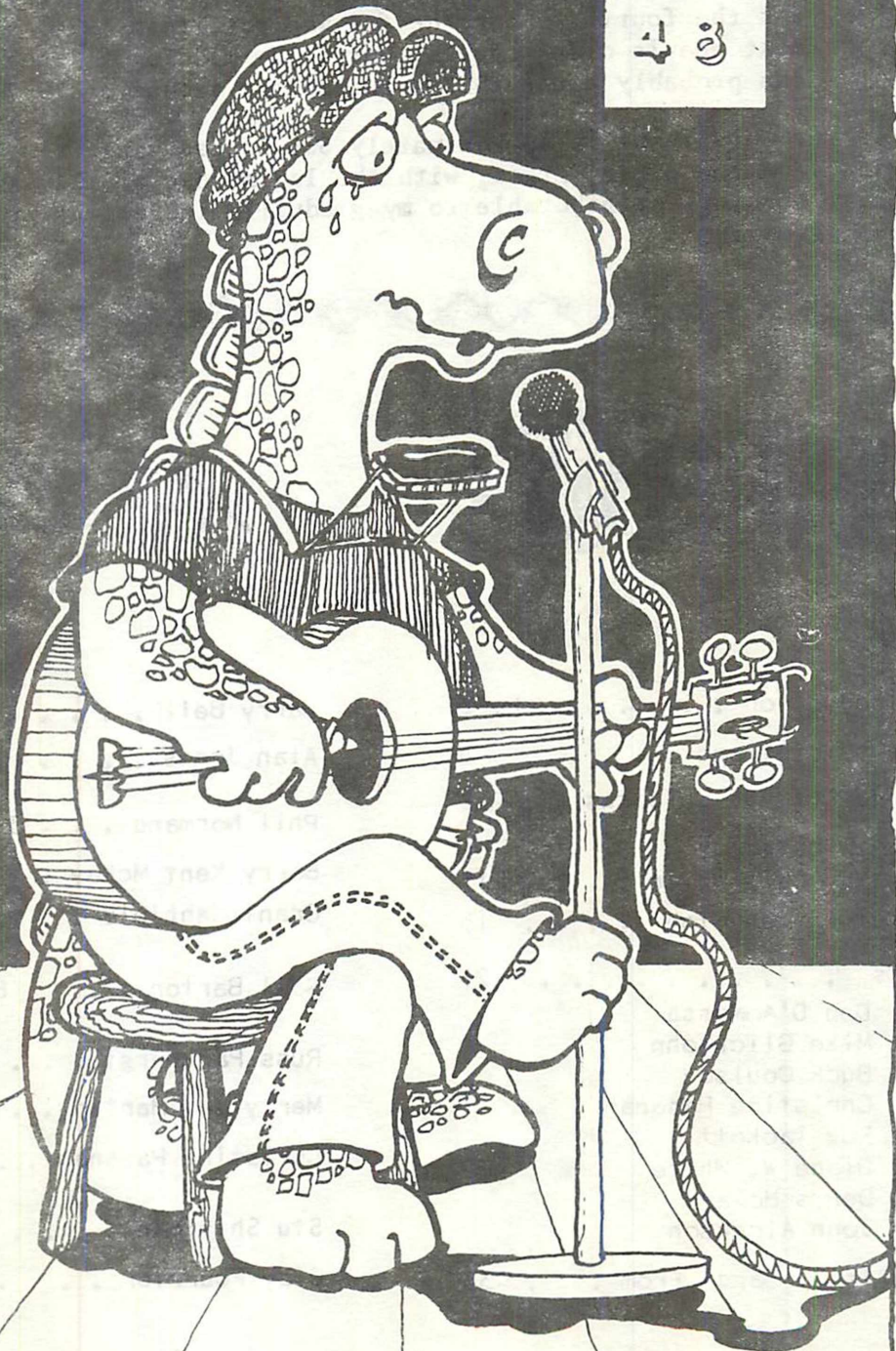


DON-O-SAUR

43



Walt Disney

APRIL 1977

A sometimes embarrassingly personal fanzine of the science fiction persuasion (sometimes I can be persuaded to talk about SF), DoS is published sporadically by Don C. Thompson, 7498 Canosa Court, Westminster, Colo., 80030: Phone (303) 429-6562. It is available for trade, letters of comment, artwork, or money. Price is still 35¢ per copy, a six-issue subscription for \$2, or a 12-issue subscription for \$3.50.

(I made a slight error in the colophon of DoS 47; I said it was the third issue published in 1976. Actually, it was the fourth -- for the few who got it in 1976. Since most people didn't get it until the middle of January, I can probably count this issue as the second of 1977, huh?)

Press run this issue is approximately 550 copies, and it's done this time entirely on the offset press, with the lavish use of illustrations and special headings attributable to my gradually increasing proficiency with the platemaker.



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This time, for sure, there is a fiction section -- a special supplement.

The reason I can sound so certain about it is that I know; and the way I know is that I have already printed that section. The pages are all run off and stacked up, just waiting for the rest of the zine to come into existence. And it won't be long now.

I don't intend to take very much time slapping this issue together. It is now, right this minute, 11:34 p.m., Wednesday, March 16. By no later than Saturday, March 26, I intend to be finished with the typing and even finished with most of the printing. I'm giving myself until the end of the month to finish the collating, stapling and mailing -- tasks that become increasingly onerous and time consuming as circulation continues to grow.

None of the writing is going to be particularly easy; in fact at least one portion is likely to be particularly difficult. The whole thing may show the slap-dash haste with which it's being done, but I decline to apologize. I'll do the best I can within the limitations I've imposed, and no one should ever expect me to do much better than that.

I'd like to begin with a sort of summary of the things I would like to cover in this issue -- a somewhat expanded table of contents. It'll serve three purposes: For one thing, it will help me get my own thoughts in order and will serve later to remind me to stick more or less closely to the announced subject (that's all one point, even though it sounds like two; think of it, please, to spare me the necessity of any rewriting, as just two parts of the same point). In addition, it will give you some help in deciding which parts you might want to read more thoroughly and which to just skim or even skip entirely. And finally, in case I really run short of time and have to abridge anything or everything, you'll at least have some idea of what this issue might have been.

Okay then, the zine, not counting the fiction supplement, seems to divide itself into four parts:

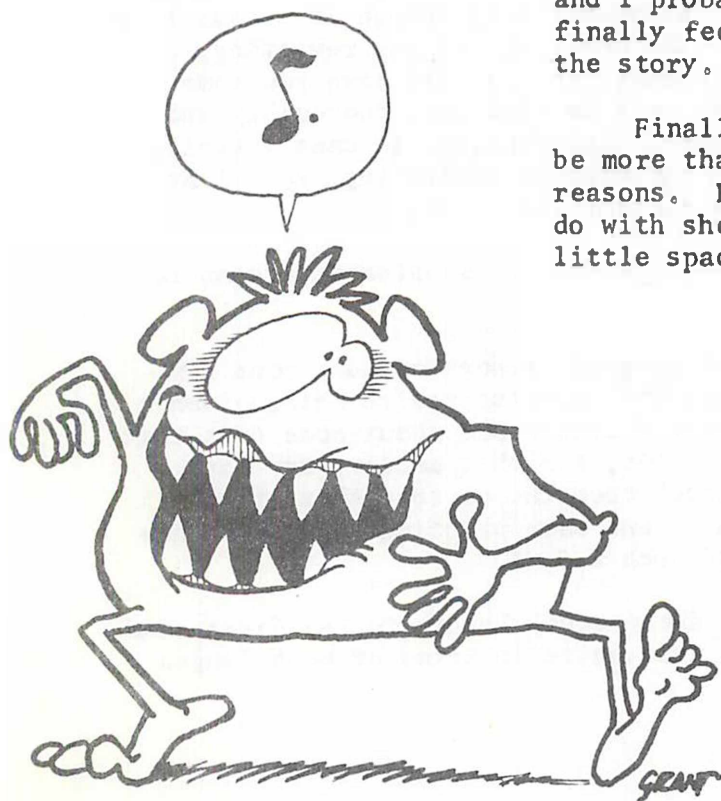
The first will be a rather brief progress report on some cons I'm involved in. Please note these are not CON reports; you're being given a respite from those. I just want to talk a little bit about some cons that are going to happen. (Or may happen). (Or, for that matter, may not happen). This section is likely to touch upon the closest thing to a fan feud that I have yet been involved in -- and some practical advice on how to ensure being on the winning side of such a feud.

The second section, probably of about equal length to the first, and the section most likely to be grossly inadequate in terms of both length

and content, to say nothing of quality, will be an explanation of the dedication. (Feel free to stop here and go back and reread the Dedication on page 2 if necessary). The main difficulty with writing an affectionate appreciation of Gail Barton is that dismal feeling that it is foredoomed to failure--that there is simply no way in the world that I can do full justice to the subject. Other than that, however, I expect to sort of enjoy writing about Gail. It will be a farewell message, in a way, because Gail is on the verge of leaving Denver area fandom and seeking her fortune among West Coast fen. This section will also be, in part, an advertisement for the booklet of poems and drawings that Gail and I have just published.



