of Star Trek: The Fourth Season. Do Ming was a closet Trekkie, (with the door only half-to), and would be the only one there who'd appreciate such gems of humour as were printed on the cardboard. "Why did the Klingon have a headache? Because he was alien." (Yuk, yuk.) Inside, along with the official U.S.S. Enterprise plastic wrist bracelet, was the real present. It's amazing what you can do with a few plastic parts from broken models and

a L'Eggs container. This egg-shaped purveyor of panty-hose can be made wicked if given a deep-space black finish, gun blisters, and conning tower. Blood red and white military markings ready the bird for active service. I liked it well enough that I decided to make one of my own. In fact, perhaps an entire Fleet of my own. (Anyone for an arms race?)

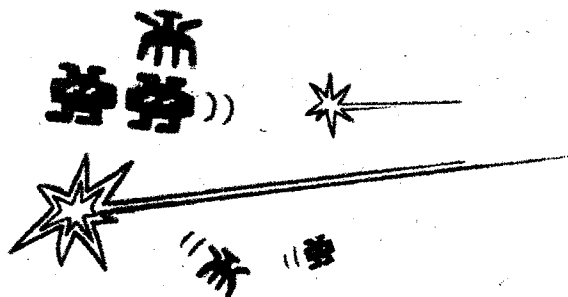
By far the most outrageous package was also my doing. Just before, Phil was given a small gift about six inches long, three wide, and paper thin. Phil joked away his embarrassment, saying that more material goods were just what a transient living out of a knapsack needed. It was a ten dollar bill. Phil allowed that there was a space in his wallet just the size of a ten dollar bill, but not a penny more mind you! Then I went into the other room and brought him my present. If Phil had doubts about accepting a gift-wrapp-d ten, he was in shock after seeing the four foot long box I brought in. Nor was he prepared for it weighing about fifty pounds. "Where do I put *this* in my back-pack," he said, or words to that effect while sitting on the floor.

Phil was carried to a chair, and the present dropped on him again. This effectively wedged him into the seat so he couldn't escape. Taking his cue, he scrabbled at the paper as best as his bruised ribs would allow. Fortunately the paper tore away easily. Opening the box was a little harder, and once inside Phil found little to repay his efforts. Just fifty pounds of slip-sheets. And a small red card with a film canister taped to it that said "open me". The canister had a tiny square of tin foil in it, barely a quarter of an inch on a side, and maybe it weighted as much as three grams. Wrapped in the foil were two even tinier squares of paper. Phil's face lit up with expectation. He didn't at all mind being the first person in history to have his ribs broken when two tabs of acid were dropped. Other

presents given were wrapped and disguised almost as completely. I'd been in a devilish mood while wrapping them the previous night. People amused themselves until about three.

Someone put the rubber turd in the burger-clam I was keeping. A slinky was sprung, crippling it forever. My first edition paperbacks with the Powers and Dillon covers were admired by those who were inclined to bibliophilia. Ken broke plastic cups for something to do. Grant wanted to know what the radome was for on the dusty blue model of a WW II Corsair. Phil overwhelmed Phyllis' husband with argument. Lexie tried to get people to join her writers' workshop-by-mail, unsuccessfully. Victoria had a form to collect "snarky" remarks for her computer game, and got rather more snarky remarks about her game for her trouble. I showed my file of this year's art to Phyllis (who liked the cartoons best, drattit). Allan shot the air rifle at Paul who was looking at the records. But mostly people talked. And then about 2:30 the ones who had cars said "who wants a ride?" Just that suddenly the party was over.

At least for me. For the others the party would last as long as it took for them to be dropped off at home by a laughing, talking, gesticulating car-load of still partying partiers. It was snowing heavily that morning when I saw them off, hoping one of them would stay and walk with me a while in the first snow-fall of the winter. But they one and all brushed through the curtains of snow and were gone. Then I returned to the quiet and emptiness of my basement to clean up the mess. This isn't the ending.



Canadians are born bureaucrats.

Nor for all our Americanisms and Anglophilia are the editors of DNQ any the less true Canadians. The penchant for bureaucracy is just as much ours, if sublimated in unobvious ways. Because this is the last issue of DNQ, I took it into my head to do something special. But rather than something useful or interesting, I couldn't resist the temptation to compile totally pointless lists of our contributors and tallies of pages published. Here are my findings —

In 32 months we published 32 times, averaging monthly. This amounted to about 375 pages total, and between 11 and 12 pages per issue. At that point we meant to publish a last, giant issue in early 81 which would have brought our tally up to about 450. Unfortunately, that was our undoing. 1981 almost passed without an issue at all, and to keep the news that we had from going too stale, we published an interim DNQ in October, which brought our average down to 33 issues in 43 months. By now, our average is 34 issues in 64 months, or worse. Compare this to Lee Hoffman's Quandry, which in the early 50's ran something like 600 pages in thirty 20-page increments over 30 months. Perhaps the present volumes, late as they are, can atone for DNQ's poorer show. But the 150 odd illos, and 600 pages of other fanac that I've mostly written myself and published since DNQ 1 account for the difference.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
78				1	2	3 4	5 6	7	8 9	10	11	12
79	13	14	15	16 17	18	19	20	21 22	23		24	25
80	26	27		28		29 30		31			40g	
81										32		
84 83								34				

Of the 31 covers or front page illustrations, I did 9 of them myself. Harry Bell was responsible for 4, and Stu Shiffman for 3, as was Jim Barker. Marc Schirmeister, Joe Pearson, C. Lee Healy, and Jerry Collins did 2 each. Barry Kent MacKay, David Vereschagin, and Dan Steffan did one apiece, and there were collaborations between myself and Jim Barker, and myself and Bonnie Dalzell. Three issues had no cover or first page art at all.

Artists were not the only people to contribute to the zine. 97 names appear altogether. In order of appearance, and keyed to their contributions, they are:

Dan Steffan (*)	Pauline Palmer (◊)	Robert Whitaker (*)	Phil Bronson (*)
David Starr (*)	Mike Blake (◊)	Randy Mohr (*)	Tim Marion (◊)
Stu Shiffman (*,*)	Dave Langford (◊,*)	Bob Shaw (*,*)	Joseph Nicholas (◊)
Lester Boutilier (◊)	Dave Vereschagin (*)	Derek Carter (◊)	Kevin Smith (◊)
Terry Jeeves (*)	Don D'Amassa (*)	Jason Kaehn (*)	Joe Pearson (*)
Mike Bracken (*,*,◊)	Al Sirois (*)	Lee Hoffman (*)	Bonnie Dalzell (*)
Phil Foglio (*)	Ted White (◊,*,*)	Arthur Hlavaty (◊)	Ken Fletcher (*)
Steven Black (◊)	Phil Paine (*)	Eric Mayer (*,◊,*)	ATom (*)
Terry Whittier (◊)	Tad Markham (*,◊)	Harlan Ellison (◊)	Rob Hansen (◊)
K. Allen Bjorke (◊)	Terry Carr/Ron Ellik (*)	Teresa Nielsen-Hayden (◊)	Gary Deindorfer (◊,*)
Larry Carmody (◊)	Bill Kunkel (*,◊)	Marc Schirmeister (*)	Ahrvid Engholm (*,◊)
Gary Farber (◊)	Jim Barker (*,◊)	Alan Dorey (◊)	George R. Paczolt (◊)
George Flynn (◊)	Harry Andruschak (◊)	Joe D. Siclari (*)	"Lesli Perri"
Ben Indick (◊)	Guy Lillian III (◊)	Bruce Townley (*,◊)	Doris Baumgardt (*)
Ed Meskys (◊)	Mae Strelkov (◊)	Jerry Lapidus (*)	Ralph Silverston (*)
Avedon Carol (◊)	Mark Olsen (◊)	Bob Tucker (◊,*)	Connie Reich Faddis (*)
C. Lee Healy (*,*)	Ron Salomon (◊)	Mike Wood (◊)	Jerry Collins (*,*)
Harry Bell (*)	Ned Brooks (◊)	Robert Runtz (◊)	Jack Herman (◊)
Bob Wilson (*,*)	Julius Unger (*)	Scott Dennis (◊)	Ross Pavlac (◊)
Bill Rotsler (*)	Jan Howard Finder (◊)	Forest J. Ackerman (*)	Irwin Hirsh (◊)
Brian Earl Brown (◊)	Michael V. MacKay (◊)	John Berry (*,H)	Gregg Trend (◊)
Harry Warner Jr. (◊)	Greg Benford (◊,*)	Kenneth Bulmer (*)	Marc Ortlieb (*)
Arnie Katz (◊)	Ian Maule (◊)	Barry Kent MacKay (*)	Jim Qdibert (*)
Rob Jackson (◊)	Rick Sneary (◊)	Richard Labonte (*)	Susan Wood (*)
			Rich Toad (*)

Key: Art (*); Writing (*); LoC (◊); Reprint (*); Column (H)

Then there are the people who read DNQ, but there are too many to be listed in the space normally self-indulgent fans are usually willing to devote to such a thing, however attractively pointless. There would be, at a guess, over 300 names. Only a few had the opportunity to read every issue, however, and these people are in imminent danger of being listed. In fact, they are Jennifer Bankier, Mike Bracken, Ned Brooks, Denise and Brian Earl Brown, Linda Bushyager, Don and Sheila D'Amassa, Moshe Feder, George Flynn, Mike Glyer, Arthur Hlavaty, Terry Hughes, Dave Langford, Marty Levine, Tim Marion, Bruce Pelz, Randy Reichardt, Joyce Scrivner, Stu Shiffman, Ira Thornhill, Bob Webber, Terry Whittier, Bob and Janet Wilson, and Robert Whitaker. 26 people, but I must remind you that having the opportunity is not the same as having done the act. Before jumping to conclusions about any of these 26, remember that not one of the 33 issues they were sent was necessarily read. There's more -- a complete bibliography -- but as a demonstration of DNQ's innate Canadianness, that is enough. Those of you who are apt to find summaries of contents, dates, and page counts more interesting than the issue at hand are encouraged to skip over the rest of the zine and go immediately to the back pages.

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³A Short Worldcon is like no Worldcon at all. That was how I felt about it when it was certain that Victoria and I would only be able to be at the con for Saturday and Sunday. Without thinking about it I suppose most people if asked to point out the difference between a Worldcon and any other would mention Hugo ceremonies, the immense attendance, the site selection and other such constitutional distinctions. None of these mean a thing to me. Nor to you, if you stop to think about it. For the fannish, a Worldcon is different from Boskone or Midwestcon or Westercon in only two important ways. The first is an article of faith. Only because it is universally recognized as the world convention do people in fact come from all over the world to be there. Nothing in principle keeps Joe Nicholas or Leigh Edmonds from coming overseas at any other time. The other practical difference is the duration of the Worldcon. No other con lasts four, five and even six days, permitting the leisurely and thorough exploration of the full potential of the convention environment. So when it was ordained that Noreascon would only last two days and three nights for us, I knew it wouldn't seem remotely like the real thing.

Nor did it. The sheer size of Noreascon aggravated the problem even more. On arrival our first impression was that we were at Balticon, or one of Doug Wright's media extravaganzas. All we could see were young kids, women in gauzy gowns (unlikely pretenders to the throne of Titania), and assorted varieties of black-shirts. Not one familiar face comingling with a hundred fascist caps and origami dragons perched on shoulders. It was hard not only that first night but all through the con to find who we knew. This wasn't surprising since they were spread out through twenty floors of the Sheraton and several other hotels as well. We roamed up and down halls from penthouse to lobby in an effort Friday night to find parties and found a few we were comfortable in, but in none of them did we find more than a small number of people we knew well, and rarely more than one or two actual friends. Without the room numbers passed on to us next day we would have had to explore the Sheraton all over again Saturday night. (Only to have discovered they were pretty much the same parties anyway.) The last straw constipated the bull at 2 AM, when several friends who had been laboriously rounded together had to leave early because they were booked into other hotels some distance away.

In spite of overcrowding and other serious flaws, Noreascon has so far had nothing but good press. I can understand this. Many new fans like the eclecticism of recent Worldcons, and many older fans like the self-importance of being on the inside. The favourable response is to a large extent deserved even. Running a convention for 6,000 people in two buildings with multi-track programming and numerous exhibits is very hard work, and can probably be performed only by taking a businesslike attitude. What I question is the need to put on Worldcons if they are so large that they cannot be run in keeping with the ordinary means and ends of fandom. Personally I didn't get into fandom because I enjoyed anonymity and routine, and if fandom is coming to that then I have no further use for it. Is it what you want? It is what Noreascon gave us, and what every future Worldcon is likely to give us in increasing amounts. Efficiency is a

by-word of NESFA, and NESFA's famed efficiency won much approval of Noreascon. Yet I have doubts about this too. A couple of incidents lead me to believe they are no better organized than anyone else who's run a Worldcon in recent years. How efficient is it, really, to make me sit in a special waiting room before my fanart presentation while my friends sat outside? It helps to know where their program guests are you say? But I offered to go right to the room I was scheduled for if they would only tell me where it was. No, someone will escort you to your room in a minute, I was told. If I was also told when that would be I would have left instantly and to hell with helping them in any way whatsoever, but, no, they were sure someone would be along in just a minute. So for the next 20 minutes Jim Barker, Marc Schirmeister and Victoria stared at me through the door and I stared at them back, waiting for someone to escort me who would be along in just a minute ... Finally my escort did arrive and took me all of fifty feet down the hall. After suffering such thoughtless inconvenience for the sake of efficiency, one would expect that once the machinery was set in motion I would give my slide show and that would be the end of it. That wasn't the case, however, as the little formality of the "introduction" hadn't been attended to. As a matter of fact, there wasn't a screen in the room either. There was a projector, at least, but it was at the other end of the room and pointing toward the emergency fire escape and in no position to be useful. These complications caused only minor delay, perhaps another 20 minutes, and in the end Moshe Feder agreed to give my introduction. He was called away at the last minute, unfortunately, something to do with a thread unravelling in another part of the program. The room was as full as it was to get, though, and I knew every fan-jack of them. The show must go on; it did and no-one seemed to miss the lack of proper opening ceremony.

The distribution of Bruce Pelz's Tarot deck was handled with efficiency every bit as rigorous as my program item. Artists who had contributed to the deck could pick up theirs from the desk by showing proof of their identity. This arrangement was fine for most, but how does one provide proof of a name like "Taral"? And, according to their list, there was no artist in the deck named "Wayne MacDonald". Would Victoria here do as a witness I asked? No. How about Tony fucking Lewis or the chairman of your con? Well, that might be alright. Luckily Tony was in the office and was quite helpful. He gave me a note identifying me to the desk and signed it. Furthermore he said to have them phone him if there was any trouble. Then, with than out of his hair, he turned back to more important business, Tarot cards being the furthest thing from his mind. Ten, fifteen minutes later the phone rings. "Mr. Lewis? Did you send a man in a green dress down here to --" Anyway, I finally got the cards. I've attacked the artshow before, objecting to the fees, and I'm not through with it yet. It was set up in an enormous and no doubt costly room that was only half full. The artists paid for that other empty half for which Noreascon could find no better use than to put up a sales-table for TAFF and DUFF. The artists were cheated all the more by this unused space because the hangings were crowded into a box-like set-up. Art hung on one wall of a crenature could only be seen by standing in front of the art on the opposite wall, blocking view of the third wall as well. And then only the art facing the open could be seen from a distance of greater than four feet. The problem could have been eliminated by simple means. Instead of placing the hangings at right-angles, they could have been arranged in zig-zag fashion. Like that, the art could have been seen from the other side of the aisle, and without blocking view of anything else. Zig-zagging is less compact, admittedly, but what about the other half of the room that wasn't being used?

Aside from the mechanics I was put off by notices warning fans to register to bid at the auction.

An unnecessary rule if I ever heard one -- was it supposed to cut down on attendance? If so, how are the artists supposed to take that? Was it to prevent non-bidders from listening in? I doubt that many sit through the auctions just to see the pretty pictures -- that's what the art show is for -- and if someone is being kept company, they should have it. And will have it. I don't know if non-bidders weren't welcome at the auction, but if that was the case then anyone who wanted to watch or keep someone else company would only have to sign-on as a bidder. If that wasn't the case then the only explanation left for it was administrative convenience of some kind, or a sheer love of rules. I don't know about most fans at the Worldcon, but I don't like to

be told what to do, and if I want to sit with friends in an art auction or a prestaging room for the program, I damn well expect to sit with them. I came to the con for that reason only, not to see some bunch of jerks be awarded pitted chrome hood ornaments and be manipulated in the furtherance of that end.)

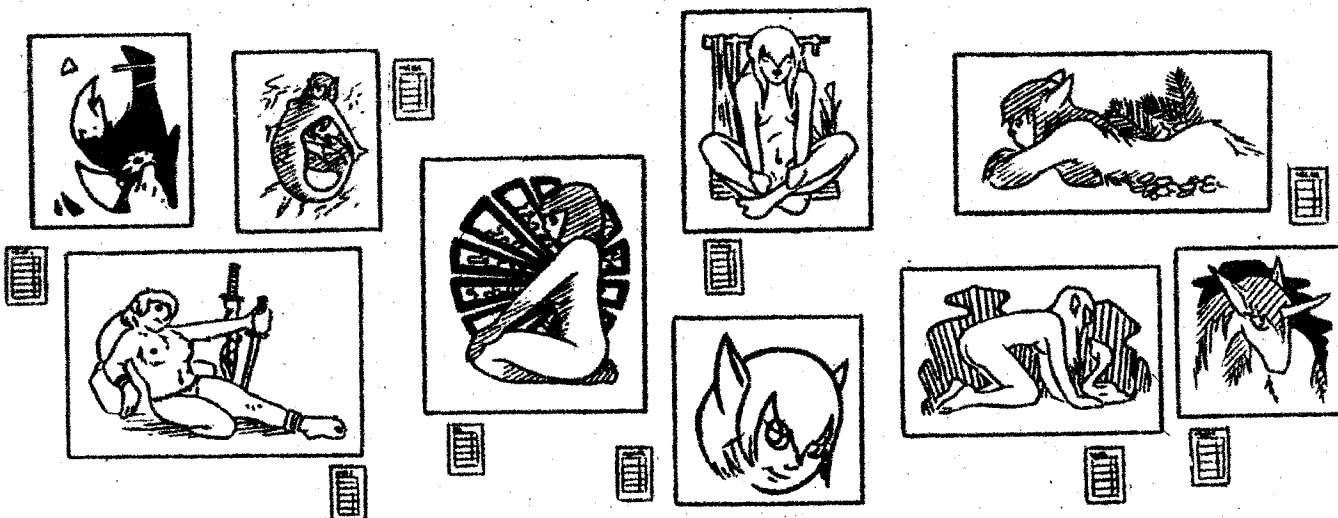
Nor does my annoyance with the art show end there. Every five minutes or so the public address system cut on, making urgent announcements such as "the special showing of Laser Book covers will begin at 3 PM", or "ladies, there is a special sale of unicorns and elves for the next hour only". The only thing missing was the Muzak.

It might as well have been a supermarket at that. I noticed very little fan art at Noreascon. It was totally overwhelmed by the rest of the show. Much of what there was, was quite good, but it was "product" in almost the same way as a DAW book, and artistically the fantasy art prevalent in shows today is most kindly described as "quaint". I have a very nice book of fantasy sculpture of the same type that was given to me this past Christmas. It's a picture book of lamps, inkwells, and figurines circa 1880-1900. If you don't believe me when I say that contemporary fantasy art is no advance over the art nouveau movement of a hundred years ago, I recommend you check the book out of your nearest library. It's called "Art Nouveau Sculpture" and it's edited by Alastair Duncan. But almost any other work on art nouveau would be as revealing.

There were the usual spaceships and planetscapes as well. Cliched, but at least our cliches. Such belong to SF cons, and are a mere 50 years old. More out of place were the paintings of air-force fighters and pencil sketches of Winchester and cowboy boots. Excellent work, but plainly didn't belong. There were rules to exclude this sort of thing, but for once Noreascon didn't go by the book. The necessary exception for all the other rules perhaps?

To my list of grievances add a couple of personal surprises. Among the endless permutations of elfen maidens were two that caught my attention. One was a woman with pointed ears, and either blue and white skin or blue and white fur, the right colours in the right places. The other piece was less similar but close enough to be suggestive. How likely was it that the artist -- a fairly well-known one who exhibits at most cons I'm likely to have shown work at -- would colour an elf with a white face and blue hair, without having seen a Kjola? I hate the thought that years from now my ideas might have become part of the common artistic vernacular and due to the greater exposure of the rip-offs and imitations my own Kjola might be considered the imitations. I have a suspicious mind, though, and some people would say I like to worry. This may be. Surely a couple of albino elves with blue hair is not an unlikely coincidence? However, the odds rose when --

Back in '72 I did a piece called "Tranquility Monument" that was a wrap-around for my second fanzine. The front cover half showed the abandoned descent stage of the Eagle, foil ripped away by the blast of the ascent stage takeoff. All around the lunar module were the footprints of Aldrin and Armstrong, and the scientific packages, the flag, and litter that were left behind. Among the detail is a set of tracks in one corner that continue over onto



generosity. When it wasn't possible for me to play the part in his slide-show, The Captive, there was no difficulty as far as I know in finding a replacement. He looks a lot like his own cartoons, except that his eyes are both on the same side of his nose, (honestly), and that he doesn't have zipatone pants. But then most British fans seem to look about the way he draws them. By such means can great artists be distinguished. Unfortunately, I don't seem to remember what Barker and I did together. I have the memory of his face at my fan art presentation, outside the waiting room, and across the table in restaurants; and I have the memory of conversation and good times. But no anecdotes to flesh out our meeting. No, not even enough to lie about, like fans do about most things. But perhaps the nebulous good feelings matter more than a good story. Another Britisher I was anxious to meet (if the Scots and Welsh are to be called British) was Dave Langford. Like Barker, Langford was contributing to DNQ, and had been writing letters. Payment for his help was made in the usual coin; Victoria acted as one of his TAFF nominators -- another bargain. Rather than tell you how much Dave looked like one of Barker's cartoons -- he does, actually -- I can remember anecdotes. I think Victoria noticed him first. We sat down with him in the lower mezzanine where we were arguing over my Tarot deck, and began a conversation that went something like this:

"Hello!"

"Beg pardon?"

"What?"

"Eh?"

"Huh?"

"Wot..."

We were all part deaf. No doubt this touching re-affirmation of a common bond with fellow human beings made him feel more at home than anytime since he left the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, communication was hampered. The difficulty was pinned down to the ambient noise level, or else Dave had to rush off for an appointment. Whatever the case, we arranged to meet for supper and improved acoustics. Our second meeting was in an Italian-Chinese restaurant well-known to Boskone goers. We were shown a small table in an out-of-the-way corner behind the clothes rack where we waited for service. We waited for quite a bit. As long as we were putting the time to profitable use, we didn't mind. Talk, however, was much the same as during previous encounters.

"Pardon?"

"Eh?"

"Sorry, could you repeat that?"

Moreover, we were somewhat pressed for time since Dave was determined to scoop DNQ on the Hugos, and was willing to go so far as to attend the ceremony to do so. We could only wait a short time without service, so had to leave after only an hour. Victoria and I, expecting to steal the news from Ansible anyway, left for another restaurant. Dave accompanied us as far as the hotel. On the way there was a marvelous example of cultural exchange. It was cold for an August night, and I think my lips were chapped. I reached into my pocket and did a thing absent-mindedly that stopped Langford in his tracks. "Look what he's doing!" he squawked.

I was only putting on some chap-stick, I replied, guessing that this was what he meant from the finger he had pointed at my face.

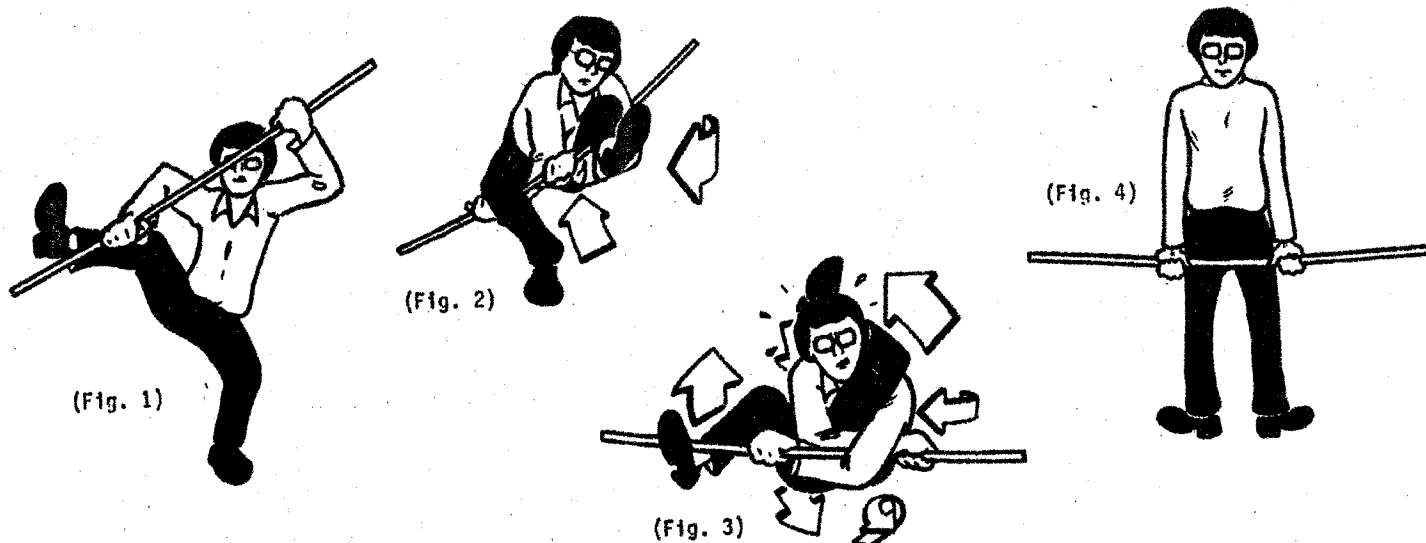
"I thought only Joe Nicholas did that," he said, "you don't carry a bag too do you?"

Sometimes, and he'd seen the green outfit earlier. Well, there isn't room in fandom for two phoney limpwrists so I disillusioned him. "In Canada it's so cold and dry all winter if you don't use chap-stick your lips will dry out and crack like you'd spent the last thousand years buried in the Valley of the Kings. Everybody does it. Victoria!" On command she whipped out hers and smeared her lips.

"In public?"

"In public."

"Alright, but do you mind if I look the other way?" Not at all we said. Then we made our goodbyes and off Langford went, wondering at the eccentricity of colonials, taking with him the six-foot, one-inch diameter dowel he'd been carrying all evening ... As it turned out, he was rational and we were not. The six-foot pole had a purpose even if we couldn't guess it. My presentation was for the following night, and during the wait before a screen was found Dave turned up with his pole and explained its use. It was to administer the Astral Master test, and he had promised Moshe Feder that he would initiate him into this secret brotherhood. The procedure was simple. Langford slipped off his shoes and demonstrated two or three times in quick order drill. Moshe tried it and sat on the floor rather suddenly after step three. He tried it again from where he sat, to eliminate the variable in the problem he'd discovered, and got as far as step three before he was stuck. Quite literally stuck. From step three there is no return and if you can't make it yourself you will probably need outside help either to be disentangled with yourself and the pole or to be pushed through the pretzel. Moshe needed aid. Dave demonstrated it again, slowly this time.



"First, start with the pole held in both hands in front. Step through like this, then raise the pole back over your head until it's out front again. Your wrists are twisted and you can't hold on? Start again and hold the pole the other way, that's it! Over your head again. Fine. Now, lift your left leg over the pole, pass it around your arm and hook it inside the pole. That's right. Now without removing your leg, put your head through your arms and follow with the rest of your body."

"That'll turn me inside out! I can't do that!"

"Nonsense," Langford assured Moshe. "Watch here." He did it again. "If you do it right it's behind your back again, you just step through and you're where you started from."

Moshe struggled but remained tied in a knot at the crucial point. Looking down, Langford added, "You get extra points if you can do it while standing." Someone in the audience, possibly Jim Barker, possibly Lise Eisenberg, possibly Ted White, said "You look fit to be tied, Moshe." No amount of encouragement helped, however much it spurred him on, and at last the exhausted fanoclast had to be unsnared from the diabolic instrument of trial. Langford looked around for other victims.

Victoria volunteered instantly. "Let Taral try!"

Step through -- pole over head -- leg around arm and hook under pole -- then ... Impos-

sible! Try it! Except at that moment somebody in the audience sneezed, or the outer planets combined their gravitational forces in conjunction, and *pop* The inside-out world was pretty much like the universe I'd left, which was surprising as it should have been composed of anti-matter and time should have run backward. I was still right-handed though. Or thought I was. Could a mirror-reversed mind tell? No matter, an undetectable difference is no difference. For all intents and purposes you inside-outers are real people and I'd simply passed the Astral Master test. The crowd was reacting the same you would expect any crowd in any universe to. I was wearing red underwear under my green kilt again. I think that was the last time Dave and I saw each other. There was the remote possibility that he and Jim Barker would travel through Toronto before returning home, but if that happened they must have been murdered by sercon terrorists from the "Friends of the Spaced Out Library", for no trufan ever heard about it.

Their places at Noreascon were filled by another British fan the last night we were there. Sometime Sunday morning with Victoria, Moshe Feder and Lise Eisenberg in the SFWA suite I became thirsty and went to the bar in the other room. There I found Paul Kincaid and Rochelle Reynolds. Kincaid I knew as one of the elected of the British apa, the Fannish Elitist Amateur Press Association, and I might have been a member right along with him had there ever been a second mailing of FEAPA. Rochelle, on the other hand, was an unknown quantity. The three of us talked for a minute or two and then suddenly she told me, "You know, I didn't expect to like you." That was when I learned of her Anglophilia and Ameriphobia. She'd heard of me, she said, and expected that I was the same kind of bland, literal minded, and easily offended nurd she thought every North American fan was. I must have made the right impression while tearing up the FAAns or running down Toronto fandom or something of the like. So I made a point of being opinionated for the rest of the interview; we discussed fanzine reviewing, motivation, and, in all seriousness, the epistemology of self-analysis, having a high old time all the while. Now I'm sure Rochelle knows better than to classify me as a typical American non-entity. Have I only been promoted to fugghead though?

I met Marc Schirmeister for the first time at Iggy and it isn't often that I meet someone I like so much so quickly as Schirm. I don't know why, exactly. Perhaps we both have the same cynicism born out of the tension between retiring and outspoken natures. Perhaps we have a similar concern for our art and serious intent. Or perhaps it was because Schirm showed me a cartoon of Saara he'd drawn -- the first I'd seen. Whatever the cause, we stuck firmly to one another and together argued down Phil Foglio at Iggy, began writing to one another, and attempted some collaborations. (Which have either been lost in the mail or six-months is the normal delivery time between LA and Toronto.) Since neither one of us was financially able to attend SeaCon, it was a great pleasure to get together again at Noreascon. I think we spent half the time I was at the con together, poking through the hucksters room or art show during the afternoon, and trying to get an artists' jam going every night. The first night we had Alexis Gilliland, Dan Steffan, Stu Shiffman, Ken Fletcher, Schirm and I assembled. It was fairly productive and several good collaborations resulted. But while Schirm and Alexis and the others were hot, I was cold, dead cold. I work slowly and have few gag ideas at the best of times, and throughout the con I was off-balance and very short of sleep. The second night's jam went no better for me and, curiously, Schirm and Fletcher seemed similarly unable to get it together. We gave up early and horsed around on paper instead. For a brief instant the pen was hot in my hand, but that was it. Sometimes I wonder that my friends don't suspect that I'm a hoax, and that the artist who turns out my work isn't some other person they've never met. The performance I give before witnesses is that often disappointing. Before leaving the con Schirm handed me a pleasant surprise in the form of a stack of old fanzines three or four inches thick. I could pay for them when I could, whatever I thought I could afford, and it was a startling act of generosity between fans. Between coal miners or aerospace engineers the value would not have been prohibitive, but some things go beyond money, and old fanzines among fans is one of them. The majority of Schirm's zines were copies of Le Zombie from the 40's, but there were a couple of Spaceways, three or four copies of Chanticleer, and other things too.

Thanks again. Among others I met at Noreascon was Freff. We seem to share a passion for progressive rock, and it was through Yes that I first got to know Freff as something more than a signature on some fanart. Freff pursued his interest to the point of becoming a musician and founding a record company, and he was selling his first release at the con. My interest went more in the direction of improving my stereo, and the only thing I ever learned to play was a record. As consumer and performer, our skills matched nicely; Freff sold; and I bought. Victoria took home a copy of A SONG OF GODS GONE MAD too.

Other people made less pleasant meetings. I could as well have done without ever seeing Jerry Pournelle again, but it doesn't seem possible to approach the SFWA suite without bringing the watchdog out, snapping and pulling at its leash. The first encounter was merely unpleasant. Victoria and I and Bob Hadji were scouting for people we knew and were stopped by Pournelle at the door. He was drunk, made a fuss and wasn't gracious about being informed that the con allowed all its program guests admittance to the holy of holies. He was muttering about cruddy fans in his professional sanctum when we went in, so I muttered about one-story wonders on the way out ... Encounter number two was no better, but it wasn't a direct confrontation at least. He was still drunk, still muttering to himself, but this time playing with a knife and making belligerent noises. Protecting his territory no doubt. Why he didn't just pee on the door jamb and be done with it I don't know. From time to time I'd run across somebody I'd seen from the other side of the room at parties in Toronto. Those who knew me were welcome sights. Those who couldn't place me but thought they knew me from someplace I generally told were mistaken. Someone hooking passers-by from the doorway of an Ottawa party wanted to know if I was from Toronto. I denied it. Ran into an incredible fugghead from home who alternately dresses up as Luke Skywalker and Darth Vader. He's about 7 feet tall and fits the part of Steinbeck's "Lennie" better. Or maybe Burgess's "Dim", just to keep in the genre.

"*Dawk*, don't I know you?"

"Nope, never been in Toronto in my life, and I don't go to 'BasCon' parties anyway."

"Oh, okay then. Duuuuh, wait a minute ..." But by then I'd hastily exeunted.

It's gotten so that cons are no place to escape local fandom anymore.

Nor is it a place to meet the more cosmopolitan. The list of people who I wanted to see who I saw only briefly is long and includes Don and Sheila D'Amassa, Terry Hughes, Avedon Carol, Mike Glyer, and no doubt I could go on much longer if I stopped to think about it. People were looking for me too, and couldn't find me. Either Barker or Langford said Greg Pickersgill wanted to see me, but we never did connect. Of course, this might have been all for the best since I wasn't told why Pickersgill wanted to see me, but we might not have resorted to fisticuffs.

Noreascon was effectively over for Victoria and me on Sunday afternoon. We had promised ourselves some shopping in Boston, since American prices are often a third of what we'd pay in Canada for the same thing. And there were so many more things to buy in the States! I brought home a number of model kits, including a three foot WWII destroyer, a 1/48 scale Mitchell bomber, and a 1/35 Leopard II tank. The tank, being a European import, cost as much as half what it would cost at home, but the others cost only a third. The destroyer, retailing at \$49.95 in a local hobby shop, cost me about \$16 U.S. Think of that the next time the government exhorts you on TV to "buy Canadian". Ask yourself, "Why?"

Victoria aimed at getting herself a direct-to-disk audiophile copy of Abbey Road or Dark Side of the Moon. Unfortunately, we found not one record store. In fact, it was a wonder we found our way back to the hotel. We learned the hard way that most streets in downtown Boston are one-way, and that only about half the streets are marked on the map. It makes counting blocks until the street you want most interesting. The other quaint feature of the Boston street plan is that it corresponds to some other-than-Euclidian geometry. Streets meet at angles that defy anyone's ability to reconstruct their route back. A road on the map that is represented by a mathematically straight line from point A to point B will in fact dart and swoop in all directions of the compass before, if ever,

arriving at the promised destination. We made it back in spite of rising doubts by boxing the compass. Each time we missed a turn-off and were carried away by traffic we were one or two blocks closer. Eventually we were near enough to scoot across several lanes, cut off an ambulance by signaling him we were delivering pizza and necessarily in a hurry, and shoot into the parking lot entrance where we were in safe harbour at last. After such an adventure on the roads the drive home was a mere denouement. The story of Noreascon ended for the four of us -- Victoria and me, Bob Hadji, and Ken Rosser -- leaving late Sunday night and taking a room at the Rodeway Inn, in Chicopee, thirty or so miles out of Boston. Then driving all day Monday without real incident until we were home.

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⁴By now most of you know that Avedon Carol is the TAFF representative for '83. Stu Shiffman phoned me the news, which wasn't as I'd hoped, but I couldn't have picked a better second choice than Avedon. She pulled in 34 votes from the UK and Europe, and 35 from the US, making her the winner on the first count with 69 out of 134 votes cast. Larry Carmody was a rather distant runner-up with 32 votes -- 4 overseas and 28 US. The remaining candidates did poorly, ~~confirming my suspicions of a prejudice against artists~~. Grant Canfield, with a total of 17 votes, gained 7 of them from the UK and Europe, and 10 from home. My total was 14 -- 2 from Perfidious Albion, and 12 from the Imperialist Capitalist Warmongers to the south. One vote was cast without preference, one vote was to hold over funds, and one "wit" purporting to be Claude Degler thought that General Francisco Franco should be sent to Eastercon in '83... Do you suppose it could have been Degler? One of the disappointing aspects of this year's race was the general lack of fanfare. A couple of Canfield for TAFF cartoons appeared in a British zine -- title forgotten -- and a line urging people to vote for Avedon appeared in four or five American zines. That was all. Even the number of ballots cast suggests apathy. I looked in A Wealth Of Fable and found that in the first year of the fund, 1955, there were 181 ballots cast. The year after there were 180, and by 1959 there were about 360! One doubts that there was such a large number of ballots cast in subsequent years, but I would love to see the figures. Has the TAFF franchise really stayed the same, or perhaps declined over the years? Part of the dullness of this year's campaign must be blamed on the lack of foresight of the framers of TAFF. The interval between Eastercon and the Worldcon is 16 months, while the interval between the Worldcon and Eastercon is only 8 months. British candidates have about twice the time to campaign that American (or Canadian) candidates have unless I'm completely screwed up. (Which may be, but it certainly didn't seem like a long campaign.) Whatever the case, a one-shot that Avedon and I planned to model after Taff-Ddu never materialized. We ran under the wire of the deadline before we'd settled who got top billing (and other practicalities). A two page cartoon of mine that appeared in Ansible to promote Taff wasn't supposed to be in the same issue as the results. I had campaign cartoons that were published after the race was over. And poor Grant Canfield had cartoons that I gather were never published at all. In other words, the candidates were only just getting started. I was particularly disappointed with my profile during the race. Seattle John Berry stigmatized me as a case of advanced gafia, yet aside from not producing a generally available zine during most of '82, it was a boom year for my fanac. I have articles to appear (I think) in Tappen, Raffles, Scientifriction, Beardmutterings, Stickey Quarters, Holier Than Thou, New Canadian Fandom, and The Shadow Line, but none will appear in time to bolster my image when it would have done some good. Similarly I have a large numbers of illos that are still unpublished. DNQ itself was a major sink of my fanac, and it too is far too late to do me any good with TAFF.

