

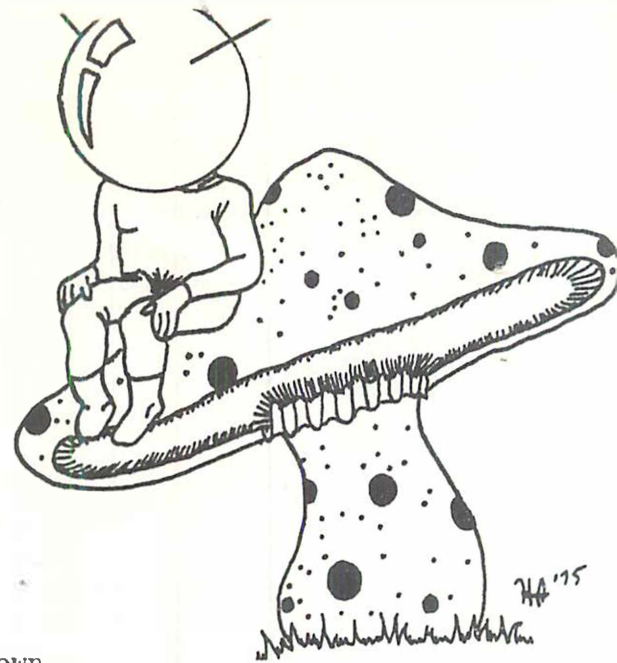
# DONOSAUR







# A T A L E O F T W O C O N S



It was the best of times, it was the . . .

No, I'm sorry, but my parody of Dickens breaks down, right there in the very first sentence. There was nothing "worst" about either SolarCon II in El Paso over the Easter weekend (April 16-18) or AutoClave I in Detroit over the Memorial Day weekend (May 28-31). They were quite different cons (different from each other, I mean) but with some distinct similarities too. But I would hesitate a long time and then refuse to give a reply if I were asked to make an evaluation as to which was "better" and which "worse." Both were very special cons for me, for quite different reasons. I could not have been bribed into staying away from either of them. Shall I tell you about them?

Well you know I'm going to, or there wouldn't be that big heading up there, right? But there's no enormous hurry, and there are one or two other things I want to talk about also, and if I don't take them up now I may forget about them -- or run out of time.

The most obvious other matter, I'm sure, is the Hugo ballot. I haven't received a ballot yet of course and I haven't even seen the issue of LOCUS that lists the nominees. But I have it on unimpeccable authority (when you're talking about Fred Goldstein, "unimpeccable" becomes a meaningful word) that I am on the ballot -- not just once but twice. For Best Fan Writer AND for Best Fanzine.

And what I want to say about that is this:

Well, in the first place, Thanks, to all of you who nominated me, in either category or in both. I am grateful, more so than any words can possibly convey. It's a tremendous honor and I do appreciate it. I have a great sense of unworthiness.

And that's the other thing I wanted to say about the Hugo nominations: In one of those categories at least -- Best Fanzine -- I definitely am unworthy. It amazes me that Don-o-Saur got on the ballot and the only explanation I have for it is that not very many people voted in that category. I love DoS, but even I would never claim that it's among the best five zines being published. Its rating of ninth in the LOCUS poll is about where I would have put it, even though I would have disagreed some on the specific ones that placed ahead of it.





That doesn't matter. It's on the Hugo ballot and there isn't the remotest chance of its winning, so there's really no reason for me to get excited about it. I ought to just accept it as the sincere compliment that it is, and blush becomingly and not say any more about it than necessary. Somehow I can't just let it go at that. I've got to make it unmistakably clear that I don't think DoS should be on the Hugo ballot; one way to do that is to go a step further in my protestations and ask you not to vote for it.

So, please don't vote for Don-o-Saur.

If you'd be interested in my recommendations, I have one. Personally, I intend to vote for OUTWORLDS and if you can see your way clear to doing likewise I would sincerely appreciate it. If Don-o-Saur stays around as long as OUTWORLDS has, and if it ever becomes as great a zine as OUTWORLDS is, and if it gets nominated for a Hugo as many times (without winning) as OUTWORLDS has been, then eventually--in four or five years, say--I just might come around soliciting your support.

As for the other category in which I'm on the ballot--Best Fan Writer ...

Well, if you want to vote for me, I won't try to stop you. I don't think there's much chance that I can win, especially since the elaborate victory campaign that I had mapped out last year--involving a giant special issue to be widely distributed among fandom--never materialized. But you never know. Maybe not very many people will vote in this category, and in that case my chances could be as good as anyone else's. I certainly wouldn't mind having a Best Fan Writer Hugo.

I'm on the FAAn Awards ballot again, as you may have noticed, but it's too late for me to make any recommendations here, even if I were so inclined. As a matter of fact, I might have been so inclined. I would have mentioned, certainly, that my ego does not demand that I win a FAAn Award two years in a row (especially since I'm not likely to anyway). Don D'Amassa is on the ballot in three categories (not even counting the FAAnAC Committee candidacies) and I think he deserves to win an award in at least one of them. But Bill Bowers is still probably the Best Fan Editor, and even though he won last year, I wouldn't consider it an injustice if he should win again. In the Best LoC Writer field, where D'Amassa's name also appears, I have it on unimpaired authority that if Mike Glicksohn doesn't win he may go berserk and quit writing locs, which would be an impairment to large numbers of fanzines. That leaves the Best Fan Writer classification, and Don D'Amassa is definitely at least as good a writer as anyone else on the ballot. So I kind of hope he wins. (I won't be crushed if Don wins both the FAAn and the Hugo, but I'll stop just short of urging you to vote for him in the Hugo race. Gotta draw the line someplace).

As for the other matters I wanted to discuss, I'll be talking about them in the LoCol anyway, so there's little point in bringing them up here, except that having mentioned that certain things are on my mind, it's only fair to tell you what they are, so that when you get to the discussions you'll know they were the ones I was referring to.

One has to do with Don D'Amassa's letter in DoS 45 about the moral questions involved in pot smoking, postal cheating and law-breaking in general. At one point I was certain that this issue of DoS would begin with my attempted refutation of Don's position. In a way I regret that I might not, now, ever get that essay written; but at the same time I'm a bit relieved. I have not thought my way through to any solid conclusions, and if I were to write the essay at this stage it would be vulnerable to counter-attack, especially from such a skilled debater and essayist as Don. So I'll rely upon the letters to make some of the points that I would have tried to develop.

Another topic that has been urging me to discuss it but which I'm putting off (mostly) to the letter col is music -- or more specifically the mechanical/electronic reproduction thereof. I'll say just a little about it here. Claudia returned from Scotland early in June and almost immediately liberated her purloined portable. I told her it wasn't really a very good machine and was likely to do horrible things to her records, but she insisted upon its return anyway, along with most of her records. To fill the resultant sound vacuum in my room, I went shopping and returned eventually with a Pioneer turntable (manual with a Pioneer cartridge: \$100), a Kenwood amplifier (low to medium power rating: \$140), and a set of Sharpe headphones (\$40), having decided to shop a little longer for the speakers. The headset quickly proved less than satisfactory. The sound is fine but they just aren't comfortable for more than a few minutes at a time. So I cannibalized the speakers from our seldom-used livingroom stereo (a Zenith; the speakers are those little tubular affairs) and left the headphones up there. I am temporarily happy with the arrangement, but I still need good speakers, either for my room or upstairs.

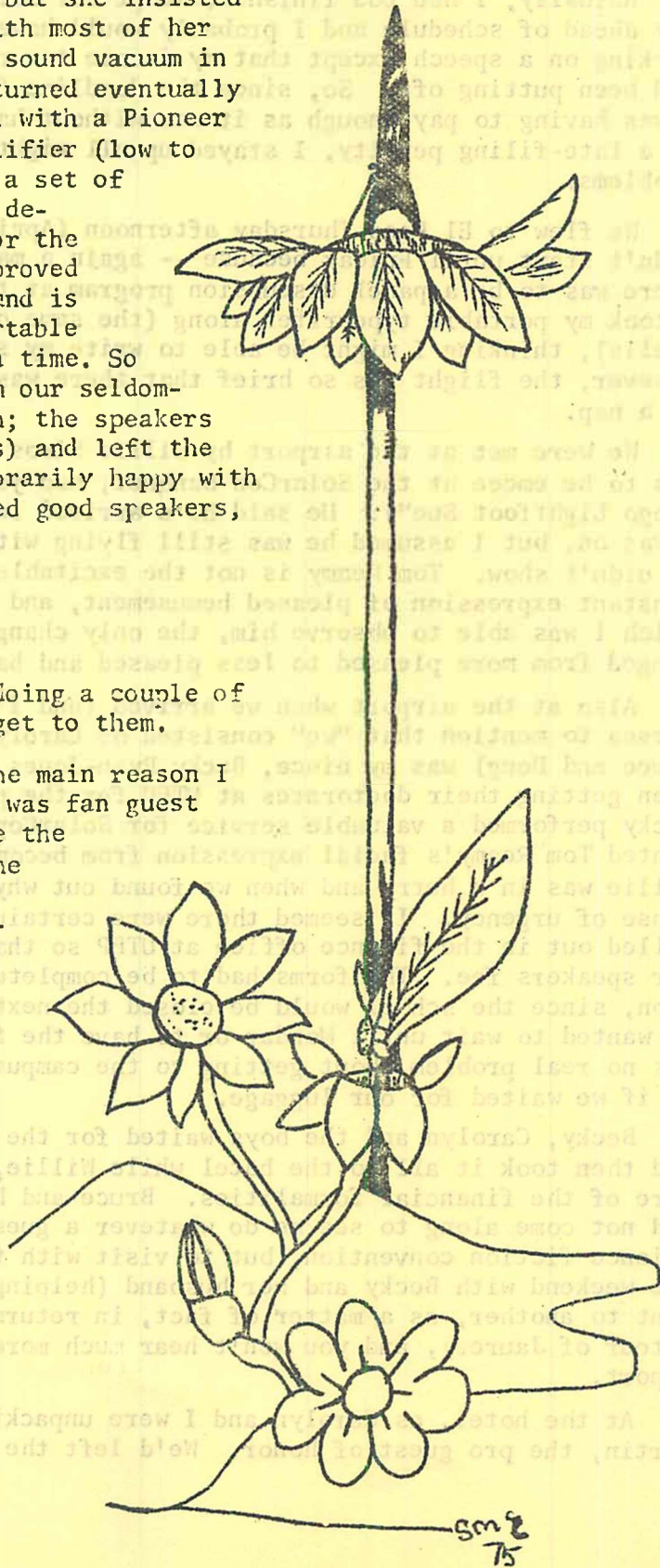
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Now?

Right. I'm supposed to be doing a couple of con reports, aren't I? Better get to them.

All right. SOLARCON II. The main reason I attended SolarCon II was that I was fan guest of honor. Willie Siros had made the invitation a year earlier, at the SFRA conference in Denver in April 1975 (at which Bob Silverberg announced his departure from the SF field). My first impulse, after I accepted the ToH spot, was to rush home and write a Guest of Honor speech. I resisted because I knew I'd have a whole year to work on it. I resisted for a whole year.

About two weeks before the con, Willie called and told me (among other things) that because of strings attached to the university funds helping to pay for the con, the GoHs (officially designated guest speakers or guest writers) couldn't





be paid until after we had spoken. I gulped and said that seemed reasonable and decided I'd better start working on a guest of honor speech. But that was just about the time I had also decided it would be possible to get DoS 45 finished to take to the Con, and that was taking virtually all of my time that wasn't spent teaching or working.

Actually, I had DoS finished (except for collating and stapling) a full day ahead of schedule and I probably would have spent that last night working on a speech except that my income tax return was one of the things I'd been putting off. So, since the deadline for that was April 15 and I was having to pay enough as it was without having to fork over even more as a late-filing penalty, I stayed up all night doing tedious arithmetic problems.

We flew to El Paso Thursday afternoon (April 15) even though the con didn't start until Friday because -- again a matter of university funding-- there was to be a panel discussion program at the university that evening. I took my portable typewriter along (the same one that had been to Australia), thinking I might be able to write my speech during the flight. However, the flight was so brief that there wasn't even time for much of a nap.

We were met at the airport by Willie Siros and Tom Reamy. Tom, who was to be emcee at the SolarCon banquet, had just won a Nebula (for "San Diego Lightfoot Sue"). He said he'd arrived in El Paso on the same plane I was on, but I assumed he was still flying without benefit of aircraft. It didn't show. Tom Reamy is not the excitable type. His face has a constant expression of pleased bemusement, and in the four days during which I was able to observe him, the only changes of expression I saw ranged from more pleased to less pleased and back.

Also at the airport when we arrived (and I've got to use these parentheses to mention that "we" consisted of Carolyn and me and our two sons, Bruce and Doug) was my niece, Becky Ryan-Jones. She and her husband have been getting their doctorates at UTEP for the past three or four years. Becky performed a valuable service for SolarCon and quite possibly prevented Tom Reamy's facial expression from becoming less than pleased. Willie was in a hurry and when we found out why, Tom and I shared his sense of urgency. It seemed there were certain forms that had to be filled out in the finance office at UTEP so that Tom and I could be paid our speakers fee. The forms had to be completed by 5 o'clock that afternoon, since the school would be closed the next day (Good Friday), unless we wanted to wait until Monday or to have the forms mailed to us. There was no real problem about getting to the campus in time, but there might be if we waited for our luggage.