The third section is the one that I anticipate the most difficulty with. It's going to be tough for me to write (I think, but I could be wrong) and it will almost certainly be difficult for you to understand -- not so much the material itself, though it has its puzzling aspects; but you may be totally baffled as to why I choose to present this particular segment of my autobiography at this particular time, in this particular context. It could (I'm not sure that it will, but it certainly could) have the effect of leaving me totally defenseless, at least in terms of logic and consistency, on the law and order issue that is going to take up most of the LoCcolumn. If I were trying to score debate points I most definitely would not bring up this episode. (But one of the minor points I want to make is that I am not interested in the Law discussion in terms of formal debate). ...And I still haven't said what this section is about, have I? Well, it's about my brief, unhappy career as a teen-age burglar. It's a topic that I have always been extremely reticent in talking about, though I've made a number of ambitious attempts to write about it. This won't be my first attempt by any means, and I probably won't even try to explain why it finally feels right and comfortable to tell the story.



Finally, there's the lettercol. It will be more than usually difficult for at least two reasons. First is the standard reason having to do with sheer volume -- so many letters, so little space for them. But there's another reason, having to do with the nature and tone of some of the letters. I enjoy a good, open, free-wheeling, unrestrained argument -- as long as it remains. . . oh, not even friendly, necessarily, but at least good-natured. Civilized. But when the participants start snarling at each other and hurling insults and taking cheap shots that contribute nothing to an understanding of the issues, then I tend to become very uneasy, and want either a change of subject or a change of venue. Some

of the mail following DoS 47 has tended to arouse that sort of paranoid uneasiness. The problem will be in deciding how much of the ill-tempered material to use (since I seem to have rejected the alternative of using none of it). Well, one thing at a time. For now, let's turn to . . .

C O N - t e m p l a t i o n s

Cons are proliferating in the Denver area, and I seem to be involved in nearly all of them to one degree or another. Some of them are definitely scheduled (some in fact are imminent), while some are merely prospective -- cons that Denver fandom is bidding for. All involve a certain amount of work.

Here's a list, going from soonest to farthest away in time:

YuccaCon I in Fort Collins, April 15-17.

Star Con Denver, May 7 and 8

MileHiCon 9, Denver, Oct. 28-30

Penulticon I, Denver, Nov. 18-20

(Those are scheduled; two are prospective)

Westercon 32, 1979

WorldCon 39, 1981 (Denvention II)

In discussing these, I'd better begin with Star Con as the one in which my involvement is the least. In fact, I'm stretching a point into an exceedingly thin line in order to claim (or confess to) any relationship at all with Star Con. I am not known as a Star Trek fan -- because I am not a ST fan -- and it could come as something of a shock to some people to learn that I have any connection at all to Star Con, but it's easily explainable.

The two Fan Writer guests at SC are M.L. "Steve" (Margaret) Barnes and Judith Brownlee. Judith is a former director of DASFA and the prime mover behind MileHiCon for most of its existence; she's also the editor of a Trekzine, Eridani Triad. My involvement is not through her, as it happens. Steve Barnes has attended DASFA off and on through the years; she's a regular in the Denver Writers Workshop and has sold to professional markets, but she seldom shows the workshop her most successful work, her Star Trek stories. They've been published for the most part in assorted fanzines. Jacqueline Lichtenberg chose one of Stevie's stories -- "A Handful of Snowflakes" -- to include in one of her books (STAR TREK LIVES!, I believe). Encouraged by friendly letters and offers of cash, Stevie decided to publish all of her ST stories herself. I did the mimeographing of 'A HANDFUL OF SNOWFLAKES' AND OTHER TREK TALES. The book sold out promptly and went into a second printing. I did the printing (offset this time) for MORE TREK TALES, a collection of Stevie's newer stories. It's going into a second printing already, too.

That's really the extent of my involvement in Star Con. And I've talked more about it than I will about some of the cons that I really

am working on. I don't think I'll be able to say very much about YuccaCon I, for example.

YuccaCon I is the brainchild of (primarily) Gordon Garb, a faithful DASFan who happens to be attending the University of Northern Colorado in Fort Collins. Gordon is a missionary at heart. There are no trufans in Fort Collins other than Gordon, and this is his way of trying to convert the heathen, to expose them to the true faith. (He's also getting a certain amount of university funding, I believe, to put on the con). Originally, Bob Vardeman was to be Pro Guest of Honor, Dan Darlington was Fan Guest of Honor, and I was to be Master of Ceremonies. That may have been a little too esoteric for the school authorities; I don't know. In the official flyer publicizing the con (of which there may be a copy in this issue of DoS), we are all designated simply as guests of honor. I don't mind.

Gordon has done/is doing all the work. All I have to do is attend, talk to a creative writing class, be on a couple of panels, and stand around looking important. I've also been helping to compile a list of science fiction songs for possible use in the Masquerade Ball & SF Disco which is one of YuccaCon's innovations. That's been fun. My preliminary list, based just on albums that I have here in my room and on songs that I like, totals about 25. I'm sure it would be no real trouble, relying only on albums that some of my friends have, to compile a list of over a hundred. It would be fun to try sometime for a really comprehensive listing of SF music, but it may already be impossible; so much of the new material is SF oriented.

My current favorite space song, incidentally, is "39" in the Queen album, *A Night at the Opera*.

(But if I want to talk about music I can damn well get into APA-LP, which I still want to do but still have not done. Back to con talk).

MileHiCon 9 and Penulticon I are the ones that present a slightly sticky situation and they're what I had in mind when I used the words "fan feud" (carefully qualified, I hope) in the introduction. A brief review may help clarify things.

Last year, even before MileHiCon 8, Judith Brownlee and Ted Peak had let it be known that they did not intend to run any more cons for a while. That seemed to create something of a vacuum, because there was no one else in DASFA who had expressed any great eagerness to take over the task.

Even before this, a few foolhardy souls, including me and Lois Newman and Gordon and Bob Alvis and others, had begun dreaming about and making noises about Denvention II. One of the obvious obstacles to the dream was that none of us except Lois had any experience in running a big con.

Lois made a proposal to DASFA -- that she take over MileHiCon next year (1977, that is) and make it a big con, as big as possible, and run it very frankly as a dry run for Denvention.

Unfortunately, Lois was unable to attend the DASFA meeting where her plan was discussed and voted upon. If she'd been there, the outcome might have been a little different, but maybe not, since there were, after all, DASFans willing to work to keep the con small. The most telling argument against Lois was that she wanted to do it on a one-time basis only, primarily for demonstration purposes. Anyway her proposal was overwhelmingly defeated, and in the heat of debate some unpleasant words were spoken and some resentments were aroused, and that's how the impression arose that a fan feud might be developing.

The outcome of the whole thing was that Lois, with support even from some

who had opposed her on the MileHiCon vote, decided to organize a brand new con and make it as big as possible and use it as the dry run for Denvention.

Hence, Penulticon. At first it was going to be NovaCon, because it almost has to be in November to keep it as far away on the calendar as possible from other largish regional cons, but then someone noticed there's already a NovaCon (in England), and so the committee accepted Ed Bryant's suggestion of Penulticon -- penultimate month; November; get it? Okay.

The way to avoid getting caught in the middle of a fan feud, or of being sure to emerge on the winning side if there is one . . . is to be on both sides. That's where you find me. And Fred Goldstein and Dave Anderson, and Ed Bryant and a number of others who are willing to work on both cons and are hoping both will succeed. I am vice chairman of Penulticon and publications chairman of MileHiCon. I'm soliciting ads for the program books of both cons.

There is no fan feud here, and I apologize for using the term, even facetiously. However, I think my description of it as a somewhat sticky situation, while perhaps inelegant, is not inaccurate. There are some serious misgivings, some doubts as to whether Denver can support two cons so close together. Personally, I think it can, but even I have come around to the opinion that Penulticon isn't likely to be as huge as we'd counted on at first. To begin with, we were thinking in terms of about 1,000. We have now scaled that down to around 500. So its original purpose of providing experience in the running of large cons is probably not going to be fulfilled.

Well, that's what the committee was thinking about at one of our early meetings when we decided to bid on a Westercon.

This year, at Vancouver, the Denver delegation will be bidding for Westercon '79.

If we win that, and if Penulticon 1, and 2 and 3, aren't disasters, and if we can put on a good Westercon '79, then we believe our chances for getting WorldCon '81 will be excellent. A lot of ifs . . .

There is a complication: Lois Newman is closing her store in Boulder and moving back to L.A. That's a tragedy for Denver fandom in general, and when the Penulticon/WesterCon/WorldCon committee first heard the news we were afraid it was the end of all our plans; but we have decided it needn't make much difference. The Penulticon committees are hard at work; Lois will be available for consultation via WATTS line and she'll come back for the con. I will probably take over as chairman of Westercon should we win the bid, and Lois can provide a lot of help from the coast. Lois wants to be head of WorldCon still, but there's no reason why she can't do that even from L.A. And she may be back in the Denver area by then anyway.

I make no predictions, but I'll be working hard.