-- Taral

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⁵Remember what happened to the oysters.

WHAT'S THIS? IT ISN'T IN THE LOC...

It's a blank page, that's what. And it was left between the Taral-torial Imperitive and Rich Coad's column because of a certain amount of confusion about the order of pages that's existed right up until the last minute. Of course, it might be possible to shuffle the material around so as to eliminate the blank — advantages were immediately obvious — but when I thought about it I realized that all of a sudden I had a need for a blank page just there! The editorial was written some time far back in the Pleistocene, and new matters have come to light since then. And here on page 17 was the best place to catch up on current events since it is right after the editorial after all. Also, it was easier... Who am I to look serendipity in the mouth? Indeed I won't — not for all the plaudits for layout an awe-struck fandom can confer on me. This is how I found the issue, and this's how it'll be. Here I say my final piece.

My news is the gaffiation of Victoria Vayne. I'm tempted to put you on, and say that Victoria was a hoax of mine from beginning to end. But too many of you have met the person. So the official line is that Victoria Vayne has gaffiated. Her fanzine factory is dismantled and up for sale. The Wonderful 466 that could dot an "i" in red can be yours for a mere \$800. Her collection of fanzines is available with certain exceptions for only \$500. Yes, it's true, for only \$1300 dollars you can virtually become Victoria Vayne, legend-before-her-own-time. As a consequence of gaffiation, Victoria has down-graded her part in this DNQ. For that matter, she'd been involved less and less for the last ten issues. The paperwork, the subscription records, the trade lists, and all that, the typing and mimeo, gradually wore her down. All the while there seemed nothing much to build her enthusiasm up, as fandom's attention shifted hither and tither, but never much to DNQ. The last straw, according to Victoria, was a remark by one of fandom's better known louts, in Twll Ddu, to the effect that fandom (for which he was the official spokesman) was just as glad that Victoria hadn't tried to make up for a lack of humourous writing she had observed. Up until this summer she had continued doing shit-work for me and paid the bills for DNQ. Sometime this summer, for a variety of reasons, she decided that she'd had enough. The last issue was typed for me, I had the paper and ink, the rest was up to me. However, DNQ still had over 70 subbers. Without having myself been enriched by the subscription money, it was more than onerous to send the subbers their copies, it was ruinous. And DNQ had a cover which wouldn't have justice done to it if it weren't offset. I needed envelopes too, for an issue that could scarcely be folded over and self-mailed. Fortunately, I found other patrons of the fan arts. Another respite came in the form of a rubber stamp saying "book rate". A half pound mass can be moved for as little as 61¢ (overseas!) if it is a book rather than a fanzine. This is a book, then, if you are ever asked.

That DNQ had over 70 subbers was a surprise to me -- I expected more like 40 since our business had been in decline. Unfortunately, it seems odd to say, we had had more than 90 at one time. An interesting if trivial datum can be extracted from that number too. It makes DNQ one of the largest "institutions" in Canadian fandom. I can only vouch for one club having a larger membership and two others that may or may not. At worst, DNQ is the fourth largest discrete class of fanac apart from conventions in this country, which puts a certain other Canadian fan pub in the shade for the present. But you can prove anything with statistics if you know how. I know how, so don't take my boast too seriously.

As it so conveniently happens, the \$5 price I've put on this issue wipes out my responsibilities to all but a handful of my subbers. This is fine by me. Although I fully intend to go on being a Publishing Giant, I'm afraid I've turned into one of those secretive BNF's who return unsolicited contributions without ever opening them, and whose mailing lists define the who's who of fandom. You know the type ... semi-gaffiated, mostly.

SOONER OR LATER II Rich Coad's Column

It was at a wrestling match, long before the deadline set by Taral, that I first mentioned this column to Cheryl Cline. Ivan "The Russian Bear" Kutsumov had just beaten Rocky "Soul Man" Johnson in the first of what were to be three main events. The foul, bearded and bald Kutsumov had won on a technicality. He had hit Rocky over the head with an eighteen-inch length of lead pipe he had hidden cunningly down the front of his trunks, then, with Rocky reeling from this blow, he'd withdrawn a ten foot piece of motorcycle chain from his face mask and begun to whip our man with it. Under such intense pressure Rocky did the only thing he could -- gouge Kutsumov's eyes. The referee, ever fair, cautioned both wrestlers and took away the chain and lead pipe. Later Rocky lay on the ground being kicked by the Russian's razor-equipped boots and again he gouged the eyes. And was immediately disqualified by the ref.

Now, even as I inclined my speaking mouth towards Cheryl's hearing aid, Ivan was screaming to a TV interviewer about how he himself had routed Yankee imperialism and was making the world a safer place for the workers and a peoples democracy.

But none of that is strictly relevant and was far from my mind as I said to Cheryl Cline "Babs," for that is what we call her West of the Pecos, "I think, perhaps, just possibly, I may have over-reached myself in agreeing to take on this column-writing bit for Taral and Victoria."

Cheryl, who had been busily leaping up and down screaming "You're blind ref!" interspersed with queries to all around about whether they had seen that which Kutsumov had done and expressions of incredulity that such actions could go unpunished in a society based on law, justice and constitutionality, quieted herself long enough to say: "Oh, why's that?"

"Well, it's just that," ("We'll nuke the Kremlin you fat Russian pig!" shouted the deaf suburban pacifist.) "there doesn't seem to be an awful lot of..." (Kutsumov, making his way back to the dressing room was passing our aisle. "You're gonna die commie bastard!" effused Cheryl and spat in his direction.) "...subject matter about these days."

"What?" asked the rubber-stamping editrix. I repeated myself. With the Russian gone things were quieter though a few rowdies were pouring whisky into Rocky Johnson's cuts. But Cheryl now understood my quandry. "Times," she said, "are tough all over. There's a recession, you know."

"But," I replied, delving deep into the historical faculties of my cosmic mind, "but... but..." In delving I'd forgotten what I was going to say.

Cheryl, however, had remembered. "I realize," she said, "that fandom was formed in the depths of the depression yet, even then, amidst the breadlines, broker-suicides and apple-selling financiers, fans managed to find material aplenty. Why they even had great controversies back then. Who, for example, could ever forget the Great Exclusion? And fandom has kept this creation of controversial subject matter alive over the years. One could guarantee response merely by lining up on either side of an important issue. Say 'Yngvi is not a louse.' or 'I support WSFS Inc.' or 'Harlan is right.' and you had at least half a dozen letters in the mail before you'd even finished the second paragraph. But there is a new malaise about in the country. Times are tough. There's a recession you know."

"I know," I said feeling the new malaise weighing heavy on my mind. "I know. I can't even write about how little controversy there is in fandom today because Ted White and Dan Steffan did it first in PONG. In fact, all my good ideas are turning up in PONG first. Spiffy little fanzine it may be but those fellows are altogether too clever. Soon nobody will be able to write anything because PONG will have done it first. You've got to help me Babs! Give me some ideas!"

"Later," she said. "The tag-team match is about to start."

Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus were pinned by the Brothers Karamazov in under three minutes.

.....

I called Cheryl the next afternoon. I often call Cheryl in the afternoon since I work nights and, when I am home, everyone else is at work. Cheryl, belonging to that class of person known as "budding-writer" (not, as has been incorrectly reported elsewhere, "bored suburban housewife") is the only other person I know who's home. She answered, as usual, with a sigh.

"Have you come up with any?" I asked hastily.

"Any what?" replied the suburban scrivener.

"Ideas for what to write for Taral and Victoria."

"Oh. No. Hadn't given it much thought really."

"Shit. Taral's deadline is only four weeks away, which means I've only got six weeks to write it. Maybe I should emigrate."

"Again?" she asked bitchily. "You could always scream 'I quit. It's not worth it. slam your watch against the wall, storm off to your room and pass out.'"

"Too in-jokey."

"Not if you give the background."

"Too embarrassing. As Gibson says: 'Reason for not writing this article: Might make me seem like an asshole.'"

"Well, she said thoughtfully, "You could write about what you did at the last party Bay Area Punk Fandom had."

"What did I do at the last party Bay Area Punk Fandom had?" I asked.

"I'll only say it involved whipped cream, diced mushrooms and a whip."

"I think I'll leave that one alone."

"Well, I'll give it thought," said Cheryl before hanging up.

• • • • •

Months passed. Deadlines passed. Small saplings grew into large trees and were cut down and made into the Monthly Monthly. Many Monthly Monthlys. No ideas were forthcoming. But Bay Area Punk Fandom was having another party.

Gary Mattingly picked me up after work, zoomed by a friend's house to pick her up and watch the hookers at the bus stop in front of her building, and zoomed right on over to the Holiday Inn where we zoomed up to the twenty-sixth floor. When Gary and Patty Peters hold a party they do it with style.

"Have you come up with any ideas yet?" I asked Cheryl on entering the suite.

"No," she said and handed me a package with a rubber stamp of a family watching TV in it.

"Gee," I said, genuinely touched, "thanks for the stamp. But I still need something to write about. I guess I'll have to go to my old standby and insult and ridicule you."

"Naah," she said. "You don't wanna do that." Then she held up her middle finger. The nail was bitten.

I said nothing. I was locked deep in thought, trying to get a flying spinning toe-hold on a nagging notion. On my fifth or seventh beer I did it.

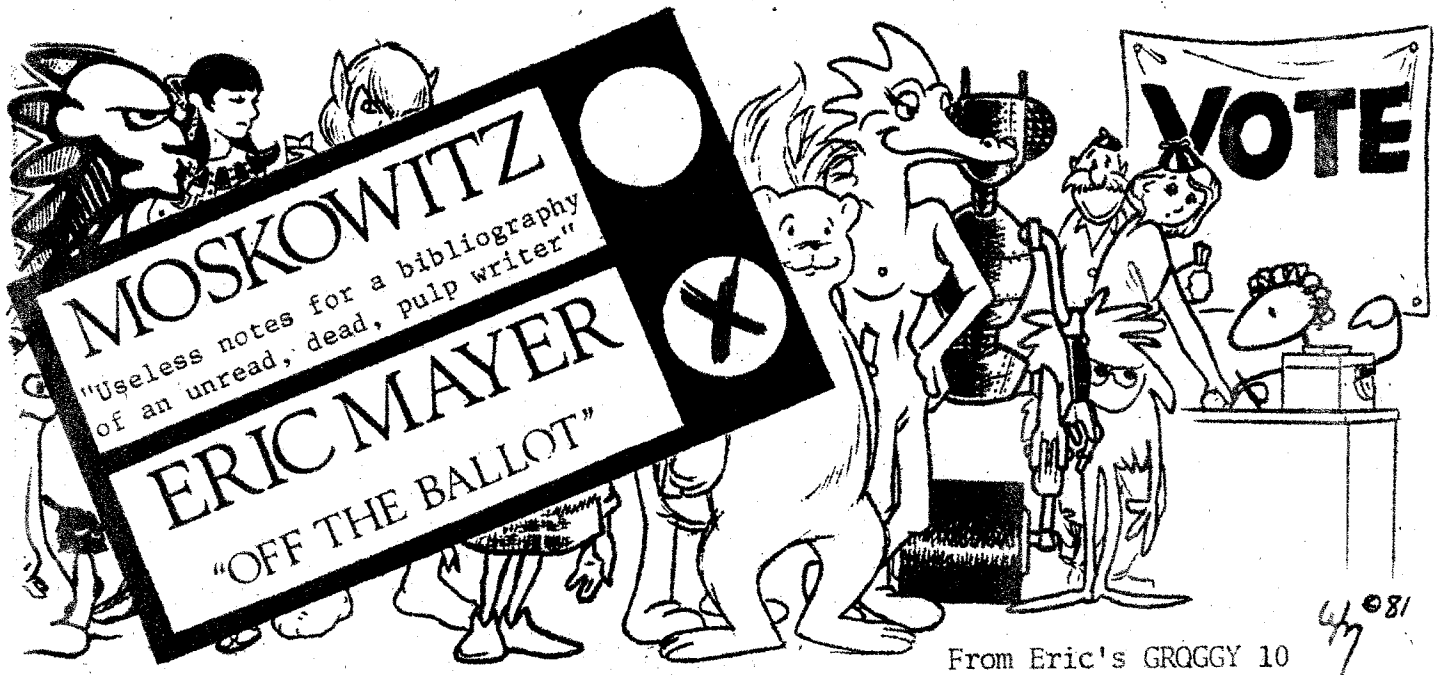
"Cheryl," I shouted, too excited to remember to call her Babs. "I'm going to tell everyone about the fuzzy pink thing you've got on your toilet."

"What fuzzy pink thing?" said narrow-eyed Cheryl.

"You know the fuzzy yellow thing that you've got on the toilet seat that makes the seat fall down just at the moment you're about to piss thus scaring away the urge to pee."

"You wouldn't dare," she said.

But I will. In the next installment.



I am not now, nor have I ever been, a member of the Hudson County Young Democrats. Joe, who collects a paycheck from the courthouse and knows more about politics than I, tried to rope me into being Legal Counsel for that dubious organization anyway. I told him if nominated I would not run and so forth.

He tugged at the beard he's assumed since his successful quest for the Weehawken school board, "Let me tell you something," he said in a conspiratorial tone. "How do you think Angelo Pizzuta got started?"

I explained that my plans for the future, nebulous as they might be, definitely did not include following Mr. Pizzuta, whoever he might be, into the footnotes of New Jersey history.

The political animal inhabits a savage world where there are no friends, just "connections"; no jobs, only "stepping stones". When a "connection" shows you a "stepping stone" you step, and never mind whether the creek is worth the crossing.

"How do you put up with that slime mold?" Kathy has politely asked.

I tell her I listen to Joe's accounts of intrigue in the political jungles of Weehawken with the same detached interest I would give to a report from the surface of Ganymede. This is not to say I am a complete alien on the political landscape.

I once worked for Bill Scranton. He wasn't Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania then, just a struggling, 23 year old publisher whose ex-governor father had lent him the family newspaper to play with. He did a good job. He was, by all appearances, something of a radical. He had rubber stamps marked "Bullshit" and "Screw" to expedite dealings with hard nosed capitalist suppliers. During lunch he practiced transcendental meditation in his office, looking out over the drab, materialistic houses along Main Street. I wrote a political column filled with purple fulminations against that leprosy of the spirit named conservatism. Sometimes Bill would invite me into his sanctum and between mouthfuls of alfalfa sprouts congratulate me on my perspicacity. Now he is a Lieutenant Governor. A Republican. I should have suspected. He never offered me any of those sprouts.

Looking back I realize that even at the age of 21 my political instincts had been dulled by maturity. In 1960 they were still sharp. During that election year I crayoned a

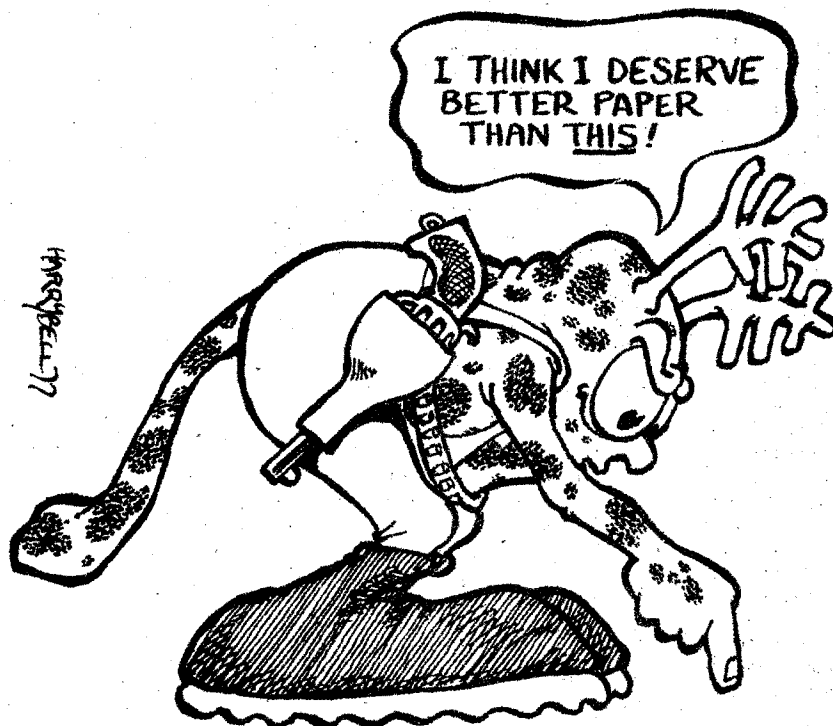
roman a clef about a pair of presidential rivals named, subtly I thought, Nix and Kenney. Kenney got shot.

I've never felt this accomplishment entitled me to predict a cure for cancer in the NATIONAL STAR every January. It wasn't an act of prophecy, only my idea of how a campaign ought to be run. Such a neat resolution, aside from being dramatically satisfying, avoided the threat to democracy posed by the Electoral College, whose invidious workings I understood only too well when I was ten.

Back then I lived for games. One summer my friends and I formed The Horseshoe Club, whose sole purpose was to select a whole history's worth of presidents one after another. The president's duties, as set forth elaborately in our constitution, were to record for posterity the results of his own election and then set a date for the succeeding election. Being children, it never occurred to us that real life presidents, once they'd had the fun of getting elected, had to buckle down to running the country. We did once take time off from the campaign trail to scavenge up a big, deflated inner tube which, I proposed could be made into an Ultimate Slingshot, the better to defend our way of elections from any communists who might be lurking across the backyard fences on Claude Street. I still have a cardboard campaign button from that period. It is shaped like a slingshot. "Experience counts," it advises, "Vote Mayer and Layou." I can't imagine why I've saved this rather embarrassing memento from an inconsequential event which we won handily 11 to 7 with 1 abstention.

Yesterday morning I was scanning the primary election results -- a pleasant bonus these days in addition to my usual breakfast of box scores. I was happy to see Kennedy had won in my old home state. He has been victimized by the television mentality of the public who knows that anyone else they watch on tv, Starsky or Hutch or Kojak, would never have let that poor girl drown. Then, too, I enjoy a good contest. Years ago I read a book called PRESIDENTIAL TIMBER, a history of political conventions. I was enthralled by the baroque, unpredictable, 103 ballot dramas of yesteryear and have wished, ever since, that someday I might at least get to experience the thrill of a second ballot.

I am primarily interested in the political process for its entertainment value since it seems obvious that the system is rigged to prevent anyone of any real ability or vision from rising.



I glanced up from my newspaper to see Joe, who hasn't been around much since I bypassed his proffered stepping stone, standing in front of the circulation desk looking, as always, as if he knew something important.

"Big meeting for the Young Dems Sunday," he said in a conspiratorial tone. "As counsel you would have played a major role."

"That's what I was afraid of in the first place," I told him and went back to my paper.

- Eric Mayer

SUSAN WOOD 1948-1980 In the 18 months that have passed from the day someone phoned me to tell me that Susan Wood had died, possibly of suicide, I have seen several personal reactions in fanzines. As one would expect of the death of such a well-liked and highly respected person, lamentations were de rigueur. More than one fan wept his words into print who could hardly have known Susan Wood. For most, though, their grief was genuine, and no decent person can help but have some pity in his heart for a woman of such potential who has died young. Meanwhile, inertia has dragged fandom a little further into the future, and Susan Wood has fallen behind along with other concerns of the past. Indeed, the vast majority of fandom was scarcely affected. A convention here in Toronto honoured its own dead -- a little known fan whose passing went almost unnoticed even here -- while ignoring the death of Susan Wood entirely. That is how it is with fandom today. Two groups of fans in the same city with different shrines and sacred bones is only a model of a community grown to include thousands. How could it be otherwise than impersonal? And yet, within our own tribe -- the various families of fanzine fans -- the reaction was less than I expected. Although many of our kin are too young in fandom to remember Susan Wood as anything but a Hugo-contender and arcane celebrity, little has been done to resurrect the Susan Wood-with-her-feet-on-the-ground that fans knew in the last great zinish orogeny of the early 70's. Few historical facts have seen print in the fan press. No one has risen to the occasion by publishing the collection of Susan's fan writing that I'd hoped for.* Insofar as I'm able, I repair the lacking with a few hurriedly researched paragraphs and a reprint of a classic Susan Wood article from Granfalloon.

Susan Wood was born in 1948, and was 32 when she died. At the time she discovered fandom she was living in Ottawa, attending Carleton University. With two friends, Alicia Austin and Maureen Bournes, she was involved with Kevas & Trillium, Canada's first Trekzine. Mike Glicksohn, joined the Ottawa scene during the summer of 1970, an emissary from the youthful Ontario Science Fiction Club to the equally young ACUSFOOS. It was the brightest period of Canadian fan activity since the 50's, and it wouldn't be at its peak until Mike and Susan left for Toronto, married. Mike had just begun a fanzine -- one of many new Canadian fanzines -- and Susan became co-editor of Energumen with its third issue. It won her and Mike half a Hugo each for publishing the Best Fanzine of 1973. (It was nominated two other times before its apotheosis at Torcon.) Aside from Energumen, she published a zine of her own that lasted five issues from 1970 to 1973. Aspidistra eschewed the famous Canadian 24 lb. blue paper for Canadian 24 lb. green, and was known as the ecology conscious zine.

Torcon 2 was in more than one sense a pyramid. It memorialized and brought to an end that generation of Canadian fandom. Clubs failed or changed hands, zines folded, and fans dropped out of sight. The marriage between Mike and Susan lasted three years, and ended with Torcon, the final issue of Energumen, and a separation. Susan moved to Regina, where she stayed with an ex-patriate New Yorker, and publisher of Kratophany, Eli Cohen. They lived in Regina for about two years and moved to Vancouver in 1975, where Susan joined the U.B.C.'s English department. Although Susan had written much for fanzines up until then, by 1975 most of her favourites, such as Outworlds and Granfalloon, had disappeared. She wasn't doing much fan writing apart from her zine reviews in Algal and sercon stuff that more and more drew her into the fringes of professional SF. All the while less and less free from scholastic duties. At the same time Susan became greatly involved in the feminist movement. Clearly there wasn't enough of her to go around, and to ordinary fans she became a figure rather magnified by distance.

Most of Susan's fannish energy in the middle-70's went into A Women's Apa, which had been founded on a suggestion of hers. She also kept up contacts with old fan friends through a personalzine called The Amor de Cosmos People's Memorial Quiet-Revolutionary Susanzine. Usually called Amor, it went for at least 17 issues from 1973 to '78 or '79, and wasn't generally available. Unlike Asp or Nerg, it was most often a short thing, two to ten pages, and plain. A few were rather longer, and had material other than Susan's own. Most of her fan writing by '78 was academic, taking for form of pre-faces, chapbooks, and the like. But I think it was for her humorous writing that fandom admired her most. Whether it was for her fannish or serious writing, she won a solo Hugo for Best Fanwriter in 1974. Then she tied for Best Fanwriter with Richard E. Geis in 1977. Six other times she was nominated, long after she had virtually ceased to write for fanzines. In 1975 she was one of the Fan Guests of Honour at Aussiecon, and since then she has been a guest at many conventions. She exerted an influence on the Pacific North-West, particularly the Vancouver club, the way a black hole would pull planets out of line while passing through the solar system. In recognition of this as much as anything, the BCSCFA awarded her a posthumous award at V-Con in 1981.

Susan probably stood on the edge of becoming a professional editor in 1980. She had done a great deal of the work on the Amazons anthology edited by Jessica Salmonson -- so much so that it was questioned by some if Salmonson should have been taken sole credit. Susan's commitment to her career in Canadian literature had also borne fruit. She had been an assistant professor at U.B.C., and finally won her tenure. On the debit side, Eli Cohen had returned to New York that summer, leaving Susan living alone. Her other relationships were unstable, and she had a history of alcoholism and depression. She had had an emotional crisis at Noreascon. High strung and overworked, Susan took pills to sleep, pills to work, and pills to counteract the pills. She had tried suicide.

When Susan died in her apartment one Wednesday morning, suicide was feared by many. Susan Wood was declared dead at 11:20 a.m. by a Vancouver hospital on November 12th, and the verdict was "heart failure". But stoppage of the heart is ultimately the cause of every death, and didn't explain anything. Rumours circulated for a couple of months until the coroner's report could sort out the misconceptions from the truth. Susan died of congestion of the heart brought about by an adverse reaction to a commonly used drug for menstrual pains. Whether or not she had been on a course of self-destruction is perhaps still debatable, but her death was totally accidental.

The death of so eminent a member of the science fiction community provided a local tabloid, The Vancouver Province, with coverage every bit as obnoxious as the worst story you've read about a "sci-fi" con. The headline might as well have read "Zap, Zap, Ray Gun Makes Susan Wood Passe" (in the tradition of the famous story on Torcon 1). Reaction from Vancouver fandom eventually forced the paper to print a more decent obituary, but I haven't seen the copy.

Susan's effects went variously to her mother, BCSCFA archives, and the University of British Columbia. A scholarship award has been established in her name at Carleton University.

As bad as the paper's account is, DNO just might have been guilty of even worse taste, but before the fact. The spurious review of Energumen 16, which began with Susan as co-editor, mentioned several prominent but inactive fans as "coming out of the grave" to write for a one-shot last 'Nerg. Susan's name was conspicuous in retrospect.

-- Taral

THE DEAD PAST....

"You've got to get up every morning
with a smile on your face
And show the world all the love
in your heart
Then people gonna treat you better
You're gonna find, yes you will
That you're beautiful as you feel."
"Beautiful" by Carole King

*

I loathe "happy faces".

Obnoxious little dayglo smiles, pinned to lapels beneath sour faces. Phony cheeriness on T-shirts and children's vitamins, cheap coffee mugs and plastic shopping bags, garbage cans and assorted garbage. Idiot grins, accompanied by meaningless messages, like the billboard I saw on the way to Malton airport this morning: a big yellow blob, a squiggle meant to be a smile, and the words "Have a nice day!"

Ha! Thanks a lot, billboard. I've been sitting here for 45 minutes in a grounded DC-10 at O'Hare airport. The wait's getting longer, the air's getting stuffy. The air conditioning isn't working, but the ground crew is, trying to find what's wrong with the cooling system. Every few minutes our chatty pilot, sounding a little harried, tells us to be patient; no one knows what's wrong, or how to fix it, or how long we'll be delayed, BUT EVERYTHING IS JUST FINE! The stewardesses (pardon, 'flight attendants') move about dispensing cold drinks and the mechanical smiles they learn in the airlines' training school. They take turns standing in the doorway of the tiny galley behind us, biting their nails, looking harried and human until the captive crowd gets restless. Then out come the "happy face" professional smiles once more.

The only good thing about the situation is that the man beside us, smoking in a non-smoking area, stopped when Michael and I, politely and with a smile, asked him not to do so.

And that's why I dislike "happy faces". I object to that billboard, for example, not because I'm not having a "nice day" but because it was meaningless, an impersonal gesture to the human courtesies and contacts everyone admires, and no one has time to practice. At best, those inane grins flooding the schlock

* In fact, such a collection came into existence in late '82. THE BEST OF SUSAN WOOD can be had from Jerry Kaufman, if it isn't sold out, for \$2 US — profits go to the Susan Wood Fund — 4326 Winslow Place N. Seattle WA 98103.

market look silly; a teller in our bank wore a blue-green-yellow "happy face" maternity smock through what appeared to be her ninth month, and I have never seen anything so grotesque as that great speckled bulge! At worst, they trivialize and debase the idea of happiness, and the human courtesy and friendliness which promotes it. Pin a smiling button that says "have a nice day" on my shoulder, and I've done my human-relations duty. I'm free to use that shoulder to elbow everyone else aside as I jam my body into a subway car full of snarling Torontonians. Sure.

Or go to my local supermarket, part of a chain which features Mr. Sincerity-and-Social-Virtue himself, William Shatner, telling us all in TVland about the courteous efficient service it provides. Now management at the local level had the sense to hire a Polish checkout girl, for this predominantly middle-European neighbourhood -- and the cheap-skatedness to leave her, usually, on duty alone. She stands, harried and hassled as the lineups lengthen past the seven closed cash registers, trying to bag groceries, give milk-jug refunds, sell cigarettes, check mis-marked prices, make change, and explain for the hundredth time that no, she hadn't rung up the total wrong, milk had gone up again.

A nice girl, Ritva-in-the-supermarket, working under conditions hardly favourable to the exchange of human courtesy and politeness. So I was interested to note that her bosses, in their new concern with customer relations had helped both her and their new image.

They had given her, not an assistant, but a dayglo pink happy-face button that said "have a nice day".

She wasn't smiling.

Neither was the stewardess behind me, who's just opened the aircraft door to coax a breeze in, because, as she confided to her assistant, "People're gonna start gettin' sick an' faintin' soon." Then, smiles back in place, both trundled off to dispense magazines and reassurance.

I know those smiles are necessary. They are big "Everything-is-FINE!" signs meant to keep the captive passengers contented through this increasingly Bad Scene. A smile was standard equipment for the girl who searched my purse when we returned to the departure lounge after ten minutes spent exhausting the glories of the O'Hare terminal. Her grin and "Hi honey let's see whatcha got just the usual stuff ok over there through the detector and have a good flight" patter humanized the whole impersonal, but necessary, process.

Nevertheless, the smile remains plastic, the courtesy mechanical, and they know we know it's not a human response, just part of the job. That degrades everyone.

When Richard Labonte, Canfan Legend, was Carleton University's student council president, he and some fellow freaky-student-councillors flew to Toronto for a conference. Unimpressed by phoniness, they merely grunted at the stewardess's "Goodbye sir, have a pleasant say, Goodbye sir, have ..." exit ritual. The smile vanished, the woman said firmly "Say goodbye to the plastic stewardess!" Shocked, they did say goodbye -- to a human being, asserting her own individuality.

Which brings up the problem again: courtesy and friendliness and happiness, exploited and made meaningless, plastic-laminated on buttons or on faces, can make you believe all happy faces are phony.

Some people believe that already. A smile on a woman's face, for example, can be misinterpreted as an invitation. Or maybe I just over-reacted to the spontaneity of convention-going, and the life of a central-city university neighbourhood after a rather dour civil-service town. For a year, I bopped happily down the streets to classes or stores, smiling when I felt happy, grinning at folks with their gurgling babies on their backs and their big dogs romping alone. And then we moved to our Ethnic Neighbourhood, where winos are an accepted part of the fauna but young people are regarded suspiciously as hippie-degenerates, where women stay home, hidden away cooking while their men visit the taverns, where almost everyone seems to be a grim middle-European peasant determined

So I went bopping out for milk, happy-faced, and routinely got hassled. Picture: winter snow finally melted, buds sprouting on the branches, the first robin singing, dead-rat-brown city finally turning green. I smile with the sheer relief only a Canadian spring can bring. And immediately: "Hi there, cutie, where 'ya goin'?"

Learning that the high-rise canyon one block east sheltered a large segment of Toronto's call-girl population only made me feel more hassled. So my perfectly natural smile was just a for-sale sign?

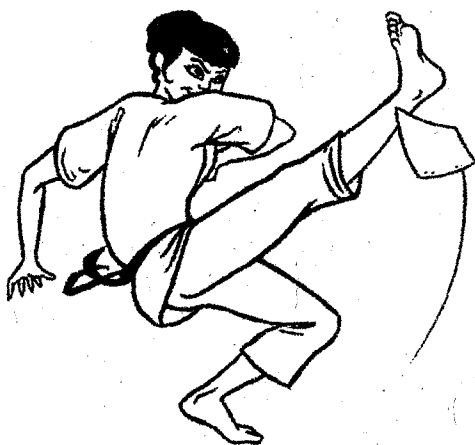
"What's she grinning about?" it wonders.

"Hippie weirdo, must be on drugs," it glares.

I like to smile and wiggle my nose at babies I encounter while riding streetcars and subways. I like babies -- quiet ones, other people's, with Mummies to change their diapers. I also have a private bet. At least 50% of the infants will stare suspiciously at me before bursting into tears -- whereupon their mothers glare at me. Approximately 40% will look puzzled or bored. Perhaps 9-1/2% will actually, with a great sense of discovery, smile back. Even chortle, cautiously. Whereupon their mothers glare at me. The remaining 1/2% are smiling already, as are their happy, relaxed parents, whose proud looks say "Yeah, it's a great kid, isn't it?" They're precious people. They let you share their enjoyment.

I grinned. He grinned back. No one else noticed.

-- Susan Wood, 1973.



INDEX EXPUGA- TORIUS

A letter I wrote to Rich Coad's SPACE JUNK some while ago may appear in the next issue, if there is a next issue. I wrote it in response to some remarks by Joseph Nicholas, who rejected categorically all American fanzine reviews. The points I made were that British and American reviewers had different aims in mind, and that the fandoms themselves were vastly different. A British reviewer is talking to a few handfuls of people who know each other and their crotchets very well. They have all read pretty much the same assortment of fanzines, and it would be pointless to catalog the contents. Instead, the British reviewer goes after the editor, much in the way a gossip columnist would. North American fandom is much larger than the British, by a factor of twenty, at least. The same cozy situation doesn't exist, and it isn't likely that a fan will be in touch with more than a small part of fandom. Consequently it makes sense to describe the contents of a fanzine, and to evaluate them as if for a consumer's guide. Among other things; it is. British zines also tend to be different from the domestic variety in as much as the editor is usually the author of most, or all of his zine. Egoboo for the zine is egoboo for the writer too. American zines still tend to be genuine-like, with several contributors and quite a bit of artwork. A discussion of the editor's sense of humour and quick judgement passed on the zine does nothing for the contributors, who are left wanting for their lumps or egoboo if reviewed this way. The opposing styles are very much suited to their context.

Nevertheless, most American style reviews leave much to be desired. The reviewers are often too far gone in the 70's idea that any expression of the self is good, irrespective of how well it's done or the intrinsic merit of the ideas embodied in the expression. In many cases it is not an ideological fallacy, but a simple matter of the reviewer being vapid and incapable of intelligent criticism. I won't name names so Carol Kennedy can rest easy.

The British reviewers suffer from disadvantages of their own. Insults and personal abuse are not the best means of offering advice, so rather than instructing, Nicholas or Dorey obstruct the novice. Do you follow the advice of a person calling you a microcephalic purveyor of prostituted prose? A dislexic typo-ist whose pages look as if typed using Cyrillic Reform 1? An asshole in other words? So why did I just insult Carol Kennedy seven lines ago? It's fun, and the British know it. They dish it out and take it too.

Moreover, the British reviewer does more than evaluate a dozen or so zines individually. He fits each review into a scheme of fanzine publishing that is a discussion of where it's at, where it's going, and what it ought to leave behind. Fandom cannot be understood by examining all its parts in turn. You have to examine them in relation to each other as well, just as you don't understand a bicycle until you assemble the parts. This is the strength of British reviewing.

The other point I made in my letter to Rich was that I didn't think I could review that

way. I had been reviewing American-style for too long. Furthermore, however many details about fanzines I knew, I had no Procrustean bed to chop and fit them into. Since then several things have fallen into place and there are patterns to reveal of a sort more interesting than my usual dire warnings of decline and decadence. Not that these new patterns aren't those of decline and decadence, necessarily. But I think they add more to understanding. This, then, is a British style installment of IndEx.

A recent catch-phrase in reviewing circles has been attributed to me in Nabu or somewhere, but, as far as I know the first person to suggest that the focal point of fandom was no longer this zine or that zine but apas was Brian Earl Brown. Remember that. He deserves the credit. Unfortunately, this is no longer true. Though apas continue to grow in local fandoms all over Canada and the United States, the old apas in the mainstream of fandom are not doing well. They continue to exist in many cases, but there is no excitement, no vitality in them like there was during the hey-days of Apa-50, Mishap, Azapa, Oasis, The Women's Apa, Spin-Off, etc., two or three years ago. They are secondary. The focal point of fandom is the convention.

The signs are obvious if you will only look at them. There are at least two conventions each weekend of the year, except perhaps in the worst months of winter when there is only one. A newly emergent fan center will first think of putting on its own con, not publishing its own clubzine. Where zines appear with cons the zine is the lesser important of the two because one is the work of a single person, at most a handful of people, where the other is the project of the entire club. Today's fan guests -- who are they? More and more often the organizers of other cons, filk-singers or other convention personalities. But the signs appear not only in the pursuits of neos, but in the zines of well established veteran fan publishers.

There are a number of zines that are not in a sense fanzines at all, because they are not published for the sole purpose of publishing a fanzine. These fanzines-not-for-fanzines'-sake include some prestigious titles, including Xenolith, Xenium, Graymalkin, and go on to less lofty productions such as Runway 37. But if they aren't fanzines, what are they? Extensions of the editors' convention activity; little more.

