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d e s c a n t

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MAILING COMMENTS . . . . . for Boyd

On the combatibility of married fan couples

Shake, Elinor. I too am hard on paperbacks (and hardcovers too but they don't show it so soon). As soon as I open a new one I break its back so it will lie open, and of course then pages start to drift out and the covers start to fall off. At the sound of that crack when I break the book's back, poor Norm winces. He also regards with distaste my habit of marking my place by turning up the corner of the page. I also make notes in margins or underline (my own books, not library books). When I've read a book, you know it. But you can't tell by looking at Norm's pocketbooks whether or not he's read them. I see no reason for being careful with books. I feel it doesn't matter what shape a book is in, within limits, as long as you can read it. However, when it comes to records Norm and I play cross-over. Before we merged our collections, I used to keep the inside plastic or paper envelopes on records; I used to wipe each record carefully before playing, using a special static dust-removing cloth; I used to change my needle frequently; I used to take care not to play my especial favorites too much so they wouldn't get worn too quickly. Etc. I was shocked to see how Norm treated his records. He throws away the inside envelopes right off. Then he leaves the naked records lying around, one on top of the other, often in a precariously balanced pile on a corner of a table or somewhere. He applies needle to record and removes it again in the Strudlemeyer tradition. Never dusts them off. Rarely changes a needle. And lends records to people who treat them even worse than he does and who return them warped and scratched.

Seems to me Juanita mentioned some time ago that Buck uses lots of commas while she uses as few as possible. So shake, Juanita. Norm uses lots of commas and I avoid them entirely if possible. This leads to mild repercussions if we apply our personal rules while stencilling each other's stuff.

As to Miriam's question about how other fan couples split their common votes-- Norm and I haven't voted on anything...except the last egoboo pool, when we each had a ballot. (Actually we didn't vote on things before out of apathy, not disagreement.)

## Klein Bottle

I happened to catch, through some mischance, a radio interview with the musical artist known as "Conway Twitty" in which he was asked how on earth he went by such a name, and he in some sort of strange Arkansas hill accent told how his agent had drawn up a list of possible stage names and, after careful consideration, had hung the most unlikely of them on him. I forget what he said his real name is.

The US press' underemphasis of Negroes in photos is very striking to any non-American who is first familiar with US publications and movies and then visits the US. One gathers subconsciously from looking through magazines, seeing movies and American tv programs that Negroes are rather scarce; it is therefore quite surprising to visit an American city and see the masses of unacknowledged people.

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"Gogi Grant is regarded as the best blues singer since Helen Morgan" - radio

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## Fans we have met

First Norm ran into Daryl Sharp a year ago after many years. And then Boyd Rabinburn called on us a couple of months ago. (See Norm's account further on). Then one day, while a storm was raging locally about the state of undress of the Ballets Africains, we saw a letter in a city paper defending nudity in what struck us as a sort of fannish way, especially in view of the name at the bottom of the letter. Could it be? Norm looked the name up in the phone book, dialed the number, got an answer, and said: "Hello? Mr. Wyszkowski? When are you going to put out FANDeMonium?"

Paul and Burnice (nee Love) Vish-koff-ski turned out to be delightful people who like cats and good eating and with whom we've spent a couple of very enjoyable evenings.

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But that was before Eileen Farrell entered the field...

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## WHY THE CHIN-FUZZ, MAC?

I have a beard. It serves me well,  
For who I am no-one can tell:  
I may be Beateuk, Cuban, Fruit,  
Or one who doesn't give a hoot.

No, it's not because I'm weird;  
For, when they ask me, "Why the beard?"  
I answer low, with sheepish grin,  
"It's 'cause I haven't any chin."

-njc

President Kennedy recently set a precedent (towards which his predecessors had been moving) by holding a "live" televised Press Conference. It was suggested that Mr. Kennedy intends to appear on TV whenever he has an "important announcement." Where, one wonders, will all this lead?