In Pursuit of Unicorns

an appreciation of GAIL BARTON

Gail Barton is one of the most under-rated artists in fandom. Whether you agree with that statement or not, at least it conveys meaning. I was going to say that Gail Barton is also one of the most under-rated poets in fandom, but I couldn't get those words to mean anything, even to myself. If Gail is under-rated, who is the most over-rated? Name one poet in

fandom who is even rated--whatever that may mean. I'm sure there are poets in fandom, but I'm not sure than fandom at large acknowledges their existence. It's a cultural deficiency that we share with the mundane world: We don't know what to make of our poets, what to do with them, or what to let them do to us. (Actually, and fortunately, a number of pretty good poets have solved the problem for themselves by putting their words to music, learning to play the guitar and becoming rock performers; some have become rich and famous. Not all poets have the talent or the opportunity or the desire to take that course). Most poets, fortunately (and this is particularly true in the case of Gail Barton), are not just poets -- they're a lot of other things besides, such as novelists or teachers or cab drivers or artists, or of course they can be all of those things at once and more.

Gail doesn't happen to be a novelist or cab driver or even a teacher in the formal sense of the word, but she is much, much more than poet and artist, and that is one of the main points I want to make, and I'll do it by talking a little about a few of the many different things that Gail Barton is, and hinting at some of the others; but nevertheless I had a purpose in mentioning her first as artist and poet. It's a good way to start showing you Gail.

Here's one of her drawings. And here's one of her poems:

U N I C O R N

*I have seen splendor:
The starhorse in the forest
Moving near dark waters
Under trees of light.
Beautiful is his forelock
The curving neck of
 moonlight.
He is the white beast
The colt of night
Wind joy.
Lights burn in his running.
He paces fire on the
 grasses.
Stars form his eyes.
Proud his hoofsteps
Horned king
Song fire.*



Here's another drawing, and another poem, and then I won't bother you with any more poems.

P E G A S U S

Feather wind

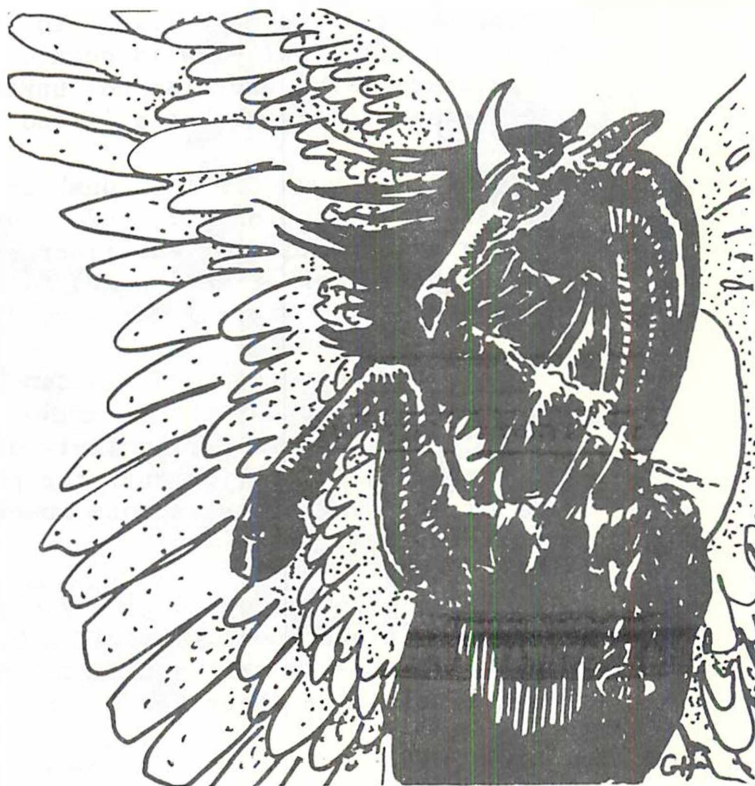
Climb the sky on strong limbs

Sky horse in the zenith

Satin flamed storm

White high sun

Plume.



But let me slip the commercial message in right here: If you would like to see more of Gail's poems and artwork (50 poems, 30 drawings) send \$2 and a boxtop (the boxtop is optional) to Don-o-Saur Press (that's me) for a copy of *BETWEEN GALACTIC ARMS*. Be the first on your block . . . etc. The printing, I have to confess, is not all that could be desired, but in spite of that it's a nice little book, easily worth the price. And if it's any additional incentive to get a copy, you should know that we have already sold enough to cover my expenses as printer; all the rest of the take will be Gail's. But this is a very limited edition (approximately 100 copies, total). So . . .

One of the criticisms of Gail's poetry, if any reputable critic were to read it carefully enough to make criticisms, would be that it lacks emotion. That hypothetical critic would point out that her poems (and her drawings too, for that matter) fall into three main categories -- mythological birds and beasts, Roman history, and science, particularly astronomy. The critic would note the absence of any poems dealing with unrequited love or heartbreak or loneliness or squalor or despair, and might conclude that "Miss Barton's work, alas, is too far removed from the ordinary experience to have much appeal. It is too abstract, too intellectual, too dry . . ." Well, I'm not going to wait around for the critic to show up and actually say those things for me to give my refutation. Here's my reply to that stuffy, know-it-all, non-existent critic:

First of all smash your stereotypes. Then, read the poems again, this time for what they are, not for what you think they should be, or for what they are not. Forget about the absence of heartbreak and despair; observe, please, the presence of beauty and cheerfulness, of humor and hope. No

all about). Cordwainer Smith is another favorite that Gail has read and reread; and currently she is on an E. E. Smith kick, including the "new" Doc Smith books.

The range of Gail's interests and enthusiasms is virtually boundless, and she is genuinely knowledgeable about more different things than anyone I've ever

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known who didn't have multiple doctorates. And she is fascinating to talk with if you don't mind a slight tendency of hers to slip into a formal lecture-monologue style of discourse. For myself, I not only don't mind, I encourage it, since I would nearly always rather listen than talk anyway.

One thing about Gail still puzzles me a little, even after several years of acquaintance. She doesn't like to write. She was in Slan-APA for a while but eventually got to where she was insisting on drawing her submissions. I think she finally dropped out. As director of DASFA last year, Gail's monthly column for DASFAx was a model of brevity and terseness. When she does write, she displays a supreme disregard for such mundane matters as spelling and punctuation. In re-copying her poems for the book, I was making so many spelling corrections that when I saw the word "rime" I naturally changed it to "rhyme." It should have stayed "rime"--as in frost.

The thing that bothers me about Gail's aversion to writing prose is that she will be leaving soon and I'm going to miss her, and I know she won't write to me. Oh, I assume she will send me pictures occasionally and poems, I hope, but without her to tell me, and if she won't write, how am I going to keep up with the latest developments and discoveries in UFOlogy, nuclear physics, astronomy, cultural anthropology, geology, botany, anatomy, Greek and Roman history, and fairy lore? I am going to miss her.

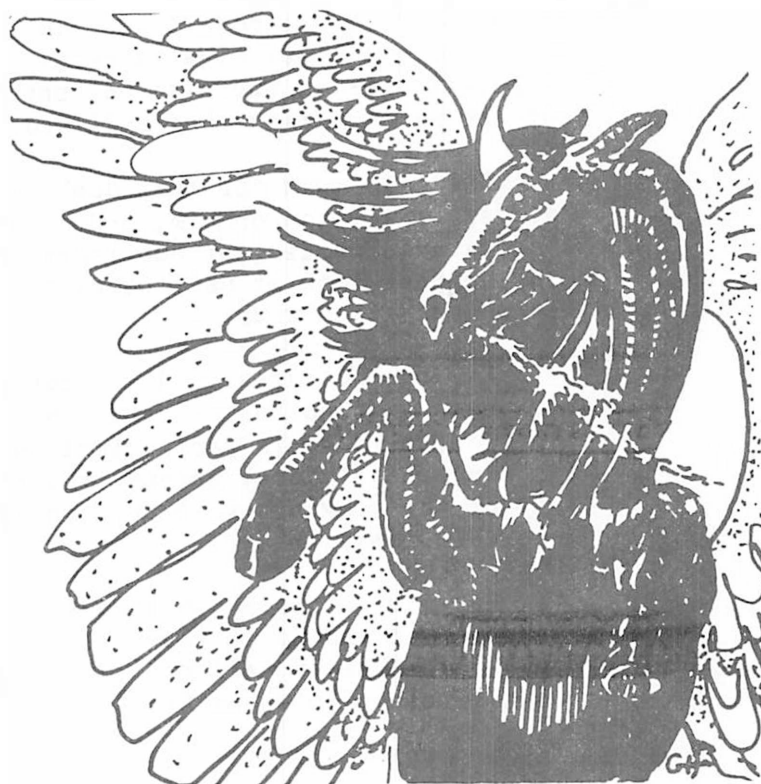


Here's another drawing, and another poem, and then I won't bother you with any more poems.

P E G A S U S

*Feather wind
Climb the sky on strong limbs
Sky horse in the zenith
Satin flamed storm
White high sun
Plume.*

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emotion in Gail's poems? What rubbish! Very little conventional emotion, perhaps, of the soap opera or country & western music variety, but there's no shortage of that kind of emotion; you don't need Gail to provide it. The emotions evoked by Gail's poems, and by her artwork, too, are of a different kind, more rarefied, more cerebral. Conventional poets are enthralled by the beauty of a sunset and in describing that beauty they convey feelings that we're all familiar with and comfortable with. But Gail Barton's poems are more likely to be about suns and circling planets than about sunsets. Her view is cosmic. Contemplation of the birth and death of galaxies is an exercise not unaccompanied by emotion. But, no, is is not the same emotion that a jilted lover feels.