The best place to start is with Bill Bowers' Xenolith, which I've reviewed quite negatively in the past. Bowers' career as a fan began with a zine called Double:Bill, which he co-edited with Bill Mallardi. When D:B ended its run in 1969, Bowers began his own zine, Outworlds, the year after. Within a few issues it had a reputation for good material, attractively packaged in unpredictable formats. From number 19 on, Outworlds went slick and built itself up to circulation figures of a thousand or two thousand, and never quite won a Hugo. The last couple of issues began to show signs of fatigue, as the layout became confusing and the material more in-groupish. Then, with promises of an Outworlds 30 outstanding, it disappeared. There were efforts to put OW on a professional basis which fell through, and then a long, conspicuous silence from William's Pen except some finger exercises in out-of-the-way places like Mishap, where Bowers ran his first series of Xenolith. These were apa-zines; later personalzines. Two years ago the urge to publish a genzine again returned, resulting in Xenolith series two. The first two issues were quite good, and the second printed letters hailing the return of Outworlds in a new guise (though it wasn't, in fact, that good by any stretch of the imagination). The third was weak; the fourth a negligent mop-up of Bowers' remaining will to publish. The next issue reverted to a personalzine in name as well as deed and continued the first series numbering.

It is dull. It is very dull. It is unspeakably and unforgivably dull for anyone expecting more than a glimpse into the sentimental dynamics of Bowers' group of friends and acquaintances, who seemingly do nothing more interesting than raise cats, write gushy poetry, and do gigs as tourists in Bimini. Xenolith 14 begins with the letter column, a collection of back-patting, gossip, and natter which fails because there is no substance in the first place for the amenities to round off. The lack of humour and inspiration in Xenolith's pages is not exceptional. The same pointless "how's the weather, I have blue curtains and see you at Rivercon" style of letter writing can be found in practically every letter column outside the covers of Speculation or The Riverside Quarterly. Laziness and inability are not responsible. The conversational tone is what

makes these letter columns popular. So popular that some zines such as Marty Cantor's *Holier Than Thou* have been up to three quarters letters, and not only have they received no complaints but they have been encouraged in the act. In this respect *Xenolith* is no worse than most and simply shares the movement of fandom toward informality and socializing.

Like the preceding issues, the main body of the zine is heavily concerned with Bowers' convention activity. The touch is put on one of his many professional friends to supply a speech or an interview, and Bowers himself chatters about the last con he went to or the next three he's going to. Not that he does much at these cons that he will talk about. Usually, nothing more exciting is spoken of than a dinner party or the emotional catharsis experienced by being assembled with his friends around a poker table. The rest is left up to the imagination of the reader. I must be very unimaginative, because I find it all superordinary.

Xenolith 14 is graced by a particularly fine example of a con speech. Dotti Bedard Stefl, who you remember as the editor of the award-winning *Family Relationships*, was the guest of honour at Spacecon, and Uncle Bill cornered exclusive rights on her first efforts in the role of superstar. It was one of those things we all wrote at her age -- a report on fandom by aliens secretly observing the earth. When we wrote it we were merely being clever, but Dotti delivers right from the heart with a sincere "I Love You All". Gets you right here, if you know what part of my anatomy I'm thumping.

Personalzines tend more to a preoccupation with cons than other zines, and *Xenolith* is scarcely the only one. It is merely a surprise come-down. More typical is *Insufficient Funds* by Leah Zeldes and Larry Tucker. IF was partly the result of Leah's wishing to get back into fanzine publishing. As reasons go, this seems a little specious since Leah never was heavily into publishing, unless her regular contributions to *Mishap* and *Apa-50* counted. Her involvement in convention fandom has always been heavy, and this can be seen in IF. The bulk of the second issue concerns *Autoclave* (and video-tape players, to be accurate), and oddly enough Leah wonders in her part why there seems to be no-one to replace the fans she knew as a neo, and whether it is because fanzines are no longer the normal means of introduction to fandom. The question that needs to be asked next is if reading *Insufficient Funds* would further a neo's impression that cons were what fandom's all about or not. I think it would. Another case in point is *Fran Skene's Love Makes The World Go Awry*. The zine only began to weigh in as more than a letter-substitute with the third issue, but that was mostly letters. The fourth is more than half letter too. Unlike earlier issues, though, there are five pages of Fran herself in *Awry* 4, more than any other. It too deals a lot with conventions. I don't think that either of these zines prove more than that cons are an important part of fandom. Not the sole concern.

For that, we have to look further down the evolutionary scale to a zine called *Runway* 37. Beginning life as *Arkanfandom*, a clubzine published by Margaret Middleton, *Runway* 37 came into being with the 11th. Each issue has the usual complement of book reviews and letters, and even fan fiction from time to time. These take up a few pages, mechanically. *Runway's* *raison d'etre* is quite clearly the remaining half of the zine, which over several issues never strays far from Margaret's convention going. *Noreascon*, *Con-Centric*, *FilkCon*, *ConQuest*, *Rockon*, *Minicon*, *Aggiecon*... A convention journal, plain and simple. The pathetic artwork, lame design and inept mimeo only underscore the creative poverty of this zine. It is of a type published by filksingers and Dorsai camp followers, most of whom are midwesterners, but Middle America is by no means confined to the corn-belt.

Aside from personalzines, the preoccupation with cons has affected another major movement in American fanpubs, clubzines. A prominent trio are the A-B-C zines from Atlanta, Birmingham and Chattanooga -- *Atarantes*, *Anvil* and *Chat*. There are distinctions between them, but for all intents and purposes they are identical and it takes familiarity to sort out the differences in personnel, editorial character and appearance that distinguish them. Southern fandom has long been insular and has rarely figured prominently in fanzine publishing. The three major features in its makeup have always been The Southern Fandom Confederation, their version of the N3F or BSFA; The Southern Fandom

Press Alliance; and DeepSouthcon. Lately, the number of conventions has increased, especially in the area where southern and midwestern fandom intermingle. Clubs and clubzines have kept pace, but they seem subordinate to the con each club runs. Certainly, convention reportage is a large part of the material filling each clubzine. Three cons are reported in Anvil 12, two in Chat 36, one in Chat 37, one in Atarantes 40, all plus news of upcoming conventions, flyers for cons, and discussions of a possible Worldcon bid. While on the whole the convention coverage doesn't seem unweildy, a matching interest in fanzines is lacking. There is no review column in any of the three, for instance. Nor is southern fandom currently producing a regular genzine. Chat, the best of the clubzines, is defunct. No-one has seen Future Retrospective in years, nor is Cliff any too regular with Atarantes. There have been a couple of first issues that are promising, but these are easily outnumbered by convention one-shots by the same editors.

Clubzines are usually a kind of newszine, though there are exceptions such as the Fred Haskell Runes of a few years ago. The A-B-C zines are more like newszines than genzines though some quite decent material appears in them aside from the news and local clubiz. They are much like File 770 and can be grouped with it and others of the kind. The others demonstrate my point most plainly. With titles like SF Con Register, Conacs, and A Conventional Fanzine there is no doubt where their interest lies. Although about as attractive as an extortion note pasted up with clipped words, SF Con Register is the most useful of the type. At 40¢ per it is more or less worth the money. The other two are more ambitious and contain spurious articles on choosing committees and tips on running artshows. This advice, as often as not unwanted as it is unneeded, only makes the convention information harder to find. File 770 is more like Chat or Anvil. It still contains a lot of general information about clubs, apas, and fanzines. Perhaps more than half of the news is convention related, if Hugo results, Worldcon politics, Doug Wright's antics, and Duff and Taff promotion is counted as such. Convention reports, though short, are common. On the other hand, no zine review column has appeared since number 20, fifteen issues ago. I had been Mike's reviewer on the basis of one column every other issue. They were sometimes held over to every third issue — and with F770 100% behind in its schedule at times, this amounted to a quarterly column. Then my last installment was held over 8 or 9 issues, and I quit. I've not been replaced, and F770's failure to review zines makes a clean sweep of major newsletters.*

Genzines are not exempt from the growing trend for fanzines to reflect the overall pre-occupation of fandom with the convention. One quite good example comes to mind that is plainly an extension of the editor's con-going, Graymalkin by Denise Leigh. Her genzine seems much influenced by Bill Bowers. Not so much the appearance as the content, though a few visual Bowerisms are obvious. Especially the typeface play. The resemblance between Graymalkin and Xenolith is most easily seen when the contents are compared in the outline I prepared:

- GRAYMALKIN 5 - editorial, poem, pro friend's article, con speech, poem,
second con speech, poem, letters
- Xenolith 1 - con speech editorial, pro friend's article, pro friend's arti-
cle, poem, pro article, pro article, pro interview, con speech
- Xenolith 2 - letters, con speech, letters, con speech, letters
- Xenolith 3 - letters, pro friend's interview, article, letters, editorial,
con speech
- Xenolith 4 - con speech editorial, letters

... interesting, but admittedly not important. What is important for my argument is that like Bowers' zine, Graymalkin owes much to the con-life of the editor. Two of its main features are convention speeches, and the third is about conventions. The remainder is filler and letters. Given that cons were my primary interest, Graymalkin is how I would go about a zine, except in minor matters of style. The material was all well-written and had general interest. It was better than merely legible and tastefully designed. Void or Warhoon may have a more lasting place in fan history but Runway 37 shows we have much to be grateful to Denise Leigh for.

Having spoken of both Bowers and Leigh, it is impossible not to mention Mike Glicksohn's Xenium. It is similar in both form and style to Xenolith and Graymalkin. But, surpri-

*Since F770 39, Ted White has filled the 3 year, 19 issue "void" left by my column.

sing in light of how important conventions are to Glicksohn, Xenium is less a convention journal than the others are. Mike writes freely about his travels but has much else on his mind. There are a couple of articles in number 11 dealing with the ERA-Iggy controversy, and in number 12 a con speech by another pro friend. Yet the articles on Heinlein, pin-ball, Mexico, and other material balance each issue well. It should not be included in my argument except that Mike is one of the same circle of friends who publish zines that do demonstrate my point. This is no accident.

Xenium first appeared in early 1973 and originally it was a short apazine for Apa-45. It was expanded for Fapa with the 4th issue, but by the eighth issue Xenium was no longer going through Fapa and was being sent to a gradually growing number of people in fandom instead. The pattern for Glicksohn's fanac had been set long before this, though. His schticks, friends and publishing habits date back to 'Nerg, and especially the period after Energumen folded, when Glicksohn was kept alive in fandom largely in the pages of Outworlds. He grew away from his initial friends and interests as he sunk deeper and deeper into the social life of the midwest, and came to be one of the central figures of what I find convenient to label "The Family". The Family grows and changes constantly, like any other clique, and included a number of people who did much to shape 70's fandom, particularly fanzine fandom. Groups tend to produce zines all of a kind, and the zines that grew out of this group show a clear relationship. Historically Glicksohn belongs to this group. And historically his zine belongs with theirs, otherwise I would have left sleeping fan editors whose last Xenium was in December '79 lie.

Both Xenium and Graymalkin have class, demonstrating that good fanzines can be published for any reason, even as a second thought arising from something else. Stripping a conzine bare of inadvertent merits such as wit and good writing leaves an appalling void, such as The Aussiecon Fifth Anniversary Memorial Fanzine. A one-shot produced by Jean Weber to raise money for the Australia in '83 bid, this mind-numbingly dull compilation of pointless anecdotes and rambling remembrances of the '75 Worldcon is in some ways the perfect model of the Australian fanzine and all that is wrong with it. The question posed to the participants was "how did Aussiecon change your life"? It was answered in most cases "not at all" with a few enthusing over friends met, or fandom's discovery, in 10,000 words or more, recapitulating the program book and private travel itineraries ad soporum. The zine is further handicapped by poor mimeo and the wildly erratic quality of the artwork. It will not raise much money for Duff.

Whether it is the straightness of Australians or some other facet of their national character, Australian fans have always had to be proud and lonely, even as fans went. Being the one, or one of the two fans in Toowoomba or Ipswich made the regular trip to Brisbane to meet the other twelve fans in Queensland a matter of some importance, so travel has always played a major role in Australian fandom. Conventions were made to order for Aussiefans, as soon as there were enough of them. Fanzine fandom, which should have thrived in isolation as well, is still not well developed, and has had only a mediocre history with a relatively few outstanding titles. Whether this is a trick of arithmetic v. permutative growth or high postal rates I couldn't say. Perhaps someone with more familiarity of Australian fandom could suggest answers. The recent growth of zines from the boonies may alter the balance, but the Aussiecon Fifth Anniversary Memorial Fanzine has only added weight to the wrong pan.

I've touched on four different groups, I think, in trying to show how fanzine fandom reflects the general preoccupation of fandom with conventions. This does not, of course, prove that fanzine fandom itself has come to see the con as the chief means to a faanish end, or that if it did that this was necessarily bad. But in the main, the more a zine is a by-product of some other urge than the creative, the less well it can be evaluated as a fanzine, and the more it becomes like judging the person. As fanzines they defy standards and the very meaning of good and bad. They demand, instead, that you like the editor or not. As such they have the artistic significance of a handshake or a snub at a party, other forms of social intercourse. Reviewing, however, is the art of formulating standards and applying them to case-studies. Fanzines of the sort I have discussed cannot be reviewed except on their own terms, yet that is not reviewing! That is merely relating to the editor. The difficulty this creates in reviewing is that a

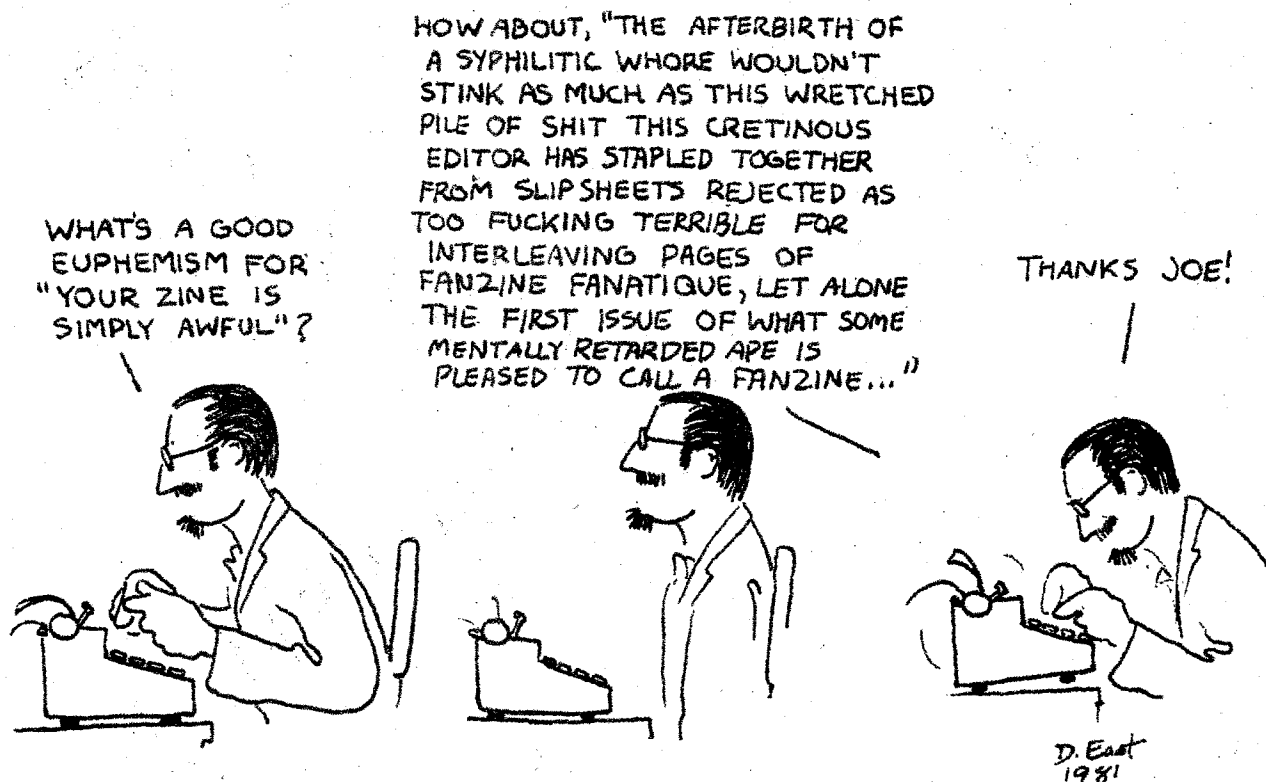
real review of a conzine will always be negative unless there is incidental merit to form the basis of an evaluation. To readers who know the editor and enjoy his zine for his sake, this will be seen as an ad hominem attack. Criticizing such a zine is like attacking someone for their haircut or their manners. A large part of American fandom takes artistic criticism in just that way, and is offended if they are told that their zines or their friends' zines are not good. Without objective standards of their own they can never interpret it otherwise.

Some reviewers develop an unconscious double standard to cope with the problem. The drawback of this, of course, is that the reader doesn't know that, and can't guess when a zine is being reviewed objectively and when it is simply being reacted to subjectively. Ultimately it leads to a confusion of the understanding of quality that is partly responsible for the bland and anti-intellectual character of much of American fandom.

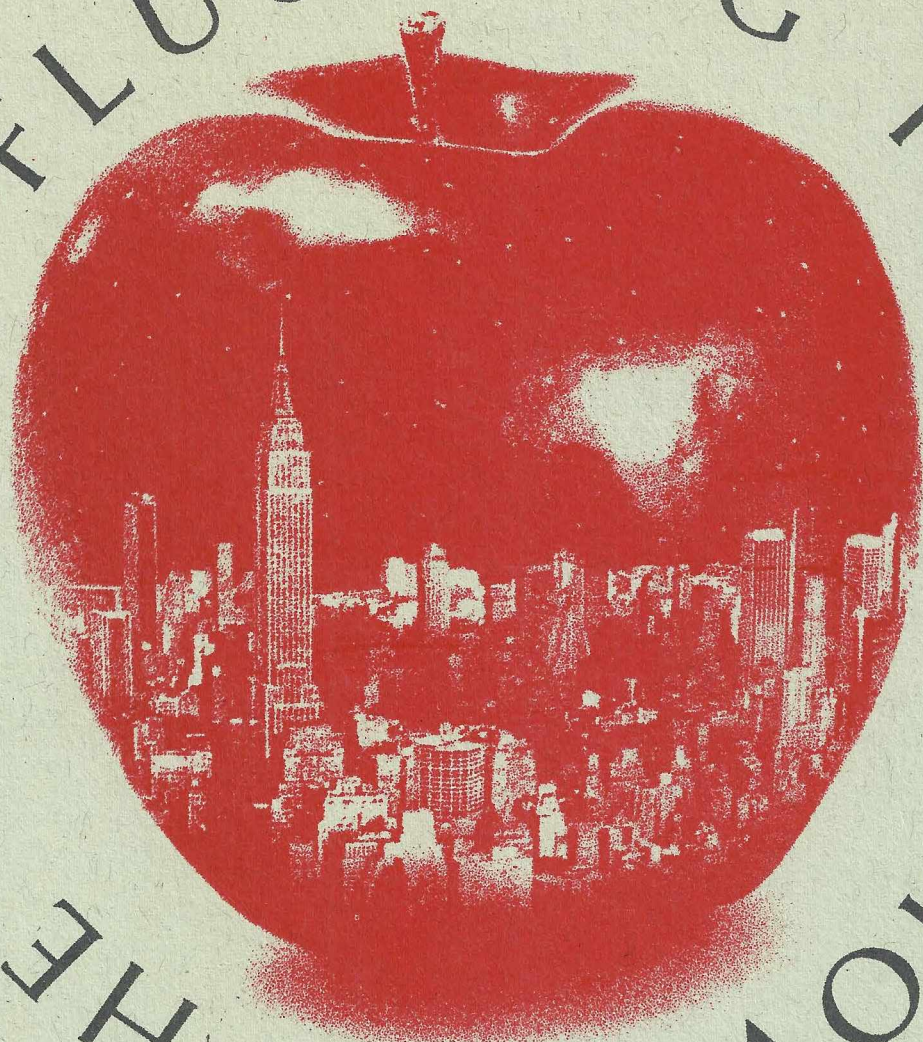
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Addresses...

XENOLITH - Bill Bowers, 3271 Shellhart Rd., Barberton, OH 44203 [\$1 or whim]
 INSUFFICIENT FUNDS - Leah Zeldes & Larry Tucker, 2818 Whitewood, Ann Arbor, MI 48104 [whim]
 LOVE MAKES THE WORLD GO AWRY - Fran Skene, 207 W. 21st Ave., Vancouver BC V5Y 2E4
 RUNWAY 37 - Margaret Middleton, PO Box 9911, Little Rock, AR 72219 [40¢ or the usual]
 CHAT - Dick & Nicki Lynch, 4207 Davis Lane, Chattanooga, TN 37416 [3/\$1 or the usual]
 ATARANTES - Cliff Biggers, 6045 Summit Wood Dr., Kennesaw, GA 30144 [12/\$3.50 or usual]
 ANVIL - Jim Gilpatrick, PO Box 57031, Birmingham, AL 35259 [6/\$2 or the usual]
 SF CON REGISTER - Erwin Strauss, 9850 Fairfax Sq. #232, Fairfax, VA 22031 [40¢ each]
 CONACS - M. David Johnson, PO Box 485, Glenview, IL 60025 [50¢ or 4/\$1]
 A CONVENTIONAL FANZINE - Eva Chalker Whitley, 4704 Warner Dr., Manchester MD 21102 [50¢]
 FILE 770 - Mike Glyer, 14974 Osceola St., Sylmar, CA 91342 [4/\$2 U.S.]
 GRAYMALKIN - Denise Leigh, 121 Nansen St., Cincinnati OH 45216 [\$1 or the usual]
 XENIUM - Mike Glicksohn, 141 High Park Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6P 2S3 [whim]
 AUSSIECON FIFTH ANNIVERSARY MEMORIAL FANZINE - Jean Weber, 13 Myall St., O'Connor ACT 2601 Australia [\$2 or trade]



GREAT FLUSHING IN
1980 MOVIES!
THE SHIFFMAN



CREDITS: [Projected against old woodcuts and photographs of New York, Queens and Fan Groups]

FLUSHING IN EIGHTY--THE MOVIE

WITH A COST OF THOUSANDS

A PRESENTATION OF LIECON-----
THE 38TH WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION

IN FLUSHING FOR 1980?

...ABSURD...

Directed by Stuart Shiffman

Produced by Stuart Shiffman

Scripted by Stuart Shiffman

Filmed in Fanoscope with Phonoclast-Sound

Casting by Stu Shiffman

Dental Care by Harvey Shiffman

Cinematography by Maryann Arrien

Musical Accompaniment by the Fred Kuhn Group,
Fred Haskell and the Early Music Consort of London

Novelization by Joan Vinge

("They pay a lot and they're easy to do..."
--Diane Keaton, "Manhattan")

[The music is a sensitive intermingling of compositions by the Renaissance Burgundian composer Guillaume Dufay and 1930's swing Benny Goodman.]

SCENE ONE -----

[A panoramic view from high above New York City, aeronautically swimming through clouds from the harbor to view the Brooklyn Bridge and proceed above the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway -- eventually to assume a car level view -- to join with the Long Island Expressway until the old 1964/5 World's Fair grounds -- Flushing Meadow Corona Park. There the camera eye again becomes airborne to sweep around and about the significant features of the park.]

[The music synchs into "Thus Sprach Zarathustra", as the camera descends to focus on a figure in front of the Unisphere -- here adapted with a giant fiberglass and aluminum propellor beanie to become a Fanisphere.]

KINNISON: Welcome to LIECON and the world of the future...

SCENE TWO -----

[Fade to perfect scale model of New York City in the City Pavilion/Queens Museum. The Fabulous Flushing Fan-Dancers led by Rosemary Edgar enter to the strains of "Meet Me At The Fair".]

ROSEMARY: One, two, three...

[The F3D's perform a phantasmagorical pastiche of old Busby Berkeley numbers among the scale model buildings, until one trips over Flushing Meadow Park and another gets entangled with the skyscrapers of Manhattan. Their colleagues assist them to rise and, doing a swift buck-and-wing, exit with expressions of embarrassment.]

ROSEMARY: Gotta dance! Gotta dance, gotta dance!

ASSEMBLED: Gotta dance!

[Scene and sound fade.]

SCENE THREE -----

[A locker room in Shea Stadium where various fans, male and female, are assembled. They are dressed in blue, white and orange football jerseys, with names and number on the back. One, number 6, is Tony Lewis, sitting with a clutch of New England fans. Everyone is listening to a slightly overweight fellow dressed like a coach in baseball cap and team warmup jacket.]

ASSEMBLED: Rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb rhubarb.

SHIFFMAN: We can't have trouble, my friends, right here in the SF Varsity. All I can offer you is blood, sweat and tears... We have nothing to fear but fear itself ... peptalkpeptalkpeptalkpeptalk--flattering generalization--meaningless words.

UNIDENTIFIED FAN: Goshwowoboyohboy!

SHIFFMAN: In conclusion, we must give the thundering hordes the best damn worldcon they've ever seen -- a World's Fair of science fiction conventions. Let's get out there and knock 'em dead!

[All exeunt with vigor, although the knot around Tony Lewis is slow to leave.]

LESLIE TUREK: Tony, I have this persistent feeling that we should be in Boston this Labor Day...

CHIP HITCHCOCK: What! and miss the Worldcon?

TONY LEWIS: Leslie's right, Chip! I seem to have a sort of memory of winning at Iguana-Con...

CHIP: IguanaCon? [Turns to look at George Flynn] What was that?

TONY: The 1978 Worldcon -- don't you remember, Chip?

GEORGE FLYNN: Tony -- the 1978 Worldcon was LACon II...

TONY: Wait a minute -- list the last ten worldcons before '79 --

GEORGE: ...uh... BayCon, St.LouisCon, HeiCon, NoreasCon, LACon I, The Mipple-Stipple BozoCon --

TONY: What?

GEORGE: -- DisCon II, AussieCon, Oh!Con in Columbus --

TONY: What!

GEORGE: -- and the Floridation in Orlando...

CHIP: Tony -- the Flushing bid won in LA -- I didn't expect the loss to unhinge you.

LESLIE: ...I seem to find George's list to be as unreal as Tony does...

TONY: Someone has been manipulating the time stream ... let's get after Shiffman and put him to the question...

SCENE FOUR -----

[The Chairman's Office at the convention registration/computer services center.]

SHIFFMAN: [Dictating into a cassette recorder] So, Denny, I appreciated the loan of the Minneapolis in '73 Time Travel Committee's device. Everything went just fine, and the chrono-shield worked as described -- 'tho Jim Freund and Elliot Shorter seem to be suffering problems with their doubled-up memories --

TONY: [Bursting in] Aha! Caught in the midst of confession!

SHIFFMAN: What do you want?!!

LESLIE: We want information...

CHIP: [Sarcastically] You won't get it, Leslie, not from Shiffman.

GEORGE: We're very disappointed in you, Stu.

SHIFFMAN: You can't stop me -- I've got the Minneapolis in '73 Dirty Tricks Team and Jon Singer on my side --

TONY: -- And we have the near-omnipotent powers of NESFA and Em Eye Tee!

SHIFFMAN: So, it's springtime for NESFA, is it?

CHIP: ...and M.I.T.! ...Winter for you non-sercon fans...

GEORGE: ...That sounds so familiar...

SHIFFMAN: [Reaching into a drawer] You think you have me, do you?

LESLIE: [Self-righteously] Of course.

SHIFFMAN: Ha! [Pulls out ornate Buck Rogers-like raygun] Stay where you are! This is a zapgun -- I just need enough time to get to the machine -- and you'll wake up as the lowest of the low -- Mundanes!

CHIP: We're not fans, we just read the stuff...

GEORGE: Why, if this goes on -- New York might even have the Worldcon in '86!

SHIFFMAN: [Maniacally] Ha! Ha! We will, I already checked it out!

TONY: I should have realized -- a sinister LA-MinnSTF-Columbus-New York axis!

[The door opens and Elliot Kay Shorter enters.]

ELLIOT: I'm afraid so, Tony -- it's for the greater good of fandom...

TONY: [Whirling to face Elliot] El! But a Columbus Worldcon?

ELLIOT: Did you really like the Big MAC that much?

LESLIE: That's a very good point, Tony.

GEORGE: [To Shiffman] Who wins in '82, Stu?

SHIFFMAN: Things to come? I'm sorry, George, but some things fen were not meant to know.

TONY: We'll fight you, Shiffman! We'll fight you up and down the corridors of time!

[Fade]

SCENE FIVE -----

[A figure dressed in informal clothing of the 1930's, who we see to be Bruce Pelz, is seated in a brightly-lighted room of futuristic style.]

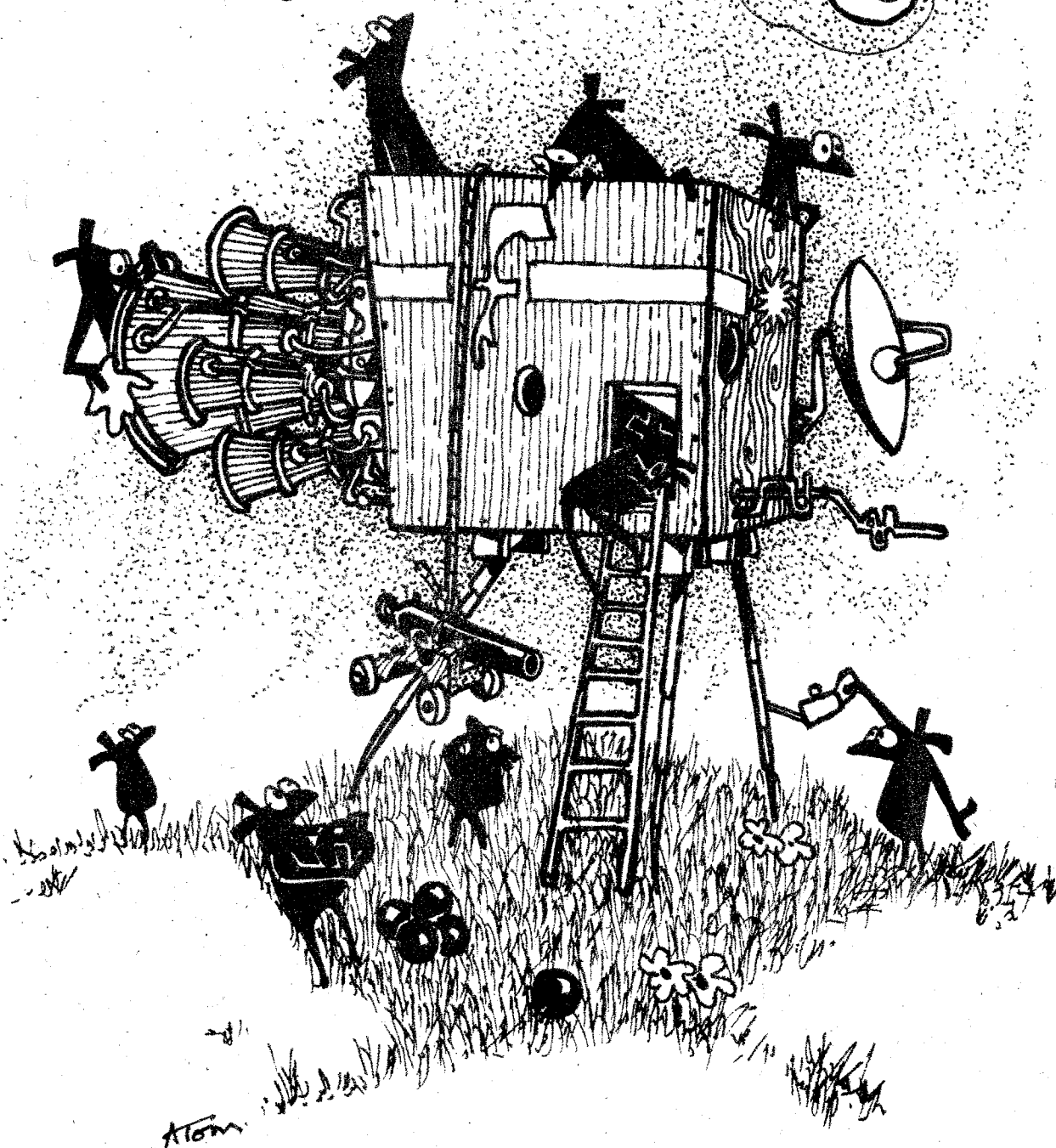
[He looks up and notices the camera.]

BRUCE: That was the start of the Great Fannish Change War. One party would make an alteration and, time after time, their opponents would further maul the fabric of history. These seeds of change were planted earlier and earlier, until now the earliest events of fanhistory are threatened. We saved Ron Ellick -- but lost Ted White and Bob Shaw. [Pauses] And now I go to meddle in the Great Exclusion Act of 1939 at NYCon I. All fandom is plunged into time-war, and the very existence of modern SF is threatened.

[Fade to cast credits with "Fiddler's Green" as background music.]

NOR THE YEARS ONDEMN

 JOHN BERRY



My father died in 1961 aged 73 ... this age is easy to work out because he was unfortunate enough to be burdened with the christian name Jubilee, being born in 1889. (This year coincided with the 50th anniversary of the accession of Queen Victoria to the throne of England.) Fortunately, he was also given the christian names Ernest Edward ... otherwise going through life called Jubilee Berry would probably have caused a severe psychological block.

I have questioned my aged mother about his early years (she is now 87 years old and is living with Diane and myself at Hatfield, Herts.). It has been difficult to ascertain what happened in his formative years, but I elicited the fact that he lived with his grandmother. It seems that his father had defected one day, leaving his wife, my father and another baby, and shortly after this, my father, about six years old, returned home after a day's scrumping, and discovered that his mother and baby brother had also absconded. My mother tells me that a family get-together was organised to find someone to assume parental control over him, and his grandmother either won or lost, as the case may be.

My mother has recounted the strange fact that his father (my grandfather) was drowned in Lake Ontario whilst out rowing with a mysterious girl ... for some reason the boat capsized. What worries my mother is that a bible allegedly found on his body, and sent to his son, my father, was 'as dry as a bone'. She feels that this was mute evidence of a planned disappearance. It was not for me to judge an affair which happened many years before I was born, but must presume that the fact that the bible was not still wet after crossing the Atlantic by a slow boat could not be construed as a superlative piece of forensic jurisprudence.

I understand that my father's early years were spent in the Shropshire countryside near Ludlow. I know that he did not attend school very much, and I do believe that if he had been educated he would have been an inventor. He was assuredly skilled in a mechanical way, and the significance of this will be related in due course.

My father had a horizontal U-shaped scar on his chin, which, whilst not in any way disfiguring his features was certainly plainly visible.

I once asked him how he'd got it, and he told me that one day when he was a young man, he had worked on an aerial railway at Clee Hill, Cleobury Mortimer, also near Ludlow. As two buckets crossed in mid air, he leapt from one to the other, and a slight misjudgement had caused his chin to hit the metal bucket edge en route. I certainly believe this story, and a few days ago, whilst searching through some old documents of my mother's, I discovered the postcard, depicting the scene of his sub-orbital flight. The card is dated 23rd September 1910.

I have a faded photograph of him and his friends posing in their army uniforms, as privates in the Shropshire Light Infantry. One important factor can be deduced from this pictorial evidence ... a date stamp on the rear of the photograph shows it was taken in 1913, one year before the Great War ... and although as I've stated he and his friends were in army uniform, he alone had the distinction of wearing a large civilian cap. Whether or not this was a portent I cannot ascertain, but I do possess evidence of a very strong nature that whereas everyone else appeared to have gone to war in 1914, my father shrewdly left the army at this juncture.

Just the other day, my mother revealed that she recalls that my dad invented the pedal-cycle side-car. I must confess that I have never seen one of these contraptions, although I was a cyclist for many years. She states that when my eldest sister Mary was of tender years, my father made a little side-car to carry her, and he made frequent cycle forays into the countryside, once even as far as Cleobury Mortimer ... "but I think they must have returned by train because the side-car was broken and Mary was covered in bruises."

I possess several other postcards my father sent to my mother when they were courting, and different writing on the cards confirms that he was illiterate. When they married, they moved to Birmingham, and their first child, Mary was born in 1915 ... she died of stomach cancer in 1971. I was born in 1926, and their third child Barbara Joan was

born in 1928, she died in 1973 of a brain tumor.

My father, by trade, was a tool setter, and worked in a factory at Tyseley, Birmingham, until it was bombed in 1941, and he speedily found work of the same nature at the Rover Co. in Solihull.

I mentioned previously that he had a mechanical bent, and in fact he dabbled in various fields, for example, manufacturing cats-whisker type wireless sets. I recall us all sitting round the kitchen table with ear phones on, with looks of bewilderment on our faces as he manipulated a large console in front of him. He eventually got the machine to work by constructing an aerial at the bottom of our garden, a sophisticated structure, which, insofar as my memory services me, would be in keeping with modern radio astronomy devices.

However, pride of place in his career as a scientist/inventor was his life long and eminently unsuccessful search for a perpetual motion machine. Year in, year out, he retired to the bathroom every Sunday morning, and when I grew up old enough to appreciate his intensity and enthusiasm I was permitted into his sanctum, and hence I can describe in detail his hopeless quest.

He had constructed a wooden platform which fitted over the bath, creating a work bench. His experimental machines were always shrouded in dusty sheets in the corner of the bathroom, and my mother was not permitted to touch them. Once in the bathroom, he would bade me to sit down, and he would lock the door. He would give a couple of triumphant cackles, and load his latest device on the wooden table, and whip off the sheets. Of course, I cannot exactly describe his models, but his later constructions were wonderful to behold.

Obviously, every day at work he had made a metal device of some sort, which he had smuggled home and utilised in his eternal quest for the impossible.

Details of his bizarre constructions are embedded forever in my mind ... I recall lots of pistons and rubber-driven pulley wheels, and here and there various miniature boiler-type constructions with pipes sprouting out all over them, rather like hedgehogs with rigor mortis. I cannot attempt to describe the technical details of his obsession, because he deigned to confide in me, and all his theories and calculations were in his head. When he died, I searched his effects in a desperate effort to find just a mere trace of some obscure physical property he had discovered to flout the Laws of Motion, but nothing existed.