... AND HERE HE COMES NOW ...

THEME UP AND UNDER.

ANNOUNCER: It's the PRESIDENTIAL HOUR! Starring genial Jack Kennedy, Prez of the U. S. of A., and featuring the lovely Prexyettes, the music and songs of Frank Sinatra and his Star-Spangled Orchestra, and this week's special guest star! Let's GO!

PREXYETTES PRODUCTION NUMBER: "IT'S A BIG WIDE WONDERFUL WORLD." AT FINAL BAR THE GIRLS MOVE INTO TWO LINES. THE PRESIDENT ENTERS AND TROTS BETWEEN THE LINES UP TO CENTER STAGE.

ANNOUNCER: And here he comes now, folks ... the Prez himself ... JOLLY ... JUMPIN'... GENIAL ... JACKIE-BOY KENNEDY!

(APPLAUSE. CHEERS. WHISTLES.)

JEK: Thank you, thank you, friends, thank you ... you're a terrific group ... thank you, thank you. Ahem. Well, it's certainly great to be here with all you wonderful people tonight. You know, a funny thing happened to me on my way over from the White House tonight. A fellow came up to me and said, "Can you spare two thousand dollars for a cup of coffee?" So I said, "Are you kidding? Coffee's only a dime." So he says to me, he says, "I know, but I wanna have it in Cuba." (LAUGHTER) Well, the fellow had a beard, so I gave him the two big ones. Who needs him around here? (MORE LAUGHTER, AND APPLAUSE) But -- to be serious for a moment, folks -- I think that we should all, each and every one of us free Americans, remember that kindness and sympathy for our fellow-man is a great American tradition. (APPLAUSE. CHEERS.) But right now I think it's time that Frank gave us one of his great little numbers. Whattya gonna do tonight, Frank baby?

SINATRA: Well, Prez, the guys in the band'd like to wail a little thing I composed yesterday, called "Ring-a-ding Rat Pack Bop." I myself am gonna cool it 'til later in the show, at which time I think I'll sing a real groovy like sexy thing that I dig a whole lot. But, right now, make it, men!"

STAR SPANGLED ORCHESTRA: "RING A DING RAT PACK BOP."



JFK: Too much, Frank! Like wow! But right now, folks, let's have a timely word from our sponsor, and then we'll be right back atcha ...

ANNOUNCER: Friends, are you still using old-fashioned ideas? Do you feel not unlike a fogey when bright, interesting, young-thinking people express their bright new views? If this is your trouble, the folks at THE AMERICAN WORLD DEMOCRACY, INC. can help you Find Freshness Fast ... Fast ... FAST! You hustle right down to your friendlier neighborhood AWD store and pick up this week's copy of FREE THOUGHTS -- only fifty cents -- the magazine that lets you know what this week's truly free thoughts are. What are free people thinking this week about the Rights of Man? About Traditional Values? About the Dangers of Communism? Read FREE THOUGHTS and know what to think! Costs so little ... knows so much: FREE THOUGHTS, the official magazine of the AMERICAN WORLD DEMOCRACY CORPORATION. Get your FREE THOUGHTS ... today!

And now ... back to the Presidential Hour ...

JFK: Timely and important, words of wisdom indeed, friends. But now I think it's time to get Frank to give us that song he promised us. Whaddya say, Frank?

SINATRA: I think you'll get a boot out of this one, Prez. It's a real gasser of a tune, and I'd like to dedicate it to that swingin' First Lady. It's called, "Come, Jacqueline, In My Political Machine." Just for you, doll.

SINATRA WITH STAR SPANGLED ORCH: "COME, JACQUELINE."

JFK: Ha ha, Frank, you sly dog! But I'm warning you, pops, don't you come messin' around, trying to charm on my old lady, or I'll have you investigated ... (LAUGHTER) and you know what that could do to you! (PROLONGED LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) But seriously, Frank, the song was the greatest!

SINATRA: Like thanks, sweetie.