Well, so much for that dumb critic. I don't suppose my tirade will have any influence on him, and I guess it doesn't even matter. But maybe someday some critic, or publisher or musician or something will take a close enough look at Gail poems to do something about them, and I want to be in a position where I can say, "See, I told you so!"

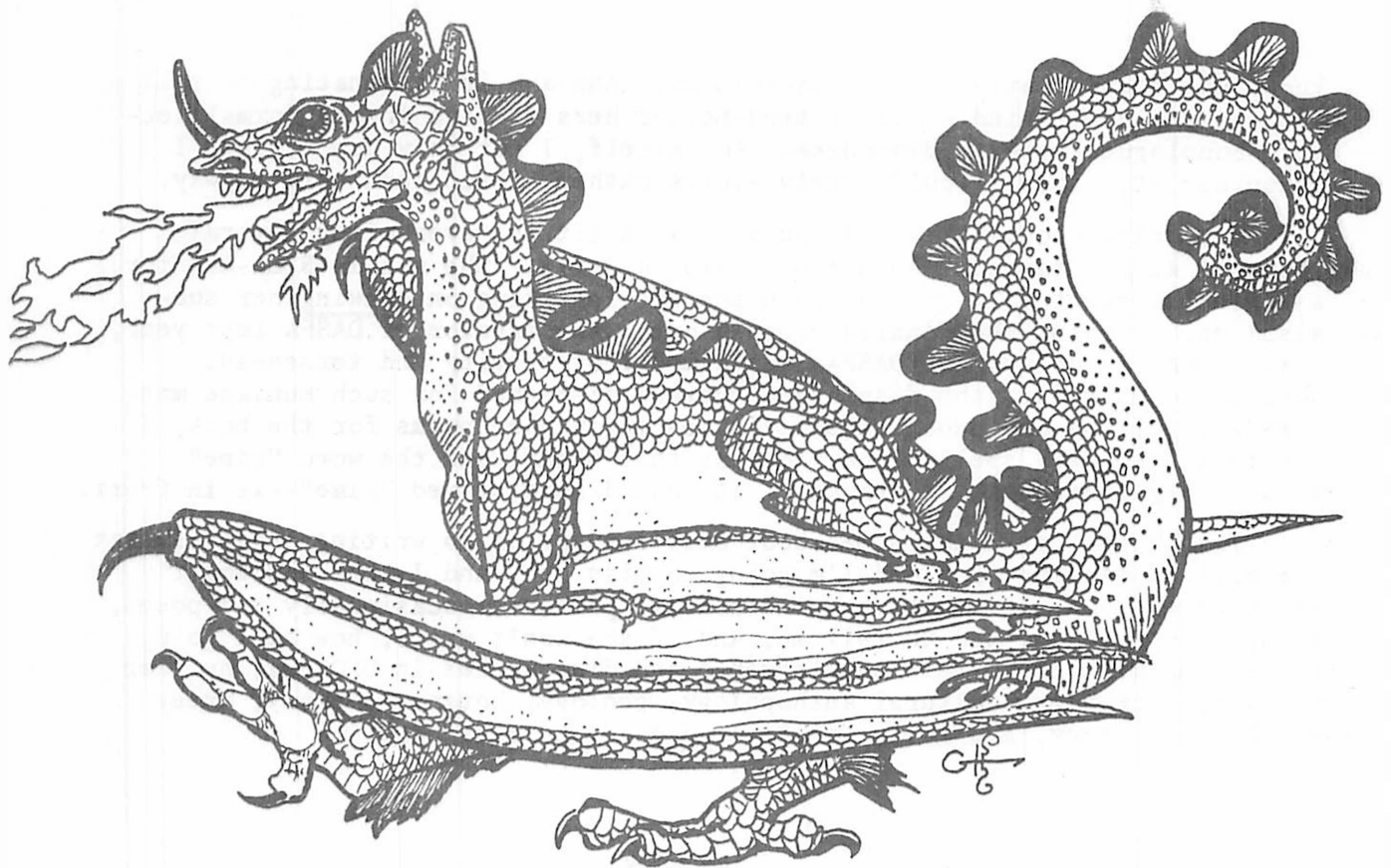
Anyone who cares to do so can learn quite a lot about Gail by reading her poems and looking at her artwork. That book, *BETWEEN GALACTIC ARMS*, that I'm selling, is particularly useful (as well as being enjoyable for its own sake, I hope) because the poems and the pictures go together. Many of the drawings were done specifically for the book, specifically for a certain poem.

But I'm not going to give you an analytical review of the book. Get a copy of it and do it yourself. Or not. In case you don't, or in case you're not able to tell much about her from the book, I would like to tell you a little more about her before I let her go.



One thing, though, to begin with-- In even thinking about Gail Barton, the same advice applies that I gave our friend the klutzy critic: Smash the stereotypes. If, just because I used the words "poet" and "artist" in talking about Gail so far, you have been thinking of her as some kind of "typical" poet or artist -- forget it. You're nowhere close. Gail is Gail; she is not like anybody else that I know, so I can't even rely on comparisons to give you an idea of what she's like.

You may have seen her at cons; she's been to more than I have and started earlier. Whether she's in a party room, or attending a panel or sitting around in a hall or lobby, she is generally hunched over a drawing pad, probably turning out her colorful and gorgeous name-tags on commission to help pay con expenses. She may look like she's totally engrossed in the drawing, but she isn't missing a thing of what's going on around her, and she can interject unexpected and incisive comments that sometimes startle the unwary.



Physically, from a distance, Gail presents an impression of great mass that you somehow expect to diminish as you draw near, and it can be a little disconcerting when it doesn't. With her crisp voice and direct, forthright manner, sometimes mistaken for brusqueness, Gail can be a little intimidating to someone meeting her for the first time.

Don't let her scare you. She loves cats. Also dogs. And gerbils, and ferrets and snakes and hawks . . . She took courses in veterinary science at the University of Colorado, along with an astonishingly wide range of other subjects -- astronomy, anthropology, geology, history, even some art. When she graduated after five years, she had enough credits for majors in two or three different subjects.

Gail was a child prodigy. She was reading omniverously long before she started school and has never found any reason to stop. She discovered science fiction via Star Trek (smash the stereotypes!) and she remains a dedicated Star Trek apologist, and is willing to argue with anyone about its merits. But she didn't stop with ST, by any means. In the ten years or less that she has been a fan, she has probably read at least as much S-F as I have in 35 years. Books that she particularly likes, Gail reads more than once, and a large portion of her artwork is quite frankly illustrations for her favorite books and stories. Roger Zelazny's *LORD OF LIGHT* is one of her all-time favorites (she's a Buddhist, incidentally, which is what her poem, "Conversion," in our book is all about). Cordwainer Smith is another favorite that Gail has read and reread; and currently she is on an E. E. Smith kick, including the "new" Doc Smith books.

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BRIEF TRIBUTE TO ANOTHER GAIL

I have never met Gail White of New Orleans, but I hope to someday. I like her.

Several weeks ago she sent me a copy of her own modest little . . . book seems too pretentious a word for it. *Epitaphs & Other Light Verse* is nine sheets of 4½ X 5½ mimeo paper, including the covers, and containing exactly seven very brief verses, uniformly clever and amusing. None is profound; they're not supposed to be. But the last one of the seven . . . well, I promptly wrote to Gail, asking her permission to reprint it in Don-o-Saur. She granted her permission. Here's the poem.