Luckily, if I concentrate really hard I get quick flashes of his actions, because I noted them so many times ... first of all he oiled all the necessary little places, and then he took a deep breath, and with eyes mere dots in a big red flushed face, moustache nestling under his nostrils, he blew explosively into a rubber tube, and then with lightning speed he rammed the end into a socket. His burst of breath turned a wheel round, and pistons thus attached actuated governors on a little boiler and two more pistons actuated flywheels and turned even more wheels, but gradually inertia set in and the wheels and pistons and things still moved but got slower and slower and eventually ceased functioning ... he always looked at me out of the corner of his eyes with a frustrated expression, and with his right hand concealed from me behind his body he sometimes surreptitiously flipped a flywheel, as if hoping that a miracle would happen and the whole damn contraption would burst into the ecstasy of everlasting life.

But of course it never did.

I left home to join the army in 1944, but during my periods of army leave his Sunday Experience had not become dimmed with failure ... the stubborn Berry trait was still dominant ... but now he had built his devilish machine to massive proportions ... it had just about taken over the bathroom ... the perpetual motion machine now included quite a lot of large iron-case wheels with dozens of little pieces of lead appended to the spokes with subtle wiring ... this time, his rapid but controlled exudation of breath made the wheels fairly hum with smooth motion, and he jabbed little spots of oil on the axles and held his breath excitedly. Sheer will power, and, if you'll permit the suggestion, little electronic beams of mind-over-matter radiation seemed to make

the very atmosphere tingle ... his machine just couldn't stop ... but of course it always did ... slower ... slower ... until the machine was finally motionless.

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World War II started in September 1939, and just prior to that date the famous corrugated metal Anderson air raid shelters were delivered to every home in Birmingham.

This represented one of my father's most fantastic coups, because he had built his air raid shelter two years previously.

I do not comprehend how he had assessed the necessity for this drastic step; I knew he couldn't read the newspapers, but my mother is and always has been an astute political observer, and whatever she had told him had significantly alerted him to the possibility that Birmingham, or, at least the 18, Roydon Road, Acocks Green section of it, was going to be bombed. To show his insight in its true perspective I must proudly report that an incendiary bomb actually did land in our back garden in 1942. But in 1937 his air raid shelter was a sensation locally, and lots of people came to look and marvel at it. It was not a sophisticated design, he had just burrowed down like an anxious mole, but in due course he had assembled a hand-operated pump to keep the water level down to an acceptable depth, and he had also constructed five bunks on stilts. It used to have a dank smell, and my gang held its meetings there for some time until the boy next door caught pneumonia. When the Anderson shelter did arrive in its prefabricated state, my father recognized that the metal was preferable to his orange-crate-constructed roof, and he dismantled his structure, and replaced it with the official one, smiling smugly to himself the while ...

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During the air raids over Birmingham, a local organization was formed, whereby selected neighbours took it in turns to guard their street during the night, and this duty was officially entered in a heavy book, which was passed to the next person on duty.

I always went outside with my father when his tour of duty came round. He did it conscientiously, walking up and down Roydon Road with his steel helmet at a jaunty angle, just covering his right spectacle. Sometimes the air raids were heavy, and even if it wasn't his turn for duty, he would swiftly whip on his helmet, and with gas mask bag rampant would walk into the road at the first siren wail. He let me stay outside with him, after all, I was 15 to 16 years old. The German bombers would throb overhead, searchlights would probe for them, bombs whistled down but never came near us except for the shower of incendiaries which traversed Roydon Road and Tavistock Road. One landed about ten feet from the back of our house. My father, alerted by the next-door neighbours shouts, quickly covered it with sandbags he kept in the garden. I often pondered over this near miss, a split second saved our house from becoming a blazing inferno. Quite often, after the heavy blasting of anti-aircraft fire, shrapnel could be heard dropping on the roofs of the houses, and some nights, after I'd gone to bed to try and sleep with the sounds of bombs and planes and AA fire, he would come upstairs to my room and press a jagged piece of warm shrapnel in my hand ... he knew I liked souvenirs like that. And of course, in common with millions of other English people, he was always on time at work next morning ...

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I received a telephone call one day in September 1961 to say that my father was seriously ill.

I flew over from Belfast to see him and got home after midnight.

My mother was sleeping with my elder sister Mary, and he was alone in the big front bedroom. I held his hand when I saw him lying there ... he was taking big ponderous breaths, and there was a pause until the next breath. He recognized me and whispered, "I want to see Barbara."

My younger sister Barbara had rather a complicated marital career, being involved in several affairs which eventually concluded with my mother not knowing her name, status

or whereabouts.

Next morning my father was worse ... the pauses between breaths seemed to be imperceptibly longer ... my mother asked me if I would try and trace Barbara, because Dad desperately wanted to see her. She gave me twenty pounds.

First of all, I telephoned the last place she had worked at, she had been a photographer at an RAF aerodrome. After several more calls I traced her to Bridgewater, in Somerset. I took an express train to Weston-super-Mare, where I stopped for the night. Next morning I caught a bus to Bridgewater, and made telephones to different firms, eventually concentrating on the unemployment sector, eliciting one vital fact through the thin veil of confidentiality ... mail for her should be left at a box number at the Bridgewater Post Office.

I wrote her a terse note asking her to go home quickly as Dad was dying. I returned home, he was worse, his breathing was now laboured. I had to return to Belfast to attend court next day to give fingerprint evidence, and in the meantime I telephoned the doctor stating that my mother could not manage to look after him, he was so heavy, and kept trying to get out of bed. I was sitting by his bed when the specialist came in. He was well-dressed, and spoke in an educated accent.

"We'll soon get you on your feet, old chap," he said, giving us a wide, flashing smile.

My father turned to me and said in a hoarse stage whisper, "I don't like the look of this bloke."

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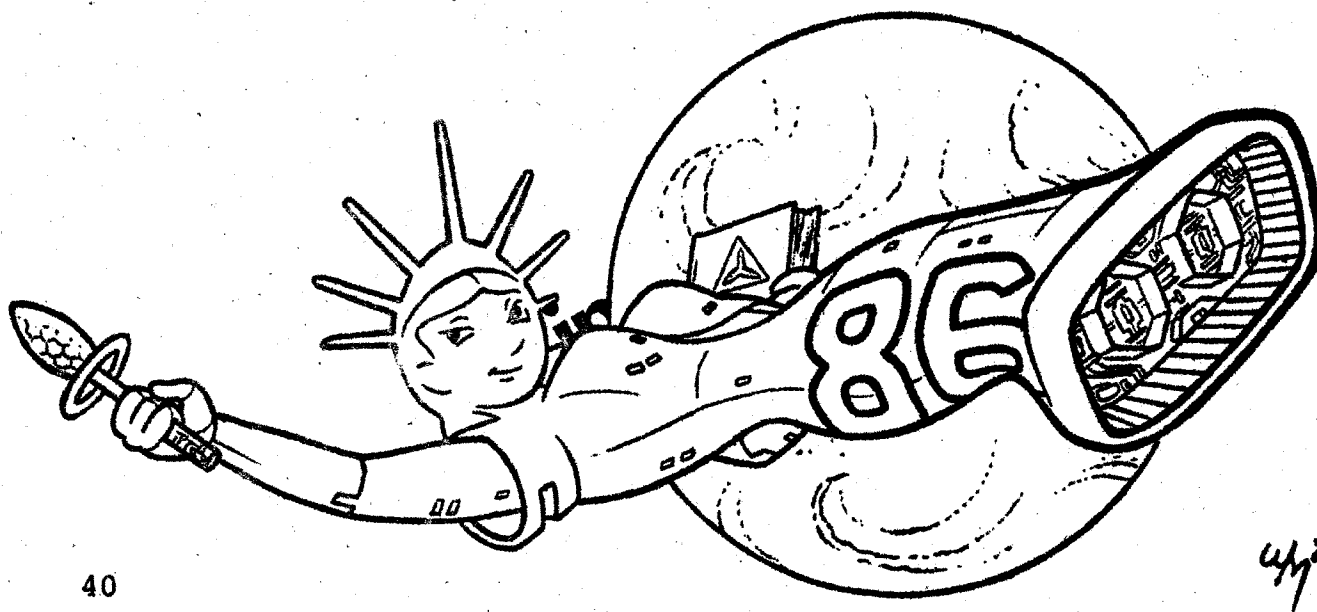
Of course, my father's judgment was cynical but considered ... he was moved to hospital shortly after I returned to Belfast, and died a couple of days later. My sister Barbara received my letter at Bridgewater and saw Dad in hospital just before he died.

I flew home again for the funeral.

My father, you see, was kindness personified. Never once in my entire life did he hit me, or even shout at me, and he always made model aircraft and catapults and farms and things when I was young.

But I still remember him mostly for his perpetual motion experiments.

I went to see him in his coffin at the funeral parlour on the Stratford Road, Birmingham ... his eyes were closed and he looked restful, but one corner of his lips was twisted upwards and his grey moustache was slightly askew, as if to say, "Maybe, if I'd just once more, it might have worked ..."



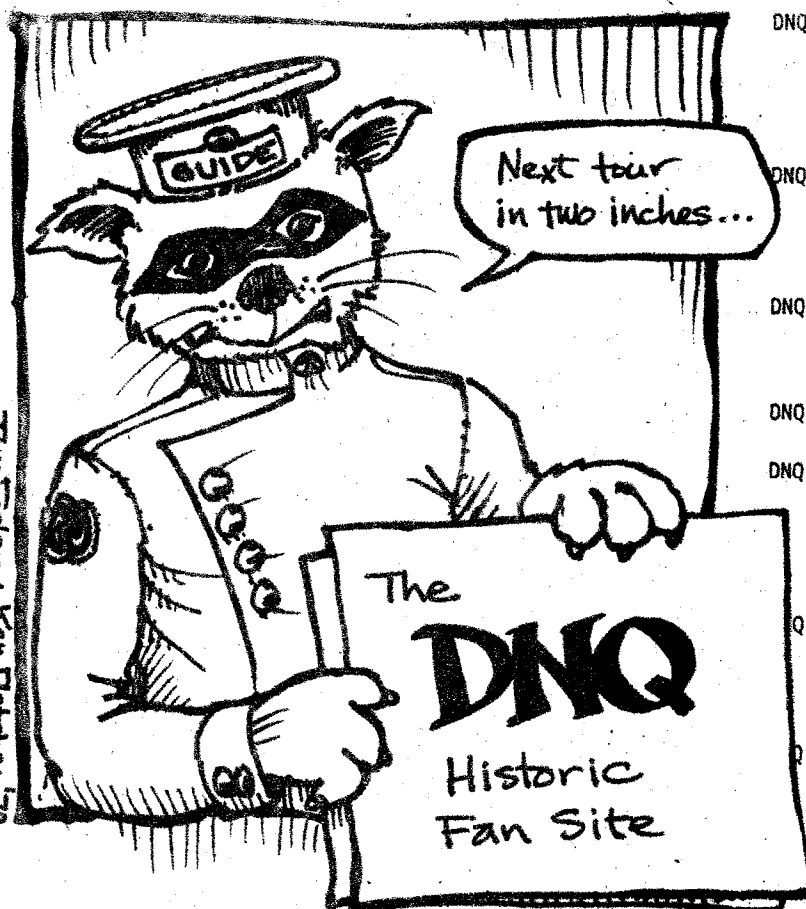
ICING WHO YOU

DAVE LANGFORD

FROM "NEW SCIENTIST"

4 OCT. 1979

I picked up a second-hand *I Ching* while helplessly under the influence of Arthur Koestler; the wonders of acausal relationships and the hidden pulse-beat of the Universe seemed accessible at last. The sheer complexity of the oracle had its fascination too: one is so much more interested in the interpretation of 64 randomly determined hexagrams than in a mere mundane heads-or-tails. Complexity can go too far, however, and I bogged at the notion of endlessly shuffling 40 yarrow-stalks (recommended equipment) to generate each of the six lines which make up a mystic hexagram. It was the work of mere days to program a passing computer to simulate the stalk-shuffling part; much more difficult was the analysis of the *I Ching's* message, for the oracle shies away from the point with all the enthusiasm of Nostradamus or a Minister being interviewed. "The wise men spits not into the wind when little fish are on the hills." Only when it's too late do you realise than this meant "look out for gas bubbles in the reactor core". My first improvement was the Langford Predictor, which consisted of four small tablets lovingly carved from bamboo, ivory or polypropylene. One side of each was blank whilst the other bore one of the four Answers: YES, NO, DON'T KNOW and NOT TELLING. Attuning one's mind to the infinite, one pushes the reversed tablets about a smooth jade tabletop, sipping Lapsang Souchong until the Moment comes (as signalled by a sudden, insightful need for a pee). Then, concentrating one's mind upon the Query, one turns over a random tile to read the Cosmic Judgment. The advantage is that 4 blunt responses offer more clarity than 64 vague ones. The disadvantage is that the Predictor can be, er, *wrong* -- while the *I Ching* with its oblique tattling on the wise man's doings can never be in error. Impenetrable, yes; wrong, no. Well, now, could there be a test experiment to validate (or otherwise) the *I Ching's* predictions? As mentioned, the mystic information-line from the future tends towards garbled and obscure messages. But there is one clear and unmistakable message, which is: no message at all. Ask the *I Ching* a thousand times about something, and through sheer statistics the replies should be biased in the direction of what the oracle "wants to say". If there is no pattern in the replies, then no information is available on the subject of inquiry. (The notion that the *I Ching* is merely a load of cobblers is dismissed as too repulsive for consideration.) Now, the test experiment goes like this. A computer is programmed to consult the oracle many thousands of times, the Query each time being "What d'you say about this particular point in space?" If the results are consistently ambiguous, then NO INFORMATION is the ultimate answer and the point in question must be located in a place from which no information can be extracted -- that is, within a black hole. Our computer repeats the process for point after point in a fine grid covering -- eventually -- the entire galaxy, and through the awful power of the *I Ching* it produces a detailed black hole map. If nothing else, this will be an invaluable aid to shipping in the days to come. The final proof of my theory comes when somebody travels out to the black holes thus located and verifies their existence; a detail which may safely be left to the engineers. As I understand relativity, it would also seem that objects moving at tachyonic velocities (faster than light) are also closed off from this mundane Universe, forever beyond our knowledge -- and therefore readily detectable by the method outlined above. A zone-of-no-information spotted by the *I Ching's* acausal eye is a black hole if moving at less than the speed of light, yes; but otherwise it can only be an alien faster-than-light spacecraft. A mind-shattering prospect ... yet the *I Ching* itself comments: "There will be no error." They laughed at Galileo, but I shall stand firm.



- DNQ 1 - Apr.78, news & fnz reviews, 114 cps, 4 pgs, 2-colour.
- DNQ 2 - May 78, news & fnz reviews, 2020, 115 cps, 4 pgs, 2-colour.
- DNQ 3 - June 78, Dan Steffan, news & reviews, 2020, "Happiness is a Warm T-Shirt" by Taral, 115 cps, 8 pgs, 3-colour.
- DNQ 4 - June 78, Taral, news & fnz reviews, 2020, 135 cps, 6 pgs, 3-colour.
- DNQ 5 - July 78, Stu Shiffman, news & fnz reviews, 2020, "As if the Colonel Wasn't Enough" by Taral, 148 cps, 8 pgs, 3-colour (with "Rubber Stamp Owners' Bulletin/Chain Letter Fan Fund (CHAFF)" by Taral).
- DNQ 6 "Cheekpoint" Ish - July 78, Taral & Saara, news & fnz reviews, 2020, "Autoclave 3" by Victoria, 133 cps, 12 pgs, 2-colour (with Typo 1, 4 pgs, 1-colour).
- DNQ 7 - Aug.78, C. Lee Healy, news & fnz reviews, 2020, "LEBcon" by Saara, "Forced Faanish Parodies" by Victoria, 150 cps, 10 pgs, 2-colour.
- DNQ 8 - Sept.78, Harry Bell, news, 2020, "An Introduction to the Faanish Social Register" by Taral, "On the FAAn Awards" by Victoria, 152 cps, 8 pgs, 2-colour (with "A Contribution to the Mathematical Theory of Big Game Hunting" from The American Mathematical Monthly).
- DNQ 9 "VILE 770" - Sept.78, Taral & Saara, news & reviews, 2020, "Iguanacon" by Victoria, "Iguanacon" by Taral, 150 cps, 10 pgs, 2-colour (with Typo 8, 6 pgs, 1-colour).
- DNQ 10 "The Decadish" - Oct.78, Taral & Saara, news, 2020, "Colophonetic Verities/Telling It Like It Is, Isn't It?" by Taral, "Saturday Night at the Pub" by Victoria, "You Gotta Suffer - How to Survive as a Fanartist" by Taral, "The Way It Isn't Any-more" by Saara, 209 cps, 19 pgs, 6-colour.

- DNQ 11 - Nov.78, David Vereschagin, news, IndEx, 2020, "Winnipeg Fandom Reveals Toronto Hoax!!!" by Taral ("Anne Smith"), "Moshe Feder's Knees Bonier Than Victoria Vayne's? Thin Fandom Does an Experiment" by Victoria, "What Was It?" by Don D'Amassa, 140 cps, 10 pgs, 3-colour.
- DNQ 12 - Dec.78, Taral, news, editorial by Taral, "A Look at the Pleistozine" by Ted White, "A Thumb-nail Sketch of an Artist" by Taral, "Future Fan History Chart" by Taral and Phil Paine, 200 cps, 8 pgs, 1-colour.
- DNQ 13 - Jan.79, Harry Bell, news, IndEx, 2020, "... Sgt. Pepper" quotes, "How Vegetarianism Threatens to Destroy Fandom" by Taral, 275 cps, 10 pgs, 2-colour (with FAAn & Negoboo ballots).
- DNQ 14 (actually "Laid", published by Mike Hall, Robert Runtä, David Vereschagin, et al.)
- DNQ 14 (the Real one) - Feb.79, Jim Barker, news, IndEx, "Taff Tushy" by Taral, "Obs Bodkins" book reviews by Taral, "A Sociological Study" by Bob Wilson, "Common Factor" by Victoria, "...Sgt. Pepper" quotes, 220 cps, 8 pgs, 2-colour (with Typo 3, 6 pgs, 2-colour).
- Q 15 - Mar.79, C. Lee Healy, news, IndEx, editorial by Victoria, "Music to Alienate an Extraterrestrial By" by Saara, "Sgt. Pepper" quotes, 170 cps, 10 pgs, 2-colour (with Typo 4, 4 pgs, 3-colour; TAFF ballot & paid con flyer).
- Q 16 "Liblish" Pt. 1 - Apr.79, Taral, "1978: The Year" by Victoria, "Auld Slang Sayings" by Bob Shaw, "Negoboo Poll Results", "Way Down Yonder in 770" by Harry Warner Jr. (reprint), "Idiotorial Pt. 1" by Taral, 280 cps, 10 pgs, 2-colour.
- 17 "Liblish" pt. 2 - Apr.79, Stu Shiffman, news, IndEx, The Dead Past, "Idiotorial Pt. 2 & 3" by Taral, 280 cps, 8 pgs, 2-colour (with Typo 5, 6 pgs, 1-colour; DNKjola, 5 pgs; Red Shift 6, 7 pgs, 2-colour; Bhowling 2, 6 pgs; some packages with Bhowling 1, 2 pgs, & Houghmum 1, 2 pgs; paid con flyer; envelope).
- DNQ 18 - May 79, Jim Barker, news & fnz reviews, "Reviewing Fanzines" by Mike Bracken, The Dead Past, "Idiotorial" by Taral, 170 cps, 8 pgs, 2-colour.
- DNQ 19 - June 79, Marc Schirmeister, news, "DNQ's Fearless Newshawks" Disclave report by Victoria, "Yorcon According to Alan Dorey" by Alan Dorey, "Siclar Semper Tyrannis" by Joe D. Siclari, 170 cps, 8 pgs, 2-colour (with paid zine flyer).
- DNQ 20 - July 79, Harry Bell, news, editorial by Victoria, "LeB Memorial Fnz Catalog 1.5", The Dead Past, "Ian Williams Reveals More About British Fans" by Dave Langford, 170 cps, 6 pgs (with Typo 6, 6 pgs, 1-colour).
- DNQ 21 - Aug.79, Taral, news, IndEx, "Idiotorial" by Taral, Taral's Log, Victoria's Log, "Bakkanalia" by Taral, The Dead Past, 170 cps, 12 pgs, 2-colour.
- DNQ 22 - Aug.79, Barry Kent MacKay, news, IndEx, "Idiotorial" by Taral, "It Wasn't the Cat" by Eric Mayer, Taral's Log, Victoria's Log, The Dead Past, 190 cps, 10 pgs, 2-colour (with FAAn results).
- DNQ 23 - Sept.79, Marc Schirmeister, news, IndEx, "Idiotorial - With Faint Praise" by Taral, "Victoria - On No Account to be Published in DNQ" by Taral, The Dead Past, 180 cps, 10 pgs, 2-colour (with Typo 7, 4 pgs, 1-colour).
- DNQ 24 - Nov. 79, Joe Pearson, news, IndEx, "Idiotorial" by Taral, Berrycenter, "What Price Glory?" by Taral, 190 cps, 12 pgs, 2-colour.
- DNQ 25 - "Jan.80" (delayed by enclosure and not mailed until June with DNQ 29-30), Bonnie Dalzell & Taral, Index Regurgatorius, "Editorial" by Taral, "Two Years Before the Potato Hatch" by Bob Shaw, "The Gourmet Fan" by Saara, "Clothes Horse of a Dif-

ferent Colour" by Taral, "Agent of Entropy" by Bob Wilson, Berrycenter, "Typo 8", 270 cps, 30 pgs, 4-colour (with 45rpm facsimile & sleeve; envelope).

DNQ 26 - Dec.79, Stu Shiffman, news, IndEx, "Idiotorial" by Taral, Berrycenter, The Dead Past, 180 cps, 10 pgs, 2-colour (with paid zine flyer & FAAn nominations).

DNQ 27 - Feb.80, Jim Barker, news, Berrycenter, Taral-imp, The Dead Past, Granfalloon folio, 170 cps, 8 pgs, 2-colour (with 2nd Negoboo poll ballot).

DNQ 28 - Apr.80, Taral & Jim Barker, news, IndEx, Taral-imp, Berrycenter, "Fall of the Mouse of Usher" by Dave Langford, 206 cps, 10 pgs, 2-colour (with TAFF ballot).

DNQ 29 (Pt.1 or 2nd Annish) - June 80, Jerry Collins, news, IndEx, Berrycenter, TaralImp, "The Poor Man's Jamdat Nasr" by Bob Tucker (reprint), 250 cps, 22 pgs, 2-colour.

DNQ 30 (Pt.2 of 2nd Annish, The Dead Past) - June 80, Le Zombie 63 (1948), 365 cps, 12 pgs (with Typo 9, 8 pgs, 1-colour, wrapper).

DNQ 31 - Aug.80, Taral, news, book & record reviews, TaralImp, "I Know Who Sawed Courtney's Boat" by Taral, 200 cps, 14 pgs, 2-colour.

DNQ 40 - Nov.80, Joe Pearson & Jim Odbert, "news", Berrycenter, Que Saara Saara, "IndEx", "Twill Tones" by "Dave Lanford", 200 cps, 12 pgs, 2-colour.

DNQ 32 - Oct.81, Harry Bell, TaralImp, FYI, Obituaries, Berrycenter, IndEx, 180 cps, 14 pgs, 1-colour (with TAFF & FAAn ballots)

DNQ 33 - 82, Jerry Collins, TaralImp, The Dead Past, "Interview with Leader Deslok" by Jerry Collins, Berrycenter, "This is Not About a Ballpeen Hammer" by Gary Deindorfer, Typo 10, cps, 16 pgs, 1-colour (with Negoboo ballot).

DNQ 34 - 82, Taral, Marc Schirmeister folio, Taral-imp, "Sooner or Later" by Rich Coad, "Off the Ballot" by Eric Mayer, The Dead Past ("A Smile is a Frown Upside Down" by Susan Wood), IndEx, "The Great Flushing in '80 Movie" by Stu Shiffman, Berrycenter, "I Ching, Who You" by Dave Langford, Death Shall Not Release You - index, "The Mis-carriage of Heaven and Hell" by Taral, bacover by Taral, cps, pgs, 4-colour.

COLUMNS EXPLAINED

Obs Bodkins - miscellaneous reviews of books, records, etc.

Caveat Emptor - Brief comments on fanzines in the early issues.

IndEx = Index Expurgatorius - fanzine review column by Taral.

Derelect Arogations - Toronto, particularly Derelect, news in the early issues.

FYI = For Your Information - news.

Berrycenter - "Irish" John Berry's column.

Editorial, Idiotorial - editorial by either editor, the later only by Taral.

TaralImp = Taraltorial Imperative - editorial by Taral from DNQ 27 on.

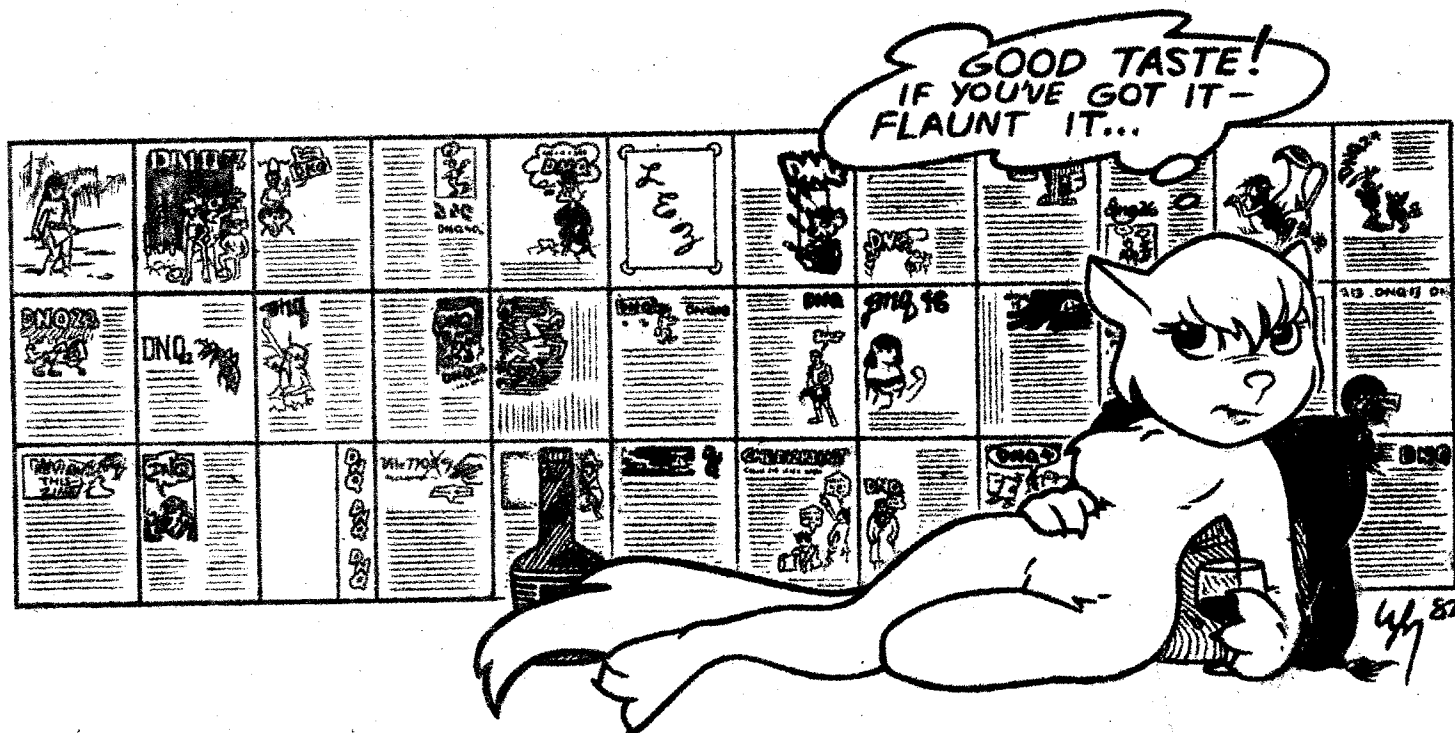
's Log - diary columns by Taral and Victoria in DNQ 21 & 22.

...Sgt. Pepper Taught the Band to Play - quotes, up to DNQ 15.

The Dead Past - reprint column from DNQ 17 on.

2020 - cartoon strip from DNQ 2-13.

Key to entries: Ish # - Date, Cover Artist, Contents, # copies, # pages, # colours (Riders).



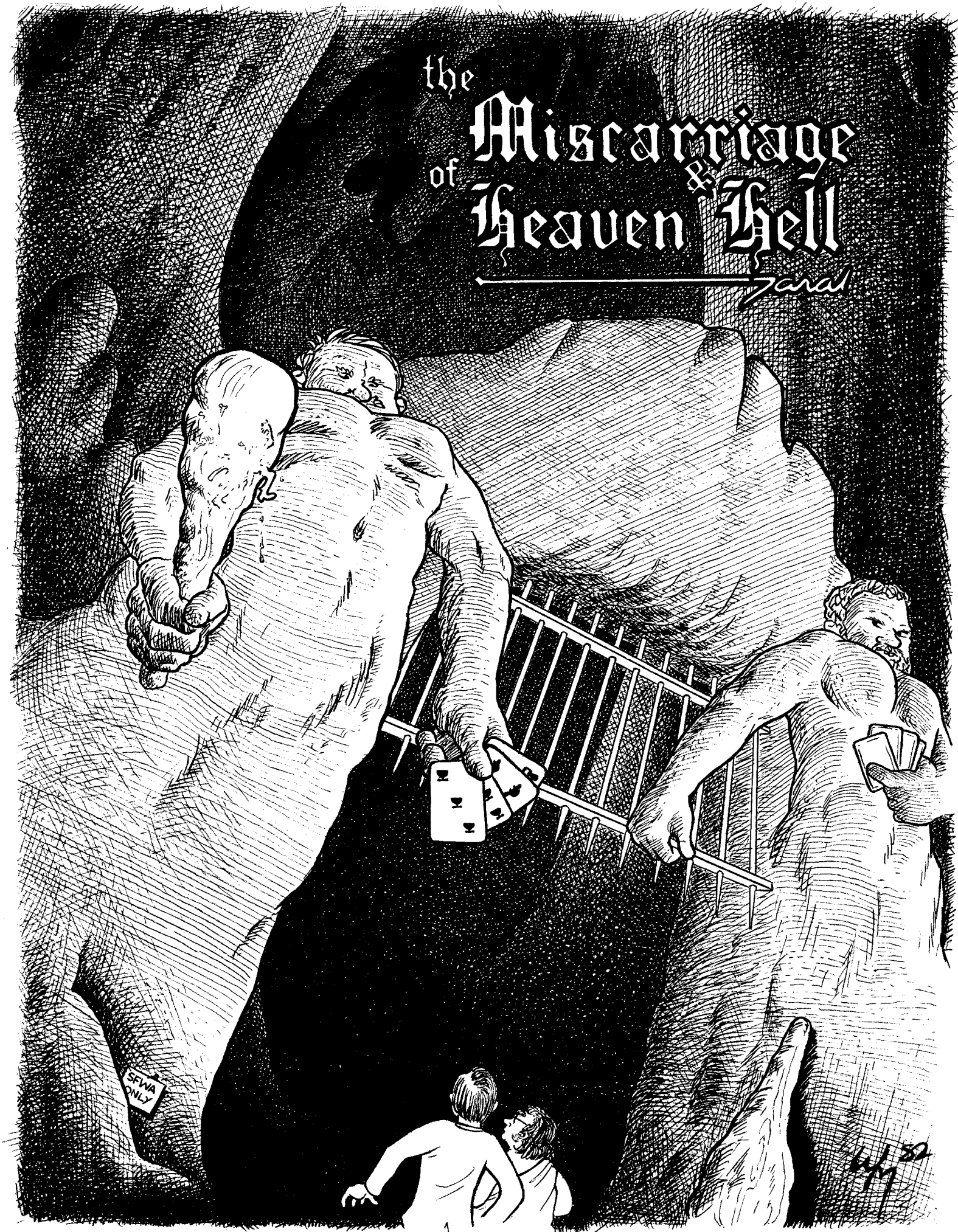
EUROPE

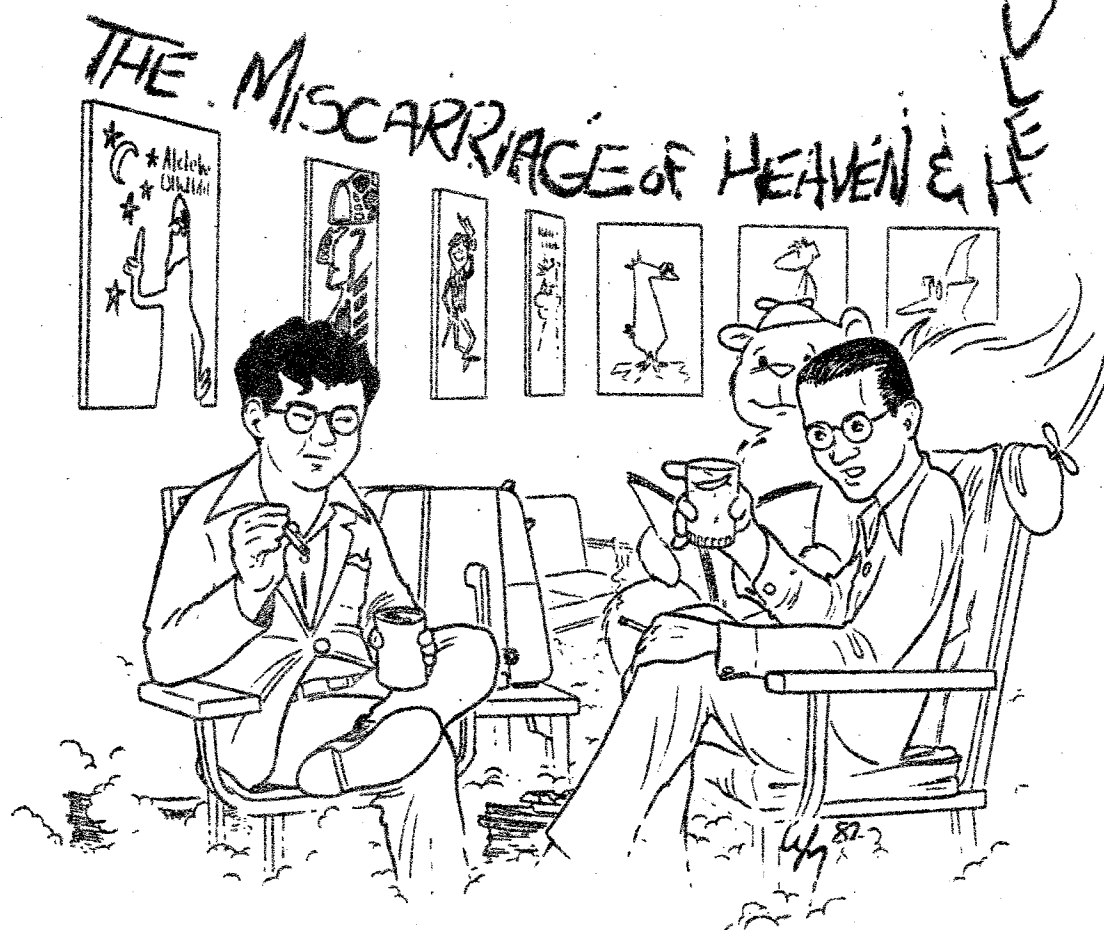
A Personal View of a Small World



- INSPIRING
NATURAL FEATURES
X OR HISTORICAL SITES
A WORLDCONS 73-83
O OTHER CONS
--- POLITICAL BORDERS
.... TRAVEL ROUTES
[A] ② • FANZINE SITES
① SAARA'S LANDING

the
of **Miscarriage**
Heaven & Hell
Zard





INTRODUCTION The Miscarriage of Heaven and Hell was written over a period spanning 1981 and 1982 while I tried not to fall too far behind day to day fanac. (Academia is not the only field which lives by the rule: Publish or Perish.) In a way, it is an answer to Walt Willis. The Enchanted Duplicator is a parable about the wonder of discovery. The Miscarriage is a look at the other end of a fan's career, gaffa. No-one feels sentimental about gaffa, of course, and The Miscarriage is not the up-beat, definitive statement of trufannishness that Willis wrote. In The Miscarriage you'll find cherished institutions cast in doubt, personalities under fire, and ambiguities. I wrote it that way because that's how I feel, and "answering" Willis comes in a distant second. In fact, I've never read The Enchanted Duplicator...

Rather than be influenced by Willis while I wrote The Miscarriage, which would have rendered it a mere afterthought to another fan's originality, I've deliberately put off reading fandom's most celebrated allegory for something like three years — in spite of having three separate editions of it! (But then, neither had Willis read Bunyan when he wrote The Enchanted Duplicator, even though everyone knows that it's a rewriting of The Pilgrim's Progress. Synchronicity can be excused if it strikes more than once.)

Doubts and criticism make for little fondness, and I've no hope (or desire) that fans twenty years hence will turn to The Miscarriage for inspiration or schticks. Yet I do hope that it can be kept in print over the long haul. If there is ever a second printing, there are amendments I'd like to see made to the original.

The first is that The Miscarriage cries for more illustration. However, it was either go with what I had, or spend another year in preparation. I had no desire to emulate Richard Bergeron, working in seclusion while fandom passed him by.

I would also like to annotate a hypothetical second printing. Everything in The Miscarriage was aimed at a specific target, some obscure even by fannish standards. I'm terribly afraid that somewhere there exists a reader who will miss some little nuance of my cleverness. Or worse still, that, with the passage of time, I will myself forget what I meant.

And last, it's unseemly for an author to write his own introduction. Either he's forced to be humble about his work, or he puts the reader off from the start. Better to let someone else do the honours. Someone who is a staunch friend and consistent supporter. Someone like Moshe Feder. Moshe, besides being an editor by profession, is also the first fan to read The Miscarriage in one sitting. Some months ago the manuscript was placed in Moshe's hands, and while he read my bid for fannish immortality, I waited to be cast into either heaven or hell by his verdict. About 4 a.m. he delivered it. Now I await your verdict...