Becky, Carolyn and the boys waited for the luggage (including Tom's) and then took it all to the hotel while Willie, Tom and I were taking care of the financial formalities. Bruce and Doug are not fans. They had not come along to see me do whatever a guest of honor does at a science fiction convention, but to visit with their cousin. They spent the weekend with Becky and her husband (helping them move from one apartment to another, as a matter of fact, in return for which Becky gave them a tour of Jaurez), and you won't hear much more about them in this con report.

At the hotel, as Carolyn and I were unpacking, we met George R.R. Martin, the pro guest of honor. We'd left the door open, because Tom



was getting settled in the room next door and Willie had been scurrying back and forth and in and out. I looked up, and framed in the doorway was a dark presence who said, "Don Thompson? George Martin."

I seldom form preconceptions as to people's appearances, and so I seldom have the experience of finding that a person is nothing at all like what I'd imagined, though I'm often enough on the other end of that. I've grown accustomed to hearing people say, "You're Don Thompson? Wow, you're nothing at all like what I imagined!" Tom Reamy confessed, later, that he was surprised to find that I wasn't a precocious kid in my twenties but instead even older than he is. (I never asked him how old he is). If George had to revise his notions as to what I looked like, he didn't show it, and the instant I saw him I knew that that is exactly the way I would have pictured George R. R. Martin if I had been trying to establish a prior image of him. It was the only possible appearance there could be for George R. R. Martin. Hair is the first impression you get of him--dark hair in great abundance, streaming off his head and face in all directions. The face is the second thing you notice, and the remarkable thing about it is that it's surrounded by all that hair without being actually infringed upon by it. There's a droopy moustache, yes, but it seems a separate entity from the rest of the hair, set apart from it by cleanly shaven cheeks and chin. Thick glasses seem to somehow magnify the entire face and emphasize its smooth youthfulness. (I never asked George how old he is, either, but I was able to deduce that he's still on the credible side of 30. And I never thought of him as a precocious kid).

With George was a breathtakingly attractive woman whom George introduced as Gale Burnick. I didn't notice anything particular about the introduction at the time, but later, in the light of additional knowledge and information and acquaintance, I was conscious of the fact that he did not introduce her as "my wife" or "my girl friend" or "my" anything -- just by her name. And that consciousness reminded me of the fact that when I was making introductions to Willie and Tom at the airport, I was saying, "this is my wife, this is my niece, these are my sons . . ." I was even aware of that reiteration of "my" while I was doing it, and thought it sounded not-quite-right somehow, but I couldn't think of how else to say it. (I still haven't solved the problem of how to speak of relationships in ordinary conversation without making them sound possessive, but I have been thinking about it and about a lot of the other little, unconscious/automatic phrases and usages that unwittingly serve as tools of sexism. Examples? Oh, well, the obvious ones, the ones that most people have already become aware of are such things as job descriptions -- mail-man, busboy, copyboy, male nurse if it's a man, just nurse if it's a woman. Another one, much more subtle, was called to my attention a day or two later, when George made some passing reference to a "coed" and Gale pounced on it immediately with a stern "Huh-uh!" George twitched his moustache and raised his eyebrows and said, "Coed? Sexist? Oh. Student?") A very brief acquaintance with Gale Burnick will make one increasingly aware of little things like that. It's known as consciousness-raising, I believe, and Gale is the most skilled and alert practitioner of the art that I've ever met. And she keeps George constantly alert, too.

It took me a little while to get the relationship between George and Gale straight. Not long after we'd met them, while we were alone for a few minutes, Carolyn said, "Are we having supper with George and his wife?" (See, she does it, too!). And I said "I'm not sure they're married." Because, after all, more and more people are living together without being married. Carolyn acknowledged that but pointed out that more and more



couples are also getting married but keeping their separate names (like Ted Peak and Judith Brownlee) or, even more commonly, getting married and combining their names (like my very own niece, Becky Ryan-Jones -- except that, dammit, she's not mine!)

We did have supper with George and Gale, and Tom and Willie, and one of the topics of conversation was George and Gale's wedding service, which they had written themselves to avoid the traditional vows and implications of mastery and subservience, and that answered my question.

I was starting to have qualms about the panel program that was coming up very soon and about which I had given absolutely no thought. Hesitantly, almost fearfully, I asked Willie, "We're not supposed to actually give speeches tonight, are we?"

"Oh no. It's just a panel, very informal."

"About the Problems of Publishing in the '70s?"

"Right?"

"I'll get to talk about fanzines?"

"Sure."

That didn't quell my qualms entirely, because I was having visions of being on stage in a darkened auditorium with an attentive and critical audience of several thousand students and faculty, and I didn't have any idea of what I could possibly say about fanzines that would be even semi-comprehensible to them. I just hoped that George and Tom would have a lot to say about the problems of real publishing.

That panel, in a way, epitomized the entire con for me-- at least in the contrast between prior expectation and actuality.

But hold it. I'm afraid I'm not saying quite what I mean; in fact I know I'm not. It's close, but it's wide open to misinterpretation if I don't clarify it. See, I did have a rather vivid prior expectation about that panel program. I had envisioned that auditorium setting not just immediately before the event, but weeks before. Don't ask me why. It was not based on any information or even any hints or clues. My mind simply went ahead on its own and created the scene--bright lights on stage, but the auditorium dark; tables draped with white covers, individual microphones for the panelists . . . the crowd hushed and attentive. . . Sorry, but that's the way I saw it.

However, I never visualized anything beyond that -- not even about the panel itself. I reiterate that I had given absolutely no thought at all to the nature of the discussion or even about the topic of the discussion. Much less had I formed any prior picture of what the con itself was going to be like.

This is the point that I want to emphasize and clarify: I did not have any preconceived notions about SolarCon. Well, I knew there would be a lot of films shown and some panels, but I never formed any mental images about any of it.

On the other hand though, Willie Siros and the rest of the SolarCon committee, as I later came to learn, did have preconceived notions and prior expectations about the con.

And their mental images about the con were to the actuality the same as my mental images about that initial panel were to its actuality -- a very great contrast.

There was no stage, no auditorium, no microphones -- scarcely even an audience; certainly not the massed thousands that I had been dreading.



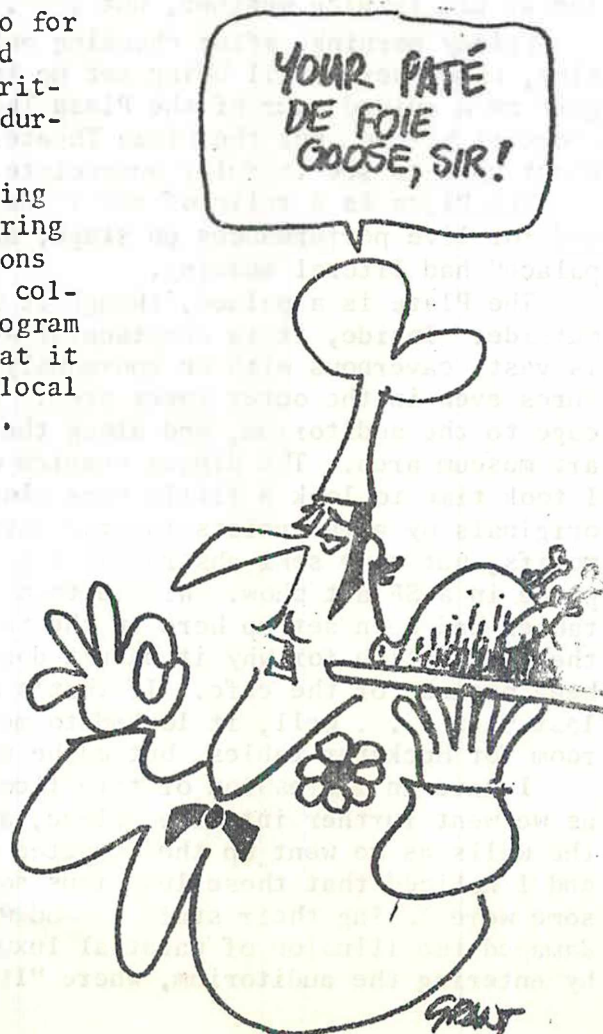
The setting was a small, brightly lighted room on the third floor of the student activities building. Several rows of folding chairs had been set up facing the panel tables at the front of the room. There was a big pot of coffee and an array of cookies and doughnuts on another table off to the side. And when we got there the entire building seemed to echo with emptiness. Minutes before the program was to start, the audience numbered less than twice the size of the panel -- and most of them were either wives of the panel members (Carolyn and Gale) or con committee members. I was more nervous than I would have been in my vast auditorium; but Willie Siros seemed not at all perturbed. He started the discussion just about on time because by then several more people had drifted in, and still more entered before the introductions were completed, and we finally had an audience that must have numbered in excess of a dozen.

It was a very successful panel discussion. George and Tom had quite a bit to say about publishing problems; Tom and I talked a while about fanzines, but there was more audience interest in professional writing; not many in the group seemed to get the point of fanzines. There was a lot of audience involvement, and before we knew it the program was over. Willie was particularly pleased because there had been two or three people whom he had not seen at any of the previous talks and programs that there'd been at the university during the past week or so.

(I notice that I've forgotten to mention that George and Gale had been in El Paso for about a week when Tom and I arrived, and George had been appearing in creative writing classes and giving talks on campus during that time).

Most of the rest of that first evening was taken up with a collating party, during which I got an inkling of the expectations that the sponsors had for SolarCon. We collated and stapled something like 200 program booklets, and there was some concern that it might not be enough, what with all the local publicity that the con had been getting.

I don't know what the final official attendance figures for the con were. I'll make a wild guess: Somewhere between 50 and 60. Though I could be off in either direction. It was hard to estimate. There could have been any number of fully paid members who spent all their time at the film program; I wouldn't have been aware of them at all. But it did seem that every time I stepped inside the auditorium at the Plaza Theater, it was very sparsely populated; but that's hard to judge too, because that is an enormous auditorium.





Anyway my point is that my impression was that there was a significant difference between what the SolarCon committee expected in the way of attendance and the actual attendance. Yet that discrepancy did not spoil the con -- at least not for me -- any more than the panel program at UTEP was spoiled by not being as grandiose as I had imagined it might be. If anything, the con, like the program, was more enjoyable for being smaller and more intimate.

One of the contributing factors to the low con attendance was the weather.

Texas is a southern state, right? El Paso is in the desert part of Texas, right? Easter is a spring holiday, and for a spring holiday in a southern, desert region, you have a right to expect nice weather, right?

Well, I've just been talking about differences between expectations and realities and here's another splendid example. I was so confident of the kind of weather that El Paso would be having that I ignored the weather reports and forecasts and declined to take an overcoat--and that was the only thing about the entire con that I regretted.

It was cold in El Paso. And windy. And rainy.

Another factor contributing to the low attendance at the con was the fact that the major events were separated by several blocks. The Huckster room, the art display, the panels and parties were in the hotel; all the films were in the Plaza Theater, three or four blocks distant. No problem at all in nice weather, but . . .

Friday morning, after checking out the Huckster room and art display, which were still being set up in the basement of the hotel, Willie gave me a guided tour of the Plaza Theater. He had told me a little about it before, but the Plaza Theater in El Paso is something you just about have to see to fully appreciate.

The Plaza is a relic of the 1920s, built to be used both for movies and for live performances on stage, and at a time when the term "movie palace" had literal meaning.

The Plaza is a palace, though it doesn't look like much from the outside. Inside, it is spectacular -- in a restored kind of way. It is vast, cavernous with an enormously high ceiling and gilded wall fixtures even in the outer foyer area. It's a long walk from the ticket cage to the auditorium, and along the way you pass a combination cafe-art museum area. The dining service was not in operation just then, but I took time to look a little more closely at some of the paintings -- originals by area artists for the most part, with a dominance of western motifs, but some semi-abstracts that might not have been too out of place in a SF art show. Willie told me that last year the Huckster tables had been set up here in the theater, and I never did quite get the explanation for why it wasn't done that way this time; it may have been because of the cafe. If that's where the sales tables had been last year . . . well, it looked to me like there was still plenty of room for Huckster tables, but maybe not.

I have an impression of tile floor giving way to plush carpeting as we went further into the palace, and I noticed the ornate sofas against the walls as we went up the carpeted stairs to the inner lobby area--and I noticed that those luxurious sofas were shabby. Some were dingy; some were losing their stuffing and were sagging. That temporarily damaged the illusion of palatial luxury, but it was quickly restored by entering the auditorium, where "It Came From Outer Space" was flicker-



ing in 3-D fuzziness on the distant screen. Willie led me down the aisle, past the overhanging balcony (which I wasn't even aware of until after we'd emerged from beneath it) and then he gestured upward.

I looked, and stood amazed, in awe.