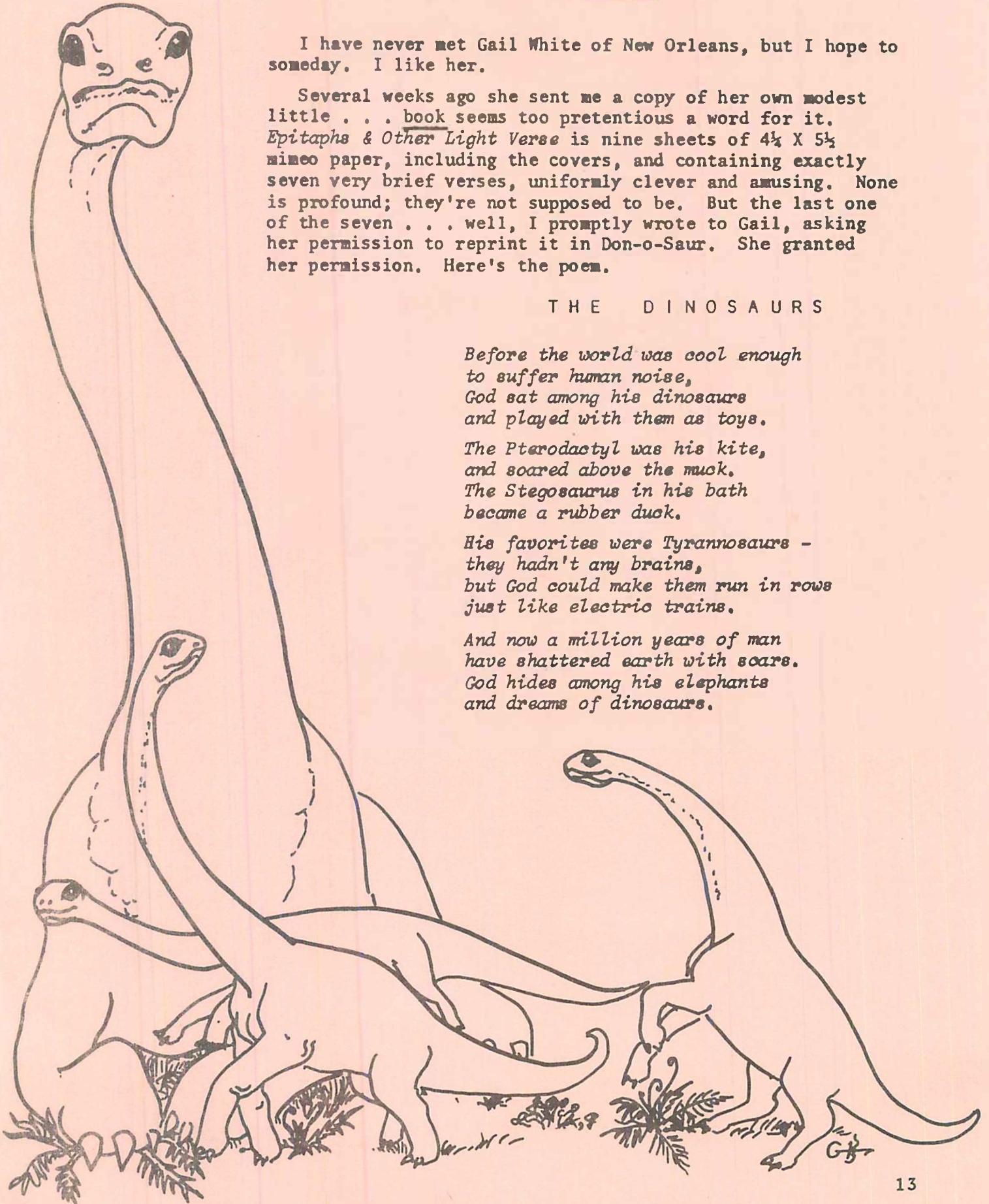
THE DINOSAURS

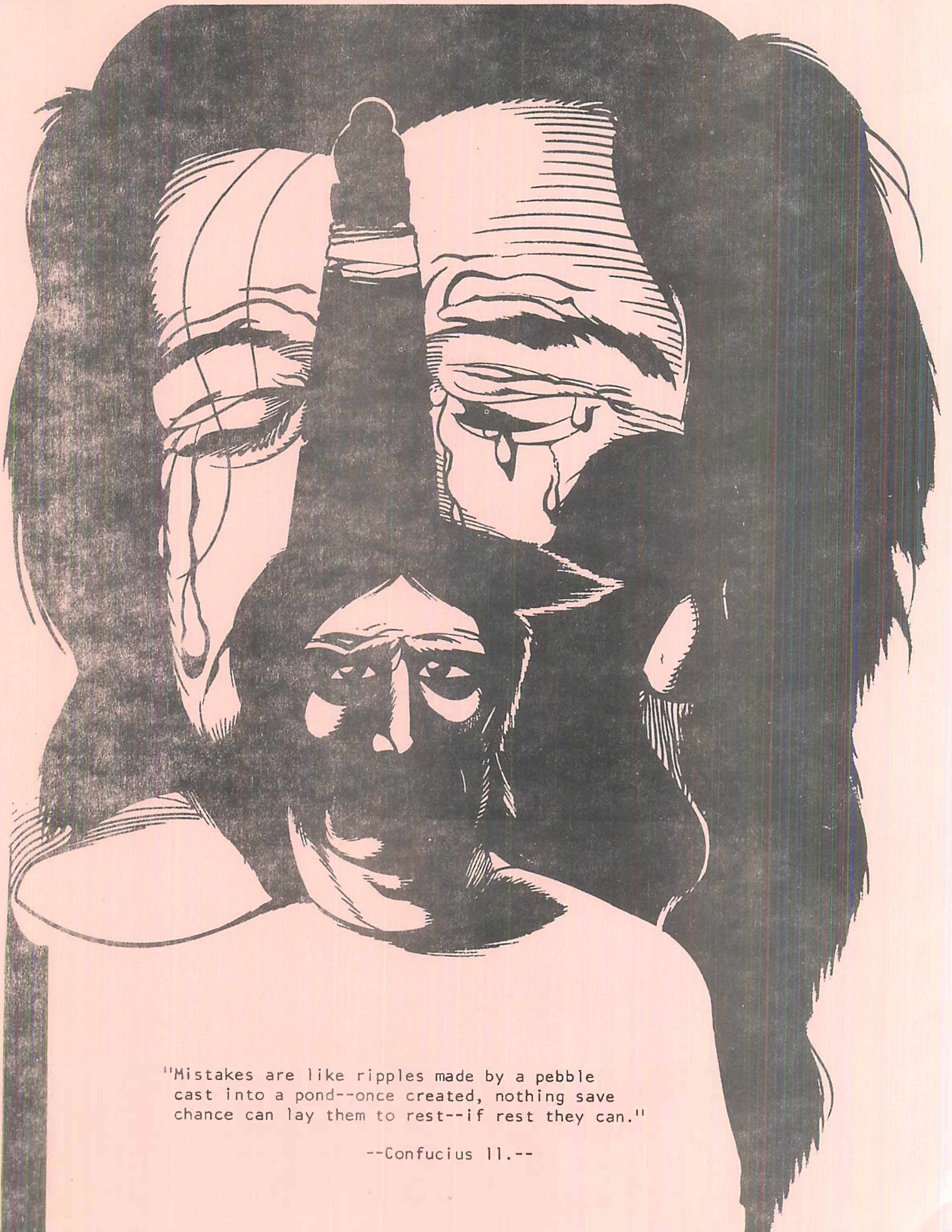
*Before the world was cool enough
to suffer human noise,
God sat among his dinosaurs
and played with them as toys.*

*The Pterodactyl was his kite,
and soared above the muck.
The Stegosaurus in his bath
became a rubber duck.*

*His favorites were Tyrannosaurs -
they hadn't any brains,
but God could make them run in rows
just like electric trains.*

*And now a million years of man
have shattered earth with roars.
God hides among his elephants
and dreams of dinosaurs.*





"Mistakes are like ripples made by a pebble
cast into a pond--once created, nothing save
chance can lay them to rest--if rest they can."

--Confucius 11.--

T h i e f i n t h e N i g h t

That dark and powerful drawing by Russ Parkhurst on the facing page is pure fortuitous coincidence. I did not commission it or plan for it. It has been in my art file for maybe a couple of years, and every time I've noticed it, it's been with the conscious doubt that I would ever be able to use it. And I was certainly not looking for that specific piece when I was digging through the art file tonight for something to go with this particular bit of soul-baring. But when I saw it, all the other art possibilities that I had set aside were forgotten.

Presumably that picture, and the words that accompany it (Russ', not mine, in case you were wondering) are representative of some personal torment that Russ was going through at the time -- I doubt that a picture like that could emerge from an un-tormented soul. But if I had told Russ then in detail all that I am now going to tell you sketchily, and if I had been able to tell him what it all meant to me and how I felt about it, and then had asked him to draw a picture reflecting my innermost feelings -- this is the picture he would have drawn.

Every detail in that picture has profound meaning for me. Some of it will become quickly clear as I start telling the story; some of it, I probably won't bother explaining, but you might be able to guess. But one meaning of one detail I will explain as a way to get started.

The human figure just behind the foreground figure--the one in the black hood, just under the crying woman's left eye. . . It looks a little like the comic book character The Phantom, and I guess it can be The Phantom, but for me it also has to represent the Shadow and the Spider and the Avenger and the Saint and all the other glamorous and deadly nocturnal outlaw heroes who prowled the fiction of my adolescence.

I was corrupted by the Shadow. I really was. I was living proof that young minds can be adversely affected by cheap, sensational literature. Dr. Wertham would have loved me.

It's funny the things you remember, once you start remembering. I recall an essay I wrote for Miss Velma Lindford's American Problems class when I was a junior in high school. The assigned topic was something like "Juvenile Delinquency: Its Causes and Solutions." The thesis of my paper was that too much reading of pulp detective and mystery magazines could over-stimulate the imaginations of young boys and make them want to imitate the extra-legal adventures of the magazine and comic book characters.

The grade on that particular paper was not good, and it was accompanied by a notation to the effect that the theory I was referring to was long out of date; it had been popular in Victorian times but modern studies showed absolutely no relationship between crime and reading.

I was in no position to argue; about all I could have said was that no one had studied me, and of course I couldn't say that. So I accepted the grade and held my peace. I knew what I knew.

If I'd been pressed on the point by someone who knew all the facts (assuming for the moment that such a person could have existed; as far as I know, no one has ever had all the facts about this, not even me; but just assuming), I would not have tried to defend the position that adulation of pulp heroes leads to crime. That wasn't even the position I'd taken in my paper -- only that that sort of adventure fiction can, in some cases, overstimulate an already overactive imagination and make the individual more susceptible to suggestion. That much was indisputable. But I was not, even then, and certainly not now, trying to blame Maxwell Grant or Lester Dent for my mistakes.