There was no such thing as bad weather in heaven, of course, but some days the clouds billowed listlessly, the gleam of the pearly gates could be brighter for a polish, and God was tending his flock elsewhere so that his splendor bathed the blessed a little less intensely than it might have. It had been marginally duller this way only for a short while. (Time was never officially kept in heaven -- some angels, though, kept illicit time through various stratagems that God, in His wisdom, chose to overlook. This naturally gave rise to controversy over God's omniscience, but he was God, after all, and felt secure, so he chose to overlook this too.) For a small congregation of souls in one out-of-the-way microcosm of the Celestial Plane, however, the shadow over their immortal bliss had lasted for a longer time. Since they were only saved souls, they had no way of knowing the real time, but they knew that several other anxiously awaited souls had joined them in heaven since the disappearance however long ago of Paul Kline.

This tiny province of the Celestial Realm was built to odd specifications. The usual billowy clouds had been arranged in vertical layers, like the floors of a hotel that rose infinitely tall from a street immeasurably far below. White walls of some ether-eal substance like milky lucite subdivided the floors into rooms, halls, and lobbies. But like everywhere else in heaven, it was impossible to do anything about the soft focus and overexposure. With the floor billowing gently around the ankles like dry ice vapour, it was difficult at first not to think of a Hollywood remake of Mr. Jordan. The three who occupied one corner of an isolated lounge had been in heaven a long time, though, and no longer thought such irreverencies. The most voluble of the three was a dapper, dark haired man with wire rim glasses, dressed in casual white sportshirt and loose trousers of the same colour. His eyes were alert, and there was a glass and a cigarette in either hand. The other dominating presence was an active young man who fidgeted constantly, and chattered excitedly. Out of the corner of your eye one could almost imagine a bushy tail and tufted ears, but to material eyes there was nothing extraordinary about his appearance. Both young men set on a white, Danish Modern couch. On a chair by himself was a rumpled, curly haired man with glasses that slid to the end of his nose, who wore a permanent smirk of cynicism. He managed to look dingy although dressed like everyone else in spotless white. Rarely speaking, he held both a cigarette and a drink in his hands, one or the other at his mouth most of the time.

The three of them, as it has been observed, were attired in what is pretty much de rigueur for the blessed. Unlike other souls, though, their halos had been replaced by white brimless caps, with golden propellers, as a special mark of distinction.

They were fans. (And by and large only the newly arrived wore their beanies much.)

The excited fan was speaking, "... gone at least a month, Bok says. Freehafer saw him last, according to Moomaw, but didn't say that Kline left any clues with him about his disappearance either. Just one day he's working on page 48 of his illustrated All Our Yesterdays, like always, and then he's gone."

Ted Johnstone had looked in on Kline, as he regularly did, to see the progress on the illustrated history, and found only the art pinned to the drawing table. Work had stopped exactly at the point Kline had begun to ink the arrival of a fake extraterrestrial telegram at a convention as one of the many hoaxes described on page 48. The message and the worried expressions of fans in the audience had been inked in, but not yet the antennae on the master of ceremonies who was reading and laughing at the telegram. Johnstone returned later, but the work was stopped at the exact same point; as it was the day after. Then he mentioned his worries to other fans. People had disappeared very rarely from heaven, and then for no frivolous reason. Kline's disappearance could have been serious, and was generally accepted as fact in a few days.

Bill Grant thought he saw him in a particularly large consuite with some recent arrivals. He couldn't recall which particularly large consuite, though, and since there were an infinite number of even particularly large consuites in fan heaven, his lead wasn't very useful. None of the new arrivals, laboriously traced, remembered seeing anyone answering to Kline's description. Earl Singleton then professed to have received a letter from Kline with hints suggesting he had a sudden artistic block and was

seeking the forgiveness of John W. Campbell in the neighbouring heaven. Considering Kline's life long feud with the editor of Astounding, and Singleton's own reputation as a jester, no-one took him very seriously. (He didn't even properly belong in fan heaven, as he hadn't truly died this time either. No-one would believe him, and until someone did, he couldn't return to his mortal body. Singleton was only one of two fans in heaven who weren't actually disincorporated though there in spirit.) A neofan in hysterics said she found Kline's ghost in one of the empty sections of the fan museum for the future, and was claiming other apocalyptic visions as well. Unmoved by protests that they were already dead and couldn't leave ghosts around after them, she was ignored. Finally, the matter had to be taken to the archangel detailed to their province of paradise. A shining angel met a delegation of concerned fans, including the three friends, and said that the archangel was unavailable. She only smiled at their questions as if keeping some inner secret.

"Bok says --" continued Ellik.

And Laney mimicked him, "Bob says! Oh poot! How does that puckish charlatan know any better than we do how long ago it was?"

Ellik looked a little crushed by this doubting of his sources. "You know him, fooling around with his astrology charts and things. He follows the motions of the heavenly bodies. He says they have regular motions just like on the Earthly Plane, even if they are Persons here instead of planets."

"Baloney," said Kornbluth, lapsing from silence.

"Baloney any way you slice it. Bok was a crackpot on Earth and is still a crackpot even in His Sight. I still say the whole discussion is meaningless as there is no time here."

"That's right, didn't you read Stapledon?"

Ellik turned to Kornbluth to argue this new point, though it was at least as likely that his last remark was a sarcasm. "How can you cite him as an expert and discredit my expert?"

"Time is meaningless here. A day lasts a thousand years, the world is created in seven days, God sees the whole universe -- past and future -- at once, and we live forever." Laney took a leisurely puff at his cigarette, as if to illustrate his last point. "And yet minute by minute time seems to pass by in a perfectly ordinary fashion. Can you tell me that the passage of time here is anything but completely subjective?"

"Just like Pelucidar," Kornbluth muttered.

"Perhaps if you were the Almighty Himself you could see the scheme of it, but I doubt very much if it would seem like time as we knew it on Earth. A month ago, a week, a year; they don't mean anything as long as you can't measure them."

"Yeah, but," Ellik said, "we can separate and come together again, and the same time has always passed."

"How do you know ..."

And just at that moment, almost forgotten in the heat of argument, entered the missing Paul Kline.

"Speak of the devil!"

"Not here, please," shot Kline, "I've seen too much of him."

Drinks and cigarettes were forgotten as the three fans crowded around the newcomer, a rather ordinary looking man except for bright eyes and a sardonic expression. His face had once been an unequalled medium for contempt, but since the end of his less than satisfactory life on the Earthly Plane he had been a more contented spirit, and the humour in his eyes overruled the surly lines of his mouth. He looked like a man with a joke he kept to himself. That no one in heaven could ever get more than a slight buzz on, however much they imbibed, might have been a small part of the joke, but Kornbluth remarked to himself that he had seen that look before.

"Do I presume too much in thinking that you boys are eaten up by curiosity about my recent absence? Give me one of those," he gestured at the cigarettes.

"Take a seat too," said Laney, offering him a smoke. "Just so long as you can make a good story of the dull truth. Undoubtedly you were visiting a favourite aunt in the next heaven over, but say you were summoned by a medium, or swept out of our plane by a passing archangel instead. It'll be more entertaining."

"I am no mere carpenter of words to varnish the truth. Everything I have to say is gospel, so help me!"

"Fout!" Kornbluth meant to say "Jesus" but this was heaven and it came out differently. They were all used to it. "As fans we have special dispensation to stretch the truth a little, but if you make an oath, you know, you aren't exempt. It's just a lie then. Be careful."

"Honest guys, I'm not putting you on." He drew a long puff on the cigarette and drew a chair up to sit on. Naturally it was upholstered in the same white as the others.

"Alright, so it's true," said Ellik, "what happened anyway?"

"I have a friend," he began, "who's almost as ready to get into fan fueds as I was, back in life, and the protracted detente between him and Seattle fandom recently broke down. I don't know what it was all about, but I've reconstructed some of the tactics used from things I learned that I'll tell you about later. It seems that one of my friend's opponents in Seattle was a lapsed Mormon, and under her ally's urging she baptized by proxy my friend and all his allies for uncertain strategic gains. As far as I can tell, I must have been baptized posthumously. And as you all know, negotiations between the Church of the Latter Day Saints and the Establishment are only in the preliminaries. According to the law, then, I was a heretic, and therefore unsaved. The instant the baptism must have been performed, the floor whiffed past my head and I was plummeting straight to hell."

"Oh, come on!" said Laney. "Hell isn't down, you know."

"SF writers have their own heaven," added one of the others suggestively.

"Hey look, if we're going to re-enact some old Weird Tales plot where the listeners scoff, then beg the hero to tell his story, I'm going to go. I've been through one story already. I'll tell you later."

"But what about the next issue of Fanac?" shouted Ellik. "What am I going to say?"

"Pick it up from Locus." Kline was striding away, leaving in his tracks eddies in the foggy carpet.

"Up here? How? It isn't allowed here!"

"Get one of the fan pros to smuggle one in. Let's go," said FTL.

Kornbluth grumbled something to the effect that they probably haven't been spared a whopper, just granted a reprieve. He was partly right, and wholly wrong. Later they believed every one of Kline's words. One of them already did.

Kline never did tell anyone his story in person. They read all about it in a soi-disant trip report called "The Profane Comedy" that Kline wrote in his last issue of Palet. It arrived miraculously in the mail box one day, as all mail did, and caused everyone on Kline's mailing list to marvel. At his imagination if not the veracity of his statements. They all wrote locs, as every fan in heaven did for every zine he got. They were witty and urbane, wild flights of fancy, insightful, sincere, and beautifully written, each according to its author. They should have been published, each and every one, but there never was another issue, because afterward Kline did the unthinkable.

The cover was by Kline himself, as usual, a beautiful silk screened Rousseau-like jungle in reds and oranges with the eyes of a chocolate girl shining blue behind leaves. In one corner of the margin, in violet script, the title was written. It wasn't a thick issue, though. It was only about 60 pages, in spite of previous indi-

could have sat upright in the lava if vigorous action weren't constantly necessary. Otherwise I'd be swept away to the entrapping scum around me. Knowing I was unable to keep it up long, I was resigned to bob around and swelter, half petrified, turning end over end in that illimitable sea of fire forever. Then I spotted an island of black, presumably solid, rock a few hundred yards away. I could never have seen it while struggling with the slag anywhere else. It was almost lost in the glare.

There was no moving through the floating crust of the lake though, so I figured that my only chance was to swim underneath as much as possible. If it was possible. It turned out that it was, but only just barely. It must have taken hours, most of which time I floundered on the surface, to cover a distance I could have walked in less than a couple of minutes. If I hadn't seriously overestimated the distance I wouldn't have made it, even with all eternity to try. Even a spiritual body has its limits. I was near to collapse and might have been forever swept away from the island by currents while I was helpless.

The last few feet were iffy. I had thought the island floated on the lava lake like the slag, but it must have risen from the bottom since the lava was shallow close to shore. I had to stand, and immediately stiffened as the slag on me cooled and turned to rock. Unbalanced, I fell over. The rock liquified in stages until I was lying flat, face down in the lava. If I had fallen in shallow enough lava, the crust on my upper side might never have melted, trapping me. This worried me as I lay face down and thought. After a minute I crawled back to deeper lava, stood up again, and ran like hell for shore. There was one possible flaw in this plan that I foresaw, but there seemed nothing I could do about it. As I had hoped, I made it to shore, and as I expected I froze solid. What didn't work out according to plan was that I didn't fall over and maybe break my stony coating. I'd stopped well balanced, or my feet were cemented too firmly to the ground. Either way, I supposed it was better than still being in the lake. I was cooler already, and at rest. What's a little boredom? Something would happen eventually to free me.

"In a few million years, dummy," a small voice in my head screamed. Then a rock hit me in the eye.

Followed by others that hit me in the chest, in the stomach, other places in my face, and too many times in the nuts. The rocks broke the hardened crust around me so that in a minute I was free, and very, very mad at someone. Someone was a rotund, warty demon, rolling over and over with laughter.

"It's so funny! *giggle* I've been waiting here, watching all the time. By the way; you're mine."

Oh yeah? I thought.

"This is just the start of the fun I'm going to have. I've never had a soul before."

That I could believe.

"You're my first independent command. I am the captain of your soul from here on in. *giggle*"

I looked over my suddenly acquired captain. He -- if it was a he -- was squat, warty like a toad, and had a tiny bouffant of snagged thinning hair on a bloated face with a perpetual fool's grin. Plump round chins waggled rubberly whenever it giggled. Giggling set off a reflex action that brought claws up to cover mouth, and the demon looked away from my eyes. I looked it over carefully from bunched toes to narrow set eyes as my potential master, then turned back to the lava lake. "I prefer mutiny," I mumbled.

It was a gesture only. A sarcasm. I wasn't at all prepared for the hard kick from behind that almost propelled me back into the magma. Obliging little beast I thought, teetering on the edge of the lake. The next kick came too, but by then I'd regained balance and caught it square in the groin as I was turning around. The demon was rolling around, doubled in laughter, as I rolled around doubled in agony. A passing observer would have wondered at the sight, if not preoccupied with his own miseries.

which he likely would be. After a minute I straightened, shaken by the violence of the pain. I ought to have hardly felt it. Was my body becoming adjusted to my environment and its new demands? Was my first surmise, that I didn't belong here, wrong?

"You," I said, "are off to a bad start if you are my custodian. Which is in itself a dubious claim. I was in heaven before I fell into your goddamn sea of fire, and can only have been brought here by some administrative screw-up that had better be straightened out in a hell of a hurry." Blasphemy -- the first to pass my lips in unknown years? More adjustments? "The next time you try to torment me I'm going to pitch you into your own stinking fire."

The demon was unexpectedly abject. "Sorry, *giggle*, sorry.. Sorry. Sorry. You know, I was sure you were mine. I had advance notice of an unexpected damned soul and got sudden orders to wait for it by Lake Diskongesspeech here. You have to admit, *giggle*, that your arriving just now is an implausible coincidence. I really do think you are mine," the demon finished saying. Claws went up to face to hide the giggles.

"I don't know about your orders," I said, "but if they meant me, then they're just part of the screw-up. I was saved, dammit! Look at me!" I presented my hands out for inspection. "Does that look like the coarse substance of a lost soul?" I didn't look much like the substance of a saved one either, I noticed with shock. My flesh was more corporal than before, it seemed. Lines and pores that were unnoticeable in the diffuse lighting of heaven seemed etched deeply into the skin in the harsh light of hell. I was burnt too. And had a hangnail. Was it just the light and the immersion in the fire, or did I truly belong here?

"Looks about right to me. A little, *giggle*, underdone maybe," the demon said, confirming my worst fears. "Perhaps you're right and it'll get straightened out by the brass later. Though I doubt it, *giggle*." The claws went up and the claws went down. "For now I think we'd best get on with your torment. I'm good at my job. I got honours at scatological torture, *giggle*." My guts began to rumble, only with fear I hoped, as the demon began to grow. "Or I could bury you with rotting carcasses." And grow. "Make you eat a dead baby cold." And grow. "Even re-enact all the spear-carrier roles in Star Trek." Until the demon was nearly 20 feet tall. "*giggle, giggle*," it boomed.

"No!" I refused as boldly as I could, still trying to keep from shitting my pants from whatever cause.

"NO?" it roared. "NO? NO? NO? Oh? No-o-o-ho-ho-ho?" Guffawing now, it produced a three-tined prod half again as long as itself and ran at me. The guffaws were punctuated by screams of rage as it jabbed at me and missed, burying the prongs half way into the scabrous rock each time. Avoiding being spitted was only the half of my worries, as the huge clawed feet stamping the ground were as much danger as the trident. Dodging a slashing sweep of the trident I was forced back into the shallow lava. The slag froze around my ankles, trapping me. In the next moment I would have been gutted and taken away to some place for further devilment, bowels dangling, impaled on the trident. A loud splash behind me upset the demon's aim. It missed and sunk the points of its weapon deep in the lava instead of in my bowels. The demon stood gawking over my head at something. Its hold on the shaft was lax enough that I wrestled it free of the demon's grip and ran it through.

Instead of disgorging a steaming flood of internal organs or smouldering blood, it shot into the air like a punctured balloon and fell at my feet like a deflated football, half the size the demon was when I first saw it. It got up and shrilled incomprehensible words at me, then started giggling like a school girl. Only a foot and a half tall, I picked it up easily, kicking and giggling, and threw it as far as I could into the lake. It hit with a splash and a fount of fire, then was gone.

"Well, good riddance anyway," said a familiar Brooklyn accent from behind me. I swivelled and found I'd been joined by a partly, patriarchal looking man with white side whiskers, a bulbous nose, and dressed in a toga. "What an incompetent. The soul he was waiting for fell in the lake a minute ago. That was the splash. They'll make a lava-ly pair, eh?" He laughed like a vulgar Jove. "As it happens, I'm in charge of you now,

not that meshuggener, and I've better plans for you my boy than enemas with red-hot coals, which was all an unimaginative oaf like that ever thinks of. C'mon, we've a way to walk. Sorry I'm late. I was helled up. In point of fact, I was just putting the finishing touches on 'Dr. Azimuth's Introduction to the Science of de Selby, Complete With Autobiographical Sketches By The Author' -- I'm Dr. Israel Azimuth, by the way, call me Israel if you like, but I can't abide by the name Izzy." He held out a hand. In spite of the figure's imposing presence of character, he was about average height and rather tubby beneath the classic folds of his toga. He gesticulated fluently while he talked. "Funny thing about de Selbey." Which he did, constantly. "He had a nose for the original, and always came up with surprising ideas."

"Um," I said, noncommittally. Who the hell was de Selbey?

"Perhaps not so unusual that no-one anticipated him, though. He was unerringly on new ground since he was always wrong. Who would be there before him if they could help it, eh?"

"Sounds like an interesting guy," I said, meaning that I thought that this de Selbey, whoever he was, sounded like a crackpot. We had walked a couple of hundred yards while Azimuth talked, and passed a pulpit-like chimney of rock, at the top of which I could just make out a man in a robe or caftan who was reading from a piece of paper to the burning lake. Before I could ask Azimuth about it we came to a neck of land that joined what I had taken for an island to the mainland. Although the "island" was a jumbled hive of broken rocks, paths wound through and around the debris, and they seemed to have been poured like asphalt. One question drove out the other. It was hardened slag, said Azimuth, left behind by rises of the lava lake that had inundated the island many times in the past. The neck of land we crossed over was a sharp ridge of up-ended slabs that looked like impossible footing. The path continued right along the top, though, hidden from sight between two vertical layers of shelf. It was like walking along a trench. Fifty or seventy-five paces took us to the mainland. Away from the glow of Lake Diskongesspeetch, the lay of the land was visible. It was rough, but at least not as rough as the island. Volcanic cones belched sooty clouds that rolled down their sides on the horizon. Fire leaped from craggy vents and pits nearer by. And valleys compressed between skeletal mountain chains were full of oily smog that slopped over their lips like bathwater in an unsteady tub. For that matter, it was unsteady. The ground tremoured constantly, and jolted underfoot at unpredictable but frequent intervals. It stank of sulphur. It was dimly lit and ruddy. It was arid. The loose slag crunched as we walked and tectonic voices groaned in the distance. Though a vast panorama was visible from the minor eminence of the path before it wound down into one of the murky bowls, the effect of the looming shoulders of mountain and the rolling reddish overcast was claustrophobic.

"Just like home, once you get used to it," Azimuth continued his monolog. "Of course, I spent most of my life in New York City. And hell isn't at all humid in the summer. De Selbey has something to say on that score. De Selbey usually had something to say on everything. A most opinionated man, unlike my reasonable self. He believed that it was the moisture content of the air that conveyed sound, water droplet to water droplet, and that in the complete absence of moisture there would be absolute silence. Giving as evidence the profound quiet of deserts and the deafening noise of the tempest or hurricane, which was noisy only because of the water suspended in the air from the spray and rain, he theorized that sound could be suppressed by dehumidifiers. He also devised several musical instruments like atomizers that were played by opening and closing different diameter siphons, and adjusting the fineness of the droplets of water in the spray. He used a tuning fork as a source. Detractors of his marvelous theory said his instruments worked like any other musical instruments, of course. It wasn't the mist of water that varied the pitch, but the length of the air columns above the siphons that --"

Christ, what a bore, I was thinking as his digression about the obscure de Selbey ran on. The path descended a couple of hundred feet at a time in switchbacks down a rocky slope until we mustn't have been much above the level of the lava lake. An oily fog had minutes ago closed over our heads, and was becoming blacker above as we continued

to descend. Azimuth was still talking.

"-- put his theories to the ultimate test. It was three weeks before the dam could be repaired and the waters fell enough for Dalkney to be re-inhabited. He claimed there was a definite reduction in village noise throughout the duration of the flood. Ho, ho! I shouldn't wonder. Hatchjaw, in his excellent biography, 'Life and Times', describes another amusing anecdote."

Oh, God! But I was saved from another long unfunny tale by the exhausted figure of a naked runner, who brushed past us from out of the gloom and fell on his face a few steps later. "Are you alright," I cried, and would have tried to help him up, but Dr. Azimuth dragged me back with a firm grip on my arm.

"Don't ever go near anyone running in hell! They're being chased!" He was right. There were howls a few yards away down the path. Almost the same instant a dozen lithe figures broke out of the smog and fell upon the prostrate body of the runner. I was disgusted to watch them fasten their slobbery mouths and brown caked fangs to his feet and ass! They crowded around him like pigs at suck, and I could see the fallen runner practically deflate as his vital juices were drained.

"Darn," said my guide as the vampires, sated, broke up and sauntered away, leaving the drawn up and dehydrated body behind them. His ass was a bloody sponge. "They always give up in the end, so to speak," Azimuth continued. "Too bad. It's such a lot of trouble when they get caught by their groupies." Their groupies? "They have to have their egos pumped up again, and that usually means sending Earthside a few 'posthumous' manuscripts for publication. I'm a rather modest man, but I may have already mentioned that I write. I was a writer on Earth too, and wrote plenty of science fiction like this fellow when I was young. They tell me also that we both had colossal egos that show in our style, which is why I've had to stand in for him before. I'll probably have to write the next one for him too, and I'm so tired of tribbles ... Well, it's none of my business yet. On we go. We have a trek of our own, and tribbles enough on the way no doubt. Ho."

Looking back over my shoulder, the body of the crumpled author disappeared into the fog after only a few paces. The groupies were nowhere to be seen. I was thankful for my Virgil, whose virtue would no doubt see me through this and future horrors, until I was home again.

"I've had to write the last three novels for an old friend of mine from the Shipyard days. Did you ever read Time Enough For Love, I Will Fear No Evil, or The Number Of The Beast? I wrote those."

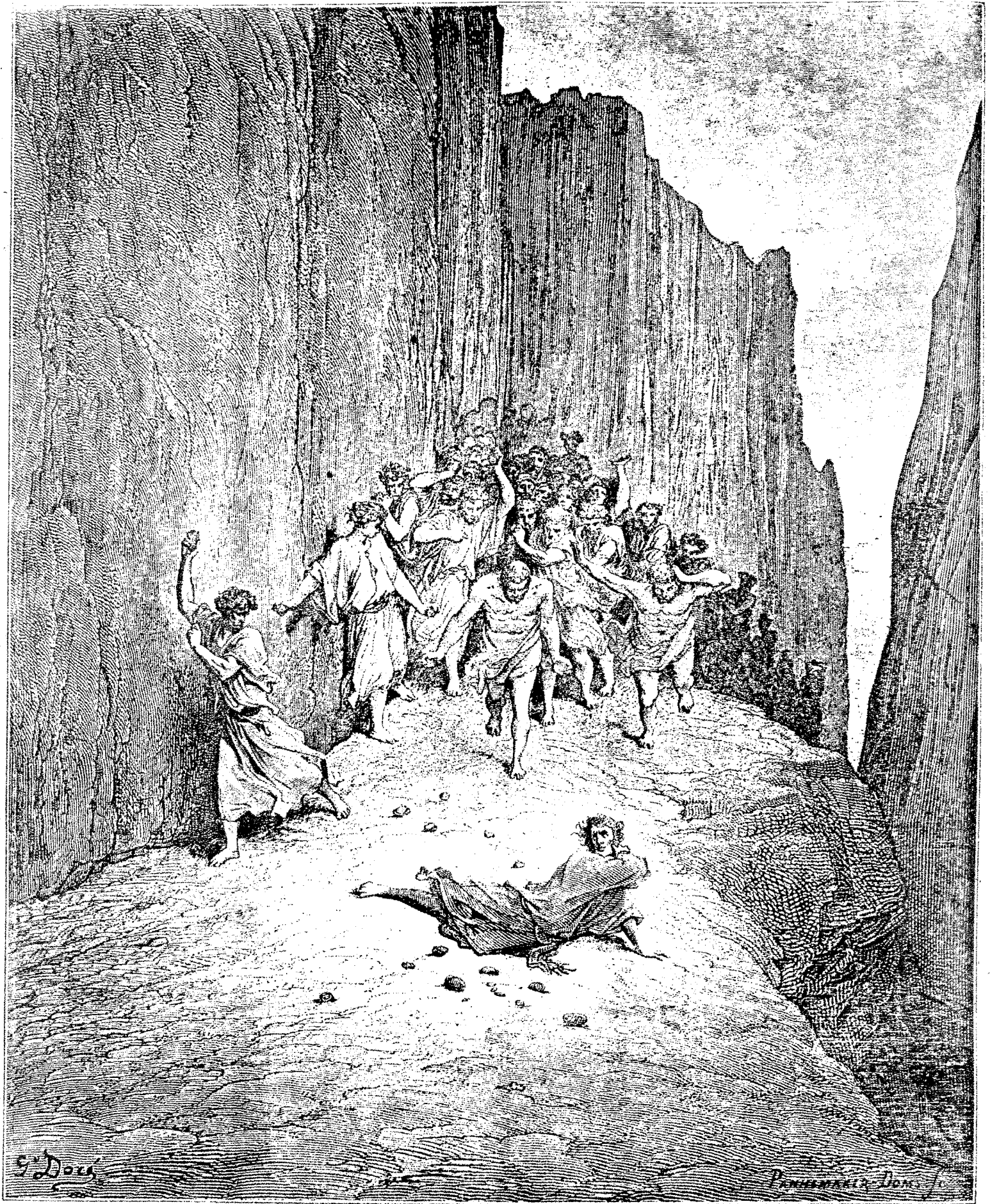
"No, those were after my time, but I know who you mean. I read Stranger In A Strange Land and Glory Road though. God, they were awful. Did you write those too?"

"*Hrumph*. No."

"Since when ... I thought Robert A. Heinlein was still alive, somehow?"

"So do most people," replied Azimuth, hopping over a bristly bandicoot with leather wings that scooted out of a hole at the side of the path to bite at his ankles. He kicked it over the edge on the other side. "He passed away years before I did, actually, but wouldn't leave. We tried to reason with him, said 118 years old was generous for anyone, but he just refused to go. So we made a deal with him. He goes through the motions of living, I write the books for him, and he gets another 20 years on Earth. You could say that the Dean of Science Fiction was driven to live forever -- a Dean Drive you might say, ho, ho. But he's been down here in spirit all this time. He was a little careless in wording his contract, I understand." I thought of Willis, whose body lived in Belfast, but whose soul lived with the blessed. Azimuth hadn't stopped for my reflections though. "-- I will almost certainly have to ghost several more novels before his contract expires and his body does the same. *Sigh* Dear me, I think we are coming out from under the smog."

Visibility was improving. We could see the trail ahead for a good hundred feet, and just make out the switchback below us. Billows of smoke hung above us that rained



oot constantly. The trail had taken us down to a crossroads where we were almost run over by another science fiction writer chased by his groupies. Unlike the herd pursuing the first writer we met, these wore berets and fatigues instead of rubber ears and pajamas. My companion abjured the steeper paths, and took the way that turned right, toward the wall of the chasm. Flinty walls closed around and above us as I followed him into a cleft or cave. "Good weather, for once," Azimuth said. "Usually this tunnel is choked with greasy smoke." Bare feet padded behind us and another writer ran past, followed by her groupies. They all wore small bags hung around their necks. "Quiet here today too."

The tunnel turned abruptly to the left and right every 20 feet or so, and sometimes widened out into a little room around one of the corners. In one I saw a mountain of decomposing mimeo stencils with a skirted figure with pointed ears half-buried in them near the ceiling, weeping uncontrollably. Some of the stencils flashed the names of famous issues that were never published. "A fan historian, no doubt," said I.

"No, just a completist collector. He never reads the things anyway, and that's why he's here."

Beyond another bend I saw an old man sitting with legs spread wide on the floor. Around him were bottles of whiskey that he would snatch seemingly randomly and upend over his mouth. They were all full of amber liquid, but the bottle he tried to drink from was always utterly dry. "Beam's, Beam's..." I think I heard him croak. What on Earth was he doing here, I wondered? The next large room had at least 40 people hanging from one flat wall. Their limbs were pinned to the rock in obscene positions that linked them like a flow chart -- hand to genital, genital to genital, genital to ass, hand to breast, breast to mouth ... a living Langdon diagram, squirming for all to see. I thought one or two faces were familiar here too, but I preferred not to dwell on the spectacle. A little further along the way we found a group of fans battling with invisible foes, while one fan with dice called out the casualties. It was not a game, since an adverse roll of the dice caused blood to flow from the indicated victim. A minute later we came across a pretty young girl crouched in a cat box, shitting and covering up and shitting ... Other rooms along the way were even less pleasant to think about. Several, to my relief each time, were empty. They were only waiting, however, for new occupants. The air everywhere was clammy with the memories of follies in uncountable numbers now departed. It grew harder to breathe in the despair. Finally, when in the last stages of asphyxiation -- head swimming and panting for breath -- a waft of unbelievably fresh air brought me to. The same air, really, choked with soot and sulphurous, that filled the confines of the gallery behind us, but so much less tainted with misery and suffering that it no longer oppressed. Dr. Azimuth, who had stopped talking, began to clear his throat for a new start. Then he thought better of it and hushed himself for another few minutes.

The walls of the tunnel shrunk away from us on either side, and the ceiling arched up out of sight. The crunching echoes of our footsteps died as we entered an immense new room, apparently boundless in the gloom. "A bad passage. I didn't expect ..." Azimuth began. Then he brightened up. "If I'm not mistaken," he croaked on top of his Brooklynese, "that's a free agent up ahead that I recognize. I don't know where he's from, but I see him down here all the time." A jaunty figure with a superior look on his face advanced on us from the gloom.

"Laney!" I cried.

.....

Laney, fiddling with the mimeo in the other room, was called out by Ellick and Kornbluth, who had stopped reading at this point. Freehafer, Johnstone, Gillings, and Grant, who were playing cards in one corner, looked up from their hands with interest. Smotroff, in another corner, sat and brooded... (He'd never quite accepted his premature arrival in heaven.) "Explain yourself!" Laney was ordered when he appeared. Instead, he came over and read their zine wordlessly.

"I was afraid he'd mention that," he said.

"You knew all along that Kline was in hell and didn't think to tell us, his best friends, where he was? What were you doing in hell anyway?" demanded Ellik.

"Yeah," added one of the poker players from the corner, "If you ever got there, they'd never let you out again. I never did figure out how you got up here in the first place."

Laney began to get huffy.

"I know you well enough to know that you must have a good thing going. We just want in on a little of the action," said Ellik, who was used to placating the mock, or real, indignation of Laney. The poker players went back to playing poker.

"Well, it was true. It was about the last thing I expected, to run into Paul Kline in hell of all places. But I honestly didn't know where he went from there. Like you, first thing he did was ask me how I got there, and then how I got back of course. He had a certain practical application in mind I imagine."

"Sure, like how he'd get back. How come it works for you, whatever the method is, but not for him?"

Laney hunched his frame into an armchair. "I might as well sit down. This is going to take a long explanation."

"Go on, we're listening," said Ellik.

"When I get abnormally tired of all you guys, the poker, the slip-sheeting, the childish fanspeak, what-all, I can only think of the silly and sordid things fans do, and did. Pictures of this person and that in flagrante delicto spring to mind, and if I was particularly good and worked up they seemed to animate. It was as if I was watching a real scene, somewhere. With concentration it became vivid enough that I could speak and be spoken to, act, and be acted upon. In other words, I was somehow transported in spirit to the counterpart of our heaven up here, where fans were fricasseed instead of feted. Re-reading parts of Ah, Sweet Idiocy helped if I wasn't especially ticked-off --"

"You have a copy of that here?" asked Kornbluth, cigarette dangling from open mouth. Ah, Sweet Idiocy was one of the few documents that shared the distinction with the Breendoggle letter of being banned from heaven lest it re-introduce disruptive and unpleasant feelings.

"Gabriel or somebody forgot to pull it out of FAPA when he was censoring. You're probably all had copies all along and didn't know it, you bunch of stupes!"

"So that's your secret," said Ellik. "But we're waiting to hear your motive. Who wants to go to hell?"

"Are you kidding? I was never very sure it was a real place, and if you stay out of the intensively unpleasant parts, it's the funniest place you can go. Providing also that you aren't subject to its rigours."

"Examples?" Ellik asked.

"Let me tell you about the petrified McCaffrey fans the dragons dropped on --"

"You have a black sense of humour, Laney," said Kornbluth of all people.

• • • • •

I still hadn't recovered from the shock of finding a friend in hell who I knew should have been in heaven, when he began to fade away. I didn't know it, but he was equally shocked, and I had disturbed his concentration so that the proper order of things was reasserting itself. He got a grip on himself before he was gone altogether and solidified. Then he explained how he found he could astral travel to hell by thinking cynical thoughts, and how he did this periodically for amusement. I disapproved, but after what I'd seen I doubted if I could have appreciated the humour of a Sellers or a Chaplin. (Nor, to stay in form, a Berry or a Burbee.) It was not only unfunny, it was unsettling. I thought I'd seen other fans I knew, in various torments, and Laney's appearance seemed added proof that fans could be easily transported from one plane to a

less elevated one. If so, it was a well-guarded secret that I'd never suspected, and threatened us all with a surprise interment in hell. It suggested monstrous paranoid plots behind plots, a ghastly perversion of the celestial wheels within wheels that undermined my entire faith in the rightness of the universe. On the other hand, Laney got back pretty easily ...

Trying to pretend I wasn't really there, all the while following at Azimuth's heels, didn't work for me though, despite Laney's earnest coaching. Maybe it would have worked, if I could have blocked all awareness of my surroundings, but they wouldn't let me. The cindery crunch underfoot, the pebbles in my shoes, the speleoblems I had to duck under or brain myself on, all conspired to convince my senses that I was undeniably in hell. The only thing I found fairly easy to ignore was the monotonous flow of words from Dr. Azimuth. We traipsed along at a leisurely pace for another few hundred feet as the gloom acquired a noticeable blue tinge. The path, bending suddenly to the right, and then to the left again, dodged between two immense stone columns like gateposts that vanished in the darkness above. And there, spread out before us was a vast bowl, flickering in a dim blue light that put me in mind of windows of dark parlors lit only by TV. The floor of the bowl rippled in waves like a horizonless field of grain. They were heads. Heads of millions and millions of people. Watching, infinitely far away, a tiny black and white screen. It was TV.

"Video fans, all of them," said Laney's voice behind me.

Azimuth threw his arms around Laney and hugged him, exclaiming, "Bless you, my boy, you're a fount of knowledge."

"Hey, watch who you're mashing!" screamed Laney. "Keep those tendrils to yourself, if you don't mind."

"Just glad to discover in our midst a sage who can relieve these weary hands of their great responsibility, and lead this lost soul through this continent of misery to his journey's end. Isn't that what you meant to do?" Azimuth asked with mock innocence.

"Of course not, you ass, I was just saying --"

"That you knew before this aged guide the landmarks along the road, eh?" Azimuth smiled.

Laney huffed up. "I just couldn't leave my friend here in good conscience with a big bag of wind who'd only get him permanently ensnarled here. Down there, for instance." He indicated the plain of heads below.

"Pooh, pooh," said Azimuth. "How much of hell have you seen? Some of the provinces set aside for trivial penances and realms governed by some of the more eccentric minor administrative demons? You'd get us lost before you crossed the Ipa Basin."

"What's that?" I asked, afraid that it was probably ahead.

"Just a swamp of cheap flat beer with tobacco-like stuff growing in it. Shut up while I'm arguing with this schmuck. You wanna get lost?"

"Who needs to go there, you big fart. I can take Kline around the damned swamp by following the Guinness Valley through the mountains."

"If you're going all that way then you'd better have a stout porter to carry your baggage, or you'll be ailing. Ho, ho!"

"Oh, Christ!" Laney and I muttered together.

"Nevertheless --" began Laney. He was interrupted immediately.

"Nevertheless nothing! Go around the swamp if you want, but where does it get you? Why do you want to be there?"

"I presumed you mentioned the Ipa Basin as an arbitrary example of a place I couldn't find my way through," answered Laney with all the dignity of the offended swank.

"But you presumed you knew where you were going, hmmmmmm?" said Azimuth, whose exaggerated dignity made him look more like a comic butler. "Besides, seeing this young man

through is my job. You want to argue with my superior?"

"I concede you have a point there." Laney blanched. "But I'll go along, just to keep a friend company, if you don't mind."

"Not at all," Azimuth beamed, "so long as you won't try to do my job." He was all smiles again once he had his way. "There's plenty of latitude on the job. Get it -- latitude: azimuth?" There certainly was, I thought, noticing again the bulging waist of his toga. "Off we go. This way, through the Viewless Valley. By the way, those people you see are video fans," he said — as if the fact hadn't already been noted.

"Not through there!" objected Laney at once, pointing in the direction Azimuth had chosen.

"I thought we had settled all that. I am leading, and we go that way. It's the shortest way and the safest."

"But they're video fans, millions of them, whose only conversation is about the engineering specs of the Enterprise or the clan tartan of Dr. Who's scarf."

"So?"

"We'll be bored to sleep and never escape. Let's go around."

"Sure, we can go around, if you want. That way," he pointed back the way we came, "there's a fork in the road that leads to steppes. We've shoes on, so we can walk through the staple-grass harmlessly. And since you have such a well developed sense of humour you may be amused by the crudzine editors walking barefoot there. Of course, it's four weeks walk that way, and there won't be anywhere to rest, but you're pretty thick-skinned. Or we can go to the right," he pointed around a rock in that direction, "and go through the rattan forest if you're handy with a shield and don't mind wearing a bucket on your head for the next three days. We might also meet one of the hundreds of berserk knights who will instantly challenge us, of course, to a joust. He'll probably strip us of our armour if he wins and we'll be beaten to death by the forest before we can go ten feet. But if that's better than a little boredom, I defer to your superior judgement. You go first."