High, high overhead, up deep in the great dome of the auditorium, the stars twinkled like tiny points of light -- or was it tiny points of light twinkling like stars? But there were clouds, floating across the face of the firmament. Real clouds? Well, they looked real, at first. Willie then pointed out the live trees and shrubs growing in nooks and crannies around the sides of the auditorium and stage. He showed me the rest of the theater -- the projection booth with its very modern and very ancient equipment, the balcony that seemed to touch the sky, and the haunted stairway where, decades ago, a patron had died of a heart attack in the act of lighting a cigarette and where, ever since, cleaning crews had reported seeing the flash and hearing the whirring click of a cigarette lighter in the after-closing-time emptiness of the building.

Willie took me backstage and had me look up again, at the narrow catwalks a mile or so above the curtains, and then he took me into the basement to see the furnace room and the dressing rooms. The Plaza may have had some of the great stars of the legitimate theater in its heyday, but the stars were not treated to near the luxury that the patrons were. The dressing rooms nothing much -- mere cubby holes.

Finally, the *piece de resistance* of the theater tour, Willie took me into the organ loft -- a vast, hollow area off to the side of the stage, with a slatted window providing an enchanted view of both audience and stage. The room ached with the absence of the massive organ that had once filled it. Several years ago, Willie told me, the theater was about to be demolished, but a group of local citizens set up a foundation to save and restore the building and keep the theater in operation. But they were not in time to save the organ.

Willie is a member (or on the board of directors?) of the Plaza preservation group, and that's how come it was being used in conjunction with the SF convention.

It cost some unbelievable amount of money just to open the theater each day, and in order for that not to be a total loss, it was deemed necessary for the Plaza to show its regularly scheduled feature (which did just happen to be It Came From Outer Space ((in 3-D, with special glasses only a quarter extra)) alternately with the con films. A table had been set up in the lobby to try to collect from the people who wanted to see just the con film program and to sell them memberships and send them to the hotel, but it just didn't work out. There was no way to prevent anyone from paying to see the feature film and then staying indefinitely to see the others too.

When I first tried to write a Guest of Honor speech (it must have been Saturday, while Carolyn was off with Becky and the boys, getting a tourist's eye view of Juarez, that I actually sat down with the typewriter for a half hour or so and put a few thoughts on paper), I included a semi-facetious section on how to improve SolarCon for next year. I ultimately and probably wisely lost my nerve and excised that portion from the speech as given, but my basic idea, I still believe, has some merit. It was, after proposing that something be done about the weather, that all the con events take place in the Plaza Theater. (Of course that would have made my first suggestion irrelevant since the weather would no longer be a factor, but I wasn't thinking about logic). No one could



deny that the theater was spacious enough for all the regular con events: Huckster room in the lobby, along with the art show, and the banquet there in the cafe area; there were small rooms above the lobby that could be used for panels. The parties could be back stage, behind the movie screen, without disturbing anyone. There might be a slight problem with sleeping accommodations, but the un-fannish practice of sleeping at cons ought not to be encouraged anyway, and anyone who really needed sleep could surely find carpet space in abundance, either in the lobby or, if darkness was considered desirable, there was the balcony.

I'm glad I left that particular silliness out of my speech. No matter how I'd phrased it, it would have sounded like criticism of the con for being too spread out. (As a matter of fact, even the portion of it in the hotel was somewhat awkwardly spread out: Huckster room and art display in the basement; panel room, which also doubled later as the banquet room, was on the fifth floor just off the hotel's main dining room; the con suite, party headquarters, was on the 12th floor).

But I don't mean to be critical. It was a good con. As I saw it, my main task, as Fan Guest of Honor, was to enjoy myself, and I certainly accomplished that.

After the theater tour, Willie gave me a quick tour of the nearby book stores. It was a battle with the wind but worth it because I picked up some bargains. Sorry I don't remember exactly what they were; they've gotten mixed in with the stuff I bought in the Huckster room and at the auctions later -- quite a lot of nice bargains, all in all.

Willie spent much of the rest of Friday, as I recall, trying to track down reports that Roger Zelazny was in town. Zelazny was the judge for the writing contest held in conjunction with the con. Willie had mentioned to me several times previously that he was expected, but I had forgotten. I was eager to meet him.

I took another walk in the wind, this time with Carolyn. I had volunteered the use of my stapler for the con program booklet collating session the night before, and had run out of staples, so now I had to get more so I could collate and staple the copies of Don-o-Saur that I'd brought along. We found an office supply store and went back to the room and had our own collating party for a while.

Then we poked around in the Huckster Room for a while, browsing, visiting and watching the television people doing their thing. Heard later that TV treated the con with due respect.

The Huckster room was fairly small -- well, small, compared to the usual SFcon Huckster room; small even compared to what MileHiCon's had been for the past couple of years, but larger than the one at Aussie-Con, which was almost nonexistent. But I found things to buy. Well, I bought a copy of *Odyssey*, among other things, because I had never seen a copy of it in Denver -- and still haven't. The dealers didn't seem overly pleased with the location of the room, because there wasn't much traffic, and there was some talk, for a while, of moving the tables to the Plaza theater after all, but nothing ever came of it.

The art show, too, was quite modest, spread out along the far wall of the Huckster room and nearly half the entries being by a local professional artist and not for sale. Nice work, though; the fan as well as the pro.

I have a distinct memory of being in the Plaza Theater again and



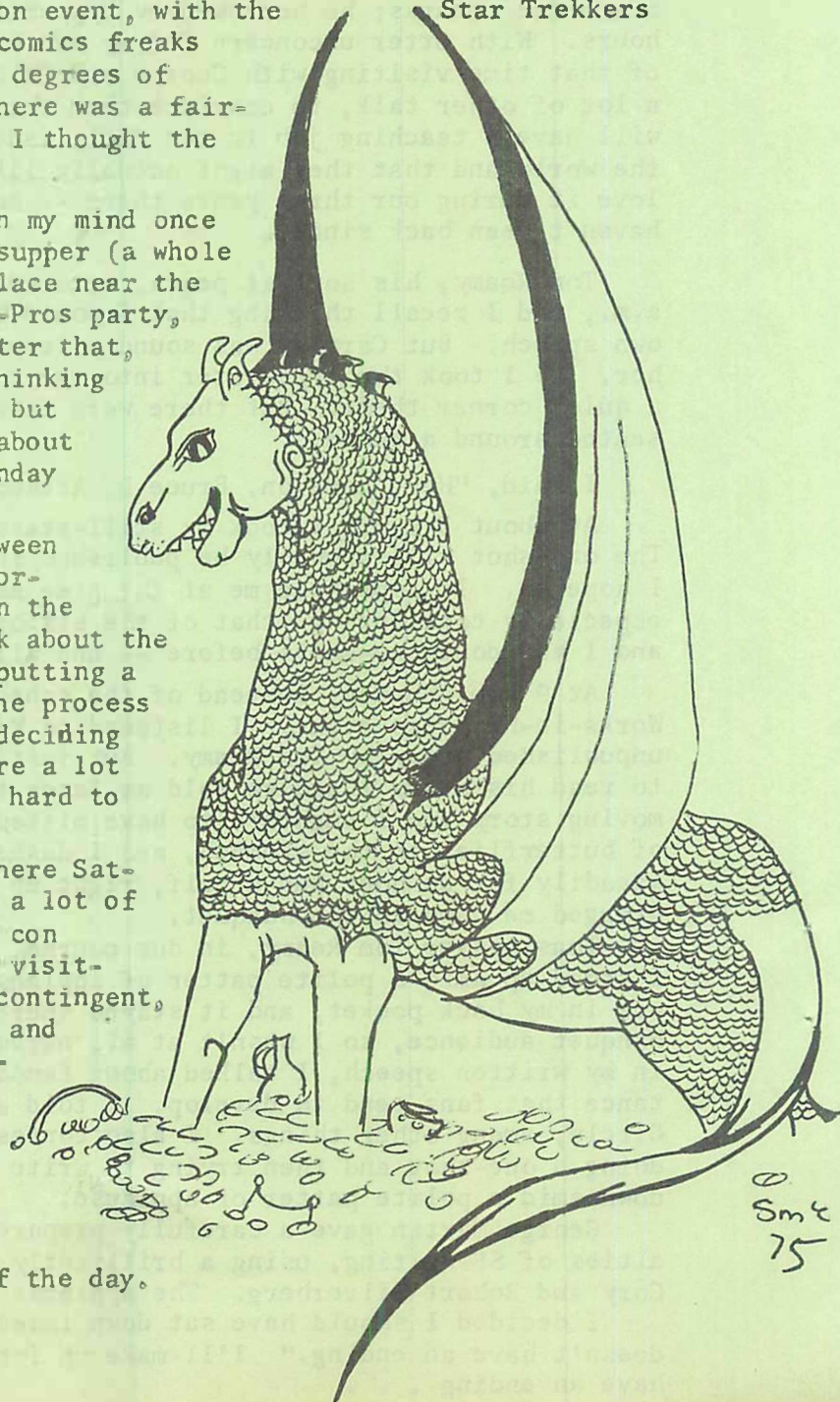
sitting through part of "It Came From Outer Space" and trying to get the glasses both comfortable and in proper 3-D register, but I have no recollection of braving the bitter wind to get there and back.

But it had to have been on Friday, and it had to have been before 4:30, because that's when the first official panel of the con was. It was a discussion of the nature of fandom. In the program booklet, I was listed as moderator and the other panelists were Tom Reamy, Willie Siros and Bruce D. Arthurs. I slyly maneuvered Willie into doing the introductions, which led almost automatically to his doing what moderating was done at all. Bruce Arthurs, unquestionably the panelist best qualified to discuss the status of current fandom, wasn't there. The rest of us gave brief testimonials about our personal initiations into fandom and our subsequent growth or regression or whatever; and from there it quickly became an audience participation event, with the Star Trekkers and the Space 1999ers and the comics freaks accusing each other of various degrees of intolerance and/or density. There was a fair-sized crowd for the panel, and I thought the discussion was entertaining.

The thought flashed through my mind once Friday evening, either during supper (a whole gang of us ate together at a place near the Plaza), or during the Meet-the-Pros party, or during the general party after that, that I really ought to start thinking about a Guest of Honor speech, but there didn't seem any urgency about it. After all, I had until Sunday to work on it.

On Saturday, some time between the Women in SF panel in the morning and the Sex in SF panel in the afternoon, I actually did think about the speech, even to the extent of putting a few words on paper. Even in the process of typing them, though, I was deciding not to use them. And there were a lot of distractions, so I found it hard to concentrate.

Really, I don't remember where Saturday went. I must have spent a lot of it just lounging around in the con suite or in the Huckster Room, visiting with people. The Arizona contingent, with Bruce Arthurs, Greg Brown and others, had arrived around midnight, having been delayed (they solemnly swore) by ground blizzards. And Roger Zelazny had materialized sometime during the previous evening, after doing the tourist thing in Juarez most of the day.





(I think it was Joe Holihen, the con party chairman, who'd tentatively offered to lead a party to some of the grungier attractions in Juarez some night, but for various reasons the expedition never occurred).

Zelazny was a participating member of the audience for one of the panels, and a participating panelist for the other. He was also a judge for the costume show Saturday evening, a chore I shared with him.

The costume show was interesting. There were seven entries and we awarded eight prizes, in such categories as Most Historical; Best Costume Based on a Fictional Character; Best based on a TV series, etc. The eighth category, Most Grotesque, was for Bruce D. Arthurs, who wasn't in costume.

About 10:30 p.m. Tom Reamy started panicking and decided he'd write his emcee remarks; he borrowed my typewriter and disappeared for a few hours. With utter unconcern for my own oratorical duties, I spent a lot of that time visiting with George and Gale in their room, trying, among a lot of other talk, to convince them that Dubuque, Iowa, where George will have a teaching job in the fall, isn't really the worst place in the world and that they might actually like it. (Carolyn and I came to love it during our three years there -- but that was 20 years ago, and we haven't been back since).

Tom Reamy, his soul at peace, returned the typewriter at around 2 a.m., and I recall thinking that I would have plenty of time to write my own speech. But Carolyn was sound asleep in our room; I couldn't disturb her. So I took the typewriter into the con suite. Maybe I could find a quiet corner there. But there were fans in the con suite, some of them seated around a table.

I said, "Hey, come on, Bruce D. Arthurs, let's do a one-shot!"

At about 5 a.m., I took my still-steaming typewriter and went to bed. The one-shot will probably be published in an upcoming issue of *CAMBION*. I hope so. It impressed me at the time as being a highly creditable zine, especially considering that of the six or seven contributors, only Bruce and I had done one-shots before -- and all we did was get it started.

At 9 a.m. Sunday, instead of the scheduled Trivia Bowl, there was a Works-in-Progress event. I listened to Willie read a sardonically amusing unpublished story by Tom Reamy. But just as George R.R. Martin started to read his story (Carolyn told me later that it was a fine, powerful, moving story and I oughtn't to have missed it), I suffered a sudden attack of butterflies in the stomach, and I dashed off to the room and typed steadily for an hour and a half, right up until 1 o'clock, when Carolyn dragged me down to the banquet.