But there is absolutely no denying that I was influenced (my word "corrupted" is a bit too strong) by those marvelous knights of the night. For a while, at about the age of 14, I was totally enraptured by them. I wanted to be the Shadow. (A couple of years earlier I had wanted to be Tarzen, and at some time or another in there I wanted to be Sir Launcelot). Being the Shadow was easier than being the various other personae that I aspired to. All it took was a black slouch hat, a black cape, gloves, an imaginary brace of .45s-- and the nerve to slither through the window of my basement room into the chill world of midnight mystery. I surprised myself by finding the nerve to do it.

I would prowl the neighborhood like a tomcat, slinking through the shadows of shrubbery and along the sides of houses, avoiding the light, blending into the deepest darkness, all my senses alert, freezing into immobility with the passage of every auto, the bark of every dog, the sound of any voice, or of any sound at all except the whispering of the trees. I was in pursuit of ruthless malefactors--or was being pursued by them; it didn't matter which.

Once I was actually captured by an insidious foe, but I outwitted him and escaped. I had crept through an alleyway and was crawling through a dense clump of backyard bushes. There was no moon, no stars; clouds hung low and black-- I could see virtually nothing. But I heard a sudden rattling of leaves and branches and something heavy landed on my back, flattening me against the dry grass.

"Ha! Gotcha! I knew you'd have to . . . Hey, you're not Jimmy! Who . . . what are you . . . "

Squirming and twisting, I managed to roll over, but it was no improvement because the someone was now straddling my chest. But I recognized the voice as that of a classmate that I knew casually. "Hey, lemme go. You got the wrong guy. There's too many of these games going on around here. You guys oughta go someplace else."

"Thompson? Is that you? What the hell are you doing out so late?"

"Playing the same kind of game you are, I guess. Let me up."

Henry (or whatever his name was; I really don't have the faintest recollection of a name for him) scrambled off and even helped me to my feet. He

lit a match. "Oh, you been to a Halloween party, huh? Still pretty damn late for you to be out, though. I didn't know you could . . ."

"I saw Jimmy just a few seconds ago," I said. "Back that way. See ya."

And I charged off the other way, straight toward home, pulling off my "costume" as I ran.

I don't remember whether it was that specific incident that put an end to my adventures as the Shadow. It might have been; I was pretty chagrined about it. Or maybe the weather turned nasty. Or it might very well have been that I came down with one of my innumerable adolescent illnesses. I was sick with one thing or another nine-tenths of the time, it often seemed. That might not have been so bad (I learned to enjoy poor health), but it was embarrassing to realize that the whole school -- maybe even the whole town -- knew what a sickly, fragile creature I was. Even kids I scarcely knew were aware that I wasn't supposed to over-exert myself because of a heart weakened by rheumatic fever, that I wasn't supposed to stay out too late or get chilled because of an extreme susceptibility to colds, flu and pneumonia. It was humiliating. But it was in the full awareness of my own delicate health that I surprised myself by finding the nerve to make those nocturnal excursions.

For whatever reason, they ended -- for a while, at least; maybe a year, possibly more than that. And when they resumed, it was on an entirely different level: still something of a game, in a sense, but no longer an innocent game, and no longer solitary.

It was chess and science fiction that brought me and Charles together in high school; that made us companions. (You see, SF corrupts, too. If I were to try blaming Grant and Dent for my slide into the path of wrongdoing, I would have to implicate Heinlein and Van Vogt and Sturgeon and Rocklynne too). Charles and I were not quite the only science fiction fans in Laramie High School, but almost. My lifelong friend Eric was one also, but he and Charles couldn't stand each other, and that may be one reason why fandom was never organized in Laramie. I'm sure Charles and I were the only ones who were both chess and SF nuts.

Not many people liked Charles, for a variety of reasons. He was overbearingly egotistical and conceited. He considered himself a superior being and was openly contemptuous of lesser mortals. His conversation was sprinkled with the biggest words he could come up with from resolute perusal of the dictionary. (Well, I liked to use big words, too, which could help explain some of my unpopularity at the time). Charles was a physical bully, too. He was a little taller than me and weighed about 50 pounds more than I did (his weight was normal for his six feet; I was that much underweight), and even though he had no athletic ability or interest, he was strong enough to impress me.

The fact that I was able to hold my own against him at chess and in the use of big words, and the fact that I liked to read the same sort of stuff he did possibly gained me some measure of respect from Charles, but I'm sure that what he most liked about me was the simple fact that I was impressed by him-- by his physical strength, his imagination, his apparent intelligence.

Charles dominated me to some extent, but only some. I was by no means his slave; I could say No and make it stick when I really didn't want to go along

with his suggestions, but in fact he seldom made suggestions that I felt like opposing.

I don't remember when the idea of burglary first came up in our conversations. As we became closer friends, I told Charles about my earlier nighttime prowlings, and he told me he used to do the same sort of thing, and he suggested, jokingly, that we ought to sneak out together some night and rob a bank. We laid elaborate, fanciful plans for getting into the bank via the sewer line, and we even agreed to meet at a certain time on a certain night in a certain place, just to see what was actually under the certain manhole cover that we had in mind.

The morning after the designated night, when I saw Charles at school, he said, "Where were you last night?"

And I said, "Home in bed, sound asleep."

"Oh. Well, so was I, actually, but seriously, why don't we think about doing something like that? Not robbing a bank, obviously, but there's lots of other possibilities. The bowling alley would be easy."

So I knew that Charles had not just been joking. He's been out in the night, waiting for me. I felt ashamed for not keeping the appointment.

We did a lot of serious talking for the next few weeks, settling both the philosophical and the practical aspects of our project.

I must talk about religion for a while.

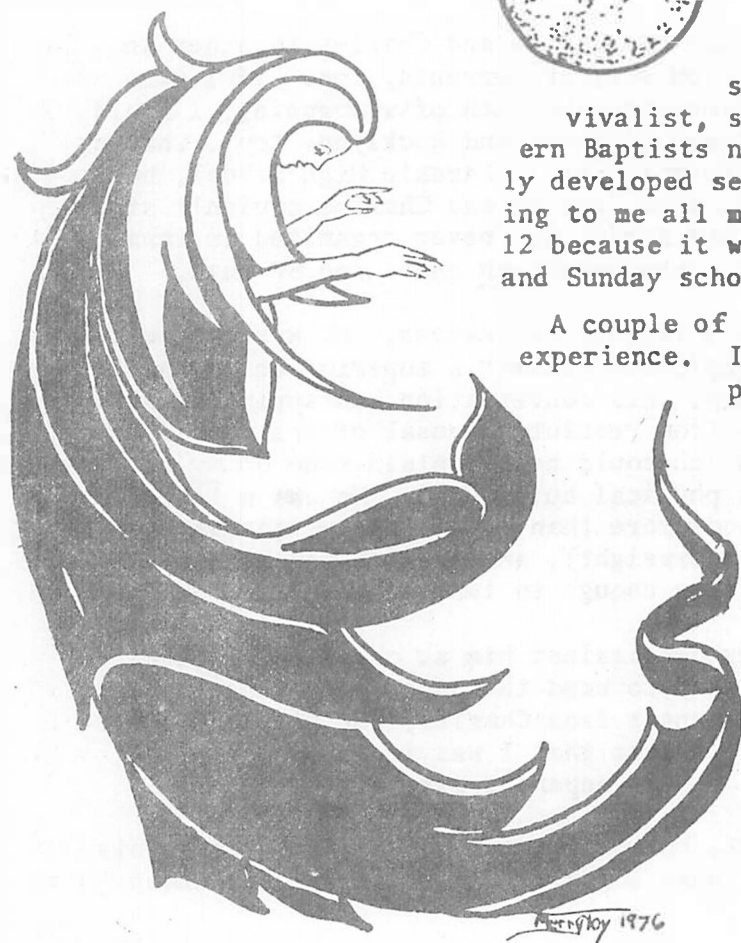


My parents were (are) Southern Baptists. Not what they call Hard-shell, the extreme fundamentalist, revivalist, shoutin' screamin' variety, but Southern Baptists nevertheless; and my mother had a highly developed sense of Sin, which she had been imparting to me all my life. I was baptized at the age of 12 because it was expected of me as a regular church and Sunday school attendee.

A couple of years later, I had a genuine religious experience. I read an article about the power of prayer, and it hit me with almost physical impact.

I was suddenly filled with a delirious, joyous elation, a bursting sense of goodness, of love, of transcendent peace. I knew that Jesus was my friend and that God and his angels were all around me, all the time. I talked to God every hour or so for the first few days and at least two or three times a day for a week.

Sunday came -- a day I had been looking forward to, for once.



Church was a shock. I saw for the first time that it had nothing what-ever to do with what I now considered to be true religion. The sermon was dull and trivial; the Bible lessons were pointless. I began thinking, for the very first time, seriously, about religion and churches.

My feeling of rebirth diminished rapidly during the second week, and the habit of prayer was forgotten by the third.

But the memory of that extreme exultation, that fantastic joy, lingered for a long time, like the memory of a sweet dream. (The only time I have had a similar experience was eight or nine years ago -- with LSD).

Within two more years -- by the time Charles and I were plotting our burglaries--I was an atheist. I now considered myself freed from the shackles of dogma and morality. I was above right and wrong -- beyond good and evil. But there was a catch; several, in fact. For one thing, I felt constrained to be a secret atheist.