"Fine," said Laney, and exercised a fourth option. He vanished from sight.

En route through the twilit pit really was the quickest way to our destination, which Azimuth said was the very archdemon in charge of this entire province of hell. He alone could adjudge my case and release souls from his realm. We travelled two days, and never passed nearer to the centre of this vast audience's attention than a thousand miles, according to the Doctor. The flicker of light swung slowly aside and fell behind us by the end of the trip. Dr. Azimuth talked virtually every step of the way, causing me to wonder how Laney could ever have feared boredom from the valley of video fans. We stopped once overnight. We cleared a little space to lie down in by the simple expedient of bodily chucking a score or two video fans out of our sleeping area. The others around us remained motionless, oblivious to our presence except for a reflexive swaying to one side or the other if we blocked their view. They were utterly mesmerized by the glow over the horizon whose source, even standing on their shoulders, we could not see. We built a fire using bits of inflammable material we found searching their pockets. This led to the unexpected waking of one of the zombies right behind the fire. With his view blocked for three hours, the spell over him was broken.

"I think I have to go to the bathroom," was the first thing he said, jolting us just as we were dropping off. There was little choice in the matter. He left the circle of light from the fire and returned after a minute, threading his way through the mass of his fellow viewers ...

"Never liked Danny anyway," he quipped, "not since we saw The Empire Strikes Back together and he thought Star Wars was better. I said he was blind and he got real pissed off."

"I don't know if I like your choice of preposition there," muttered Azimuth.

"Bad preposition; good premonition," I added. Then I asked the awakened video addict, "What article of dogma did this heretic violate?"

"He said the special effects in Star Wars were done better than in the sequel. He didn't like the stop-motion animation, which he said was jerky."

"Wasn't it?"

He looked a little uncomfortable as he admitted that it did, but "It's the best stop-motion animation I've ever seen," he protested.

"But you could tell it instantly as a special effect. Like magic, if you know it's a trick, then it isn't magic. The animation is that movie didn't work because it looked like stop-motion."

"Exactly," put in Azimuth, who was roasting a weinie he'd special-effected for our dinner. I hadn't seen how he'd done it, so presumably it'd fill my stomach. The bubbling fat dripping unnoticed on the Doctor's knee made it suspect, however.

"Yes," persisted the video addict, "but it was still the best animation I'd ever seen. How can you say it was bad?"

"Because it didn't look like Luke Skywalker mounted on a live, sheep fleeced moa. It looked exactly like a clay model tricked out in borg."

"But it was the best stop-motion animation, ever --"

groan A purist.

"-- think of all the work moving Yoda's eyes and ears and brows and mouth, and his arms and --"

"The puppet? Animated!" I screamed. Azimuth dropped his weinie into the coals, where it roasted succulently though the spit was almost instantly charred.

"Yes, some of the best stop-motion animation I've ever seen," he repeated stubbornly.

"Enough of this foolery," said Azimuth. "You'll get no sense from him and be reduced to the level of his kind if you pursue this any longer. Back to sleep with you, you space-age lotophagi." Azimuth made magical passes with his hand that looked suspiciously like a gesture of dismissal, and the media fan fell asleep on his feet. He fell forward against Azimuth, who shoved him back to fall lengthwise. His head roosting in an anonymous lap, we left him to concentrate on the Doctor's thaumaturgical meal. Then we slept for some hours (indeterminable in the twilight) until we were woken, refreshed, by some change in the program over the horizon that caused something of a false dawn. Azimuth dematerialized the remnants of the previous night's repast while I scattered the ashes of the fire. We were suddenly ferociously hungry. Azimuth offered to produce a breakfast of cornflakes, strawberries, bacon, eggs, toast, jam, orange juice, coffee, and fresh dairy cream, or bagels and lox if I preferred, but I ignored him. He sighed at the hopeless goy who doubted his abilities, but led the way without protest. A last look at our video addict showed he was still asleep, head in someone's lap, but the stranger had begun mechanically rubbing his back.

Azimuth was as talkative as ever, and filled the weary hours of shoving through the thronged masses with equally wearisome banter. The light flickered over the horizon, plunging us into stygian gloom or flooding us with ghostly luminosity, second by second. At last the land began to rise and the lip of the natural bowl of rock took form under our feet. We were out of this mesmerized Woodstock of souls at last. "You know," said the Doctor, "these people are an insoluble problem. They're here to be punished, and this particularly suited form of damnation was devised at great expense expressly for them. We thought we'd have to force them to sit like that eternally, and budgeted for extra legions of demons as guards around the perimeter of their compound. We ended up removing the barbed wire and reassigning the demons though. They appear to like it, no matter what we show."

A path wound up and out of the bowl identical to the one that led in at the other side. The same tumbled topography of firelit rock and volcanic ash normal to most parts of

hell prevailed here too. Azimuth led me unerringly along trails that crossed, wound, and doubled back on themselves frequently so that the shortest way was always to change direction and path. Dr. Azimuth had his bearings; I had to give him that. I said so, but he had to have the joke explained to him. Twice we passed the dehydrated remains of authors whose endurance gave out but hadn't been reinvigorated yet. A small groupie lingering over the corpse of one looked up at us as we passed, saw that we weren't important, growled and went back to worrying the body. The path began to widen soon after this, and looked paved. Other traffic joined us -- a band of twerpy looking guys in white shirts and short hair who played key instruments they blew through, cartoon-like creatures that carried their jagged frames with them, a fellow in a bowler hat who stopped every minute or so and gave himself an enema with a hose and object that glistened silvery under the slime, and other, even more peculiar, wayfarers. The road was positively crowded by the time we came to a halt before a huge, natural arch of stone, barred against entry by a portcullis. A gerbil was stuck, ass first, on one of the tines.

Most of the traffic turned off at the gate. The rest milled just outside, obviously refused entry but having nowhere else to go. The marching band that unfortunately accompanied us all the way to the gate was in confusion. It had been ahead of us and probably told to bugger off by one of the giant gargoyles that grew out of the living rock. They wheeled around and around, misstepped, and tootled out of key. One of the gargoyles reached out a great stone claw and squashed half of them flat. The others were brushed out of the way. It laughed like pumice stones ground together. We were next.

"And what do you want?" the gravelly voice of the other guard asked. I looked up at the giants and quaked at the 80 feet of maffic looking torsos and ogreish heads. With each word, grotesque expressions animated the hideous craggy features of the one speaking. But rather than horrible, the monster was almost ridiculous. A swath of orangey moss grew on the rocky skin below the nose. It looked like a ratty moustache, and changed the grotesque to the absurd. It and its mate played cards, the pips fully as large as my head. But they were still dangerous. The speaking gargoyle wielded a long flat blade that it used to pick dirt out from under its claws. It breathed boozy fumes at us and teetered as if likely to topple over on us at any second. Dr. Azimuth answered the giant's challenge by saying that he was an emissary of his Satanic Satrap and authorized to enter palace grounds. "Who said so?" the gargoyle boomed at us. Azimuth looked indignant and repeated that he was allowed past the gate by authority of the Satrap himself. "Baal's balls!" the gargoyle roared and teetered dangerously. "Who are all these mortal shrimps and amateur diaboli who have wormed their ways into our cozy hell lately? Can't an honest devil have a place of his own where he can relax with other professionals? Lucifer save me, but I might as well dive into the burning lake with the other riff raff!"

"I demand you let us through!" shouted Azimuth as best he could through the bass of the giant above him.

"You with the red face: shut up!" said the gargoyle from the other side of the gate. "And you too Ger. You grow out of this rock as you damn well know, and can't go anywhere any more than I can. Let them through and let's get back to the game. It's your deal. Ger hasn't been sober," he confided to us, "since that silly looking mold or whatever began growing on him. Produces intoxicating chemicals that addles his brain. I don't know why I haven't put in a demolition order ages ago, but where else am I going to get a partner who can play with 8 foot cards? On your way through, and mind you, don't look at my hand or I'll blame Ger for tearing your heads off." The portcullis rose uncertainly and we hurried through just before it fell with a crash behind us. The gerbil squirmed on its barb. As we hastily put distance between us and the palace gate, we heard our benefactor scream obscenities at Ger for mashing one of the travellers behind us on the discarded cards.

"Those rock guardians can be unpredictable and violent. Fortunately I had the situation well under control," said Azimuth as soon as his colour had returned. "You have to treat underlings -- underlings from the underworld, get it? -- with a firm hand or they simply won't respect your authority."

Firm hand? I thought. He'd missed definite possibilities. "Good you played those jokers right. You didn't miss a trick."

"Just a matter of know-how, and I am very important around here." Azimuth puffed himself up. He hadn't as much as raised an eyebrow at my puns, the egotist.

Inside the palace grounds, the landscape had been manicured. Instead of the jumbled rocks and sinuous avenues, the rubble had been removed and the crevices filled. Odd constructions stood up from the plain around the horizon, some near and modest, some far and huge. On our way we passed a tumulus about a hundred feet high. Something moved on the far side, then a man-sized boulder rolled up into view. It rolled higher and revealed a figure pushing it upward. It was naked, and hairy like a wild-man. His bushy beard was matted with sweat. Disheveled dark tresses almost hid a wrinkled tiny face. Altogether, the man couldn't have been more than five-four, or five-six, though he was rolling uphill a rock twice my size. I stopped, fascinated, and watched as the boulder inched up to the summit. Much sooner than it would have if I had been pushing, the boulder reached the top. It balanced there for a few seconds and leisurely toppled over. Instantly it was rolling furiously down the other side and disappeared into surrounding brambles. The small man at the top shouted and waved his arms, then ran down the side of the mound and into the brambles after his rock. I could make out only some of his incoherent cries, but they sounded to me like he was saying, "I rolled away again! I rolled away again!" And more faintly still, "Everytime I get to the top, I roll away again."

"What was that all about?" I asked Azimuth.

"I don't want to talk about it," he said gruffly. "An injustice, I say, to punish a fellow for a little healthy self-confidence."

It didn't sound altogether like self-confidence to me, and then I imagined the chubby figure of the Doctor rolling his ego up a hill ... But no, Dr. Azimuth was my Virgil, and no more a fixture of these precincts than I. Fortunately, the mound-man hadn't yet found his boulder when he and his mound were finally lost to sight. Nor did we approach any other of His Excellency The Satrap's lawn ornaments close enough to determine their nature apart from knowing that deviltry was afoot there. Instead, we had come up to an extensive one-storey building built of masonry. Its facade was decorated with intricate brickwork, with niches, recesses, and buttresses that looked Sumerian, but reminded me more of the ovens of a crematorium.

"This is the palace," Azimuth said cheerfully. "They don't like to build upward here. It's mostly underground. In fact, if you take into account that we're already in a cave, it's all underground."

I followed him in through brazen doors guarded by obscene friezes of mixed animal and human bodies that winked and glared at us through stony eyes as we passed. Stone feet, sprouting from the floor in the doorway and broken off at the ankles, suggested that an effective guard was kept by the devices on the walls. Evidently we were welcome visitors, or we might be waiting now for some collector to come and snap us off at the ankles. I wondered where the statues were taken. Inside, a long hall disappeared into darkness at the other end. Doors opened into it, providing what little light there was from the rooms beyond. Azimuth passed them all by, and followed by myself we walked in the near darkness for several minutes before we came to the end. Most of the doors we had passed were only partly ajar, or the room beyond had been dim, but a few were brightly lit and could be seen into. Whenever we passed one of these, Azimuth would notice my stare and comment.

"A filk sing. They all have to wait until Arthur Godfrey finishes though. He never does, of course. And George Formby is next." Or, "A million neos typing randomly. They won't be released from their torment until they duplicate all of Walt Willis' writing. So far the best they've done is to randomly type one complete issue of Hyphen, except they consistently spelled 'Quandry' right. They're expected to come up with another issue of Hyphen in another 60,000,000 years. Their next best effort was a run of Fanzine Fanatiques with spurious columns by G.M. Carr. Most of what they produce,

though, is even more worthless."

"What do they do with it?" I asked, shuddering at the thought of so much soulessly written fanac.

"Send it topside for publication, what else?"

Or, "He slipsheets with the page he's just printed. But he's not being tormented. He's the Satrap's third assistant junior undersecretary, and he's just stupid."

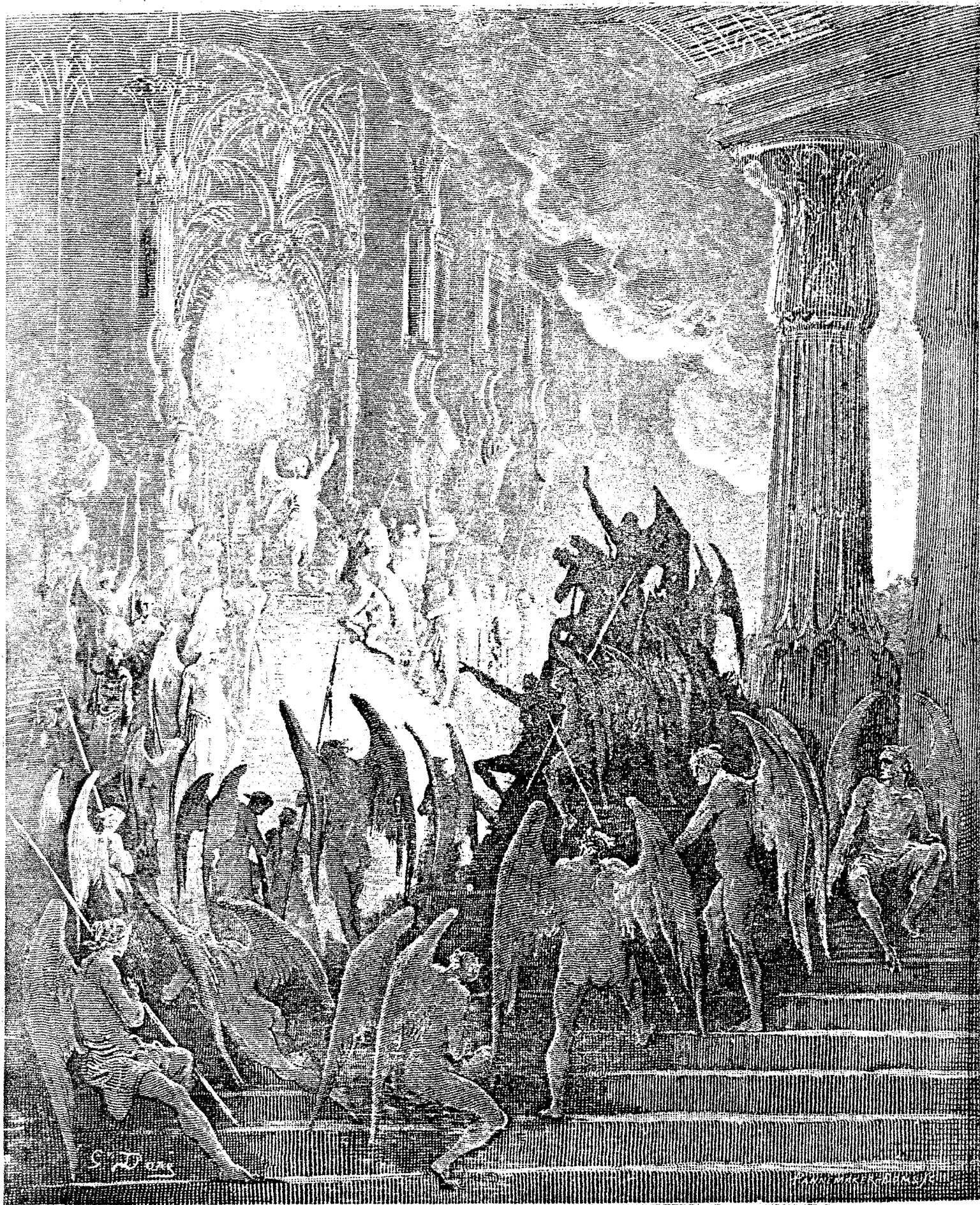
At the last door we passed, I made Azimuth stop. Inside was a darkened studio. Although there was no audience, there were a half dozen self-important fans sitting by themselves on the lighted stage. They were rapping together, being mellow, and making esoteric references that as far as I could hear I didn't understand. Unlike the other scenarios played out before my eyes, this one had a dreamlike quality that made me even more uneasy. Azimuth began to explain, but I cut him short. He was left behind, standing open-mouthed and speechless.

The bronze doors at the end of the hall were like the doors at the palace entrance. Maybe even the same malevolent spirits in an unseen frieze guarded it. It was too dark to tell, and I wasn't going to feel the walls.

"Er ... This is it," said Azimuth, still a little taken back by my attitude toward his latest elevating lesson. "Beyond these doors is the inner palace and court of His Excellency, The Satrap of Fandemonia by the Grace of His Satanic Majesty, Claudegelebub I. You have occasionally taken me lightly in our acquaintance -- no, don't deny it, I'm a very sensitive man -- but do not make the mistake of taking one of the Dark Prince's own lieutenants lightly ... I'm concerned for you my boy!" Azimuth trembled with emotion. I became impressed in spite of myself, realizing that behind the absurdity of most of what I had seen was very real misery and degradation. In a few moments I might be one of Laney's funny jokes or a grotesque moral lesson for Azimuth's next pupil. It would take only one word out of place to remain in this place forever.

Azimuth placed his palm against the door and intoned in ancient Hebrew a password. I felt rather than saw or heard shapes move in the dark around us. Then the doors parted, in stately slow motion, admitting us into the court of Claudegelebub the First. Demons, cartoon figures, and ordinary mortals crowded a vast room. Some froze, some startled, some turned their backs, some did nothing at all as we entered. No-one moved naturally or performed understandable acts. Azimuth and I walked carefully between irregular rows of armed demons who were as still and silent as granite. They led to a raised throne upon which sat a brooding and malevolent presence. As we walked, the shapes around us continued to freeze, to startle, to move in fast or slow motion, to declaim to no-one, to dance with themselves, suddenly cut off conversations, handle invisible objects, gabble, or writhe on the floor, each going through the changes without either rhyme or reason. Several strands of music played at once, rising or falling in volume and wandering in and out of key. Subtly, the light changed as well, as did the draft, the slope of the floor, temperature, and everything you could see or hear or feel or even think about, disorienting me below the conscious level. I felt psychotic, depressed, keyed-up, and several other contrasting emotions all simultaneously. Finally, I felt that I was the centre of disturbance and not even there at all. Azimuth was sweating and pale. We were at the foot of the dias then. The steps were proportioned for no human tread, and they were spotted with watery blood and bile that puzzled me until I saw a live, plucked chicken. It squawked and ran out from under the crinolines of a slack-jawed young woman who stood motionlessly on the stairs and held a broken tea-cup. The chicken nearly voided on Azimuth's sandals before it staggered away to be caught by a fan in a tux who ate it alive as we watched. Yellow liquid speckled with fresh blood dribbled down a stair where the pullet had had its last spasm.

A pistol-shot! The Belle had come to life and inexplicably slapped Azimuth's face -- who protested that he hadn't touched her yet. Then she froze again, an idiot in silk and whalebone whose foot tapped to an unheard minuet. On the first platform of the dias, chubby men in diapers played games with unspotted dice and moved bird droppings on the patternless marble. One looked up and challenged me. "I am the mighty Tagor, conquer-



or of the Floral Empire. I wear three swords, know the charms against ghouls, goblins and ghosts, and have won many treasures. My blow has the strength of eleven ordinary men, and I can withstand the smiting of seven." The man looked strong in spite of his flab, but surely his boasting was not an objective evaluation of his prowess? In any case, after he had delivered his challenge he went back to moving his bird-droppings without emotion. The next set of stairs was a longer climb, and the platform at their top had only the body of a man on it, naked except for the caftan bunched up under his armpits. He was snoring, and languorously playing with himself—oblivious to our approach. Spread around him were arranged Tarot cards, all carefully faced up. Every one that was close enough to see clearly was drawn by a well known fan artist, and the cards were printed on twiltone that appeared to age almost as we watched. One more series of steps remained between us and the throne. On the last climb we passed several burned wooden cages with charred shapes in them that I didn't want to look too closely at: they moved, and the smell of the blood seeping through cracks in the black surface smelled insanely delicious. One of the shapes, with a bit of tortoise shell fur left, mewed pitifully. In each cage with the living meat were chinese fortune cookies that seemed to be feeding on the burned flesh. One of them clacked at Azimuth like false teeth, biting its own white slip of a tongue. It was stained with blood. Fortunately, nothing more horrible remained between us and His Excellency than a rotting Big Mac.

Having sidestepped the putrescent hamburger, we stood before The Satrap at last. Clau-degelehub was more an idea than a concrete fact. The eye was reluctant to take him in. Instead, you saw things that were only in the mind's eye. One moment you saw an evil old man, another an impossible hybrid like the jackal and ibis headed gods of Egypt, and then the masterly almost noble figure of the movie vampire. But at no time did he look in any way like any of these things. These images never obscured the deeper, more profound presence of evil whose features were darkness, sin, and pain rather than the figurements of an ordinary human face. A higher spiritual being would have seen him in these terms clearly. I was far too primitive a spirit, and I had to fill in the blind spot in my perception with borrowed visual detail from my background of experiences. Judging from Azimuth's discomfiture, he was nearer my spiritual plane than I had supposed. He preferred to stare at the empty cans of killer-cola around the throne than meet the evil being's eye.

The Satrap smirked, I think, but I might have imagined that too. Then he said, "So, Azimuth, you have brought me a soul. What of it? You want it?"

"I'm very flattered by your generosity, Excellency, but I was only doing my duty as I saw it. This Kline, a splendid fellow in all accounts your Excellency, was put in charge on an incompetent by accident, and soon did away with it. By the way, I'd imagine it'd need to be fished out of Lake Diskongesspeech still. I can see that it's looked after, after the audience with your Excellency. But this soul needs a new master put in charge of its torment in the meantime unless I may suggest an alternative. I was more than satisfied by this young man's exemplary conduct; perhaps he can be recruited? I'm inadequate for his training, of course, but at your order I would do my very best --"

"Throw him back in the lake. We're overstaffed with assholes like you already. Maybe you should jump in with him. I'll think about it seriously if you bring my any more 'recruits'. Go." The Doctor winced, and turned to leave.

What? What's going on here? I thought. Azimuth humble? A new master? Torment? Recruits? "Azimuth, you fink, you were supposed to be my guardian angel, not just a managerial level demon!"

"Oh, my. Whatever gave you that idea?" Azimuth looked genuinely startled. "You shouldn't suggest such things before His Excellency. He has to be very careful, and unsupported accusations can be very serious ..." he finished weakly and looked up to his Lord.

"Haw, haw!" the Satrap boomed. I thought. "Tell him what you are, you spineless worm."

"Oh well, yes, I suppose I am responsible for misleading the young lad, ha, ha. Me an angel? Dear me, no, I'm only a trustee here. I was a baaaaaaaad doctor on Earth, and had a moderate amount of mundane influence, so I have special privileges here that the most ordinary run of damned souls aren't entitled to. At his Excellency's pleasure, of course," added the Bad Doctor, smiling obsequiously at Claudegelebub. "When you outsmarted that idiot who thought he was your tormentor, I hoped you were a sorcerer I could take to-the boss. I did the best I could for you once I caught on that you were an ordinary soul, but you had me fooled for a while. There had obviously been some sort of mistake -- you weren't properly prepared for, and I thought I could earn the boss's favour by bringing you in. He loves getting sorcerors who stumble through the gates of hell through their own stupidity. He takes special delight in punishing them, and hasn't had one for quite a spell. Ho, ho!"

Azimuth had forgotten himself and where he was.

"Azimuth!" roared the Satrap.

"Oi!"

"You know where the lake is. I want you in it. Now." The Bad Doctor popped out of existence. "You too," he said, turning to me.

"Wait I don't belong here I'm here only by some inexplicable accident and I demand repatriation --"

"So who cares? Let God come and get you and he can have you." The Satrap waited anyway, and spoke again. "Well, aren't you going to try to weasel out of it? If you're not going to be entertaining, then --"

So, as long as I could be tortured with false hope, he was willing to give me time. I saw my chance and jumped at it. "This is science fiction hell, isn't it."

"Patently. You saw."

"Then it's for fuggheads, minackers, deadwood, SMOFs, hucksters, Trekkies, neos, fringe-fen, fakefen, drobes, LMJ, and sercon fans, but not for me!"

"Prove it," the Satrap said, shifting his immaterial bulk around to a more comfortable position. Below us, his motley courtiers surreptitiously watched.

"I was in FAPA for three years. My zine Scherzo came in third after Silverbob and Harry Warner Jr. in 1958. I also published 13 issues of Palet between 1962 and 1965. I was nominated for a Hugo as best pro artist once, and nominated as best fan artist in 1967. I was nominated again in 1968 and would have won too, but for ... some misunderstandings."

"The LACon committee publicly withdrew your name from the ballot, I seem to recall. I'm not impressed, Kline. Try again. The lake is hot, and by now you've no immunity from it."

I was sweating already. "I did consistently well in Fanac polls for several years, and I placed second once. I was a Cult member. I was invited to all the closed room parties at cons and was toastmaster at MidwestCon in '59. I ran for TAFF against Don Ford. I fought against WSFS Inc... Uh ..."

"I have about a hundred thousand souls down here who can tell the same story. What's different about you that you should get away scot free? One more try, then I have pressing matters to attend to. The Site Selection is being made next week, and I have to see that the wrong bid gets it. What do you think of a Worldcon in New York again, anyway?" Incoherent laughter rose from the court at this suggestion.

But I had other things on my mind, so I didn't respond to his gibe. I was desperate now for any sort of faanish credentials, and brought up any unlikely thing I could think of to prove I was a trufan and undamned. "I had an N3F membership once. I cut Peter Vorzimer from my mailing list. I threw away unopened zines from Ed Wood. I ordered a Warhoon 28 in 1967 ..." and with that I ran out of ideas. I was doomed.

Claudegelebub thought so too. I could feel the tension gathering in his substance as

he prepared to make the act of will that would plunge me into the lake of everlasting fire. The prospect made me giddy. The walls of the hall began to spin, and even the overwhelming presence of the Evil One before me seemed to fade away into the distance. I beheld a vision.

It was awesome and terrible. First a great lighthouse appeared, besieged by storm breakers a thousand feet high. But however furiously the winds and waves strove to knock down the lighthouse, it stood resolutely and shone forth its beam to enlighten all those who would look to it. The storm dissolved and the lighthouse became a mile high bird bath. The benevolent form of a beaver looked down at it from the clouds, and it was good. From the sacred waters of the birdbath rose a possum, and it too was good. A fan in a propellor beanie knelt before the possum and beseeched it to show him the way to trufannishness. Touched by his sincerity, the possum blessed Jophan and gave him a shield, and pointed the way to a tall summit, where the Enchanted Duplicator lay. There lay salvation. And Jophan was me.

I was profoundly moved. In fact, I laughed helplessly, uproariously. It was the silliest thing I had ever seen. But I knew that it was truly my salvation.

"Er ..." I began. "The fact is, that I was kinda loosing interest when I left FAPA. It was just habit that I stayed in fandom at all, and if I'd thought about it at all I guess I would have gafiated."

Claudegelehub looked consternated at the news. (I thought.) So I continued.

"Really, I felt gafiated years before my death. I hardly saw any fans after 1968, and nobody sent me fanzines. I didn't go to cons or belong to apas, and never thought of myself as a fan. No, I'd gafiated alright. Probably as far back as '62 or even '60, now that I think about it. I doubt I ever really was a trufan at all."

"If that's the case, then you've made your point. I don't know why you wasted my time trying to prove you were a fan before -- every fan is fuggheaded, every fan was a neo, every fan SMOFs, every fan is a Loud Mouthed Jackass, and they all belong here, at least some of the time or in part. There's not one of those sanctimonious dilettantes that doesn't spend some part of his waking or sleeping hours in hell. Or who isn't an outright schizoid living two separate lives at once, one here and the other in heaven. My greatest victory and The Enemy's greatest remorse is that they don't seem to be aware of things as they are, giving them little or no chance of any true redemption. You think heaven is where people belong? But if you're not a fan, then this hell isn't where you belong either. Beat it!"

And with that, The Satrap, his court, and hell itself faded away around me. The last I saw of hell was the scowl of a betrayed possum. Like the grin of the Cheshire Cat, it vanished last of all.

II

Claudegelehub must not have had anywhere in particular in mind for me when he evicted me from hell. A room began to shape around me, and I was sure at first that I was safe in my own home in heaven. But the furnishings had been moved. The drawing board to my left looked increasingly like a wooden table cluttered with glassware, and that's what it solidified into, no question about it. Instead of my shelves of prized old fanzines there was a fireplace and mantle. My Voids and Fanacs and Veritases and Habbukuks were gone, and in their place were sepia photos of stuffy Victorians, curiously shaped pipes, and a Persian slipper. As the drawing room of a London gentleman, it was a distinct failure. The eccentricity of the occupant was to blame. Chemical smells lingered in the air as if scientific experiments were customarily carried out in the test-tubes, burettes, and flasks I noticed first. Bills and papers were transfixed to the mantel by a jackknife. Across from a florid anti-macassared loungechair, the inscription "V.R." was shot into the patterned wallpaper. By the windows, blinds had been pulled down and were shadowed by the bust of a grim looking man with a hawk nose, high forehead, and sour expression. As rectal a face as I'd ever seen.

"Ahem," someone coughed from behind me. "To what diabolical invention do I owe the

unexpected and doubtful pleasure of your company? My companion and I failed to hear your entrance as we were in attendance of the door. You are to be congratulated on your resourcefulness -- and your disguise -- but you will not find that Dr. Watson and I will sell our lives cheaply!" With that, I was jumped on by two men, one of whom was the very image of the sculpture by the window.

"Mr. Holmes, I presume?" I questioned my attacker as he went through my pockets and Watson sat on my chest. I must confess that Nigel Bruce was closer to the prototype than Conan Doyle's heroic war veteran. Some years had evidently passed since 1888 ...

"You are not Moran," Holmes replied after a while. "In fact, you are neither Moran, nor one of his rampsmen. Who are you then, and why are you here in our apartments?"

"Yes, and you might also add a good explanation of how you came to be here!" added Watson, leaving my chest at last. "Holmes and I were both intent on watching the door, but we heard nothing to indicate that you gained your entry through either the drawing room or bedroom windows."

"Bosh, Watson, you were asleep after finishing your overgenerous glass of that brandy that the baron von Bismark left us after the trifling affair of Wagner's missing last opera. Nevertheless, you are quite right, our guest did not enter through either the doors or windows, and I personally check our premises periodically for secret passages and trapdoors. I lock the windows every night against break-ins. Your entry, sir, is quite inexplicable!" All the while he talked, Holmes ran his eye up and down my clothes, glanced at my hands, stared at my shoes, and did a double take at my vaccination mark. "You have five minutes to explain before I send the good Watson for Inspector Lastrade."

Explain? How was I to explain to the Great Detective that his parlor was the back door to hell? It would offend his sense of propriety at least. But if I told him that I came from the future, the partial truth, he might believe me. If I elaborated -- told him that I was dead, had fallen from grace mysteriously, was conducted to the presence of an archdemon, had talked my way out of it, and appeared in his rooms it would be fantastic. I came right to the point. "I am from the future."

"Go on."

"From over a hundred years in the future."

"Go on."

"I don't know how, though. I don't know how to get back either."

"I didn't mean 'continue with your fabrication', I meant 'I want the truth'. But I'll wager that you're an American, if I judge your accent right." Holmes drew his pipe from his dressing gown and struck a match. Shag tobacco began to consume itself odoriferously.

"I must have travelled in space as well as time." An air-tight case it wasn't, but --

"It fits the facts!" Holmes burst out. "Your sudden appearance is otherwise inexplicable, and there are numerous recorded instances of unexplained disappearances and subsequent returns, strange journeys out of the body, and psychic experiences that cannot be dismissed by skeptics." He looked pleased with himself, wreathed in tobacco fumes.

"Then you believe me," I said. I knew I could count on the great deductive powers of the world's most famous detective to arrive at the truth.

"Of course not. Poppycock!" cried Holmes.

Watson echoes, "Utter balderdash!"

"Your story does not in the slightest go toward explaining why you have recently been in Central East Africa, why you have been disinherited from your father's estate, nor that you have only minutes ago been firing a boiler!"

I was flabbergasted, and could only say, "Huh?"

"It is also quite plainly evident that you are unaccustomed to heavy labour, and that

your normal occupation is in the performing arts, most like an operatic tenor. Shall I go on Watson?"

"By all means Holmes. Capital! Capital!"

"While in Wiltshire you were initiated into a secret pagan cult believing in human sacrifice, and you have made a special study of Cynic philosophy at the University of Chicago. You have learned to eat with chopsticks from a Thai, and practice vegetarianism, yet you have not had time for breakfast today. And, dear me, you are wanted by the police! You are allergic to --"

"Wait a minute!" I interrupted. "How on Earth did you deduce such a fantastic catalog of speculations? I know your methods, but replay it for me like I was a simpleton." This seemed to be the moment that Holmes was waiting for. Watson had already settled down into the bid anti-macassared chair, and the Great Detective commanded the center of the room.

"Elementary, my dear ... er, stranger. It is a simple matter of observation. The eye sees a thread out of place. For the unobservant, it is merely a thread out of place, and as natural and guileless as a bird in the sky. But for the trained observer, a thread out of place is a thread no longer where it belongs, and must be accounted for."

"Bully, Holmes, bully!" broke in Watson, all but clapping his hands in admiration. "Tell him about the mind instructing the eye what to seek."

"Pray, contain yourself, Watson. Do you deny that you have been scarred by smallpox, which is currently raging only in the Sudan?" He pointed with his pipe at my vaccination scar, a look of triumph on his face. "You are also pale, indicating a prolonged stay indoors. Or underground, which isn't likely, therefore you were in convalescence. Your speech is educated, and low born men only travel in arms. Hence you are or were once at least moderately provided for, though you are too young to have accumulated much wealth yourself. You are plainly dressed **moreover**, and have no signs of wealth about you. It is obvious that your wealth is not your own, and that you have recently been deprived of it. You have been deprived of other indispensable items of a gentleman as well. You have no purse or keys in your flat pants pockets. So you have been robbed, but have not yet been to the police. Instead, you came here, so it is obvious that you cannot turn to the law for help. It **suggests strongly that you have reason** to fear for your liberty. The plain clothing that I have already remarked upon is remarkable for still another reason. It is uniformly white, a druidical practice surviving in the debased witchcraft cult of which I have no doubt you are a member. Do you see my line of reasoning?"

"Uh huh," I said, beginning to enjoy myself almost as much as Holmes. "Anything else?"

He puffed himself up a bit more and continued, "Your clothing is also stained by sweat though it is not in the least warm outside. At the same time I perceive ash and grit on your shoes which comes from no part of London or its surrounds. I've made a study of soil types, and can make a confident claim that that ash conforms to no type to be found within a radius of a hundred miles of this apartment."

True, as far as that goes, I thought.

"Instead, you have grimed your shoes with the residue of a furnace or boiler! Or else," his eyes gleamed with the absurdity of a sudden thought, "you have trudged up to my abode from Hell itself."

Wouldn't he have liked to know ...

"What have I forgotten?"

"Cynic philosophy," I suggested.

"And the eating with chopsticks, Holmes, tell him about the eating with chopsticks!"

"Of course, Watson. Your hands tell the story. They are not calloused, stained, or deformed in any way -- very uninteresting hands, those -- but there is a slight depression of the right index finger and thumb caused by the habitual handling of a thin,

lengthy object or objects. Since I see your teeth are regular and without caries, I deduce that you are a vegetarian, and you observe an oriental diet. Chopsticks immediately suggest themselves as the tools used by a man with no trade, but the depressions are not consistent with the correct manner of manipulation. You were taught, therefore, by someone inexperienced with the correct use of chopsticks himself, most likely a Thai, but possibly an Indonesian or other degenerate Asian. Small matter. The indentations on your fingers might possibly have been caused by a pen or pencil, but we have already established that you cannot be a clerk. Since you are in a partial state of undress -- your collar is open, you have neglected your vest, coat, and hat -- I infer that you were in haste. It was unlikely that you would stop to breakfast, but not dress properly before calling. Oh, hum. Cynic philosophy? Your hair is unfashionably long as befits a student of the natural life of the Cynics. And the University of Chicago would be the nearest large center of education available to someone speaking so well developed a midwestern American dialect. I think that's all, isn't it Watson? No? Oh, yes, he is obviously unaccustomed to labour, hence he is most likely a performing artist. A singer, I would think, judging by the formation of his throat, and a tenor to my ear."

"What a load of bullshit!"

"I-beg-your-pardon?" Holmes spaced out the words in shock. Double shock that I should speak so crudely as well as contradict him. Watson's mouth hung open.

"None of that is true. This is how we dress in the future, it was ... um, hot in America when I left, and that isn't a smallpox scar, it's a vaccination mark."

"Like Jenner's ineffectual treatment for cowpox? Come now! You've been exposed, now you must tell the truth. If you won't come to the point of your visit, I must ask you to leave. We were waiting for important developments in our latest case when you arrived."

"What conceivable explanation for my appearance here could incorporate all those absurd lies and possibly be more believable than my travelling back through time? I can't imagine one!" I couldn't, but Holmes could.

Possessed of himself again, he nonchalantly tamped his pipe with a souvenir Jezail bullet picked up by Watson many years earlier in Afghanistan. "I have no doubt you were dispossessed as a result of your father's discovery that you had been inducted into a druidical cult while in Britain. Cut off without a penny of inheritance or allowance, you were unable to return to America from your African vacation to complete your studies in philosophy in Chicago. You had only recently earned enough money by singing tenor for a small opera company performing in Nairobi to return to London, when you realized that you were wanted by the police for your involvement in a cult responsible for bloody human sacrifices committed in your absence. Fearing apprehension at any moment, you hid in the basement of this building, where you fired the furnace to avoid suspicion. Then you entered this apartment through the heating shaft to avoid being observed by the men you took for detectives posted outside watching my premises. You seek my help to clear you of the unjust charges brought against you, and re-establish your reputation with your father. Am I correct?"