Toastmaster Tom Reamy, in due course, read his introduction of me, and I stood up amid a polite patter of applause. My uncompleted typed speech was in my back pocket, and it stayed there. It was a smallish and friendly banquet audience, so I wasn't at all nervous. Covering some of the points in my written speech, I talked about fandom and the sense of self-importance that fans tend to develop. I told about Claude Degler and the Cosmic Circle, among other things. I also confessed to having stayed up all night doing a one-shot and then trying to write a speech in the last hour. I sat down amid a polite patter of applause.

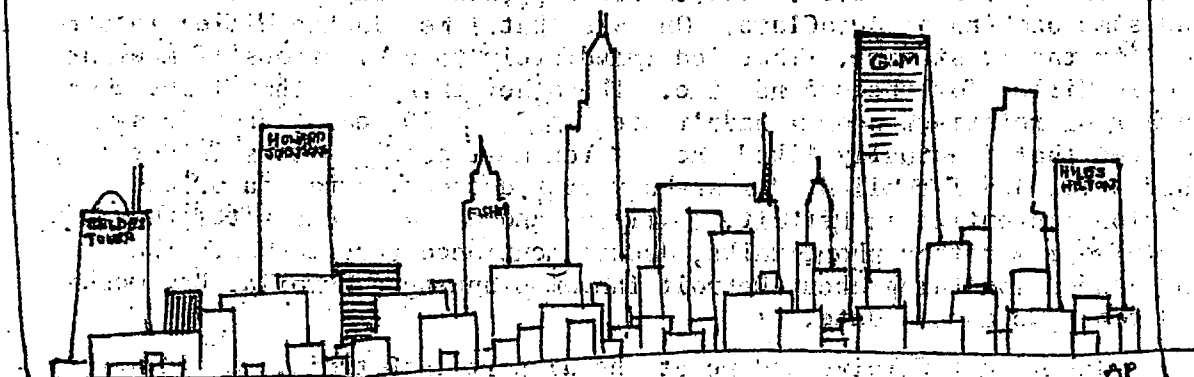
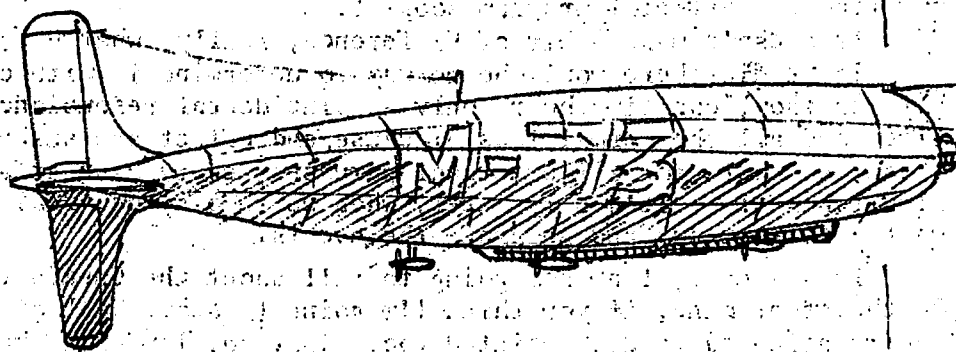
George Martin gave a carefully prepared talk about the rewards and penalties of SF writing, using a brilliantly sustained comparison of Richard Cory and Robert Silverberg. The applause was sustained.

I decided I should have sat down immediately after I said, "This speech doesn't have an ending." I'll make up for it now. This con report doesn't have an ending . . .



# Don O'Saur

SPECIAL  
AUTOCLAVE  
ISSUE



... And THIS con report has no beginning. At least not exactly. To start with an explanation of this masterful cover art by Andrew Porter would be logical enough but it would take us immediately to an event that took place either Saturday evening, May 29, or Sunday, May 30, depending upon whose memory you want to trust. And that would involve a philosophical discussion of memory problems and the use of flashback technique to tell about the events that transpired prior to King Con -- or Kong Con; I'm not even sure what we decided to call the invasion of Canada.

I have no objection to flashback technique, or to philosophical discussions. The real problem with beginning the AutoClave report is that I must, after all, say a little more about SolarCon. Specifically I want to apologize to Jaron Lanier, to Mike Emery, to Debbie Bean, to Christine



Pasanen and to Ed Scarbrough, to Clint Hiser, to Charles Darby, to Wendy Emlinger, to Nina Siros, to Kimball Ayer, to Tom Cagle, to Brian Giza, to Jim Corrick, to Carol Hoag and to anybody else I met and talked to and didn't get around to mentioning; and I must add a special word of thanks to Nina's and Willie's parents for providing transportation to the airport when the time came, too soon, Sunday afternoon, to leave Solar Con.

\* \* \* \*

Now back to my disconnected memories of AutoClave . . .

I have decided that Kong Con or the Canada incursion (it was really just a raid, not an invasion) had to have been Sunday and the banquet Saturday. I thought that was the way I remembered it, and now I have received confirmation in a brief con report from Brian Earl Brown (at least he recalls the banquet being Saturday night; but then he recalls me as looking like "a sterno-bum/derelict," so how much confidence are you going to have in his memory? Also, the dittoed tentative program schedule that was mailed out in advance (and which I forgot to take along, to my regret) shows the banquet on Saturday night. Of course I cannot now find the official program booklet.

It doesn't make a bit of difference, really, what happened when, and even if it did there would be no way to determine it with certainty. As all fen know, con time bears only a coincidental resemblance to mundane time, and all the normal laws of cause and effect are suspended during a con, so that, for all practical purposes, everything at a con happens simultaneously. It's only later, when we rejoin the "real world" that we try to sort out and separate the events.

In any case, I am not going to tell about the Canada thing just yet. On the other hand, if you think I'm going to start back at the beginning, you're going to be disappointed too. Instead, I'm going back about six months before the beginning.

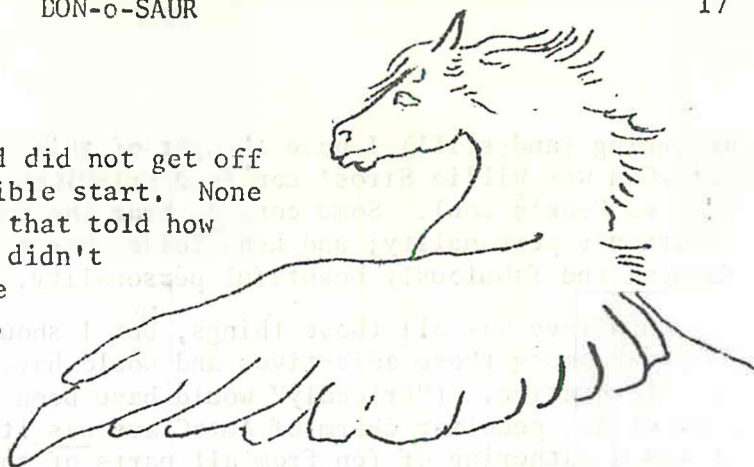
Back to November 1975, to my trip to Virginia for the memorial services for my sister Polly. Two things happened during that trip that had some bearing on AutoClave. One was that I met Jackie Hilles in person for the first time. That led immediately to aspirations of meeting Jackie Hilles for the second time. The other thing was that I met a number of relatives whom I hadn't seen in 25 to 30 years, and I discovered that I actually liked them. "You must come visit us in Detroit," they said, and I replied, "If anybody ever decides to have a science fiction convention in Detroit, I will." And a few weeks after that, in one of our marathon phone talks, Jackie mentioned very casually that she'd seen something about Detroit fandom planning a Memorial Day weekend con. We made a date.

Jackie met Carolyn and me at the airport in Detroit. She'd arrived from Richmond on Northwest Airlines an hour and a half ahead of us, and had walked the enormous distance to the United terminal and waited.

Some people, I suppose, might consider this a somewhat challenging situation -- either that or so hackneyed as to be avoided at all costs. How does the average man go about introducing his wife to the woman he loves? I won't say that I hadn't been just a bit apprehensive; but of course there was no reason to be. Jackie and Carolyn had already met, sort of -- on the telephone and through an exchange of letters -- and had already decided they liked each other, so there was no undue tension about their first in-person meeting.



Even so, our con weekend did not get off to the most auspicious possible start. None of us had brought the flyer that told how to get to the hotel, but it didn't seem to matter. We knew the con was at Howard Johnson's, and there was a bus that would take us to Howard Johnson's Central. That sounded right to me. But the desk clerk at that small downtown hotel, just across the street from the Cadillac, said, "Auto Cleave? Never heard of such a thing. You sure you're at the right place?" He made a phone call and then gave us an infuriating smile. "It's at Howard Johnson's New Center motel. You'll have to take a cab."



At least it was a fairly short ride on to the right hotel, and once we got settled there (on the 15th floor) and found the con registration desk (on the second floor) and started meeting fans, I quickly forgot about feeling stupid; and in fact I had no more personal difficulties or unpleasantnesses for the rest of the weekend. It was pure pleasure from then on.

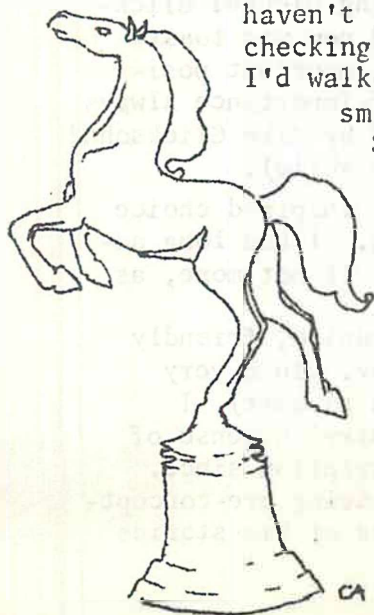
It took me a while to get to the registration desk, because there was a cluster of fans with name tags that I recognized (and even a face or two that I recognized) that I had to get past first. There was Gary Farber, and Dave Szurek, and Tony Cvetko (him I remembered from DisCon) and others, but if I tried to say exactly when and where I met whom, I would simply get bogged down in confusion. I don't even recall who was at the registration desk when I picked up the name tags and banquet tickets. It could have been Joe Wesson or Gary Mattingly or Diane Drutowski, or maybe they were all three there. Or maybe it was three other people entirely. You see what I mean.

Leah Zeldes was not at the desk; this I can say for certain, because as I started for the Huckster Room, which I could see was not really open yet but which was there and an irresistably short distance away, I walked past fans seated on benches against the balcony railing (this second floor

lobby area was a sort of mezzanine from which you could look down to the main floor lobby; I can visualize it but I notice that I haven't given you any clues), and I was almost subliminally checking name tags as I went. One registered in my mind after I'd walked past. I stopped and turned back, and Leah Zeldes smiled and got up from somebody's lap and said, "Hi."

She was tall and willowy and very, very lovely and though I'd had no preconceived notions as to what Leah Zeldes looked like, I knew instantly that this was the only possible appearance for her. I don't recall saying anything at all. I folded her into my arms and kissed her enthusiastically and told her telepathically that I loved her and that I already knew her con was going to be beautiful. And after a few more kisses I tore myself away from her and went on into the Huckster Room and got acquainted with Howard DeVore.

I know there were other people involved in the planning and production of AutoClave, but from the



beginning (and still) I have thought of this as Leah's con -- just as SolarCon was Willie Siros' con (and MileHiCon has been Judith Brownlee's and Ted Peak's con). Some cons do bear the unmistakable stamp of the chairfen's personality; and Leah Zeldes has a fantastic, fascinating, fannish and fabulously beautiful personality.

AutoClave was all those things, but I should have worked in "cosmopolitan" among those adjectives and would have except it wasn't properly alliterative. ("Friendly" would have been fine, though). Definitely, part of the peculiar charm of AutoClave was its cosmopolitan character. It was a gathering of fen from all parts of the country . . . Or would you prefer accuracy? Not all parts. I don't know of anybody there from the Deep South or from New England. (But there were a lot of people there from Canada). Some of the people I met marveled at my having come all the way from Colorado for what they assumed was a regional con, but I was able to point out that others had come from even farther away. Don Ayers was there from Hollywood, for instance. And Curt Stubbs and Greg Brown from Arizona. (Oh, and HJN Andruschak, also from California). Kansas City isn't such a hell of a lot closer than Denver, and it was represented by Jeff May and Bill Fesselmeyer. From the East Coast, other than Jackie, there were at least Dave Romm and Gary Farber.

The con contained a couple of minor disappointments for me, but only in a positively negative sense -- except I don't think that makes any sense, does it? What I mean is that I was disappointed that some people weren't there that I thought might be. For instance, Chris Sherman was tentatively designated moderator of the panel on APAs and I'd have liked very much to see him again, for I have fond and pleasant memories of a weekend he spent in the Denver area some two years ago. Also, Bob Tucker was tentatively designated moderator of the First Fandom panel, and I would not have minded very much seeing Tucker again, for I have fond and jumbled memories of Australia that involve Tucker to some degree.

However, the minor disappointments of AutoClave were far, far outweighed by the delights.

We could almost have had an Aussiecon trip reunion party, such as is being planned for MidAmeriCon, because there were several of us there from the Aussiecon flight -- mostly Canadians, including Michael Glicksohn. He'd been a fan Guest of Honor in Australia and now was toastmaster for AutoClave. How he manages to occupy these important positions without ever seeming to have any feeling of self-importance always mystifies me. What a delight it was to be embarrassed by Mike Glicksohn! (I'll try to get around to explaining that in a little while).