Except to Charles, I dared not proclaim my philosophical convictions. I dared not inform my parents that I considered Christianity a superstition; my mother was a borderline hysteric under the most favorable of conditions and I just couldn't face the prospect of her reaction to my "loss of faith." So I continued to attend church and Sunday school regularly and to smilingly accept the praises of those who considered me the perfect model of a youth for Christ. Inside I seethed with contempt for my hypocrisy. I felt guilty about having to conceal my true views. I felt sinful. And there was the major catch: Right and wrong, good and evil had been banished -- but not S I N. That was something that had no relationship to logic or philosophy or reason or religion; it was a part of me. There was also, then as ever since, in the back of my mind, in the depths of my soul, a nagging doubt -- suppose I was wrong and Christianity was true after all? How could anyone be certain? In some obscure corner of my mind, I had faced that dilemma and solved it: If God existed, then I was on the other side -- a minion of Satan. So on one level of consciousness, I denied the existence of evil, while on another I perceived myself as a creature of Evil. And if simple denial of the Holy Ghost was the Unforgivable Sin, as the Bible said, then I had already committed it and thus was already doomed to spend eternity sizzling in Hell.

In view of the enormity of my sins already committed, burglary seemed almost insignificant. Any way I looked at it, there seemed no reason for not burglarizing the bowling alley with Charles.





Have I explained why I was a teen-age thief in the night? Have I made my mixed-up motivation at least half-way clear? I've tried. And I'm going to quit at that, for now. The burglaries themselves were almost anticlimactic; not particularly exciting.

Within a period of about a year, Charles and I committed four break-ins: The bowling alley, a small grocery store, the same bowling alley again (Charles' parents were bowling fanatics and so he knew the layout of that particular establishment -- and yes, of course he was symbolically punishing his parents), and the high school office once (read what significance you want to into that one).

I quit after the fourth one, for various reasons. I said, No; no more; and Charles didn't argue with me.

But he continued for another year and a half, running up a total of more than 20 burglaries. He seemed determined to get caught, to achieve the recognition he wanted. He left blatantly obvious clues; he began hanging around the police station, taunting the officers about their slowness in solving the crimes.

When Charles was finally arrested, he did try, for several months, to protect me with his silence, and I was grateful to him for that, for I had no desire to be caught, and I really thought for a while that I might get to live out my life clutching that guilty secret to my bosom. But in the end they made Charles tell all, and my role was exposed.

Charles was sentenced to a term in the state reformatory, which he served. (In fact it was later lengthened because of an attempt to escape).

I and two accomplices that he'd acquired after I quit, and whom I never met, were placed on probation.

I was released from probation after only a couple of months to enlist in the Army, from which, after only 18 months (that was a full enlistment in those days), I received an Honorable Discharge with the exalted rank of Pfc.

Pretty light punishment?

Take another look at the Russ Parkhurst picture at the beginning of this piece. Observe the weeping woman.

My mother. I had been afraid of what her reaction would be if she knew I was an atheist, but I hadn't considered what it might be if she knew I was a criminal. At least not in time.

Observe the haunted, guilt-ridden foreground figure in Russ' picture.

Me. For many, many years.

Pretty light punishment?

Don D'Amassa
19 Angell Drive
East Providence, RI
02914

As I see it, the
basic difference
in our points of
view has nothing
to do with the law

LOCs

You see man as basically good. I see him as
basically amoral, motivated largely by self interest.
You feel that most of the time, if left alone, most will make moral
decisions about their behavior. I believe that, left alone, most men will
usually make the decision that they think will lead to the best deal for
themselves.

Even if you were, for the most part, right (which I do not accept) about
the basic goodness of man, your society would be skewed in favor of the im-
moral man. If everyone else follows good moral principles and doesn't steal
or cheat, but I do, the advantage is mine.

It's nice to say that, in the best of all possible worlds, we wouldn't
need laws or constraints on our fellow man. But this isn't the best of all
possible worlds, and it's the one we have to live in. People like you (who
don't feel guilty about breaking laws that have no obvious "victims") are
preying on me, the unobvious victim. Because when respect for the law --
even silly laws -- disappears, then respect for all law disappears. In your
letter column you have printed letters from people who admit, nay, boast of
breaking various laws. I've received a couple of letters directly that say
they agree with me, but they'd be too embarrassed to say so publicly. Do
you realize people are actually embarrassed about admitting they obey the
law?

On heroin, you sound very plausible in principle, but not in practice.
The legalized use of heroin in England is not the same thing as in the U.S.
There they had very little organized crime involvement. Here, many addicts
are involuntary addicts. If you want to get your market up, you forcibly
apply it, or make it available as something else, so your client doesn't
know what he's getting onto until it's too late. Sure, you could legalize
heroin, but then the emphasis would change. Now we'd be blackmailing
people. Buy heroin from me or I'll make it public that you're an addict.
Organized crime in this country has a way of working around these "solutions."
Certainly no one knows what the eventual outcome of legalization would be,
and it might even work out as you say. But do you want to take the chance?
(Incidentally, after two years, the rate of heroin addiction in England -
and addiction related crimes - went up sharply).

I never said that personal pleasure was not a good reason for breaking
the law. I said "transitory personal pleasure" was not a good reason.
Let's see if I can make the point clear. If I discovered that I really en-
joyed pot and wanted to use it regularly, I'd become active in the movement
to have it legalized. On the other hand, if I make a point of smoking pot
once a year at Don Thompson's annual party so I won't be left out, then I
am breaking the law for a very transitory pleasure, and I would frankly
despise myself for it.

I did not say it was hypocritical of you to smoke pot. I did say that
it was hypocritical of you to encourage clandestine law-breaking in your

home, particularly in an area that may well prove to be extremely harmful to the users and their friends. (You can get high from the fumes from roaches being smoked in the same room, you know, and some people have had violent reactions to them).

In your reply to Stuart Gilson, you don't seem to realize that there is no practical difference between a society which has no laws and a society in which every individual decides which laws to obey. They're identical. Even in an anarchy, each individual would have his own code of behavior.

I can pretty much agree with you on the sexist terms debate. Mike Kring wins your case for you while trying to defeat you. If "only the women" want the word "chairperson" used, then there obviously is a great deal of power attached to the use of the word "chairman." In fact, although I've generally thought that the only real purpose to this change was to make the general public more conscious of the change in our lifestyles, Mike has just provided me with a more innate - and therefore more valid - reason for it. And he was trying to do the opposite.

Mike Shoemaker displays a similar lapse. If the word that indicates the race (Man) and the word that indicates the male sex (man) are the same, while the female sex (woman) is different, as it is, then I suggest that the situation does in fact say an awful lot about our society. And derogatory or not, patronizing or not, words that classify people artificially have the effect of being derogatory. There was some uproar, for example, because Carter wanted to be inaugurated as "Jimmy" instead of "James Earl" Carter. "Jack" Kennedy became JFK or President Kennedy after his election. You can give an "office girl" a promotion to "administrative aide" and she probably won't notice if you skip her annual wage increase. There's a lot of power in words and titles, and if Mike Shoemaker thinks otherwise, he's going to get some unpleasant surprises.

[I'm not sure that Don and I can even agree on what it is we disagree on. I don't know how he got the impression that I consider man (except couldn't we say "humanity" maybe, since this is something we do seem to agree about) basically good. I'm sure I never said that. I don't consider humanity "basically" anything -- except enormously adaptable, perhaps. "Human nature" is a product of cultural conditioning (I believe), not vice versa.

[I do not agree that "when respect for even silly laws disappears, then respect for all law disappears." Nearly everyone that I know has respect for some laws and contempt for others.

[Involuntary heroin addicts are criminals under U.S. law, and I think that is a contemptible law. But I wouldn't want heroin legalized to the point of making it available in every drug store (or any drug store). It might be necessary to break the power of the Mafia in order safely to legalize heroin even in clinics, -- and it could be much too late already].



Mike Glicksohn
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The core of this issue [DoS #47] of course, is the discourse on law, which I found fascinating. It didn't surprise me to find Don D'Amassa writing from essentially an intellectual viewpoint and

Don Thompson replying from basically an emotional one. These are the characteristics of most of their writing, and as usual I found myself in sympathy basically with the Denver Don.

I can admire Don D'Amassa's stand and a part of my mind can even accept it as exemplary but I'm afraid I'm far too weak and imperfect to abide by it myself. I lack the integrity and the conviction to follow the rigorous and consistent course that Don D'Amassa suggests. Like Don T., the existence of transitory personal pleasure is more than enough for me to contravene laws whose violation I do not consider an offense. I cannot defend this on any sort of intellectual plane, of course. The laws against smoking dope should carry the same weight as the laws against robbery, violence, etc; my intellect can accept that. But my emotions say "Rubbish!" and I break the laws I don't find convenient with ridiculous ease. Nor do I feel guilty about it as Don T. does, not having been raised on the Puritan work ethic. On the other hand, I'm not especially proud of my actions either. I recognize that they're indicative of human weakness on my part, which I accept without going around bragging about it, much as Denver Don does. In fact, that worthy manages to say just about everything I'd like to say on the subject and says it much better than I ever could. And I suspect that is why I can admire Don D'Amassa for his thoughtful, consistent and intelligent approach to life but love Don Thompson for our shared flaws and weaknesses.