"Not by a mile."

"Some trifling inaccuracy then?" Holmes persisted, nettled and chewing the end of his pipe.

"I come from the future."

"OUT!!" screamed the Great Detective. And so I left, with the assistance of the Good Watson applied to the seat of my pants and the scruff of my neck.

With the door slammed behind me, I had no choice but to take the stairs down to the entrance and let myself out of 221B Baker Street. The night was dark and foggy and smelled of sewage and oil. A great night for Lon Chaney Jr. Holmes was right about the men watching his room from the street. I saw about a half dozen in the gloom. They didn't look like plainclothes police to me, so I left quickly. Not before I joggled something one figure standing in a darkened doorway was aiming at 221B.

But it went, and the man swore at me as a window on the third floor exploded into shards of glass. The bust of Holmes sat impervious, silhouetted in a second storey window. But this was none of my business.

Sanctuary, when I found it, was a night hostel for men and lice. I'd never had lice before, and didn't want 'em then, but they came with the place like the watery soup and greasy bed. It cost a ha'penny, which I didn't have, so I had to mop the floor around the urinal trough. Hell wasn't this bad. At least I wasn't out in the streets though, with Spring Heeled Jack, Leather Apron, and other human monsters that excited the hostel gossips. I thought a great deal while mopping. Sherlock Holmes was an imaginary person, so how did I come to meet the flesh and blood personification of Conan Doyle's great creation? Did that mean that Conan Doyle did not exist? What other fictional characters could I expect to meet if I had poor enough luck? Frankenstein? There were no answers, so I put my last dregs of energy into cleaning the spot behind the trough that everyone else evidently neglected, and collapsed into bed with the lice. I slept soundly; scratched unconsciously. Woke up in the morning and asked where I could find a job. I had formulated plans to make the best of the bad situation.

It was a situation, after all, that I had been made familiar with in my mortal life, through any number of science fiction stories about time travellers trapped in the past. What SF fan wouldn't envy my opportunities? One of the many options available was to make good in the past by capitalizing on knowledge of the future. I could sell military secrets far more potent than fixed bayonets and slow lead slugs, reveal miracles of medical science that could cure thousands, play the stock market, or give wise counsel to the combined European heads of state. I could take my choice. But first I would have to have proof of my anachronic origin. Some little device that would prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that I had knowledge entrusted to no contemporary. A few inches of optic fibre. A transistor. A fission device. I couldn't make those particular choice wonders, but I could sketch them, explain their principles. Perhaps I could even anticipate Einstein and become the Father of Relativity myself! Think of how advanced science would be in the 20th century if the 19th is given a head start! The first item on the agenda, however, was to find work, and save money enough to look more respectable. Without making allowances for the prejudices of the Victorian order, I could wave plans for an anti-gravity generator or a mind-over-matter machine and not be paid any attention to. Unless I came properly attired for a gentleman of scientific persuasion, I would be thrown off the grounds of any university I cared to show up on.

Finding a job wasn't hard. Finding a good job was. My talents were unsuited to most decent professions, and the indecent ones were unsuited to me. I beat the pavement for two days, returning to the lice and mop each night, before I found a match between my talents and rapidly diminishing fastidiousness. My previous experience made me eminently qualified for the position I applied for. Bright and early on the third morning I began cleaning the stables of the Robb Hansom Co., a small concern of four horse drawn cabs and enough horse shit to give Hercules a backache. It wasn't dignified, but it paid 5s. 2½p, just enough to move from the hostel to a small dingy room in Miller's Court that was dirtier but at least private. But it wasn't enough to save for a better cut of clothes. The class system perpetuated itself in myriad ways -- low wages probably being the most effective at preventing the lower classes from bettering themselves if somehow they ever got the notion. About a week after starting work I was still wearing my celestial whites -- now a grimy umber colour -- when I heard a scream out in the court one night about two hours before dawn. Next day the cops were crawling all over the place, questioning suspects. I moved back to the hostel when I read in the papers of the grisly deed that had been committed yards from where I slept, in a ground floor room very much like mine.

In about three months at the hostel I had saved enough for a worn suit and homburg, shoes a little down at the heel, and the fare to the nearest seat of higher learning. It hadn't been easy. To save on the cost of a razor and lather I grew a beard which made me look more professorial in any event. I couldn't have kept personal items except on my person anyhow; they would be stolen while I slept, just as my first pair of shoes were stolen one night after I had improvidently removed them to sleep. No doubt

I stood out, though I kept my distance from others, and was more of a target because of it. However dirty, white everlasting shoes attract envy. Fortunately I found them on the feet of a bum a few beds away and confiscated them. There were few things to distract me from my thrift. Gambling was not allowed in the hostel, and wasn't safe in the streets. One look at the whores of Whitechapel was like a cold shower. There was little else a man with only a couple of pennies in his pocket could afford, except gin and the brief rental of a glass to drink it from. I didn't fancy it. To save the customary fee for the night, I even continued to mop the loo until it dawned on the keepers that I had money to be fleeced of. I felt virtuous and confident of the positive outcome of my adventure.

On the morning that I was to step out of the grime and squalor of the London slums, I went to the stable as usual. I kept my better clothes there, and changed, bathed with real soap I had bought the day before, shaved my beard with a new razor, and tendered my resignation.

"Aye, an is bein' a shame a young man like you should be a leavin' such a promisin' career," Mr. Robb said to me. "Never ha' I seen a man so imminently suited to his job as you me son. If you ever be a needin' work agin, the Robb Hansom Company is always in need a men who are a knowin' ha to handle manure." And with that recommendation, I hired one of the competitor's cabs and sped away, thinking I'd never need Old Man Robb's pennies or his shovel again. It was the worst luck that I didn't notice the tall, villainous looking figure lurking outside the stable as Robb swore at me. He must have begun questioning the cab operator as soon as I was out of sight.

The great colleges of the University of London are mostly in Kensington. The Royal College of Sciences was no exception, and that was my destination. I applied at the office of the dean for the help of a specialist in a scientific matter. The dean was skeptical -- I wasn't wholly presentable in my second hand togs, and he demanded I expand upon my problem. As a long time reader of science fiction, it was easy for me to baffle him with convincing but outrageous pseudo-science. He offered to introduce me to a number of respected members of the faculty, including a Professor Challenger and a Dr. Jekyll. I passed them both up and opted for the harmless sounding academic whose name I presently forgot. There was a Dr. Moriarty enrolled on the staff, but I disdained to be involved with any individuals named Moriarty just then. Mr. _____, moreover, was keenly interested in theories of time and space, the dean mentioned, and would likely listen to me most closely on any matters of a physical nature. He sounded like my man.

Mr. _____ welcomed me warmly, and offered brandy, the first alcohol I'd had in weeks that wouldn't foul a fuel line. From the beginning he did most of the talking, starting with an elaborate apology that he couldn't show me his experimental apparatus, which he had constructed in the workshop of his own home. I enquired politely about this 19th century prodigy, expecting to be regaled with explanations of phlogiston machines, of the measurement of the luminiferous aether, or perhaps even of the orbital mechanics of the planet Vulcan thought to lie between the orbit of Mercury and the Sun. All very exciting issues of 19th century science, I supposed. Surprisingly, he was evasive. Whatever the exact nature of his extracurricular studies, I could only grasp that they had to do with the behaviour of time. If that was the case, I thought, Mr. Whosis would be eminently receptive to some elementary relativity.

"I am an amateur speculator," I began, "dabbling in physics, and I've had a number of notions I wish to try on an educated ear, perhaps leading to some research and verification along lines I could suggest."

"I am self-educated myself," said Mr. _____. "If you have discovered basic new physical principles, I would be delighted to be of every assistance to you in bringing them to the attention of the scientific establishment. I am well aware of the skepticism and obduracy of the entrenched view of some of my colleagues. In my own modest endeavours, I have not yet convinced ... well, never mind that. I am here to listen to your ideas, not you to mine. Have a cigarette?"

"No thanks," I answered. I couldn't afford the addiction and had gone through one withdrawal already. Noticing a small toy rather like a gyroscope near the cigarette case

as he waved his hand that way, I asked about it on impulse. His gesture had seemed something of a Freudian slip.

"That is a model of ... my apparatus. See, here, the seat for the passenger. The dials set ..." He reconsidered, then said, "No, you wouldn't be interested. At another time, perhaps."

Thinking to myself, here goes, I launched into the basic tenets of Special Relativity. He picked my theory to shreds in no time. "It's very well," he said, "to say that the measurement of the length of an object is shortened in the direction of its travel by a ratio commensurate with its velocity -- it's an ingenious interpretation of the failure to detect the motion of the Earth in respect to the aether -- but don't you see that this is electro-dynamically infeasible?"

"How so," I asked, with a sinking feeling that I was way out of my depth.

"In several ways! If you compress an electromagnetic field as you suggest, you alter both the electric and magnetic components so that they don't satisfy Maxwell's equations. Here ..." And he took a piece of chalk and filled a blackboard with alphabet soup, punctuated by Greek symbols and the sort of chicken scratches that signify the frighteningly abstruse kind of calculus that ruins lives and blasts careers. "Not only that," he went on, "but I'm afraid that your suggestion about the Doppler-like shift of the wavelength of light presupposes that light is a wave-form, and while this is permitted by Dr. Maxwell's equations, it is not consistent with the bulk of experimental research at present. How do you suppose to support your conjecture, and reconcile it with proof that light behaves as if it were a stream of particulate matter?" Well, Einstein did it, but I was damned if I knew how.

Attempting to explain quantum mechanics got me only deeper. After a half hour of vain attempts to enlighten the 19th century world it was obvious that all I had shown was the extent of my own ignorance of the 20th. I had proven myself a crank. As if I needed the aggravation, Mr. _____ explained his own radical ideas at last, no doubt meant as a kindness. He fooled around with his toy, and loaded it with cigarettes for a demonstration. And he thought I was a crank? I was right! Best of luck on your silly time-machine, I thought, as I left his office.

Out of the corner of my eye, before the door closed behind me, I noticed that the model was gone and the cigarettes too.

My next attempt to astound the world would take money. Unfortunately, I had burned the Augean stables behind me, to mix some mythological metaphors. In better clothes, however, I managed to find a somewhat better job, stoking a furnace to heat agricultural gardens in Kensington where I could stay near the university. I was moving hot air, instead of shovelling shit. That should mean something, but I don't like to dwell on it. At 7s., I figured it would take another 10 weeks to save and buy the materials I'd need for the next step. Nothing of interest happened in any of those 70 days, except the one time a lopsided dandy strolled through the gardens with a tiny little girl in hand. He told her stories and made up rhymes that confused even me. This was of note only because I later learned that they had been found murdered in the neighbouring park, bled to death by a maniac who nevertheless took care that not a drop was spilled. I had to get out of there ... The ten weeks were not over soon enough to please me.

The first problem that confronted me was that while I knew in general how many things were made, when it came to specifics I was usually lost. Just how do you make a computer or a telephone if you don't go to Radio Shack for the parts? Sure, a lightbulb is a simple concept, but where do you get evacuated glass vessels, refined tungsten drawn in microscopically thin coils, and electricity for that matter? Well, I wouldn't astound the world with a lightbulb in any case. A lightbulb was possible to make, and I knew someone was busy trying to do just that. Thomas Alva Edison was not in the least hesitant to sue anyone who he thought had robbed him of one of his inventions, either. Which I would have; a priori. I settled on constructing a laser, remembering all those articles in the Amateur Scientist column of Scientific American that I'd read that taught how to make lasers from jello and tin-foil. Just like Lex Luthor making a

leach-ray in prison from orange juice cans and a flashlight. Then I'd astound the world, and maybe undermine the edifice of Maxwellian electrodynamics that was holding up my introduction of Relativity. There was no need to hurry. It was 1891, and Dr. Einstein would take care of that little detail in only 11 more years.

I hadn't realized how antique a world it was when the foundations of modern science were laid. Theorists had thought their ideas were totally abstract, and would never be proved in a laboratory. And yet most of the mathematics and principles that Einstein would pull together a few years later already existed. At this moment he was preparing his first paper on electroluminescence in a gas-lit Swiss patent office.

Yesterday, I read in the paper that a barber on Fleet Street had been cutting his customers' throats, and his accomplice had baked the bodies in meat pies ...

At the end of the ten weeks I had my laser, and it worked! I had solved the electricity problem with batteries, obviously, and this was the most serious limitation of the system. One discharge of the laser would drain the batteries, which were then useless until I'd built up their charge again using a hand generator. Even so, they were ruined after a number of discharges. Instead of buying new batteries I was able to replace the plates myself, less expensively, and add new acid. The landlord of the new room I'd taken frequently tapped his forehead with his finger when I came in with fresh equipment, and must have wondered what I would be doing with such unusual quantities of vitriol. The constant reportage of one atrocity after another in the papers must have made 19th century Londoners a suspicious people.

The construction wasn't difficult, and you can probably imagine most of it yourself. A mirror at one end, a partially silvered glass at the other end. This I made using some of the same acid that I used to replenish the batteries with to remove some of the silver from another cheap mirror. Ordinary food colouring or dye would do as the lasering medium, but finding the right dye took another three weeks and 116 samples before I found one that would work. Adjusting the end mirrors to the proper multiple of the operant wavelength was the most difficult part of the work. The mirrors mounted at either end of the lasering cavity on wooden frames in a slide could be moved infinitesimally forward or backward by giving a screw a tiny fraction of a turn. That I was working with an invisible, infra-red beam was not at all helpful. At first I used photographic plates to register the beam, but this was prohibitively expensive, even though I was recently given a raise of six-pence a week. (And did I ever remember at those times when I used to make \$270 a week!) Then I discovered that plain flash powder I found in the same photo supply shop would do the job much cheaper. Poof! ... and you know you were getting laser action.

With all the smells and the strange sounds that often culminated in flashes of light seen under the door-sill, the landlord had a cop with a warrant come to search my room. Then he evicted me for performing dangerous experiments on the premises. The cop took a very dim view of the large number of empty carboys of sulphuric acid, but could find no evidence of mis-use and was plainly disappointed by what he felt was a dereliction of his duty to take me in on some opportune charge. To make matters worse, the shadowy figure I had missed seeing at Robb's stablery had traced me to my room. I saw him lurking about the street until he could talk to the landlord, who courteously gave him an earful. Just as well that I was leaving in the morning, I thought, now that I knew I was being followed.

Whoever it was had been given the slip, at least for the time being, because I didn't see him again while rooming in my new quarters. I'd quite my job again so he couldn't trace me through that angle. (I was sure I had a dangerous gang of criminals on my trail who were thirsting to revenge themselves upon me for thwarting their plans. I regreted that I ever saw the thug outside Holmes window with the blow-pipe.) 1905 was obviously even less a reasonable target date for astounding the world that I'd ever thought. But I had my laser, a functioning stfnal laser! Now all I needed was an opportunity to expose this example of the superscience at my fingertips to those who would appreciate it. The fleeting thought that I might impale threatening shadowy figures with my laser was also an ignoble one, and moreover impossible. I could defend myself better with a

matchstick.

My opportunity came during a scientific conference only a few days after I'd relocated. It was an invitational affair held in one of the professors' homes, but I'd hoped that I'd be recognized by Mr. Whatsisname and not be thrown out immediately. Unfortunately, if Mr. Whoever was there, he never had a chance to see me. I was thrown out of the foyer twice -- the second time by a uniformed cop -- without seeing a single professor. Fortunately the professors refrained from pressing charges, and I was released the next morning. One of them, in fact, came to the station house to order my release, and overwhelmed with curiosity asked why it was so important for me to crash his conference and what the bulky satchels I'd carried with me contained. He'd already been satisfied by the police that they'd not contained bombs or guns with which to assassinate the scientific brains of the Empire.

"It was a device," I took advantage of the opening, "to collect rays of light and project them in a beam that can be used either as a scientific tool or as a weapon."

"You mean a sort of heliograph, or the reflecting shields of Archimedes that destroyed a Roman fleet? I'm afraid that that has already been thought of, and while no doubt your model works -- I wouldn't dream of doubting your word -- it has no practical application to which it has not already been put to use. There are constraints, you see, constraints ... on size of mirror because of its own weight, and the difficulty of grinding, bringing it to bear, it would be like a very large telescope, or a series of telescopes, and not very effective at all, no not at all..." I thought he would mander forever, tacking clause after clause on in an interminable sentence, but he wound down like an old clock.

"No," I said, "a new principle, that doesn't reflect sunlight. It's a source of light itself, and projects a beam of only one colour, in parallel rays so that the destructive energy is concentrated on one spot. It doesn't decrease in intensity inversely with the square of the distance either."

"Oh, come, come ... but a parabolic reflector would do that, if it were perfectly formed, wouldn't it. You said it didn't reflect though. I suppose I must let you make a demonstration if I'm to understand what you mean. We'll get your valises from the constable at the desk and see how it works if you'll be so kind as to allow me to give you a ride home. My home, of course." He laughed with embarrassment, guessing that my own domicile would be less than a gentleman's. I agreed. He picked up my luggage from the desk and the professor hailed a cab to take us back to Kensington. I had it made.

A couple of hours later I was ready to make my demonstration. The laser sprawled across the professor's drawing room floor, cables snaking from one component to another, the dye container looking harmless in the middle of it all. Even with two large valises to pack it in, it was a tight squeeze for my home made laser. Only two of the batteries and none of the acid or replacement plates had made the trip from my own "lab" via the police station to this one. The lasering cavity had already been tuned, however, so no test shots should have been necessary. The two or three pulses I could produce on only two batteries would be quite enough, I thought. "I'm ready professor," I said, "watch the far end of the glass tube. That's where the light beam will emerge."

He watched with interest as the invisible beam pulsed forth.

"Well, when do you begin?" he asked. But I had begun. One down, and two to go ...

"You can't see the beam," I explained.

"Oh?"

"It's too far down in the infra-red for it to register on the human eye." That did sound a little lame, didn't it? But I was prepared to show that something was there, even if the eye couldn't see it. I set up a pinch of flash powder in line with the tube a foot from the semi-reflecting mirror. The power of the beam was so low that at greater distances it was too attenuated to set off the flash. Since the capacitor had already recharged from the still fresh batteries, I let 'er rip a second time. The flash powder burst into light at the flick of the beam, and when the stars faded from the pro-

essor's dazzled sight I was standing in triumphant pose, ready to start a new era of 19th century science.

Instead of congratulating me for my stupendous discovery he eyed my battery and capacitor assembly with suspicion. "Can you do that once more," he said, and I said I could. The batteries were almost dead, and needed charging before they could spare electrons for the capacitor. While I cranked the hand generator I wondered to myself what it would take to convince the professor? Twice now I had produced a beam of monochromatic light, once made it visible to his insensitive eyes, and yet he was still skeptical. But that was well and proper, wasn't it, the scientific skepticism? The third time would leave him no alternative but to accept that an unknown phenomenon had been demonstrated in his presence. Naturally, he might still distrust my explanation, but I had supported incredible ideas with demonstrable action, and the scientific establishment would be forced to look for ways to prove my theories itself, or else abdicate its role as interpreter of the physical universe.

This time I took no chances and replaced the flash powder with a tiny square of fine silk cloth for a more revealing if less dramatic demonstration. I would burn a hole in it, or singe it at least, just as I'd singed a spot on my shirt sleeve one time when I was more than usually careless. It was two down, and one to go.

"I'm ready, Mr. Kline, are you ready yet?" I looked at the foil leaves atop the capacitor. I said I was, and made the connection. No flash this time -- I expected only the smell of burning fibre and a dark brown spot on the cloth about the size of a cigarette burn. Then the 19th century would begin anew ...

Instead, the professor stuck his chemical calloused hand in the path of the beam, and nothing happened at all.

"Ah, I thought so," said the learned no-good buttinsky. "I'm sorry to say that your device is no more than a sort of spark generator, at most a machien of the kind that Hertz built, and it is sparks that are causing your flash powder and handkerchiefs to burn. An Italian, the name of Marconi I understand, is working on apparatus to study the generation of sparks at a distance, and it is remotely possible that your invention works on the same principle. But it is quite as likely to be a simple spark generator I'm afraid. It would have to be disassem --"

"This is not a goddamn radio," I sputtered. He looked at me kindly, but in my frustration his kindliness looked more like a supercilious sneer. In fact, he must have been quite tolerant of what should have appeared to a Victorian gentleman as common impertinence.

"Radio," he said, "an Italian word. Ah, I see that you are familiar with this Marconi then. But no, I don't mean to suggest that you have plagiarized ... that is, imitated ... no, rather I think that you have accidentally paralleled his research and misunderstood the significance of your success. Look, look here." The professor bent down to squint at the emitting mirror. (I thought briefly of burning a patch of his retina blind, but the batteries were drained.) "All this, these mirrors and the fluid inside do nothing at all. Why, I don't see how you could have been generating Hertzian waves at all. It just makes sparks. Dear me, if you had removed all this claptrap you might have shot sparks further. I was certain," he continued, as he straightened up, "that there was an electrical explanation at bottom, the excessive voltage needed for your device's operations strongly suggested that, and when my hand blocked the effect I knew I had guessed right. I believe I even felt the spark strike my skin, yes, it has singed the hairs on the back of my hand, my word, I wonder if I shouldn't have some ointment.."

"My batteries are dead!"

"I beg your pardon?"

"My batteries are dead, you jerk! And you drained them of their last discharge by sticking your fucking hand in front of the laser! How purblind and dimwitted can a supposed scientist get --" I'm afraid I reacted badly after that. The sequel is so predictable that I don't imagine there's any point in setting it out in print. The least

I can say is that I left the station the next morning, this time without my bags, which had been confiscated as "dangerous incendiary material". Three strikes and I was out.

The next morning went no better. More weeks went by, earning money for a new laser, but for some reason I could never fathom it refused to work. Before I could hit upon the fortuitous configuration that caused the first to work, the police warned me about incendiaries again. Then my supplier wouldn't sell me more acid without an explanation of its use he would believe. So I decided to make an electric motor, based on my hours of experience re-winding armatures for the HO trains I used to run in my basement. I figured that if I couldn't revolutionize science then I would make a million dollars (or pounds). No-one seemed impressed by my crude fist sized motors, though. They wouldn't have run a slot-car -- they were so weak that they couldn't pull their own excessive weight. Moreover, I'd forgotten that with public electricity a ways off in the future still, financiers would not see the same bright vision of electrically run factories that I could. Ultimately I sold my prototypes to some sharpie who, after fencing with lawyers I could hardly afford, ended up with complete possession of the rights and property of the Kline General Electric Motor Company. As far as I know, K.G.E.M. Co. never did become a major power in industry, though I heard that they had shortened the name since I lost control. I have that satisfaction at least ...

All through this effort I also invested what was left of my pitiful wages in stocks and bonds, but it's amazing how deficient the average science fiction fan is in his knowledge of the history of business. I recognized a few names in the stock exchange, but for the most part there was nothing in the papers but page after page of companies I'd never heard of, whose future success or failure was as much a mystery to me as it was to any other investor. I bought a few shares in the future giants of oil, pharmaceuticals, and steel, insofar as they existed at so early a date, and insofar as I could afford their stock. Had I waited until World War One I would have become a millionaire many times over. As it was, the only thing I acquired of value in the 19th century was one original drawing by Aubrey Beardsley. It subsequently became worthless because it had disappeared with the owner, was therefore unknown, and of course couldn't be authenticated. I had little need for riches by that time anyway, but I don't want to get ahead of my story.

I had spent at least 6 months in the 19th century when I decided to forestall events instead of make a million dollars. I foretold the Boer War, WW I, the assassination of McKinley and Roosevelt's accession to the American presidency, the sinking of the Russian fleet at Tsushima, Halley's Comet, Sitting Bull's murder, the Wright brothers, Rasputin and Bolshevism, the Klondike gold rush, the Boxer rebellion, the death of Scott in the Antarctic, and dozens of other spectacular historical events that would come true and prove my amazing predictive powers. By 1914 I would be irrefutable. But by the end of 1891 the only event that I had predicted and had come true yet was Sitting Bull's murder, and my pamphlets sold like dead rats in the streets of London. I lost my job grinding sausage meat on the grounds that I no longer had the comportment and respectability of a man in so responsible a public trust -- in other words, I was making a fool of myself and bringing shame to the firm's name. Finally, jobless, I was reduced to telling fortunes in Hyde Park. I wasn't very good. "Tell me if I'll meet a tall dark stranger," a dowager would ask. All I could say was something like, "Er, sorry, Ma'am, but for the sake of your great grandchildren, don't emigrate to Northern Ireland." "I wasn't thinking of moving to Northern Ireland," she'd say, and I'd reply, "Good." That sort of thing was all I could manage. It was all useful advice, but no-one seemed happy with it.

Several times since I last saw him, I was followed by a stealthy figure. I managed to pull up stakes and get lost again every time. Since I was now jobless other than itinerant fortune-telling, and too notorious as a crackpot to find employment, I slept in the hostels again. Under the circumstances, pulling up stakes was easy. The drawback was that I had lice again, and my clothes lost whatever respectability that once had from constant wear and no washing. I regret to say that I was blending in with the proletariat, taking to cheap gin and beginning to eye the equally cheap whores speculatively. Every day I earned a few pennies and waited patiently for the day when I would

be rich and famous, just as I suppose everyone does to get them through their lives. In my case, I knew the future wouldn't forsake me. For them it was just faith that tomorrow would be different, and you could see it in their private desperation. So why was I shaking just as much as the undestined labourers and destitutes around me until I got my morning's first drink?

I guess I must have been drunk the night that I tried to break into the police station that confiscated my laser and try to use it to burn down the Tower of London. That's what I think I intended to do, for of course I never left the station with it. It wasn't, in fact, even the right station that I'd broken into, but merely the nearest to the tavern where I'd spent my day's pennies in absolution. The police doctor who interrogated me said I had been raving about weapons of destruction that could level a city in one blow, about harnessing the sun's power to drive giant steel ships under the north pole, about hundred storey buildings housing millions who never had to set foot outside, and machine slaves that would claim the planets for American homesteaders (who were only then still having trouble wresting New Mexico from the Apaches.)

It was incomprehensible to everyone. Although the doctor was understanding, he said that for the while I'd have to remain under care -- I was obviously suffering delusions, perhaps compounded by malnutrition and advanced alcoholism. And I'd had a record of arrests and suspicious behaviour. Had I not been a public charge, I might have had a private doctor, but under the circumstances admittance to a city ward was the best I could expect. Just like that I was in Bedlam. Committed as insane.

Spending a week in a 19th century insane asylum is not a mind-expanding experience. I began looking back fondly on hell, where you could at least feel self-respect for deserving everything happening to you. Here, everything was calculated to drive you crazy if you weren't to begin with. By the seventh day I belonged where I was, and even if gold was found in the Yukon and even if the Archduke Ferdinand was shot in Sarajevo, I didn't think I was ever going to leave. "Nuts foretell the future all the time; that's how you know they're nuts," the attendants said. ... if anyone paid attention at all.

But just as I was beginning to look forward to the daily meal of greasy bread and lentil porridge, a man arrived asking for me. I hadn't actually become fond of the place yet, but knowing who must have come to take me away I forced the attendants to subdue me before I could be removed from the crowded cell. They didn't use tranquilizers in the 1890's either, they just slugged me with fists and truncheons until I became co-operative. Terrified of the dark murderers who had at last found me in this desperate haven, I held on so that the attendants must have thought they'd have to kill me to get me to let go of the doorframe. The screaming woke up at least one catatonic. The last thing I remember before passing out was a sinister looking face peering down at me and saying, "Yes, that is the man I want. Release him into my custody and I'll take full responsibility. He won't be back, I can assure you ..."

When I awoke, I expected to be dead. But that was silly, wasn't it? Wasn't I already dead, my soul saved and gone to heaven? Still dazed, I recoiled at the thought -- I had fallen! I was still in hell, sleeping in a pit with bums with reeking breath and wine-sores, laughing maniacs, human vegetables, and Big Name Fans who waved razors and crooned to their only friends. Kindly professors were stretched over drums and cranked. Sherlock Holmes ... No, wait, a face leered down at me. My vision began to clear.

"Holmes!"

"Yes, my good fellow, and a jolly good chase you gave me for half a year all over London. Not even my shrewdest enemies have ever eluded me for so long ..."

"You are a lucky man, Mr. Kline, lucky indeed." It was Watson too. "Had you never been admitted to Bethlehem for medical assistance, you might have performed all manner of irresponsible acts and might still be at large, an unhappy and ill man. You would come to harm eventually, I've no doubt. The medical profession has earned your gratitude."

"Hush Watson."

"Holmes --?"

"Have I ever told you that you prattle?"

But Watson was right, in a sense. Had I not been nailed down to one place, I might have gone on moving from one dingy boarding room to another until Holmes had given up, and I might very well have spent the rest of my life, if I had a mortal life here, waiting for Tomorrow. I have since thought back and realized that the Great Detective may have saved me from falling in the mud of Passchendaele or from some other nemesis in wait for the unwary time-traveller. What had happened is that Holmes' great powers of observation had noted that though I had a smallpox scar, it was odd that I hadn't scars all over my face as is usually the case with victims of a disease currently ravaging the Sudan. If that supposition was not true, his thoughts ran, then possibly he had erred on one or two other particulars as well. Had I not denied his allegations? Moreover, what was the strange object he had found while searching through the intruder's pockets. Dr. Watson had badly singed his mustache when a three-inch long flame shot out of it, and a curious odour lingered that smelled like a gas-jet, but not quite the same. The clincher, however, was the silvery coin Holmes found, struck 1962. So I had come out of the future, the Great Detective concluded. And he had just thrown me out ... of ... his ...

"Great Scott, Watson!" he had cried. "After him quick! I'll never forgive myself if my client comes to harm --"

It was Holmes, of course, who trailed me to Robb's stable, who talked to my first landlord, and who chased me from slum to slum until he found me in London's historic asylum. He brought me back from Beckenham to Baker Street and waited patiently until I was back in my right mind, keeping Dr. Watson wisely at bay all the while. I slept for two days, woke once, and slept 12 hours more.

Next morning, I assured Holmes that I was strong enough to talk, and talk we did. I told him all that had happened from the day I popped up in his drawing room until I was tossed into Bedlam.

"You know, Mr. Kline -- next time you wish to escape detection you should change your name whenever you move. It is the easiest thing to follow a fugitive who reveals his true name wherever he goes -- at first it was merely the importance of your being a chrononaut that put me on your trail, but I quickly found more compelling reasons." This was unexpected. I asked him what he meant. "Did you notice the profusion of grotesque and violent episodes around you wherever you went?" My answer, that I took these for normal occurrences, apparently didn't flatter his pride in Victorian England. "It was when I investigated the bizarre murder of a dotty reverend and a little girl, unrelated it seems, that I connected the crime with your own proximity. You were employed stoking the furnace for the botanical gardens not a hundred yards from the spot where they were exsanguinated. The murderer, I discovered, is a well known freak of nature who drinks human blood, a count of a long line of European nobility who by all that's natural should have been dead long ago. But these are not the most astonishing facts about the murderer. To my surprise I could find nothing pertinent about the case until a remarkable volume was brought to my attention by one of my irregulars. The murderer is a character of fiction! Everything I have learned about him was set forth in a macabre tale of the supernatural written by a well-known author of sensationalist stories. I needn't name the man. He is blameless. Hounding your steps was case after bizarre case, each incapable of solution without reference to the pertinent work of fiction. I have no doubt that other impossible events of a more benign character than crime and violence must have followed your trail through our great city, but the nature of my work brings selected incidents to my attention, you must admit. And in their own way, charitable or harmless acts brought about by your person are just as dangerous!"

"Bully, Holmes!"

"Watson, will you please step out and find Inspector Lastrade like a good boy. Tell him that he won't be wanting to see you today."

"Oh, I say Holmes, you can rely on me," Watson replied. He waddled out the door as eagerly as his Jezail wound and flabby legs would let him, leaving Holmes and I alone

in the famous room. Instantly, the pained look I'd first noticed on his bust left Holmes' face. He drew soda from the gasogene in the corner and poured liberal amounts of good American whiskey in two glasses.

"I wish it were always as easy to be rid of that obsequious twit." He smiled without seeming grim for the first time I'd seen him. "We were discussing the greater implications of your predicament, were we not? As I said, your intrusion into my plane of existence appears to have somehow drawn all manner of impossible people and events into the breach after you. Like a tiny flaw in a highly stressed fabric, you are bringing about the destruction of reality as we know it!" With that crowning statement, he tossed off the remains of his whiskey and poured another. Then he brought me mine.

"But Mr. Holmes," I said. He tut-tutted and told me to call him Sherlock.

"Never could break Watson of that nasty British habit of reserve, even though we've been roommates for 12 or 13 years."

"But ... er ... Sherlock, you are a fictional character."

"Eh?" His colour drained, followed quickly by the contents of his second whiskey.

"When I was all ... in the future that is, I read some of your stories. Everybody did. They were written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and he never claimed that you were a real person. Many of the stories he wrote would have been flatly impossible."

"It does not seem possible. But, by Jove, you have already shown to my satisfaction that the impossible must be possible. ... reminds me of one of those maxims of mine that Watson is always parroting in those stories he writes. There's a thought!"

"Yeah?"

"Dr. Watson has a cousin, I believe, whose name might be Doyle. Just like one of Watson's family to affect a title. Do you suppose that he will eventually publish Watson's accounts in his name? I can't say that they are very accurate, and some are outright invention on the doctor's part."

"That's possible I suppose, but I don't think so."

"I must think this through." The Great Detective looked thoughtful, working the gasogene again. Then he strode two or three times around the room looking for his violin, which his great powers of deduction soon located under a collapsed pile of periodicals. "A Stradivarius, you know. It must be preserved carefully." One of the periodicals was a summer issue of The Strand Magazine, which should have contained a Holmes story, by all rights. I looked while Holmes played Bluegrass -- I swear! -- but there was nothing there. Pointing this out to the detective, he said, "No matter. I am satisfied that for my purposes I am real, and no doubt the anachronisms that you have brought into my reality are real in their own time and place. Which is where they must be returned if we are all to survive!"

"Swell, but how do we do it." I tapped my toe to the rhythm of the fiddle.

"I see ... I was rather hoping that, as a man from the future, you might have a solution." That was how it was.

In the end we could think of nothing more creative than moving the source of contagion; me. Holmes advanced the theory that the incidences of anachronism were increasing the longer I stayed in London, and that if we retreated to his family lands in Yorkshire we would have that much more time to think strategy.

As it happened, he was completely wrong, again.

London bustled about us normally as our train moved out from Paddington Station. But after a while the city was left behind, sooner, said Holmes, than it ought to have. Holmes was disquieted, and when I saw four children and a pixie fly out of a second storey window I knew too that we weren't escaping the reality-change. Instead, it got worse the further we went, exactly the opposite of what Holmes theorized. The breach in the fabric of space had a fixed location, probably the very spot in Holmes' parlor

where I'd materialized, and its effects radiated outward, apparently becoming more intense the further away from the breach we were. The effect was not centered on me after all. Whether or not the people around us were aware of the chaotic state of affairs or not wasn't clear, but plainly we would have to return to the comparative sanity of central London as soon as possible. It wouldn't be possible, however, until we had reached the end of the line, wherever that would take us.

As we rode, we saw a manor-house garden, which was nothing remarkable in itself, but playing cards in it were squabbling over croquet. A few minutes later, an armed group of knights on horseback were routed by the smoke and thunder of the iron dragon that pulled our car, inexplicably, through their joust. Holmes spotted a distant tripod marching away into the distance over some purple hills next, causing him to nearly choke on his pipe. From then on there was not even an appearance of rationality to the landscape. In the space of a minute or two, we saw a band of cartoonish Gauls, a beagle in a Sopwith Camel swoop down on us with machine guns blazing, a squalid village of grotesque hillbillies (with one stunning blonde exception), an ent forest on the march, five ducks in a pudgy car (one wearing a silk top hat), a troop of foot high fuzzy mid-gets with spears, a swamp full of talking alligators and skunks, a caped figure flying in the sky, a walking mannequin and a cricket, three oval-shaped craft knobbed with gun-blasters that cast mile-long shadows over us as they drifted overhead, a man on horseback who wore a stupid-looking Viking helmet with the horns turned forward (he attacked the train somewhere behind our car and I don't know what happened to him -- he may have been run over if the bump we felt was him), a squad of lizard-men in Nazi para-trooper fatigues chased by another troop of soldiers in plastic armour, a white woman with blue hair who wore a silver dress and shook her head disconsolately at the sight of us, a toad rowing a small boat most ineptly, a herd of three-legged animals with two heads that ran away, plus assorted centaurs, Tharks, Droogs, gods, ghosts, robots, and most of all things that neither Holmes nor I recognized. The car we were in began to waver like a detail in a dream that you never look closely at. When you turned, there were people and things there that you hadn't seen, but only while you looked. The man next to me, with four mechanical arms in addition to his own, was talking to a cowboy in a mask across the aisle, and made me nervous. I didn't remember boarding with him. But before he noticed my stare, my head swam. Then I seemed to remember having been on a train, not long ago, but it felt like Holmes and I had been sitting on the gritty downs for some time. Was this the end of the line?

Holmes was as slow to come around as I was. From somewhere a great red sun had risen. The landscape was low, scrubless, and rust coloured, like the dim sky. I thought the world had ended, and it nearly had. A crab Holmes mistook for a rock scuttled out of reach when he tapped the tobacco out of his pipe on it, telling me where we were. It was somewhere between 802,000 and 20,000,000 AD, according to Wells. Holmes was lucky the crab had chosen discretion to defense. It was nearly as big as a card table once hoisted up on its jointed legs, and could have taken one of the detective's legs off with a snap of its pincer.

"The strain on the fabric of reality was too much to bear the existence of a steam locomotive in this world, apparently. My conjecture was wrong, and I have brought us into desperate circumstances instead of safety. You have my most profound apologies."

"That makes me feel so much better," I replied, scuffing the toe of my shoe through the gravel and grit. "But what do we do now?"