It was a delight to meet Donn Brazier; and what an inspired choice he was as Fan Guest of Honor at a fanzine-oriented con. I had long admired Donn through TITLE and now I admire him equally, if not more, as a person.

And Gene Wolfe! What a fascinating, fantastic, fannish, friendly and fabulous individual he is! To say nothing of funny. In a very brief con report that I did for DASFax (which I happen to edit), I described Gene Wolfe as "a middle-aged cherub with a pixyish sense of humor" and I haven't been able to improve on that description since. Gene Wolfe is kind of an exception to my rule of not having pre-conceptions about people's appearances. From having read some of his stories



and from two or three letters that he'd written to DoS, I had developed an image of Gene Wolfe as a relatively young, thin, wirey, energetic individual with thin, sharp, serious features and cold, glinting-gray eyes. An ambitious young man on the rise. (*Yon Cassius hath a lean and . . .* Yes, yes; thank you, Willie S. No need to belabor the point).

Instead, Gene Wolfe is a middle-aged cherub.

He is plump and comfortable looking with a broad, smiling face that doesn't know when to quit, having extended itself generously in both directions, top and bottom. The domed pate has burst through the hair layer. The extra chins add the emphasis of repetition to his smile. He's a beardless Santa Claus in slacks and short sleeved sports shirt.

OR: He's a big overgrown Teddy bear that your 4-year-old nephew would love to roll around on the floor with and ride horsey-back.

Could this be the man, I asked myself, who wrote "The Fifth Head of Cerberus" and "The Death of Dr. Island"? Could it be the man, Carolyn asked herself, who wrote Peace (a little-known mainstream novel so full of little ghost stories that Carolyn was certain Gene Wolfe had an Irish grandmother; he denied it)? Well, it takes only a little casual conversation to reveal Gene Wolfe as a many-faceted, highly complex being whose sense of humor by no means precludes a wide ranging and deeply penetrating intellect. And if you want Gene Wolfe stories that reflect the kind of humor that is his most obvious surface feature, they do exist. There's "Tarzan of the Grapes," for instance (F&SF June '72) or "How I Lost the Second World War and Helped Turn Back the German Invasion" (Analog May '73).

Gene Wolfe's AutoClave guest of honor speech was a masterpiece of fannish nonsense -- certainly the most fannish pro-GoH speech that I've ever heard. It'll be reprinted in somebody's fanzine -- but alas, not this one.

The Huckster Room at AutoClave, while actually not much bigger than the one at Solar Con, was particularly delightful for me for two special reasons. One was the opportunity to get acquainted with Howard DeVore (the Big Heart is not just a myth; he insisted on giving Carolyn a copy of a book that she had mentioned in casual conversation that the Westminster Library should have). The other reason was Ben Jason.

Once Ben Jason got his table, the one closest to the door, set up, I never got beyond it to inspect any of the others. I collect pulp magazines. Ben sells pulp magazines -- at reasonable prices. There was another pulp dealer there, for about half a day, but most of his stuff (in beautiful condition, I have to say) was magazines that I do not (yet) collect, and at prices I may never be able to afford. I was interested in Ben Jason, not just because of the magazines I was able to buy from him, but because he can provide color Xerox copies of magazine covers-- also at reasonable prices. I paid \$2 several years ago for a copy of the August 1928 Amazing with the first Buck Rogers story, and the only thing wrong with it is that the front cover is missing. Dealers are asking anywhere from \$20 up for that particular issue now, complete with cover. If I can get a color Xerox copy of the cover for only a couple of bucks, I will have saved about \$16, which I can spend on Xeroxes for some of the coverless Astoundings and Weirds that I have.

I got so engrossed in talking pulps with Ben (he's one of the few collectors with a complete set of Weird Tales; even the fabulous Ron Graham

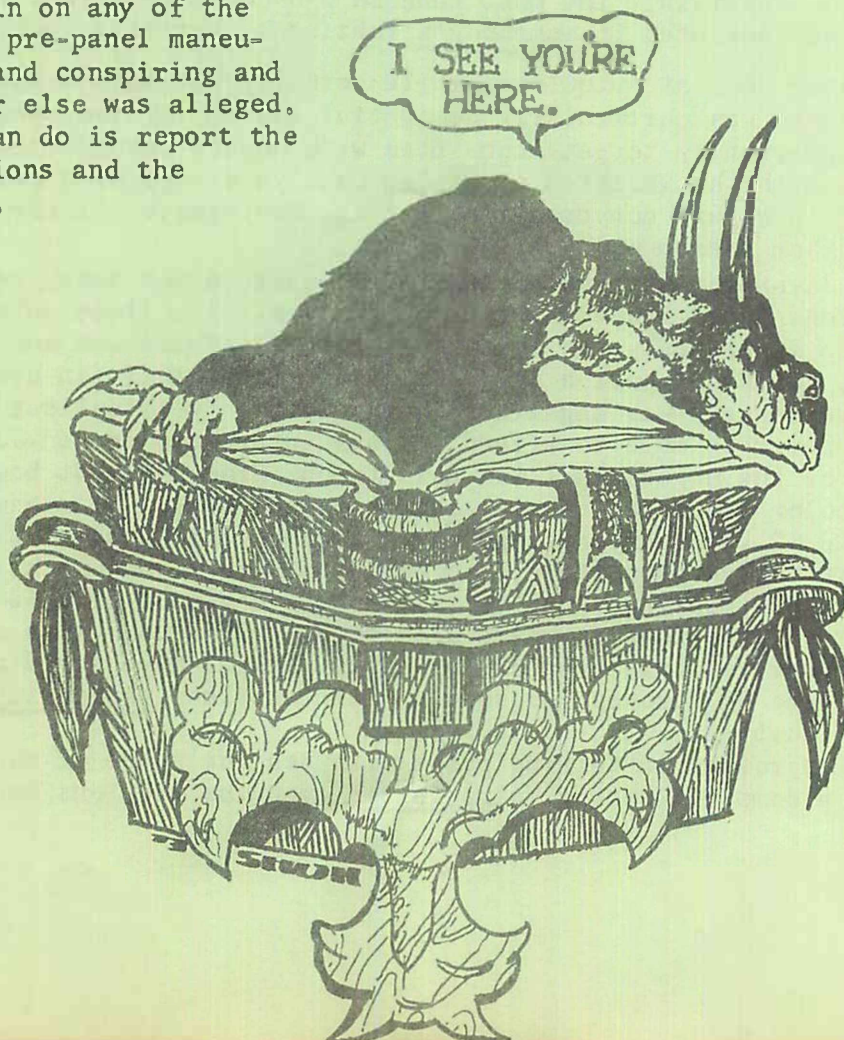
in Australia was missing about six issues) that I missed the APA panel, which I had started for. (Carolyn sat in on it and said she thoroughly enjoyed it and was quite impressed by Gary Farber's moderating abilities).

I had gotten my paneling duties out of the way early and thus was able to relax and enjoy the others. In fact, I enjoyed the one I was on -- FANZINES: Their Organization & Why People Publish Them. It was the first one on the schedule-- at 12:30 Saturday. Donn Brazier was the moderator, and the other panelists were Bill Bowers, Linda Bushyager, Mike Glicksohn and Andy Porter. With that kind of lineup, I didn't have to say much at all. Bill and Andy were kept busy trying to explain, in response to Linda's pointed questions, why they should still be considered fanzine publishers while striving to become prozine pubbers.

The panel that had the hardest time holding its audience (in fact, it lost about half its audience before it was over) was the one consisting of the pro writers -- Gene Wolfe, Lloyd Biggle Jr. and Gordon Dickson. Indicating, I guess, what a fan-oriented con this was.

The most exciting panel, by far, was the SEX IN SF & FANDOM one, also Saturday afternoon. And it was the only time during the entire con that I detected sparks of genuine hostility. In addition, it was the occasion I had in mind when I dropped the casual comment a while ago about being embarrassed by Mike Glicksohn. So I'd better explain about this one in a little more detail.

I didn't get in on the very beginning, because the Huckster Room was right next door, and it was almost impossible (for me) not to stop there on the way to any of the panels. And of course I wasn't in on any of the alleged pre-panel maneuvering and conspiring and whatever else was alleged. All I can do is report the allegations and the denials.





I wandered into the room just as Mike was making what sounded like a last desperate plea for some woman in the audience to join the panel and provide a semblance of sexual balance. Just when it seemed they were ready to give up and start without a female, Carolyn walked up and took a seat at the end of the table. Ro Lutz-Nagy didn't know who she was, so Mike introduced her as the wife of Don Thompson. Bill Fesselmeyer remembered her as the lady who had once paid \$14 for him at an auction (at a MileHiCon the year that Galactic Bill was the ARFF --Adjacent Region Fan Fund-- winner. Jim Allen had me identify myself in the audience -- and then introduced me as the husband of Carolyn Thompson.

With the panel complete and the mandatory puns and double entendres out of the way (wish I could remember some of the better ones; I always enjoy that aspect of the Sex & SF panels, but the best of the one-liners always slip right through my memory), the discussion settled down to what at first seemed like a routine reiteration of the major points that you've heard made at a dozen other such panels-- that yes, SF has matured a great deal in its handling of sexual themes, and yes, SF by its very nature is able to explore certain aspects of sexuality that the mainstream cannot; but that nevertheless, SF still has a long way to go...etc., etc.

As long as the dialogue was on that level, Carolyn was neither overshadowed nor out-talked by the male panelists. She is not a fan, but she is a good librarian. She reads a lot--of both SF and non-SF and is in fact better qualified to make meaningful comparisons than most fans are.

Mike Glicksohn, of course, hasn't read science fiction in years, as he acknowledged when it came his turn to comment. And so he insisted on discussing the other half of the official panel topic, which, he reminded everyone, was "Sex in SF AND FANDOM". (In the Sex-SF panel at SolarCon, George Martin and Gale Burnick intended to swing the talk around to that aspect, but Roger Zelazny happened to be on that panel too, and he was successful in sticking to a consideration of literary matters. Mike did better; he had more help).

Audience interest, certainly, perked up when the panel started assuming the characteristics of a confessional. And the panelists did deem it necessary, in order to avoid the morass of meaningless generalities, to engage in a round of rather specific reminiscences and self-revelations--not using names, but making it unmistakably clear, for the most part, what and who they were talking about. Carolyn, who sat silent and unconsulted, having nothing to contribute to this phase of the conversation, told me later that she thought Mike had plunged the panel into quite unnecessarily frank and uncomfortable realms. I couldn't argue the issue with her, since it was an honest opinion -- a subjective value judgment; but I felt that perhaps I had a clearer understanding than she of why Mike had wanted to turn the talk into those channels, and I told her I was grateful to him, in a way, for having done it. It was by all odds the most informative Sex in SF panel that I'd ever listened to.

The outburst of hostility, in case you were jumping to conclusions, had nothing to do really with the personal disclosures that were being made. That occurred when someone in the audience asked why (when the males were disclaiming any taint of chauvinism) this had been originally an all-male panel and they'd had to get a last-minute female volunteer from the audience. Ro Lutz-Nagy began a somewhat detailed and involved account of how they'd tried to get various females to join the panel and had been, for various reasons, turned down. I confess that I was not





become accustomed, in marriage to a certain focus of affection, and when that focus starts to shift . . . it takes some getting used to."

"Does it bother you now to know that many, many people in fandom love your husband?"

I didn't quite catch Carolyn's reply because my ears were starting to ring, but I heard Mike's next question clearly enough:

"Would it bother you then to know that I love your husband?"

Obviously a mature, intelligent person with any presence of mind would have stood up and proudly proclaimed, "Mike, I love you too!" But all I could do was slouch down in my seat and blush so furiously that I must have scorched the people sitting close to me.

I can't recall a single other thing that was said on that panel.

Oh, shucks! I'll have to blow that line because I do remember something else. As the whole thing was winding down, Carolyn took a couple of minutes to make a statement. She said she had volunteered to sit on the panel because its members had looked like (and sounded like, in their preliminary bantering) an archetypical array of MCPs and she felt they really needed a touch of refinement. She apologized to the gentlemen for having misjudged them, and she commended them for their fairness, consideration, candor and gentlemanliness.

I'm almost finished. I'm going to quit trying to show you the con, to re-create it (so that I can relive it). I'll try to summarize the rest of it as briefly as possible.

There was an exceptionally lovely art show, but I was spending so much money in the Huckster Room that I didn't even enter a bid on any of the pieces that I admired. I missed out on the orgy of name-tag artistry Sunday night, in which everyone present drew at least one tag. I even missed the art auctions entirely.

AutoClave may have been the first con I've attended that had no costume show. No one even seemed to miss it.

The film room, run by Sid Altus, was different. The movies weren't the usual 16 mm things; they were videotapes that Sid had taken directly from the air, with tag ends of the commercials still there. I spent very little time at the movies. I watched part of "Yellow Submarine" with Jackie late, late Saturday night and was simply too sleepy to stay up for all of it.