JFK: Well, I see that's it's rolled around to that time ... time to meet this week's Special Guest Star, and this week it's ...

HUGE CAKE IS WHEELED IN TO CENTER STAGE. ORCHESTRA FANFARE. TOP OF CAKE BURSTS OPEN AND OUT POPS ...

JFK: WELL! It's NICK KHRUSHCHEV! How about a great big American hand, folks! Let's hear it for Nick!

( OVATION. )

NK: You ... loogink ... guhd, Jeck ... sviddie.

JFK: Well, it's our beautiful American Florida sunshine does it, Nick. By the way -- heh, heh -- how's everything in Siberia? (LAUGHTER.)

NK: Fonny, Jeck, fonny. Hah, BOT ... Suvyet Georgia batter den Yoo Hass Georgia.

JFK: Haha. Well, Nick, I know the folks are anxious to see you do that soft shoe routine ... I mean, not the one on top of a desk, haha, but the one where you leave your shoes on your feet. You know, the one that's been cracking everybody up at the last few Summit Conferences?

NK: Oh, da. Ho Kay. Dun't ... voul ... me opp ... you dem Spengle Orchestra.

ORCH: "TEA FOR TWO." KHRUSHCHOV DOES SOFT SHOE TAP ROUTINE. AFTER STOP-TIME CHORUS, KENNEDY JOINS KHRUSHCHOV AT CENTER STAGE FOR DUET.

JFK AND NK SING: Peace for two, and two for peace -  
West is West, and East is East;  
We, at least, are all for peace  
For all.

NK: No "H" explosions  
On land or in oceans ...

JFK: No more aggressions  
To cure our recessions ...

TOGETHER: We're firing our spy rings  
And hiring a Peace Talks Hall!

Peace for all, and all for peace ...  
Strontium 90 will decrease ...  
There will be a World Police ...  
You'll see!

JFK: There will be an end to strife -

NK: Each side having its Way Of Life -

TOGETHER: How co-existential  
We will be!

SUSTAINED TUMULTUOUS APPLAUSE. ROXYETTES FORM CIRCLE AROUND KENNEDY AND KHRUSHCHOV. STAR SPANGLED ORCHESTRA PLAYS "MY BUDDY."

ANNOUNCER: "Well, folks, we're running a little overtime ... we'll have to say so long now, folks ... we're a little late ..."

THE ANNOUNCER'S WORDS ARE SUDDENLY CUT OFF, OWING TO THE FACT THAT THE THIRD AND FINAL WORLD WAR HAS ACCIDENTALLY BEGUN.

--- njc

## THE PHONE RANG . . .

The phone rang at noon, while Gina and I were still sleeping the sleep of the juiced; and I chivalrously allowed her to crawl over me and answer it. I heard her say, "What? Who? Oh, hal-LO! My, my, tsk, tsk! NOEM! It's Boyd Raeburn."

"Does he want me on alto or tenor, and what does the gig pay?" Then I realized that she must mean the other Boyd Raeburn; and I was out of bed with a bound that wasn't entirely successful, as bounds go.

"Hello," I muttered, "where are you? Ottawa? The Chateau?"

The Chateau Laurier is a Fancy Expensive Hotel.

"How can you get over here? Well, you turn right . . . there's a bus . . . but maybe a cab would be the best way. Yeah. No, don't bother to eat lunch. We'll fix something up when you get here . . . right, 121 Delorimier."

I hadn't seen Boyd since perhaps five years ago, at which time I was occupying a seven-dollars-per-week room in Toronto, trying to learn to be a Jazz Man; and trying to exist on the seventeen dollars I collected weekly from the Unemployment Insurance Commission. At that time, a rumor had spread around -- reaching first me and then the Insurgents (probably through the courtesy of one N. G. Browne) -- that there was a Big Fight on between myself and Raeburn, Steward and Co. This rumor has never been effectively quashed, as the mass media say. I now quash it. It was all a Misunderstanding and Boyd is a Nice Guy. Let me remove all overtones of sardonicism from that statement. I say it again, quite sincerely: Boyd Raeburn is a nice guy, and his too-brief visit with us was very pleasant; and we hope to see him again soon. Who knows but that Steward may be a nice guy too?