"Do you think that maybe there is a habitation nearby where we can find food or shelter? I don't think I recall this situation from my limited acquaintance with imaginative literature. Surely though, if we hie over that nearby rise -- and away from these confounded shellfish," -- one had snatched the famous deerstalker from the famous head and crunched it up in its mandibles -- "we will leave this forsaken beach and be in some other world-time more amenable to us than this one at least..."

That made sense, so we trotted over the hill as quickly as the loose rubble underfoot would let us, pursued by hungry or curious crabs. What we found there made us about-face and return to the crabs. Holmes and I had come to the last extremity. The dis-

solution of reality had an arrow like entropy's -- events could only become more chaotic, and no going back. From the relative plausibility of crime-ridden London we had ridden through an increasingly improbable jumble of events until we were deposited in a dead-end situation. Beyond here was only a swirl of colours, sounds, textures, tastes, and shapes where solid matter was abolished and probabilities changed from moment to moment, from point to point. Pursuing our course further, we would no doubt cease to exist in any meaningful sense. The crabs gave us a warm welcome ...

Fortunately, the crabs were slow, ungraceful creatures who could be eluded easily. One of us would keep watch at all times while the other tried to grab a few winks of sleep. Three days of this watch-on-watch vigil reduced us to walking zombies, with little difference between our waking and sleeping states. The morning of the fourth day, as a sliver of muted red as long as your arm hung above low haze on the horizon, Holmes spoke to me. "Paul, I'm afraid that I have bad news for you. Though perhaps an end to our miserable existence here is good news actually."

"I may be asleep still, but lay it on me anyway. It won't make much difference."

It was this way. The area Mr. Wells' reality existed in couldn't have been much larger than 3 or 400 yards across. Holmes and I counted off the steps the first day we were trapped, still hoping to find an avenue to a more pleasant world. Holmes kept counting, day by day, and this morning he was sure that our tiny world was shrinking.

"Last night it was scarcely 500 feet in diameter. I don't like to think about how much it may have shrunk in the dark. I estimate that by this day next week we will be forced back to back by the shrinking circumference of our world."

"Swell. I'm allergic to shellfish anyway, and wasn't looking forward to our first experiment in cuisine-art." It was absurd. Looking out at the distant horizon and the swelling sliver of sun, it was impossible to believe that a minute's walk in any direction would cause this whole dying planet around us to vanish like a sudden fright. The situation begged not to be taken seriously. All I could think of was to end it all by walking to the end of the world and maybe changing into a giant chocolate sundae, or a shower of pixie dust. And then one silly thing after another forever. We both stared at the rising sun, speechless. Two or three times we picked ourselves up, left behind some crabs whose clattering armour gave away their attempts at stealth, slept fitfully, and tossed pebbles in the placid ocean. That was our day. Forty or fifty hours each. By nightfall, Holmes' pebbles weren't falling in the water anymore, they vanished in mid-air instead. But rather than comment, he just began dropping his stones a little closer to shore.

Next day was the same, and the next after that, except that chaos began so close around us that most of the crabs had blundered into it, or hadn't been able to escape its advance. Only the smaller, first-base sized and under, were left. This was just as well; they weren't half bad raw after several days fasting. According to Holmes, chocolate sundae-hood was maybe only 50 feet away in any direction, if we happened to be at the centre of contraction. ...he was by no means sure we were. Although the sun still glowered at us a hundred million miles away, reality was none too substantial anywhere about us. A dinosaur flickered in and out of existence two or three times, like bad radio reception, and thankfully never returned. The sound of sonic booms broke overhead once. It snowed, but never reached the ground where we sat. Twenty feet away, though, snow could be seen falling through the earth for another 10 feet or so. Something like a big sea urchin fell to the beach. Holmes and I could hear a baby cry inside, but nothing we could do would open the meteorite and it disappeared an hour or two later. We even saw Mr. Wish-I-could-remember-his-name riding in a scaled-up version of his toy, but only for an instant. I hadn't joked about my allergy to shellfish. In my fever and sleeplessness I began to wonder if the universe wasn't about to wink out of existence after all. I looked out at a tiny moonlet, a remnant of our once magnificent orb, and imagined that what I saw out there was real. Where I and Holmes sat was the unreality, and the universe was healing around the edges of the wound we caused.

Just before the fall of the eighth evening, with insubstantiality almost within a man's reach, a peculiar whirring sound broke the silence. Sparkling motes of light in several

man-sized columns gave us the first illumination that wasn't deep red in many days. It settled the one controversy Holmes and I had found to enliven our stay. The ash only seemed red, but was in fact a lively shade of grey.

The light-motes condensed into man-shapes. The man-shapes into men. Anathema. These men, they were the nemesis of the true science fiction reader, they were crewmen from the USS Enterprise. Holmes grabbed me by the sleeve and kept me from finding salvation as a chocolate sundae.

"Spock," said the one so familiar from Loblaws ads, "where's that Star Fleet base you said was here? You, ensigns, check out the area. Let's have a defense perimeter, and no fraternization with the natives this time." One ensign went left; the other went right. The one who went left said "uf", the other said "org", as they carried their spears into perpetually changing oblivion. To us, however, they only seemed to have vanished a few steps from where the landing party had appeared.

"Captain," cried Spock, "what an intriguing phenomenon. Would you mind ordering Lt. Sulu to step that way," -- he pointed straight ahead -- "so I can determine if the zone of disappearance is disposed symmetrically about us, or whether it is directionally biased?" The Vulcan's tricorder winked and blinked like a pinball game during orgasm.

"Not now," said Kirk.

"Fuck off," said Sulu.

"It would be inadvisable," said Holmes.

"That's insubordination, Lieutenant, and it is not time for Pon Farr in any case," reproved the Vulcan. "Why, if I may ask, do you feel a timely experiment is not advisable at this juncture?" he then said, turning to Holmes.

"Spock! I said no fraternalization!" but nobody ever listened to Kirk.

"Because we have already ascertained the radius of containment of this reality," said Holmes to the Vulcan. "It is safe for only about 15 feet on all sides of us, beyond which, if you proceed, reality becomes a meaningless concept."

"Indeed? This is most fascinating. Since the Star Fleet base the Enterprise's sensors indicated on this planet is not 15 feet away, it probably no longer exists. This may explain, Captain, why we do not see it."

"Fine, Spock, I was beginning to worry." The Captain seemed anything but relieved by Spock's conjecture.

"Elementary! It may not be on this planet at all," added Holmes, warming to his subject after days of dull company. "Since this world exists in a reality less than 30 feet across, it might be equally correct to speak of distances further than that as existing in another continuum rather than not existing at all, as you appear to believe."

Kirk and I looked at each other, then we looked at Holmes and the Vulcan. Both men were tall, spartan in decorum, aquiline in feature, and spoke like impeccable pedagogues. They blinked at us, and returned our stares. "Pardon me," I said.

"But you wouldn't be related, would you gentlemen?" Kirk finished for me ...

The upshot of all this was that after an hour's deliberation, Spock and Holmes thought they had a way to restore the stability of existence by modifying the transporter beam of the Enterprise. Fortuitously it had been left in a geosynchronous orbit above this spot. It was therefore still in touch with the landing party instead of having joined the undifferentiated building stuff of the universe, to wait for the next creation before taking form of some sort again. (At least in respect to us?) I would be returned to heaven, removing the foreign element that was causing the plenum to leak into itself like a herniated organ. Holmes, on the other hand, elected to remain with the Enterprise for a while.

"Won't you cause the same confusion I did by being out of your time and place?" I asked him after shaving, a bath, and a square meal.

"Oh, eventually I will have to return to Baker Street, I have no doubt. But Spock calculates with his excellent instruments that if I move perpetually around I will not accumulate negative-entropy charge at nearly the same rate that you did, and that I should do little harm to the stability of things for two or three years. The damage was done originally by you staying in one place for 8 months. You literally burned a hole in space-time. I will be travelling with the Enterprise and should have only a minimal effect on particular points in space that will after all be several light years apart on the average. Spock and I agree that a man might move out of his plane and time indefinitely by spending only a second in every galaxy, but that seems impractical."

"At least," I said. "What about Dr. Watson, and your practice? You can scarcely tell the Victorian era that you've been frog-hopping around the galaxy for three years." Yeoman Rand gave my waist a last squeeze and disappeared into a turbo-lift.

"Oh," said Holmes, looking impish for once, "I suppose I can make up some nonsense about Moriarty doing me in. He had a fatal accident while on vacation recently. Fell over the side of a rail while looking at some fool-tourist attraction. I won't say I had anything to do with it, mind you! I'll leave a note where Watson can find it, saying that I tracked Moriarty there, grappled with him, and both fell over, or something of the like. How does that sound? I'll turn up later with some plausible explanation for my miraculous escape and absence."

"Conan Doyle believed it, so I guess Watson will." I shook the Great Detective's hand for the last time. He was decked out in Enterprise uniform, but still wore the famous deerstalker, somewhat the worse for wear mind you. Before I was beamed back to heaven from the Enterprise, however, I had one final question to ask.

"Wasn't that Bluegrass you played on the violin after you sent Watson away? I thought you played only plush romantic stuff?"

"Oh that," he chuckled. "I can't abide by that oversentimental musical self-indulgence. I much prefer popular American tunes, and mark my words they will someday overturn the musical conventions of the world. But Watson always asked for Scriabin or Strauss. I'm usually willing to humour his tastes as long as it keeps him quiet and he lets me think." Then he faded away, the transporter room with him. I was back in heaven, at long last.

III

I should have been more specific. Where were the endless white hallways and never-crowded-however-full party suites? The celebrating fans? The curling mist was underfoot, and everywhere was the sinless white of heavenly reward. Quite clearly I was somewhere in my Father's House, although perhaps in one of the more disused wings. The rococco gates of some cheap, milky substance looking like snap-together pearls were quaint enough. Illogically, they stood alone, giving neither entry nor exit to anywhere different from anywhere else. They could only be outmoded symbols of some religious urge whose manifestations would be maintained, like all others, however unimportant, forever and ever. Backwater though it looked to be, this part of heaven had plenty of the blessed. Men and women alike wore ankle-length nightshirts and huge gilded wings on their backs that defied ornithological convention. Peculiar cabalistic signs bobbed over every head, and each of the saved carried an antique looking harp that would probably be of little use musically. I was in fact, at the doorway of one of heaven's major vestibules, though it looked ratty enough to seem otherwise. This was the final resting place of Christian fundamentalists. How absurd, I thought to myself.

"You said it. Shrewd observation for a young man, if you don't mind me saying it."

"Yowp!" Behind me was a man of 75 or so, with a dandelion's puff of white hair and a stinking big cigar. Unlike the others around us, he wore baggy trousers, boots, vest and jacket. They were white like the clothes I had miraculously resumed in obedience of divine mandate. Neither had he the wings or halo of a Christmas tree angel. In fact, he looked rather more as if his druthers inclined toward bad whiskey and a gold pan rather than piety. "I didn't know I'd been speaking out loud," I said. "Who're you?"

"Why, don't you know me? So much for writing for posterity, as my more pretentious contemporaries used to claim I was doing. I suppose you could call me ... how about Capt'n Stormfield? My case and the Capt'n's are as close as two congressmen on a bandwagon, so I can't imagine anything more appropriate at the moment, and I think I'd like to enjoy the freshness of anonymity with a person again. They all know me here." He chuckled, and included the blessed all around us with a sweep of his cigar. "They don't approve, of course. Look at those fools." It was true, I had never seen a sillier bunch of immortal souls. Half of them at any one time were down on their knees, raising jubilation to the Lord, though doubtlessly He wasn't listening. He would have better things to do than satisfy His Vanity. Most everybody seemed to cry "Hallelujah" at random intervals. And the rest either wept miserably for their sins, or sang without stop.

"Like little children ye shall be, or some such truck," snorted my new acquaintance.

"Where are you from," I asked. "You don't seem to belong here anymore than I do."

"Oh," he said, "I came in on a comet. A comet with four boilers, two hundred hands, and a style as grand as a circus! You don't believe me? Look down there, where the clouds draw around in a big bay, you see the haze and black water like the night sky? The comets put up there, where you see the landings. Nothing like it since New Orleans afore the war, when the riverboats ran the Father of Waters and I was a young man foolish enough to want to be a pilot."

I looked, and saw off in the distance a curving bluff of clouds that might have been a bay. Black space lay at the foot of the bluffs like water alright, but instead of a busy river port I saw a vast landing field, filled with silver steeples -- spaceships waiting on their tailfins to lift. Then there was only the tastelessly overdone cloud-scape again, that had no end this side of infinity. I believe that the old timer saw his river port though, just as for a heartbeat my sense of wonder had formed spaceships from the distant cloudstuff. There was no point in disillusioning the old timer, I thought, but then a twinkle in his eye made it clear that he knew that I wouldn't see what his heart saw.

"I stay here for Olivia's sake, bless her heart, and I have a few old friends here to pass the time with. Not as many as told me to meet them here though. They must be as surprised as I not to meet me where they actually ended up! But if you've a notion to be somewhere other than here, that is the place to go for a start." He pointed down in the distance to where he saw the bay. "Take the ship of your choice. One will surely take you wherever you want to go. I saw a nation of places on my way, any one of which would be more interesting than where I am now."

With that, the old captain strolled away, walking in a funny scuttling way I knew he'd learned from the rolling deck of a riverboat. He was headed for a break in the drifting clouds, beyond which there seemed to be a vast amphitheatre. I could just hear the voices of millions of people lifted in song before the clouds drifted together again, closing off the sight. I made off down-hill in the other direction, but had only gone a few steps when I heard Stormfield's voice explode in scoffing words and a laugh. I looked back to see him and another old-timer swapping stories. The stranger was a tall bearded man whose homely features were both tragic and dignified. Yet the next moment he roared like a backwoodsman and nearly lost his white stovepipe hat. The two looked back at me, and the Railsplitter called, "Best of luck, boy!" To which Captain Stormfield added, "Mind that angels make their last stand where fools fear to stay!" Then they were gone, behind a billow of changing cloud, and I hastened toward the spaceport or whatever it would be when I got there.

To make a long story short, what I found was neither a riverport nor a spaceport, but I could disembark for where I pleased and did. The end of the line.

This, they said, was where The Creator Himself would be, but anyone who wanted could go there. Most, however, quickly left, for reasons I would know in good time. In the presence of God I was instantly absorbed and became One with Him. Being One with the All, though, gives you a queasy feeling. It is fine to think about seeing every little

sparrow fall, watching the matchless slow ballet of galaxies, and knowing how every electron will turn, but the sum of it all is like nothing so much as a pattern made by a random number generator. A finite mind cannot integrate it into a picture, and to submerge yourself entirely in God means losing one's individuality. What it feels like to be One with God, to know the unknowable, is like reading with the wrong glasses. In the end, God gains nothing by your being One with Him; and neither do you, since while you are One "you" is a class without members. At length, We decided that it would be nice if Paul Kline came into being again, and it was done. Separated from God, I remembered next to nothing -- perhaps most of the six billion seven hundred million languages spoken by intelligent beings; the secrets of causality, conservation, consciousness, entropy, and the noumenal world, plus some of the other trivial axioms of creation; the making and saving of souls; the names of all the men who fell at the battle of Kadesh in 1288 B.C.; a handful of theorems for finding best algorithms; and the lost modes of Hellenic music, but hardly any of the more profound mysteries. It was enough, at least, to set me up as a demi-urge.

In a sevagram of my own I surveyed empty space-time around me, then decided to make a mundane plane as the basic substratum of the universe I was to create. Entering it to perceive better what I was to do, I next conceived the laws of nature for this place. Suppose, I thought to myself, magic worked instead of science? I willed it so, fixing the rules and logic of the phenomenal world accordingly. It didn't work at first, events preceeding causes and the like, until a few minor changes had been made that eased the kinks out. Then it worked, and it was good. Next I peopled my creation with a strong beautiful race of warriors and poets who stood seven feet tall from the soles of their rawhide boots to the crowns of their golden heads. They were green eyed, fair of complexion, and had pointed ears in token of their tie to the land. I showed them how to build fires, play harps, husband animals; and erect sturdy comfortable cottages. Soon, as divine time passes, they built castles and populated the world. To give them adventure I filled the forests with dragons and other mythological creatures. Gnomes skulked beneath the roots of mountains. Great kings raised empires. Sorcerors razed them. Treasures lay hidden in lost lands, and heroes won to them. It was the most elaborate dungeons and dragons game ever devised, taking 400 years for the playing of it. It was just like dungeons and dragons in every other way too, down to the last cliché and unicorn. I grew bored and destroyed it.

But to my immortal chagrin, I could think of nothing more original. One after another I began worlds that Bodé, Burroughs, and Howard had created before me, and all I added to their work was a greater sense of verisimilitude through disorder. On the whole, their jobs were more convincing. I destroyed each before completed, becoming one of the sevagram's most accomplished mass murderers. Finally, I turned my hand to something I was in better rapport with than medieval or alien societies. I began with a world very much like the one I had lived my mortal life in, devolved to the early 1930s. I seeded ideas in certain heads to try writing and publishing stories based on scientific discoveries, then moved them to print letters from their readers. Soon, correspondence clubs spontaneously arose from the pulp, and clubs, amateur magazines, and fans were not long behind. I had recreated fandom, and as a reminder to myself not to take it too seriously I revealed myself as "Roscoe".

I hadn't realized until I had created a fandom of my own how predetermined its development must be. The gadgeteers needed to start the wheels turning were ground under almost immediately. The serious-constructive readers took a little longer to feed as grist to the wheels of progress, but went under as fated when my Tucker-figure appeared to ridicule and demoralize them. Under my subtle guidance the Quandries and Hyphens soon appeared, evolved through Voids and Warhoons, to become Twll Ddus and Outworlds. Almost before I knew it, fandom had gotten out of hand, whizzed through its golden age and begun its decadence hardly after things had begun to work smoothly. Conventions got too big, fanzines went pro, promoters caught on to money-making possibilities, and pretty soon the fandom I had created was in pretty much the same deplorable state of bloating and dissolution I had left the real one in when I departed from my first fleshly incarnation. I hadn't changed a thing, really. The only difference between a Terry Hughes or a Walt Willis on the one hand, and a Barry Hews or a Will Wallis on the other,

was the exchange of a few letters. Was fandom's growth so inevitable, I asked myself, that not even a demi-urge could alter it meaningfully? I looked down at my creation and back into my memory and saw that they were the same. It was not good.

In the nanosecond it took me to summon the will to destroy this, my last and most disappointing creation, I had time to survey the world below me a last time. There was much to displease me, not in the least confined to fandom. The larger arenas of human activity I had largely neglected and allowed to grow dangerously unstable. I nevertheless found a few things that made me pause. I saw a modest fan on the west coast who drew funny and original cartoons. (Did I have the originality to have created this person I wondered? Or had another hand worked unseen after mine.) On the opposite coast I saw another fan who, although better provisioned with good intentions than persistence, had nevertheless kept the faith. A small fanzine from the east raised its voice in hymn to the old time religion, maintaining one virtue. And another fan from the west coast moved ahead of the times, showing the other virtue I loved so well. I just couldn't destroy it, richly though fandom deserved it. The sinners would never be brought to task, but would have as long as it would take them to find their own salvations. (And perhaps that was the intention all along of the Hand that reworked what I'd wrought.)

It was just as well that I decided against destroying my final creation, but I had no way of knowing it at the time. I had a particularly vengeful end in mind for fandom that began with a sci-fi movie so overwhelmingly commercial that fandom would have tripled overnight, every night it showed, until the last vestige of decency left to science fiction was corrupted by consecutive best-sellers ... Of course, that happened in the real world anyway, not long after I died, giving me still another reason to wonder how much control of my creation I'd ever had.

Ruefully, I left the universe I had made and sealed it up behind me so that it would be forever more on its own. I didn't wish to be reabsorbed into the One, but had nowhere else to go to. Except to where I had started from, my post-mortem home with my friends and fellow fans. If I could still fit in, that is. Perhaps my divine being and modest grasp of the cosmon would have been a little overbearing to people who had not yet created or destroyed worlds, nor been even a mere neuron of the Almighty Himself. A part of my mind I emptied of all memories from after my apotheosis apart from the barest outline of events, and gave it independence of thought and action. I sent it back across dimensions and eras until through it I saw the familiar hotel environment of fan-nish heaven once more. Then I went to sleep. And except for the tiny self-contained part of me writing this, I'm asleep still. I'm sure that the writing shows it. After this long a narrative, probably all of you are asleep too.

-- Paul Kline, Palet 19

.....

"It's substantially right, up to the part where he does to meet Claudegelebub. From there on I can't vouch for it."

"And I say it's a load of bull," said Kornbluth to Laney, "from beginning to end."

"Naw, he ran into Kline himself, remember?" put in Ellik.

"If I know Laney, he's just stringing us along, like Kline."

"That's right," FTL said, "I'm making it all up. I don't have the slightest idea where Kline went, and you stupes fell for it like a ton of bricks from the Tucker hotel."

"Nice try," said Ellik, "but no cigar. I happened to look up that mailing of FAPA you mentioned you got your copy of Ah, Sweet Idiocy from, and it was there as you said it would be. Your secret's out of the bag, and you can't stuff it back in that easily." Laney looked nonplussed at the pristine copy of A,SI Ellik handed him.

"Still a load of bull," said Kornbluth, hopefully. But he'd known better all along.

"Not a chance," Ellik answered him. "I tried it out, and sure enough, if I concentrate, I can see Ed Wood reading a copy of Starship."

"That's hell, alright," groaned Laney.

The three friends critiqued Kline's Palet on into the night. When you have forever, small matters can be considered leisurely, and savoured. No need to cover three months of fanac and smoffing in three nights. Other fans drifted into the conversation from time to time, usually moving on to the bar after a half hour or so. Not one of them thought for a moment that Kline's story was anything but made up. One of the hoax Tuckers thought it was pretty good fan fiction, but lacked the joie de vivre of the best examples he could think of. Ed Cagle strolled by and put in two cents worth. "Why didn't he just blast people by name instead of making up all this tripe," he said, and "if he doesn't like it here, why rain on our parade?" Then heeding the call of the wild pickle he left for the bar. Les Croutch was nearby, talking to a new N3F arrival he'd always been fond of. He leaned over to stare at the naked girl on the cover, but was ignored as usual. Someone commented that The Profane Comedy was the work of an insincere egoist, and a victim of his own neurotic fantasies. The gravelly voice was cut off by another fan who added that "it does seem like a power trip, doesn't it? I mean, becoming God and creating fandom?" Still another opinion pointed out how offensive Kline's putdown of other people's fanac was. Someone next to Ken Beale and Wally Gillings was noisily counting typos and errors of punctuation. None of them, Kornbluth noticed, seemed to have copies of their own of the zine they were so diligent to criticize ...

No one thought to ask where Kline was now, but Laney, Kornbluth and Ellick were painfully aware that he had disappeared again.

Upon Kline's return to fan heaven, he had picked up everlasting life where he had left off, resuming his work on the illustrated All Our Yesterdays, seeing the OE of Heaven Can Wait so he could be reinstated without joining the waitlist again, dropping in on the eternal party in room 7,700,000 to renew acquaintances, and, most of all, beginning the next issue of Palet. Naturally, his membership in Heaven Can Wait was straightened out without trouble. In fan heaven, apas had no membership limit. Effortlessly he published issue after issue of his apazine, Scherzo, in company with all the other great apazines of fandom -- Lighthouse, Horizons, Spaceship, Fandango, etc. etc. etc. It seemed too easy. He finished illustrating All Our Yesterdays and received monstrous amounts of egoboo at the announcement, as he had expected. Then the next week it was something else everybody was egobooing and the illustrated history was forgotten while the ink was still fresh from the drawing-board. Almost as a matter of routine, he began illustrating A Wealth of Fable, and the mention in Fanac was greeted with more transitory acclaim. When it was over, he didn't bother to start on the art after all. Instead he found himself more and more writing his "trip report" for Palet, revising, editing, and polishing the opus that grew into The Profane Comedy.

Kline had been back less than three months when he was asked to be the fan guest of honour at the Otherworldcon that week, which was being held four floors down and a few miles west in a complex of rooms and halls that hadn't been used for a con yet. Kline had been a guest at over 40 cons since he died, several of them Otherworldcons, just like practically everyone else he knew had. That was what made the place good fans went to "heaven". But he noted for the first time an irritation at the cleverness of the name, Otherworldcon. A pun, no less. How many puns had he heard here since he died? Were many of them better than Dr. Azimuth's? For that matter, he was tired of reading buttons and badges on other people's shirts to discover who they were, and having to read "Fans Do It Smoooooooooth" and "You Will Believe A Dragon Can Fly" before finding out that the Minor Name Fan he was talking to was a George. He looked down at his new white shirt and slacks, and wished he could have the second hand coat he'd bought in London. At least it had been dark brown, and he'd had a maroon tie and cream coloured shirt. On the way to a panel he was moderating, his eyes hurried over the framed fan art on the walls. The felt tip lines, smirks, word balloons, and beanies didn't register anymore. Kline wondered idly if the art was drawn on paper or if it was done on the white walls and the empty frames hung over them. Someone at the door handed him a fanzine. He saw from the listed contents -- excellent fanhumour, cogent articles, and penetrating letters of comment -- that it was a good issue as usual. Number 312 he noticed. Kline managed to leave it behind an overfed filksinger and felt no guilt. Then

he was at the front door of the room with his panelists, not a minute too soon to begin the program.

The topic was "Fanwriting Standards". It hadn't been used too recently. It also unfailingly evoked interest even from people who never did fanwriting, or at least seemed to write only about fanwriting. Kline made the opening remarks expected of him, then introduced the panelists to either side of him. He carelessly mixed up the names of two of his fellow panelists who he wasn't bothering to look at. The faces were familiar ones, so no one particularly noticed the mix-up. The fan at the end of the table began first, venturing his opinion that fans should write second and third drafts like he did, and that it was laziness that caused fans to write more poorly than they should. Kline was tempted, as he always was at that point, to mention that in fan heaven all first drafts were perfect. The second fan said that, yes, the first fan was right, and that his favourite fan writers had always rewritten their articles for him, and that that was why fan writing wasn't as good as it used to be. The fat fan on Kline's other side objected. He said that fan writing today was just as good as it had ever been, and that it was just different. The woman at the other end of the table said that the best fanwriters were women. The first fan spoke again, saying that he disagreed, and said that sercon or politically activist writing wasn't fannish. The fat fan accused him of belonging to a fannish mafia and the second fan argued with him about trufannishness. Then the fat fan made a deferential joke, and the panel mellowed. The second fan talked about his neo-hood and the fanwriters he admired, naming the first fan as his exemplar. The first fan thanked Kline, who wasn't listening, for publishing his column so he could reach promising young fans like the second one. The fat fan asked the femmefan if she would write a column for his fanzine. She corrected his use of "femmefan" but said that she would be delighted to write for the fat fan's fanzine, it had always been one of her favourites. The second fan made a joke about the fat fan's titles, and the crowd laughed.

All the while the audience ate it up, Kline stared at them, but didn't see. He was seeing a vision of a panel, just like the one he sat on now. Smug faces sat and made meaningless talk, and one of the faces was his. He saw himself in the darkened studio from the doorway of a corridor in Claudegelebub's palace, Azimuth at his side again. And he saw himself, from the panel, looking over the empty seats. "I don't want to know," Kline heard his other self say to Azimuth.

Then the vision left him. Instead of the empty studio seats, in front of him were the familiar faces of hundreds of fans. Kline looked at them, looked at the fans to either side of him on the panel, and knew he'd talked himself out of hell at a price. That price was seeing the Truth of what he'd said to escape. Abruptly, Kline rose. He told the assembled hundreds, "I gafiате!" No one saw him leave in the confusion, but in the weeks that followed no one saw him at all.

While fans debated the pros and (mostly) cons of his last publication, Kline had arrived where he'd hoped he would. Every fan knew of the archangel in whose care fan heaven rested, but none had seen him or expected to. When the need arose, an angel had always come to their aid in the archangel's name. Know-it-alls who knew nothing said that you could find his palace on the penthouse floor, in the lobby, or 5,000,000 miles away in the direction of your choice (the hotel being laid out in the plan of a tesseract). It was in none of those places, but fans took it as a matter of faith that their archangel resided somewhere in their heaven. It was a small matter, after doubting an afterlife and finding yourself wrong, to believe in a palace you had never seen. Kline had less reason to doubt than most, having seen more of the divine plan than was revealed to most souls. And the archangel's palace was where he came to be, without having any clear notion how he'd got there.

Unlike the Satrap Claudegelebub's palace, the archangel preferred to build on the surface. Nor were the black, carved wood doors closed or guarded. Inside the wall was a vista of wild beauty. Purple mountains reflected like jagged splinters of broken glass in the placid lake in the distance. A forest ran down a slope to the shore, rumpled like a carpet by green hills, between which a paved road wound its way. Here and there over the rolling horizon, columns of mist or spray rose to the sky. If there was a ceiling, it was lost in the blue. At the end of the road lay a small town of pavilions,

the inner court. But from a glass and natural stone chalet nearby, a young woman with glowing skin and garments of light was coming up the trail toward the gate. She and the grandeur of the palace were unexpectedly familiar to Kline.

"Can I help you Lord?" she asked reverently.

"I'd like to see the archangel and ask if I can leave fan heaven," said Kline.

"I don't understand, Lord. You are the archangel Roscoe. You may leave any time you wish."

"What!" exploded Kline. "You mean I created myself? Did I really create fandom then? But that's too confusing."

"Your Lordship has a peculiar fondness for self-referential humour, it's true," the angel answered, laughing. "However, fandom would not have been real without you there to be in it. What you didn't experience didn't exist, it remained only an abstract concept, so you created yourself to give existence to fandom just as God made himself a man so that Man might exist. That's the divine power."

"Ouch. Elementary theology! But that's so," said the demiurge Kline as he fully awoke. "Well, I'll leave now. I don't know when I'll be back, but ... if anything happens to fandom?" Kline thought back to his near-suicide when he almost destroyed fandom and the basis of his own existence at the same time."

"Fandom will be cared for in your absence, Lord," replied the shining angel, and kissed him. "Where do you go?"

"Everywhere." Kline vanished again, consciously.

... and he was in a place as much like 18th century Vienna, as Paris in the 1860's. Music was in the air, literally, floating in 4/4 time or serial polyrhythmia from every open window. A woman in pigtails walked into Kline so intent was she on fingering her saxophone, and surely the bald man who composed on the bench there was Arnold Schoenberg? Beethoven and a Japanese courtesan were having a friendly argument over minimalism, eating pizza, while a suitcase radio blared Gaelic folk songs nearby. This, thought Kline to himself, looks like a good place to start.

DNQ 34 is A Terrible Mistake 135 © 1983 by Taral Wayne. Copies are \$5, and are available from 1812-415 Willowdale Avenue, Willowdale, Ontario, M2N 5B4, Canada.

Five dollars is a long way from the Sticky Quarter that a fanzine used to cost, even including inflation. But the one thing I've learned by peddling fanzines over the last ten years is that either a person will pay a decent price for what you're selling, or they will pay nothing at all except, perhaps, some nominal sum that theoretically squares you for the cost of the paper and ink. Why price yourself down for those who care nothing for your work? So I'm asking \$5 for DNQ and I expect that I'll get it from those who'd pay a dollar. Those who won't pay five wouldn't have paid a sticky quarter for it. DNQ is available at a still greater cost -- your attention, concern, interest, and even love. For those who pay in that coin -- negotiable as letters from my friends, as contributions of art or writing that I'd like to publish, or as fanzines that I want to read -- paper money isn't good enough. However I've numbered them, there are 96 pages in this issue. The bulk of the writing and illustration is mine -- 75 pages of the 96, I believe -- but I'm grateful to the contributors not for filling space but for providing a very real balance and foil to my own material. It would not have been as good an issue without them. Design and paste-up was also my doing, as was the selection of art and text, and the overall concept. Valuable assistance was provided by Victoria Vayne, who typed the material and paid for the paper, ink, other supplies. Postage and offset costs were generously subsidized by Paul Taylor, Marc Boyer, Bob & Janet Wilson, and Do Ming Lum. Typos may be equally credited to Victoria and I.

KLINES
DESCENT
INTO
FANHELL

LAKE DISKONGESSPEETCH

UPPER CAVERN

STAPLE STEPPES

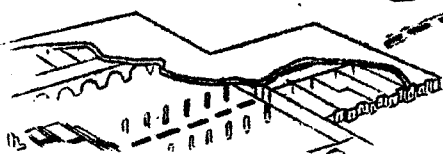
RATTAN FOREST

CAVERN

LOWER

VIDEO VALLEY

CLAUDEGELEBUS'S
PALACE



6/7/82

FINAL WORDS

ON DNG 34

YOU KNOW, I WENT THROUGH A PRETTY UGLY HEAD-SPACE A WHILE AGO. THE USUAL THING ABOUT BEING A FANNISH OUTLAW

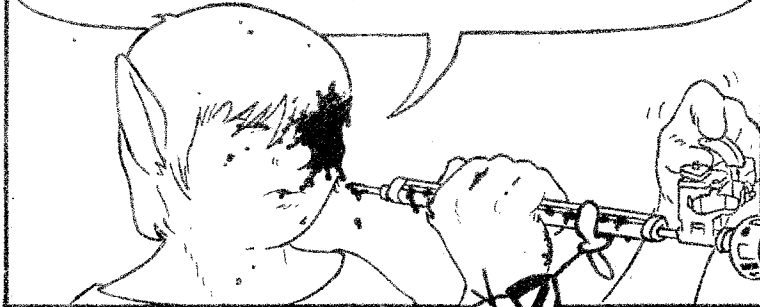


AND PISSED OFF WITH ALL THE PERSONALITY CULTS. (WHEW, THE SHIELD OF 'UMOR THAT WASN'T.) CALL IT THE THROES



ON DNG 34

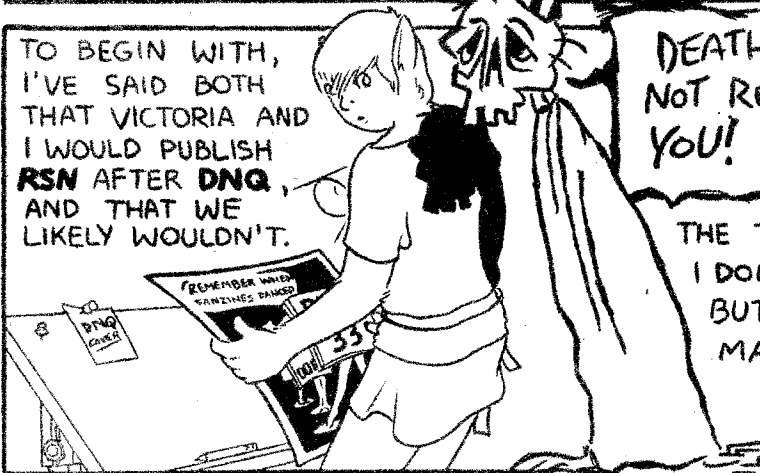
OF CREATIVITY. I'VE NOTICED BEFORE THAT I FEEL OUT-OF-MIND WHEN I'M OUT-OF-SIGHT FOR ANY LENGTH OF TIME, AND I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THIS ISSUE FOR MORE THAN A YEAR. BUT NOW IT'S DONE. OTHERWISE IT WAS POSSIBLE



THAT YOU MIGHT NEVER HAVE READ THE ZINE YOU HOLD. IN SPITE OF THE SELF-REFERENTIAL AND THEMATIC THREADS RUNNING THROUGH THE ISSUE, THERE ARE A FEW LOOSE ENDS THAT I WANT TO TIE UP.



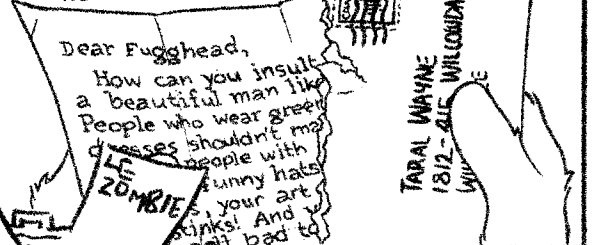
TO BEGIN WITH, I'VE SAID BOTH THAT VICTORIA AND I WOULD PUBLISH RSN AFTER DNG, AND THAT WE LIKELY WOULDN'T.



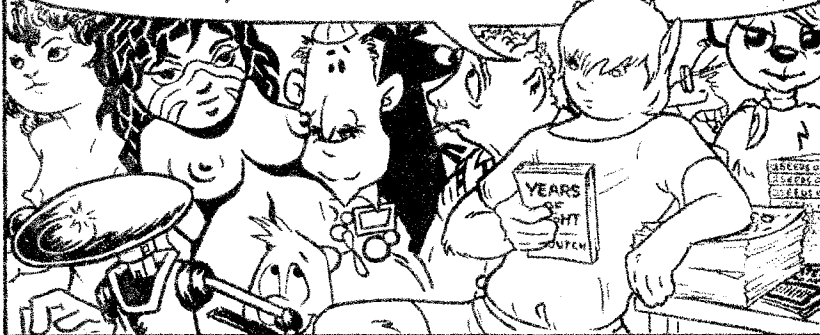
DEATH WILL NOT RELEASE YOU!

THE TRUTH IS, I DON'T KNOW. BUT... ER... MAYBE.

IF NOT, I'LL PUBLISH RED SHIFT ON MY OWN. SO KEEP THOSE CARDS AND LETTERS COMING IN. IF YOU DON'T WANT TO USE MY SURE-FIRE LETTER FORMULA (SEE PAGE 4) THEN RIDDLE ME THIS...



... HOW MANY FANARTISTS APPEARING IN THIS ISSUE ACTUALLY DIDN'T. SPOT ALL OF MY PASTICHES AND WIN A FABULOUS FANNISH PRIZE. FIRST COME, FIRST SERVE, AS LONG AS THE PRIZES HOLD OUT.



THERE ALWAYS SEEMS TO BE A LAST PANEL... A TIME TO LEAVE FANHEAVEN, A TIME TO BE FLESH AND BLOOD AGAIN INSTEAD OF INK AND FANTASY, A TIME FOR ONE LAST STUPID WORD PLAY...



EXIT?

GOOD NYDAHL!