There's one other actual con event that absolutely must be mentioned. It was at the banquet, after the scheduled formalities -- after Mike's introductions, after Donn Brazier's rather brief reminiscences of the cons he's attended (he's only been to about six, even though the first was ChiCon in 1940!); and after Gene Wolfe's masterfully garbled talk. Before Mike could declare the banquet officially concluded, Bill Bowers rushed to the microphone and with awe-inspiring courage for a man as terrified of microphones as he is, presented Mike, who had just turned 30, with a "This Is Your Life" scrapbook put together by some of his fan-nish friends for his 75th birthday. Bowers read the slightly salacious contribution of Harlan Ellison.

Later, after the banquet, Carolyn and I sat in our room with the door open; we were considering whether to go down to the con suite and the party right away or wait a while. As we were discussing it, Brian Earl Brown strolled in and sat down on the bed, and we visited. After

a while Jackie joined us, and then Sandi Lopez came in, and Victoria Vayne, and Taral Wayne MacDonald . . .

In a way, that typified AutoClave: We never had to look for parties, or for good talks; we could just sit still and they'd come to us. I could almost fill the rest of this report just with the names of people I enjoyed talking to -- not even counting the ones I've already mentioned that I would like very much to say more about. I've mentioned Dave Szurek but haven't said anything about our discussions of Satanism and witchcraft and the occult, or of the material Dave has sent me since the con. I've mentioned Victoria Vayne but could fill several pages with the talks I had with her, and the same with Gary Farber. I didn't talk enough with Donn Brazier, but could still say much more.

But I want to at least mention for the first time such wonderful people as Karen Pearlston (who may have gotten no sleep at all at the con); Ken Josenhans and Barbara (what's Barbara's last name?), who were not intruding in the coffee shop; Laurraine Tutihasi, to whom Carolyn was attracted early as a fellow librarian; Janet Small, to whom I'll have to confess that I lost the copies of her zine that she gave me; I know I left them in the con suite; Rick Dey and Mary Anne Dey (that passionate discussion with Mary Anne, about cats and mountains, could easily become the subject of a ten-page discourse!).

Have I mentioned Jackie Franke? I don't believe so, and she and Wally were right across the hall from me and Carolyn, but I never did get a chance at the kind of talk I'd like to have had with Jackie, even though she and I sat together at the Chinese dinner Sunday night -- the invasion of Canada that I mentioned at the beginning; nicknamed Kong Con or some such thing, because Kong was part of the name of the restaurant. That dinner started out with about half a dozen people planning to go in one car; ultimately there were 22 people in four cars. Andy Porter did the AutoClave cover on a place setting.

Have I mentioned Don Ayers? We got started on a good long talk several times, but there were interruptions.

I haven't even said very much about Jackie Hilles, have I? That's because I was afraid that if I started telling about our talks, and particularly our long, long walk Sunday morning, and about our exchange of gifts later, and all the other treasured memories that I now have of Jackie -- that I would never get around to telling much about the rest of the con.

And I haven't said as much as I would like to about Carolyn. I've mentioned her, of course, and perhaps dropped a hint or two regarding her importance to me at the con; but I'll go ahead now and try to put into words the most significant thing about AutoClave, for me. I can't pinpoint the moment; maybe there was no exact moment, but a culmination of moments-- when Carolyn embraced Jackie on their first meeting, at the airport; when Carolyn replied honestly and courageously and thoughtfully to Mike Glicksohn's questioning on the Sex-SF panel; or when Carolyn coaxed me into singing Gilbert and Sullivan at the Monday morning party; or later at that same party, when Carolyn, Mike and I stood in a timeless embrace, laughing and kissing each other repeatedly. All those moments and more.

What happened was that I fell in love with Carolyn -- for somewhere between the 50th and 100th time in the 25 years we've been married. And I realized that it's because I love Carolyn so deeply that I am able to show so openly my love for all the other people I care so much about -- such as Jackie. And Mike. And Leah Zeldes.

Thank you, Leah, for a beautiful con. Thank you for the farewell kiss.



I've decided to start the  
Locol with this one, just  
for its confusion value:  
(It's dated May 23, 1976)

Brian Earl Brown  
55521 Elder Rd.  
Mishawaka, IN  
46544



I thoroughly enjoyed  
DOS#46 as usual. As was  
to be expected, Don D'Amassa was  
ruthlessly attacked by the libertarian segment of fandom. (It's odd how  
such a conservative literary society tends to espouse such liberal and  
even radical politics). There is a certain grand and seductive lure to  
the notion that "I'll only obey those laws I think are good." But as  
John Boardman pointed out in his letter-cum-article, the Law is our only  
defense against tyranny of the strong. It may seem paranoid to suggest  
it, but really, it's messy logic to say that it's alright to violate this  
law, but not that. Once one admits that it's permissible to violate one  
law, then it becomes just as permissible to violate any law because the  
criteria for which laws will be obeyed or violated are purely subjective.  
And one person's subjective wrong may be another person's subjective  
right. But Boardman said this all much better in his letter.

Enjoyed your conreports too. For that matter, I greatly enjoyed  
meeting you at Autoclave and hope we can meet again--perhaps at Mid-  
AmeriCon? I must have been asleep as I don't remember Old Bones' speech  
being that funny. Your encounter with Larry Downes was -- well, typical  
of Larry Downes. And -- ah yes -- the fanzine seminar. When will they  
ever have a seminar that actually gets down to helping neofans prepare  
for their first fanzine? (But did Mike Glicksohn really boycott the sem-  
inar because "there's too many fanzines as it is?" That doesn't sound  
like Mike).

Your Don-O-Tracks reprinting of the article in which you correlate the  
lightheadedness of Colorado fans with the altitude reveals a talent for  
frivolous writing that I haven't seen in you before. You really ought  
to do more of it. I always thought that the peculiar nature of Colo-  
rado fans had something to do with the water they drank. As they say in  
the Bear Whiz Beer commercials, "It's in the water."

I greatly enjoyed your cover this time, but couldn't tell if it was  
done by Phil Foglio or Sheryl Birkhead. You forgot to credit it.

Oh, well, it was a great issue and I eagerly look forward to the next.

When I did meet Brian Earl Brown at AutoClave, we never  
got around to discussing the respect-for-the-law question, but  
we talked about the letter itself. Brian apologized for not  
loccking issue #47, since what he'd really had in mind was the  
comment I made in #45 about someday running a loc about the next  
issue; and it had occurred to him that this loc would have to be  
in this issue, which was no better than Pat Kenny had done. And  
I apologized (or meant to; I do now, if I didn't then) for not  
being able to make DoS#46 conform more closely to his loc. No  
letter from Boardman; no encounter with Larry Downes, not even  
a libertarian attack on Don D'A. Sorry, Brian. Con reports,  
anyway; at least I got that much right. But I am no JWC, I guess.

In a letter sent to me after AutoClave, Brian apologizes for his description of me as a sterno bum/derelict in his con report; and inasmuch as I mentioned that previously in my con report, I'd better at least acknowledge the apology and point out that it wasn't necessary. (Hell, I thought it was a compliment).

The very first loc that I got on issue #45 was from Bruce Arthurs, a 10-pager produced in the con suite at SolarCon immediately (or almost) after he'd read the zine. I'll give his home address anyway.

Bruce D. Arthurs  
920 N. 82nd St. H-201  
Scottsdale, AZ 85257

. . . I find Jackie Hilles a rather frightening young lady. She's too open! There have been times while reading HILLESIAN FIELDS that I've felt like a voyeur, looking

at the naked emotions of a relative stranger. You're honest and forthcoming yourself in DOS, but there's always a sense of reserve. No, wait, I know what the difference is: when you write, you write like "this is the way I felt a little while ago." Jackie writes like "this is the way I feel now." Your writings are a bit removed from the actual experience, while with Jackie you're right inside her skin.

Now I'm a very private individual: I hate to show strong emotions in public or in print, and likewise it makes me uncomfortable when someone is able to penetrate this shell and make me react. And HF #6 managed that. I sat down at the typer and wrote a very emotional letter, pouring out what little soul I have. But, of course, I didn't mail it. That's a good thing about locs; you can react to something, but if you don't want your reaction publicized, you can slap a DNQ or DNP on it. If you don't want even the causer of the reaction to know, you can just "forget" to drop the letter into the mailbox. Instead, I dropped the letter to Jackie into the "unmailed letters" file, which until now had been filled only with two or three letters to Tim Marion.

I have to agree with Don D'Ammassa's letter about people smoking pot in one's own home. In fact, something like that nearly caused me to drop out of fandom. Back in '71, I was absolutely and utterly paranoid about pot, and I just knew that the second I stepped into someone's home where a stash was hidden, that twelve thousand cope would pour in through the doors and windows, guns blazing. One time after an sf club meeting, I drove two people home and they invited me in. I knew that they were both fairly heavy users, so I asked them if they had any illegal stuff in their apartment. "Oh no, we keep our stash buried in a glass jar in the field out back." So I went in for a few moments. One of the two people ducked into the bedroom . . . and came out with a lighted joint in his fingers. Great joke, very funny, ha, ha. I was out the door in about two seconds.

Now, it wasn't the pot per se that nearly made me drop fandom. (I stopped going to club meetings until after I got out of the army, but kept corresponding), but the fact that I had been lied to, and I was no longer able to trust those two or, by association, anypotheads. I could not be sure that somebody else would not put me in jeopardy someday. . . .

Did I forget to mention that Bruce's 10-page letter was written on 2½" X 4" note pad sheets? Sorry. That's why it doesn't look like 10 pages.



Wish I could remember what, if anything, I had in mind when I spoke of the confusion value of Brian's letter. If confusion has value, this next one is priceless:

Tim C. Marion  
614 72nd St.  
Newport News, VA  
23605

I saw Jackie not too long back = . . . she showed me her photo album, which contained a picture of you. "What?? This can't be Don Thompson! This almost looks more like Mike Wood! I remember Don Thompson looking like a much taller version of Bill Bowers!"

Needless to say, you weren't at all recognizable with your semi-long black hair & beard. Why do I keep thinking you had blondish-reddish-grayish hair?

"Hold it! There's a Don Thompson who is married to Maggie Thompson and a Don Thompson who is married to a Carol Thompson," Jackie said dramatically, as if she was telling me something new. Which, in turn, inspired the story about how I thought I saw you with a "Carolyn Thompson," which caused your wife to indeed wonder who you were with. I never did respond to that matter, because I just couldn't figure it out. Now I have.

It's the theory of parallel universes, see. In your universe, you probably met a Tim Marion who was very tall, had dark hair, etc. If so, that proves that somehow the Don Thompson of this universe (you) got crossed with the Don Thompson of another universe who was also attending a DisCon II in his universe. Somehow you two switched places. (Don, what is your impression of what I looked like? No smart remarks . . . )

No, I won't even try to answer that last question; my impression couldn't possibly be correct. The only thing I can figure is that the crossing-over between universes is easier and more frequent than we realize. As I see myself in the mirror, I have a sort of neutral brown hair but definitely grayish beard -- and very handsome features. In all the pictures I see of "myself" the hair and beard color range all the way from yellow to black, and the ugly features belong to someone totally unrecognizable--someone not of this earth. Also, "my" wife's name is Carolyn, yet a largish number of people, some of whom have known her for years, call her Carol -- and as often as not she responds to that name, making no attempt to correct it. Sometimes I'm not sure which universe I belong in.

But enough of that kind of confusion; let's get down to issues-- particularly the one raised by Don D'Amassa about obedience of the law. We've got some splendidly sharp and clear-cut disagreements on this.

In fairness to Brian Earl Brown, I'm going to start this discussion with his second letter, in which he clarifies his position as expressed in the "hoax" letter.

Brian Earl Brown  
(Address as above)

. . . in that letter I expressed some opinions supportive of Don A'Amassa's letter about breaking the law. Actually I'm most sympathetic with anarchists. The less rules the better. I make no bones about having smoked pot or having exceeded the speed limit on an open highway, and the like, where no one but me could get hurt.

Don's position seemed to be based on the notion that people obey the Law because they're told to obey the law. Sort of like military discipline in civilian life. But people obey the Law when it's convenient or organizes things more efficiently (such as traffic laws, stop signs, etc.) Disobeying

a law doesn't breed disrespect for the law, at least not as much as a patently stupid law does in the first place.

On the other hand, Don does have a point when he says that you can't say "This law I'll break and no further." A friend sent a quote on a related matter (The morality of vigilanteism) that applies and which I'd like to pass on to you. It's from *MAX WEBER: ESSAYS IN SOCIOLOGY* (New York 1946) and the essay "Politics as a Vocation":

"If one makes any concession at all to the principle that the ends justifies the means, it is not possible to bring an ethic of ultimate ends and an ethic of responsibility under one roof or to decree ethically which end should justify which means."

Of course in real life we do juggle means and responsibilities, but we lie to ourselves a lot.