Boyd arrived about half an hour later, and knocked at the wrong door because I had neglected to tell him we live upstairs, above the candy store. He found the right apartment, came in, met Gina IN PERSON, undressed and sat down. I mean he took off his coat.

I was in a state of panic. What could we offer him to eat? After all, he is the Gourmet of FAPA; and all we had on hand was half a can of beans, a few eggs, three frankfurters, and a bit of carrot fudge. Decidedly not, eh?

"Are you really hungry, Boyd?" I whined, cowering. "We could fix up a mess of scrambled eggs, wieners-and-beans and some adequate instant coffee which may amuse you with its presumption."

"I'm not really hungry, at that," Boyd said.

"Well . . . how about if I phone for some beer? You see, my vintner has been called away to Bourgogne -- to give them some advice, I think -- and so, heh-heh, I guess we'll have to drink beer."

"Well, I don't care. I'll have one . . . maybe."

I called for the beer; and we settled down to talk. Boyd allowed as how



our place looked "fannish". I think he meant well, though. Then he got onto the subject of Socialism, specifically as it has manifested itself in New Zealand. I must say that Boyd's case against it is striking in its bitterness and factual basis: so much so that it is almost convincing to any lukewarm Libertarian Anarchist such as I often am.

I kept thinking that I should, really, offer Boyd something to eat; so, crazed with drink, I grandly phoned a nearby Chinese restaurant and ordered recklessly, telling them to deliver the stuff, Damn The Expense. When the food arrived, I hadn't enough money to pay for it; so Boyd got nailed. The food wasn't very exotic, either.

Boyd heard Ornette Coleman for the first time, when I played a record for him. By God, he liked it! Is it any wonder that I say Boyd is a Good Man? I didn't get a chance to play him a record by Jonathan Edwards -- who is The Man -- because I couldn't find the LP; which is hardly surprising, considering our "fannish" chaos of records.

Finally, Boyd punched our baby girl, Jenny, in the nose. He said it was accidental; but I had been noticing his reactions while she slobbered on the knees of his trousers, pulled the buttons from his coat, peed on his shoes, and so on. So what he did was, he gestured expansively and barfed her right on the nose. By God, it's something I've often wished I had the nerve to do. It was beautiful.

Just before he left, Boyd asked me whether I shaved. I stroked my beard. Was he trying to be funny? I said, "Partially." He gave me a Schick Injector Razor, plus blades.

Since then I have used no other.

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S H A L L   I   T E L L   Y O U   S O M E T H I N G   ,

M R .   B O G G S ?

In his publication, Discord, Mr. R. Boggs quotes "the year's most astonishing remark." The remark in question was mine, it was in a "mailing comment on Gemzine," and it went: "I'll have to agree with you about Caryl Chessman, although I am opposed in principle to capital punishment. In his case the death sentence was justified because he was a sex pervert."

I can only, with charity, suppose that Mr. Boggs is a busy man, one who has barely time to skim over what he reads. Had he given more than cursory attention to the rest of the "mailing comments," he might, possibly, have realized that the "comments" were Funny, i.e., I couldn't have meant them less, i.e., they were supposed to be a parody of Mailing Comments. Whether the page was funny enough to make anyone roll on the floor is doubtful; but the thought that it may have been taken seriously by people -- other than Mr. Boggs -- disturbs me.

Honest, folks, I don't believe in Rosicrucianism; and I despise Hot Chicken Sandwiches. All clear?