Richard Brandt  
4013 Sierra Drive  
Mobile, Ala. 36609

While boozing and smoking are legally accepted habits, I don't partake of them, don't appreciate being urged to partake of them and downright resent people participating of the latter in my presence. But I rarely try to talk people out of them. I have never discouraged people from smoking pot, but I don't partake of the weed myself and I have refused every offer of a toke on the nearest joint. I find the illegality of the act uncomfortable and since I don't smoke pot myself, I wouldn't want anyone doing it in my house. I would be allowing them to break the law. And while breaking a law against pot (or booze) may be quite different from subverting the electoral process, I believe I could reduce your case to the fact that virtually everybody holds by the laws Mr. Nixon ran afoul of, while you happen to disagree with anti-marijuana legislation. Come to think of it, if scientists came up with conclusive proof that pot was harmful, how many pot-smokers would believe it and stop smoking? I know enough chain smokers never really think about what they may be doing to themselves, but I wonder how many really just don't believe all the Surgeon General's claims? ("They've never proven smoking causes cancer, ya know. . .")

I hope everyone appreciates the self restraint I'm exercising in staying out of this debate. It ain't easy!

John Thiel  
30 N. 19th St.  
Lafayette, IN  
47904

There's some kind of war going on between smokers and non-smokers, both of marijuana and cigarettes. I don't smoke marijuana, but I've had to extinguish innumerable cigarettes because someone objected to them. Why they object, I don't know. They seem to regard smoking as pyromania, and a cigarette as a weapon that might be used to burn them. There's a feeling that they suspect it of being particularly sinful, too, is if it were objected to in the Bible.

As far as marijuana is concerned, I've had the experience several people described of being where people are smoking it, not being able politely to leave or tell them to get rid of it, and thinking about those ten-year sentences I've seen being meted out in the papers to people considered accessories by virtue of being in the same room where marijuana is being smoked. I don't want to be there, but it's hard to walk out of a party without being sensational. As for what they're smoking, I took a puff once and it failed to make me feel pleasant or have any effect I



could notice, and it tasted bad. Even if it were a supreme delight, it wouldn't be worth the horrible legal penalties. Somebody told me it's been recently legalized by the Supreme Court, but this sounded like a joke. It's hard to imagine marijuana being legalized.

It is? Then how come . . . No, sorry! I am determined to keep out of this until everyone else has had a say.

Robert J. Whitaker  
P.O. Box 7649  
Newark, Del.  
19711

The major difference between cheating the postal service and smoking pot is as follows: One is a crime without any victim. Pot smoking really basically hurts no one except (if you see it that way) the person who smokes it. The person who cheats the postal service is doing the post office a disservice, and roundabout, doing himself/ everyone else involved, a disservice. Who supports the P.O.? The taxpayer. Who is a taxpayer? The person who cheats the post office can be/ is one. The P.O. loses the money and has to draw it off from the taxpayer.

D. Gary Grady  
USS Dewey (DDG 45)  
FPO New York 09501

I would like to see operating a motor vehicle with any detectable amount of alcohol in the blood forbidden, as it is in Iceland. I would like to see smoking cigarettes in public forbidden, as in Sweden. But I cannot see insisting that people obey a law of this sort in private. For one thing, there are a number of excellent drug laws on the books that I think OUGHT to be on the books which are plain-and-simple not enforced. The epitome of this non-enforcement is the law that prohibits minors from purchasing cigarettes. Now, a minor is hardly capable of deciding for himself or herself (as a general rule) to start smoking. I know plenty of people who smoke and in every case they wish they had been prevented from starting the habit. The solution is not, I believe, to punish the kids for possession of tobacco, nor to prohibit parents from providing their children with the stuff (although I have contempt for any parent who does so). It is reasonable to prohibit the sale of the stuff directly to a minor and at least make it somewhat difficult for him to obtain it. But have you seen this enforced? When they start enforcing good laws that are on the books, I may take seriously admonitions that I obey the bad ones.

Graham England  
11, Churchill Close  
Didcot, Oxon  
OX11 7BA  
England

I agree with Don on law abiding -- but break the law that obliges me to go to archery practice on the village green every Saturday. On the two occasions I've met deliberate law breaking, I've not denounced the law breaker, but I've had nothing to do with them since. One occasion was a young lady who smuggled in 1 kilo of marijuana from Afghanistan, and the other a translator who did not declare all his income to the Inland Revenue.

Rich Coad  
291 Jayne Ave.  
Oakland, CA  
94610

Don D'Amassa's thesis seems pretty absurd. I find no point in obeying a law that I find silly as long as my disobeying it harms nobody else. Does he really think that the wholesale repression of individual rights can be equated to a person practising those same rights? And, merely because heroin, for example, is harmful to the user, does that warrant the creation of a hundred thousand new criminals at the stroke of a pen?

Tom Digby  
1043 N. Curson Ave. #6  
Los Angeles 90046

Does Don D'Amassa's policy of obedience to the law extend to the laws regulating sexual activity in private among consenting adults? It used to be in Calif. (and still is in some

other states) that certain sexual acts are serious felonies even if conducted in private between husband and wife by mutual consent. ("It's OK to hold it in your hand, but putting your mouth on it is illegal.") This was recently repealed here, amid some opposition from fundamentalist religious groups. And what of cases when obedience of the law increases the danger to self and others, such as when the prevailing traffic on a road is moving faster than the speed limit? So with traffic and break the law, or keep under the limit and be an obstacle to traffic, or what? The obvious answer of staying away from that road entirely may not be practical.

Eric B. Lindsay  
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Faulconbridge NSW  
2776 Australia

Don D'Amassa's letter should get some active response re pot and the law from all those people who disagree. However, it really comes down to the much more general issue that Don mentions later, viz:

"I don't really think a society can work in which every individual goes around deciding which laws he shall and shall not obey." And also, "I believe you have to have a damned good reason to break a law, and that transitory pleasure is not a good and sufficient reason."

This sounds very reasonable in a lot of ways. Indeed, one English philosopher, G. E. Moore, in his "Principia Ethica," put forward the view (I've summarized it badly, but . . .) that, since we cannot know what is right or wrong, we should therefore follow custom and the existing morality of society, this being the best way to minimize the risk of being incorrect. From an evolutionary viewpoint, the customs that maintain a society are designed to ensure its survival (since those societies whose customs are not able to ensure its continuity have all died out) are obviously the ones a society has to maintain.

However this leads to the interpretation that the collective values of society, and their continuation, are more important than any individual or group of individuals that make up the society, and that survival as a group is the most important human value. I reject that absolutely, and claim that a society is valuable only in as far as it helps individuals attain their utmost potential as human beings. From this point of view, it is important for each person to be selfish about their own aims, for only they can decide what is important to them. Since all societies leave people unequal, and since none of us can be sure that we would be among the most privileged classes, an optimum strategy seems to me to be to ask that society restrict its actions only to preventing us from being oppressed by others who have more power, and otherwise encouraging, but not coercing us towards better things. From this point of view, if a person wants to smoke pot, etc, then it is absolutely no concern of society. Postal rates are more complex, but if a person were to say that they will punish anyone who tries to undertake a certain action that other people approve of, but will do that action themselves, for a certain price, then I think you are justified in finding ways to avoid their charges. The post office fill the place of that person, in that they will not allow anyone to provide a similar service, thus ensuring that if you want to send letters, you have to use them. This has been a constant feature of all government posts for ages. In the UK there were struggles to ensure the mail went via London & was charged, rather than being sent cross post by the keepers of the post houses for their own profit.



Brett Cox  
Box 542  
Tabor City, NC  
28463

I'm afraid I can't agree with Don D'Amassa's comparison of people who cheat on postal rates with Richard Nixon, and all the accompanying stuff about obeying the law. All that sounds like Serpico's "How much does it have to be before it's wrong?" which I don't agree with either. In my opinion, since there are no absolutes (including anything I have to say on this subject), that yes, it is all right to break laws that you don't agree with, in some cases, or to rip off organizations like the Post Office, which is run by a pack of incompetents, or the telephone and utilities companies, which are run by a pack of thieves. (At least they are around here). In my opinion, these people deserve to get ripped off. And as far as comparing breaking the law by smoking pot to a man who was responsible for the deaths of 20,000 young men (beside which all his other malfeasances pale in comparison -- it's always been my belief that getting Nixon for Watergate was like getting Al Capone for income tax evasion), well, that's just plain stupid. In my opinion. To hell with purists.

Ken Josenhans  
7602 Vicar Place  
New Carrollton, MD  
20784

I think that were it not for those millions who have used marijuana and found it to be relatively harmless, there would be little impetus for changing the existing law. Insistence on a strict enforcement of the pot laws can lead to a disrespect for all laws; a younger person, having seen that one law, even though ludicrous, will be enforced to the fullest, makes the extrapolation that the law cannot be used as a basis for behavior and disregards it.

I don't think a violation of the law has to be followed by an arrest for it to be effective as a means of protest. The seat belt interlock systems, which amounted to a mandatory seat-belt law with the vehicles doing the enforcement, were bypassed by thousands of drivers. The realization that the public wasn't going to put up with it sparked a congressional override of the departmental rule which led to the interlocks.

I would suggest that Don check to see if he is scrupulously obeying the sexual laws of his state. I don't know about the particulars in RI, but in nearly every state the only type of legal sex act is that best defined as husband-on-top-hurry-up-quick-get-it-over-with. The U.S. Supreme Court recently upheld Virginia's sodomy laws, which prohibit not only homosexuality but also heterosexual fellatio and cunnilingus. Now, should we copulate on the courthouse steps as a public protest or should we restrict the expression of our affections to the legally approved manner until such time as a more realistic law takes effect? Personally, I'm ignoring any attempt to tell me who I can screw and how it must be done, but I'm damn well doing it in as much privacy as possible.

Laws exist to shape consciences, but it's our consciences we follow and not the law. I don't refrain from certain actions because they're illegal and I'll be punished for them if I'm caught; I refrain because a sense of guilt has been instilled in me by my family, my education, and, to a lesser degree, by my former church. The old theory of punishment, which actually is a form of behaviorism, suggests that those whose consciences permit them to do undesirable things should be controlled instead by the fear of society's retribution; the more modern theory suggests that defective consciences should be rehabilitated. But the religious influence on our consciences tells us that the primary standard for judging an action is its effect on others. And we can see that pot smoking has no effect on others. And since we can also see that

enforcement of the law is haphazard at best, and thus there is little chance of punishment, the result is that there is no social control on the use of marijuana.

*Dave Szurek*  
4417 Second, Apt. 2B  
Detroit 48201

There is no justice in unjust laws, and so long as a person harms no one in the process, I see no reason for an individual to be fettered by senseless, repressive rules of conduct -- whether coming from legal authorities, from society, or from some alleged duty. (And if anyone cares to claim that "victimless" crimes are harmful to the "stability of society" -- a handy little mechanism devised to keep the slaves in line, I'd refute that but I've recently done so at length). Don cites hypocrisy, but again I disagree. Nixon fucked people over with Watergate and a good number of other things as well. Nobody is fucking anyone over by getting high. In the case of marijuana and most other drugs, the law, not the violators, are the aggressors.

Just ask Don if he'd advocate we stop reading, were reading made illegal. Or would he read only if it would land him his day in court? It might not sound like the same thing to him at first, but if he'll think about it, he'll recognize the principle is the same. It's always been ironic that drugs like grass are illegal, while alcohol, which is probably the most dangerous of all -- leading not only to disastrous behavior, but to addiction and considerable physical damage -- is sanctioned.

*Harry Warner Jr.*  
423 Summit Ave.  
Hagerstown, MD  
21740

I liked Don D'Amassa's exposition on being a law-abiding citizen. It's a form of behavior that I try to maintain. Of course, there are some reasons why none of us can be completely consistent. Hagerstown has some snow emergency streets on which it's illegal to park after a big enough snowfall for authorities to proclaim a snow emergency. The state has a snow emergency law which makes it illegal to drive a motor vehicle without snow tires or chains, after a snow emergency has been proclaimed. This guarantees inconsistency for the most conscientious resident of Hagerstown, if by chance he had parked on one of those streets overnight and woke to find a big snow newly arrived on the city, with nothing but conventional tires and no chains on his car.

You may have mistaken the reaction of readers when you think they are anxious for you to shift emphasis in your fanzine. Or maybe you're anxious to shift emphasis and you've deliberately read into locs a reaction which isn't there, so you'll have a good excuse for making the change. If there has been a shortage of comment on the intimate kind of writing that you've been doing, it must result in large part from sheer inability of most of us to find enough courage to step in and talk about someone's personal life face to face with the individual involved (or page to page, in the case of a fanzine and its locs). Lots of people spend most of their time talking about personal lives at great length, but they almost invariably do it behind the backs of the people they're talking about, partly because they think it's more fun that way, partly because it minimizes the danger of getting slugged for meddling.

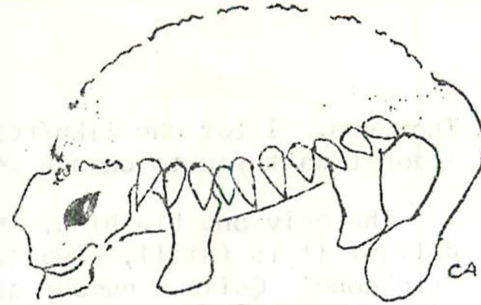
*Mike Glicksohn*  
141 High Park Ave.  
Toronto, Ont. M6P 2S3  
Canada

I can understand the sheer logic behind Don D'Amassa's position even though I don't follow it myself and know very few people (or even fans) who do. On a purely intellectual basis I'd say it was almost impossible to argue with what he



says; fortunately, as I see it, life is not lived entirely on an intellectual plane. The adage "Rules were made to be broken" is hard to defend rationally, but it seems to embody a certain aspect of the human spirit that I find appealing. The big laws I'll go along with; I haven't killed anyone, or robbed any banks, or kidnapped any small children. But the "small" laws, the petty rules, the niggling regulations, these I see as

fair game. The laws that apply to strictly personal matters, such as the right to use pot if I want to, I'd fight on the grounds that no one has the right to legislate those aspects of my life which relate exclusively to me. No one tells all those inconsiderate bastards they can't smoke cigarettes and litter my environment and pollute my air so why should they be able to tell me I can't have a toke or two if I feel so inclined? Despite many specious claims to the contrary, I think the situations are remarkably parallel. So there are laws which have no right to exist, and I'm more than willing to disregard them until they are taken off the statutes, even though I recognize the logical conundrum that Don poses as to deciding for oneself which laws are "good" ones and which aren't. It's a chance I'm willing to take. I admire the strict sense of ethics that Don exhibits, but I feel no great urge to emulate it.



"Never give an ankylosaurus an even break, huh! Triceratops, Tyranosauri, even your odd Diplodocus, but do we get billing in Don-o-Saur?"

[I'm going to allow that subject to drop now, for this issue, and until Don has a chance to respond. Other loccers did comment, but I believe that all the main points have been expressed in the excerpts already printed. Certainly most of the points that I would have made in an attempted rebuttal article have been outlined, and in some cases much more clearly than I could have done. Here's another segment of Glicksohn's letter]:

Your editorial/discourse contemplations disturbed me somewhat because they left the impression you were allowing your readers to decide what sort of material you'd write for DoS. I hope this isn't the case and will never be the case. You and you alone should decide what sort of things you want to write in the pages of your own journal -- which is what DoS is -- and if there are people out there who cannot handle that sort of material let them subscribe to LOCUS instead. If you want to include more writing about Issues and Themes and Topics, okay; you certainly have the talent to write out the worthwhile opinions you hold. But don't steer clear of the emotional (and beautiful) writing you've been doing just because a fan here and there blushes to know that you're capable of deeper feeling than he or she is. I may have told you myself on occasions that I'm incapable of writing or even reacting to the sort of deeply personal things you write, but I'd never want that to be taken as an indication that I wanted you to do book or record reviews instead, and I'd feel sorely deprived if you stopped sharing your life with us. That's selfish on my part, but there's absolutely no need for you to apologize for being

Don Thompson. I for one like/respect/admire you for being Don Thompson and I don't want you to change unless you want to.

The only one blushing, that I know of, is me; but what a delight it is (still, always) to be embarrassed by Mike Glicksohn! Quite a number of people commented on the issue of personal writing, but I will zip past that subject as quickly as possible, simply because it is kind of embarrassing for me. Still, I can't resist one or two more quick excerpts:

*Denny Bowden  
917 Tracy Street  
Daytona Beach, FL  
32017*

. . . Carolyn's image remains a shadow for me. I wish I could read of her importance in your life. Only occasionally does she slip into DON-o-SAUR, but when she does, she absolutely sparkles! Her sharp style bit through the facade and revealed "Don Thompson" in an earlier issue, showing the lover of books you are (shades of FARENHEIT 451?). Once again in DoS 44 Carolyn slices her way into your zine, leaving a deep impression with her imaginatively enticing comment to Alter. I'd certainly like to see more by Carolyn . . .

Carolyn's comment upon reading that: "All of a sudden Denny Bowden has become one of my favorite people."

*Ben Indick  
428 Sagamore Ave.  
Teaneck, NJ  
07666*

. . . Your writing has given fan writing a dimension it lacked; your genuine humanity and capably expressed emotion have been of value to yourself and your readers. It has not been a wasteful period. I would suggest that you do spend more time in so-called serious writing, but retain the option for occasional relief -- and the opportunity for introspection -- in fan writing.

Your background is part of you, and will not be shucked off; your newspaper work shows its influence in the chapter about Barb. The piece could go either of two ways (it is unhappily in the middle of both right now): either go all the way for a loose, reportorial style, or tighten it up one hell of a lot. It is, of course, only an excerpt, not even a chapter, and inconclusive in consequence at the moment, but it does need some more clear peaks and valleys as guideposts. My preference would be tightening, and heightening. . .

The locs were excellent. I would like to commend Jessica's letter. This is really an amazing fan character, not because she went through what seems an outrageous operation, and not because she has bragged with devilish lasciviousness about her developing tastes, but because she has been consistent and forthright. She has not retreated nor compromised, and, by golly, damn if I don't respect her for guts. (It may not be reciprocated, but that is unimportant. I ask respect only for my red head).

*Hank Heath  
250 Dale Drive  
Cassadaga, NY  
14718*

Every once in a while, when reading things like "Barb Before the Break," I feel I've (without knowing, tripped onto one of Zenna Henderson's People stories happening in real life! There are special people in this world, who carry a magic with them. They are many, but few are known, and some have the



magic killed by inattention. Barb is one of the magic ones, and you took the time to give it attention. This is a special time, and I thank you for sharing it.

That's it! Yes, yes! Barb is one of the magic ones. Why didn't I say that? But it isn't enough, for me, just to say it. I can't be content until I have managed to show the special quality of her magic in a narrative form. That isn't so easy to do, but I have to admit I haven't been working on it.

*Nigel Sellars*  
4621 SE 26  
Del City, OK  
73115

A brief comment on the two letters from Mike Glicksohn and Jessica Salmonson. Yes, there is a difference in behavior in men and women and it is due to a little hormone called testosterone which is what makes males aggressive and dominant. That will probably get me some letters accusing me of being a sexist. Not so. It is a biological truth that primates especially, including humans, have social structures in which males are dominant, with good reason. The males are the ones who must defend the troop and consequently have to have a lower threshold for releasing their behavior aggressively or sexually. It is a matter of evolution and no socialization process, with the exception of Skinnerian operant conditioning, can change that. But of course people feel that conditioning is immoral. (I should add that I don't). Now this doesn't mean there aren't aggressive women, but that women tend to be less dominant. And society ain't all to blame. I work indirectly with primate research at OU's research lab and every bit of data we get indicates this to be true. Anyone wish to call chimpanzees sexist? However, I do favor changing the social structure of human society so that those most able, whether male or female, have an equal chance at getting ahead.

*Karen Pearlston*  
132 Hove St.  
Downsview, Ont.  
M3H 4Z7, CANADA

Most transsexuals that I know of are attracted to the opposite sex, the one they were originally. The gay women I know can't stand men and refuse to have anything to do with them. But the only gay women I know are extremely radicalesbian types: they want a women's revolution. I'm not sure I am in favor of any revolution, but if I was, I know of a lot of women who deserve to be shot and a lot of men who would be a great loss.

That's also the reason I am no longer an active feminist. The Toronto Women's Movement was taken over several years ago by ex-remists, gay and straight. They were totally banning men. I disagreed with this on both levels. The one being general, how is it possible to build a new, better society while supressing and oppressing half of it? The other being personal. I had many male friends who were mostly feminists. They were also mostly nicer people and better feminists than most women in the Toronto movement.

*K. Allen Bjorke*  
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People who spend fortunes on sound equipment have always seemed to be overdoing it, to me. I bought a used quad system from a friend for only the \$8 it cost to get it out of the repair shop (which had done an estimate and wanted \$70 to reinstate the RF speaker -- a job my dad (an electronics

engineer) did in about an hour and a half with a total cost to me of about \$10 for materials like a small amplifier entegrated circuit) (thus the total price of the stereo -- \$18). I have never had any trouble with it unless I really crank it up, when the tiny speakers (yes, the speakers were included. The total unit was the speakers plus a turntable) start rattling their casings off and shake the room up a little. Even when I do things I shouldn't, like plug 100 ohm speakers into the sockets labelled "use 16 ohm speakers only." And the sound is just great.

Okay. Love is fine, in its place, but we all need a little healthy hate in our lives, too, and that is why the ghods allow some people to find a July 1926 issue of *AMAZING* at a rummage sale for \$1, and others perfectly satisfactory mimeographs for \$5 or less -- and still others to acquire quad systems for \$18. However, K. Allen Bjorke does seem fairly knowledgeable about music as such, so I might, eventually, be able to forgive him his good fortune. Here's another paragraph of his letter:

The Moodies let their words say something while they work towards beauty -- an admirable goal in anyone's books. My favorite track of theirs has always been "The Dawn," from DAYS OF FUTURE PASSED, tho A QUESTION OF BALANCE is my favorite album as a whole.

My favorite albums are those with a definite plot behind them -- Moodies albums, yes, and Sgt. Pepper's and Magical Mystery Tour (the preceding record titles are in cleverly disguised capital letters) and Capt. Fantastic & the Brown Dirt Cowboy by Elton John, whose music I usually enjoy despite what a lot of people say.

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Music is one of those topics EVERYONE has something to say about. Lately, I've gone to concerts by Woody Simmons, Meg Christian, Chris Williamson (all of Olivia Records), Malvina Reynolds, Olivia Newton-John (by far the worst of the lot, but very slick and professional) and I guess that's it. I prefer women soloists, guitarists, folk singers above all others. I also like Baroque, though I know little about it. The only thing the two forms have in common is (I believe) simplicity). The best music--few would wisely disagree--is home made. I like to make my own, by myself, on my guitar. And no matter that I did at one time play professionally, anyone can make homemade music. The absolute best concert I ever heard consisted of about 16 percussionists on a street corner (including those banging pop bottles together), two wild dancers (one a fat woman, one a skeletal woman), a drowned-out flute, and the craziest jazz bagpipe you can imagine. They only did one song, but it lasted two hours, and I never moved from it.

Of my own homemade songs, several have had lyrics good enough to be published as poems. AMAZON SOLDIER SONG (TO MISTRESS ANNA) in the upcoming Empire SF was originally a ballad, as was TO THE SWORD! in the first fantasy-poetry journal Fantasae, and THE CONQUERING LORD in the defunct Breakthrough. Darrell Schweitzer's LOVERS--THREE NIGHTS ON A BALCONY in the current Fantasy & Terror is also from a song he fashioned. Perhaps few will ever hear the tunes of these, but it's that old riddle: if a tree falls and no one is there to hear it, did it make a sound?

You'll have a hard time now shutting down the topic of music.



I'll try to keep the music discussion from taking over DoS entirely, unless music happens to become the dominant interest in my life (possible but not probably); but I certainly wouldn't want to shut it down just yet. In fact, I find that I have more to say just now about music than I do on the matter of obeying the law. One of my comments about music is in response to the letter from Ken Josenhans, but a portion that I didn't print. So that you will have a chance of understanding my remarks, I print the pertinent portion here:

*Ken Josenhans*

*(address as above)*

You mentioned your stereo and your previous mono system, both of which I would consider decidedly inferior and which would tag you as a person not to be loaned records. I'm curious-- do you find yourself drawn mostly to lyrics, or to rhythm, melody and tone? Judging by your use of Dylan lines in your writing, I'd suspect the first. Barbara and I have noticed that people with comparatively cheap stereos tend to favor lyrics, while those with more expensive systems tend to be more interested in the instrumental characteristics. I have a moderately priced system and I tend to ignore lyrics; voices to me are just another instrument with their own tonal colorations. Barbara and I also wonder why females seem to have the cheap stereos and the taste for lyrics, while guys tend to be audiophiles.

Until recently I was definitely more interested in the words than anything else. With the better equipment, which gives me the feeling that the musicians are right here in the room with me and that I can reach out and touch the guitarist just over there, and the percussionist behind him a little to the left (with those fantastically delicate cymbals!) and the pianist over here (those speakers that I swiped from the living room Zenith have turned out to be excellent), I have suddenly become much more concerned with the instruments. My profound conclusion is that good equipment enables one to appreciate more than voices. And I suspect that more women than men have cheap stereos primarily because more men than women make the kind of money required to buy good ones.

One of my other comments about music has to do with my job at the Rocky Mountain News, which I have decided not to leave just yet, after all. One of the main reasons is that periodically the assistant ME gathers up all the promotional/review recordings that have accumulated in his office (tons of them!) and makes them available to whomever happens to be in the office at the time. These are considered the dregs, because more important people have had first choice (friends of the editor, etc.; the News does not have a regular record review column). But here are some of the records that I have recently acquired in that manner: Shawn Phillips' RUMPLESTILTSKIN'S RESOLVE (A&M) (I have two other Shawn Phillips records; this is by far the best); THE GUESS WHO: The Way They Were (RCA) (unreleased recordings by the group when it consisted of Bachman, Cummings, Kale and Peterson--they were very good!); David Bowie, CHANGESONEBOWIE ((RCA) (All the record companies seem to have gotten tired of the "greatest hits" designation). . . And several others, nearly all of which I've been delighted with. It's a significant fringe benefit (probably immoral or unethical).

My closing comment about music is that I have just about decided to accept the invitation to join APA-LP, recently formed by Nicholas J. Poiak and Patrick Hayden.