In my middle 'teens I met a girl called "Boxes" by the boys (though never, or only occasionally, to her face) and I became the victim of an overwhelming desire for her. I used to hang around the school she attended -- skipping school myself in order to do so -- and insist on walking her home. After weeks of ardent courting, the force of my passion increasing daily, my opportunity arrived. I met her out walking one night. She was walking with a half dozen guys, but I only had eyes for her (I remember thinking, at the time, that that would be a good title for a song: I ONLY HAD EYES FOR HER.) "C'mon," one of the guys, whom I knew, said to me with an enormous wink. So I tagged along, and we went to a deserted park.

"Yuh wanna rassle, hey?" I heard one of the guys say.

"Aw, you..." giggled my beloved, "Oooof!"

In the park vague shadows thrashed in a giggling, grunting scrimmage. Rather mindlessly, I found myself become a part of the rolling heap. A swelling sweater brushed against me. Curious, I put forth my hand ...

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Then I became a man, a mature and serious man, and I met a wonderful, a mature and serious woman who understood me, even as I understood her. Together we plumbed the mystery and beauty of Art, Music and Poetry. The current heroes were Van Gogh, Dylan Thomas and Charlie Parker, and we shivered with spirituality through the many hours we spent together, reading "Fern Hill" to the accompaniment of "April In Paris" under a reproduction of "Sunflowers". Our three idols had died young and tragically (not "old and tragically" or "young and felicitously"), and we pondered this and felt that it was, by God, profoundly moving.

Profoundly moved; one afternoon, as we dreamed on Death and Sad Youth and Life, What Is It?, we suddenly Knew. She pulled off her sweater, blouse and brassiere and leapt upon me with a strangled oath ...

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It was a hot day in the summer of my discontent, the year of my disillusion, and we were alone at her cottage. (This is a different girl,) We had just been in swimming, or out sunbathing, and now we sat in the cool interior, sipping Chianti.

"It's lovely here, isn't it?" she murmured from the sofa where she reclined so sweetly, so sveltely, so invitingly.

"Not half," I replied, "Not half so lovely as are you, fair radiance." I smiled darkly.

"Wasn't the water lovely and cool?"

"Not so cool as the cool and lucid depths of your timeless eyes, my cabbage."

"It makes one's soul sigh, does it not?"

"My soul's sighs are like unto the sound of a blast-furnace, my pet;"

I murmured, "Listen, why don't you take off that uncomfortable bathing suit?"

"What the hell for?" she asked suspiciously.

Calmly, purposefully, I strode toward her ...

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It was my wedding night, I faced her (this is another girl) from across the room.

"Look," I said, "it's all right. We're married now."

With a guttural oath, she swept me into her arms and carried me to the bed ...

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So that's most of my sex-life. I have, naturally, left out a few trifling affairs which would have been embarrassing to relate -- embarrassing for the women involved, I mean. I myself have never been embarrassed sexually except on those occasions which I shall not mention here, or ever.

There was one rather strange affair that I had decided to omit; but, since this is fiercely honest, I am compelled to recount the bizarre details.

I had spent several weeks at my uncle's farm. Bored, lonely, horny, I had become accustomed to taking long walks about the countryside. On one of these I chanced to meet -- yes -- a buxom, winsome, flaxen-haired, rosy-cheeked, doe-eyed, simple country maid. We struck up a conversation, and then a friendship, and finally she allowed me to kiss her sweet strawberry lips. When we parted, panting, I begged, "Meet me tonight in the barn."

With a blushing nod, she ran down the gravel road.

I waited, that evening, in the barn where the horses were stabled. Anxiety and urgency enveloped my being. An hour passed. Then two. She was not coming! Three hours; and I groaned. Then, all in a moment, I was caressing the flank of the mare beside me. "Easy, girl," I murmured, pulling down my zipper ...

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That's really about all, I suppose, at least for now. Perhaps by the time I start work on my next book, I'll have had innumerable new erotic experiences which, of course, it will be my duty as an author to describe. I know that those of you who are serious about Literature have followed the chronicle of my sexual (and, therefore, spiritual and artistic) development with understanding, compassion, and detachment; for, as it has been wisely observed, "the story of Life is the story of Screwing," and all we serious artists must know and tell the Story Of Life. But, aside from this and on a more personal plane, my soul has been eased by this chapter's unburdening. No more will I lie awake through the tortured night, crying "Maude!" over and over (Maude was the horse). I have purged myself of painful memories; I have banished guilt and self-reproach; and I have had an orgasm.

(Hull, Aug. 23 - 24, 1960)

## PASS THE NOSTALGIA

"They don't write songs the way they used to," said Mr. Buttolph.

"Who said they did?" I answered curtly, absorbed in writing a song the way I used to. Buttolph has the knack of saying the wrong thing.

"Why quibble?" asked Buttolph, "That's like saying 'who says so?' when someone remarks that the evenings are drawing in."

"They aren't," I snarled, immediately realizing the fatuity of my rejoinder; still, he had me peeved: just yesterday the evening had drawn in fifteen minutes earlier than it should have, leaving me to look awfully the fool, under the circumstances. Savagely, I snuffed out my halvah.

"Just today," Buttolph went on infuriatingly, seating himself on an Ottoman (heedless of the fact that he was one of the oldest and frailest of my servants), "I heard no less than three songs that were obviously not written the way songs used to be written."

I cursed softly, and smashed my fist on my zeitgeist; and something in me snapped.

"I say, old chap," cried Buttolph, rushing to offer me assistance, "something in you has snapped!"

"Quite," I hissed, "A simple safety pin will suffice." My Ottoman fled, cowering, to fetch me one.

"As I say," said Buttolph, saying it, "I heard three of them today. One of them went: 'Ookie ookie reenie; yay, yay, yay ...' Have you heard it?"

Had I heard it! It was the song they were playing when she ... but no! I must not think of it! "Never!" I shouted, pouring with trembling hand a brimming glass of gnocchi. When the glass had stopped brimming, I faced Buttolph with fearful calm.

"I swear to you," I said, "that I have never -- as heaven is my judge -- never heard that song. You do believe me?" He nodded. "And yet ... ah, and yet, Buttolph, shall I tell you a curious story?"

He nodded once more, and I told it to him. He laughed heartily ... good old Buttolph! I grasped his shoulder. "Buttolph," I said, "I have written a song the way they used to. Be of good cheer!"

"Is it any bloody good?" he asked with a twinkle, filling his pipe with that rare blend of cannabis sativa he loves so well.

"Buttolph, it will bring tears to your eye." Buttolph has only one eye, poor chap: lost the other one, years ago, in a bar-room brawl with a piano-player named Shearing -- a brawl in which, incidentally, Buttolph emerged the victor.



In my light tenor voice -- the voice which had once earned me the applause of James Joyce himself (before he went mad) -- I sang the refrain,

"Come away with me, ma honey babe,  
Come away with me, ma lamb.  
Come with me to the roses' wabe  
In sunny Alabam' ..."

Blinded by scalding tears, I sang the whole song through. When my eyes could see to see, I found that Buttolph, with his characteristic considerate sensitivity, had left me alone with my emotion,

"Ottoman!" I choked, "Another flask of Verdigris ... and be quick about it, you blackguard!"

--- njc

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# CLEAR-EYED, WITH 20-20 VISION

At a rigidly informal cocktail party  
he held the floor!  
"Conformity is the death of our society,"  
he said,  
"and Advertising is the executioner."

Finished, he brushed the ashes  
from the narrow lapels  
of his Continental Suit,  
crushed out his Filter-Tipped cigarette,  
and departed, at a Moderate Speed,  
in his shiny Compact Car.

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# ALL I KNOW IS...

Some headlines better never read:  
MEMBERS ADDRESSED BY LION HEAD  
CLAIMS THAT ARMS RACE OUT OF HAND  
PRESENT SEATING PLANS TO STAND  
CALLING APRIL MARCH ON HILL  
INTRODUCING BUFFALO BILL

--- njc