I can see both sides of the sexism and semantics question but basically I'm on the side of those who think the issue is being blown out of proportion and the changes are annoying. I suspect this is because, rightly or wrongly, I like to think that when I use a word like "mailman" I'm not being sexist, but simply referring to a convenient label. It may be true that others who use the same word do so with inherent sexist overtones but selfishly I don't like being forced to adopt a new vocabulary which is, to me, both unneeded and unattractive because of some other group of twits. Intellectually I can understand the desire of feminists for a new vocabulary but personally and emotionally I don't think I need it, which makes it more difficult for me to be in sympathy with its introduction. I'm not at all sure that the words we use have quite as much influence on what and how we think as you believe they do. They can have such an influence, I agree, but rather vainly I like to believe that, as intelligent people, we are aware of that possibility and adapt our language to our thoughts rather than letting the reverse happen.

It all boils down to personal interpretation of words, of course. For me, "mailman"



IMAGES of WOMEN in SF Trading Cards



#2 Seductress/enchantress



has no derogatory connotations so I see little reason to drop it from my vocabulary. This is undoubtedly simple selfish laziness, for intellectually I'm aware that there are certain people to whom the word is offensive and if I were truly considerate of their feelings I'd alter my speech patterns for them. Intellectually I'm incapable of defending my failure to do so, yet emotional and esthetic reasons seem to keep such words in my speech. I strongly suspect that as more and more people start making the transition from "man" to "person" it will gradually pass into my own conversation as well but just as I'm still thinking in Fahrenheit degrees I'll probably still say "chairman" and "garbageman" and others of their ilk. I'm just not the pioneering type, I guess.

[I don't think anyone's claiming "mailman" is derogatory per se. But it is inaccurate if the person delivering the mail happens to be a woman. Come on, it doesn't require much pioneering spirit to say "letter carrier" does it?]

Buok Coulson
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Hartford City, IN
47348

"The words we use affect the way we're able to think about things." They do, huh? Then I assume you feel that a mortician is superior to an undertaker, that a sanitation engineer is superior to a janitor, and that a police officer is somehow higher

class than a cop. And as the black population has demanded to be referred to, in turn, as black, colored, Negro, and back to black, your opinion of them as people has risen correspondingly.

I can see why Jessica wants to believe this sort of crap; feminists are grasping at any sort of straw to enhance female status, and I don't blame them a bit even if I disagree with them. But you're a newspaperperson - or would you feel better if I said "representative of the press"? You mean you really don't know that thoughts determine language and not the other way around? God knows the American population has been conditioned by the ad agencies to accept euphemisms - but that same conditioning means that words have less intrinsic value, and normal people pay very little attention to what euphemism is being used. (My coworkers all say "blacks" just like the news announcers - they know it means "n-----s" and the jokes they tell haven't changed any except for the word substitution).

Tackett gives the answer; language will change when we've learned to think differently. Until we do, you can throw in all the euphemisms like "chairperson" that you want to and it won't mean a thing. As for possessives making it somehow "easier" to think possessively of individuals, that's another load of crap. People who feel possessive will think that way, and those who don't, won't, and it doesn't make a particle of difference what the language is. (Sure the concept of possession is built into the language - it's built into the race, too, and changing the language isn't going to change the emotions. You have to work it the other way).

Maybe it's because you're a pressperson that you like to think that words are terribly important? Sure, I object to "sci fi"; it's a silly

term. But I'm not stupid enough to think that getting a mundane critic to say "s-f" is going to change his opinion of the genre. Are you?

I'll stay out of the crime discussion except to point out that the logical extrapolation from saying that heroin addiction is a disease and that laws outlawing it "are not control laws!" is that heroin should be free to anyone who wants it, and if they happen to become addicted they deserve free (or cheap) treatment by society. And if laws outlawing heroin are not control laws, then laws outlawing robbery are not control laws either - they haven't stopped it, have they? - and the mugger is really diseased and deserves free (or cheap) treatment by society.

[I often envy people who can be so absolutely certain they're right on every issue. It must be nice. But I think the only way such an attitude can be maintained is to keep a pretty tightly closed mind, and one way to do that is to slap such labels as "stupid" and "load of crap" on ideas and points of view that you don't want to think about seriously. Buck's letter takes such a simplistic and derisive approach to all the issues raised that whether or not his words affect the way he thinks, they make it extremely difficult for me to respond to his comments with any patience. If someone else would like to try . . .]

Christine Pasanen
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El Paso, TX 79902

The use of the word "my" in such terms as "my wife," "my husband," "my daughter," etc is not in itself sexist. It is, rather, possessive. I believe the reason you became

upset about referring to Carolyn as "my wife" is because you are sensitive and perceptive enough to catch the sinister overtones of the possessive case. Yes, when one says "my son" it can mean that a mother/son or father/son relationship exists -- but it can just as well mean that the parent literally possesses or owns the son. Or would like to. And since women have for so long been possessions of husbands and fathers and employers, the use of the possessive in such a case has good reason to make perceptive people aware that it sounds "not-quite-right somehow."

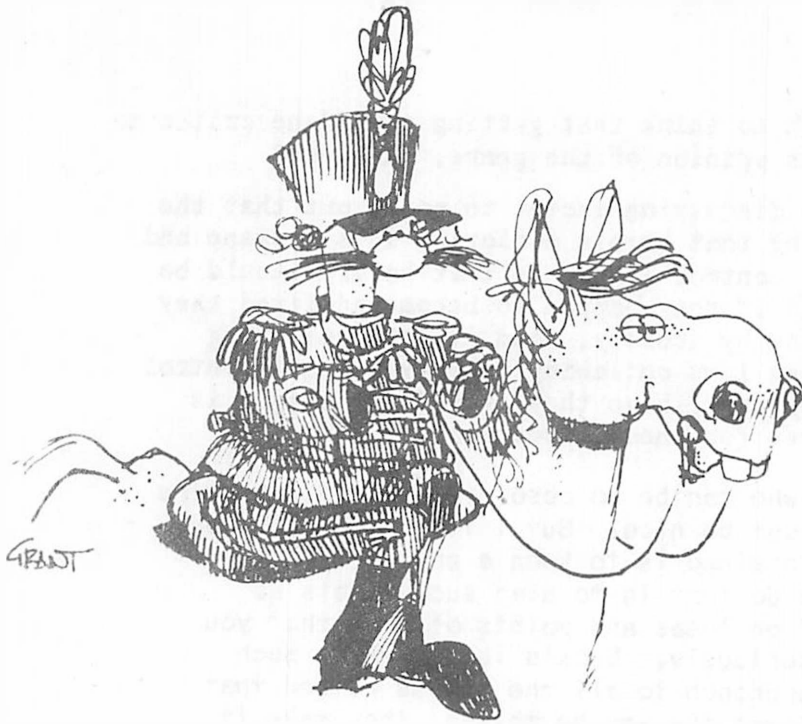
Obviously, those who can't catch the dark echoes behind "my wife," etc. have never felt themselves to be mere property, goods, chattel of someone else--they have no sense of such a heritage--they cannot even imagine that such a heritage could possibly exist. What's past is past, right? Women might have possibly at one time in mankind's (!) dark and distant past been treated as property, but that was ancient history and it's all over with, right? "And I," as Joanna Russ says, "am Marie of Rumania!"

Mr. Tackett is apparently frightened of the word "liberation" and of words that end in "ism"--I suppose they conjure up images of war and guerrilla uprisings--and so he

IMAGES of WOMEN in SF Trading Cards



#4 Bosomy
Breck Warrior Maiden



must abbreviate them to make them less powerful. FEMLIB. Sounds like a liver pill or something. I suppose that Mr. Tackett also apeaks and writes of the Pal-libs over in the Mideast and the Sym-libs who spirited away Patty Hearst. There are, however, some of us who believe that feminism and liberation are not dirty words --we take them seriously and are understandably upset to see them abbreviated to make them sound like something advertised on Saturday mornings between the cartoon shows. I am not warning Mr. Tackett that feminist guerilla forces will be sniping from rooftops and planting bombs by the end of the decade--why is it that all liberation must be violent, must shed blood, must inflict anguish

on innocents? This is a very male interpretation of the word. I propose that the liberation which we women are striving for is a much more internalized process--although it must, of course, manifest itself outwardly toward such issues as equal pay for equal work, control over our own bodies, and so forth. The liberation we hope for may well be something which the western world can scarcely comprehend.

Aw, c'mon, girls--where's ya sense of humor?

On one point, Mr. Tackett is correct--feminists often see "sexism in every shade and nuance of language and attitude." Why shouldn't we? A society's language reflects its attitudes and beliefs -- and we live in a sexist society.

Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Rd. NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107

As an old word juggler myself I can't argue with you about the power of words, although you failed to mention that it isn't so much the words themselves as how they are used. I have, in days of yore, handled press releases and propaganda and become adept at the technique of writing to special purposes. It's easy to present a subject in either an attractive or detractive way.

Heh. You work for the NEWS, don't you? Tell me, are you a "news-paperman" or a "media person"? Think about it. Think about the derivation of "media" as it pertains to newspapers, radio, tv, etc. If someone referred to me as a "media person" (although there is no reason anyone should), I'd pick up a club and hit him. In the cold light of analysis "media person" = "advertising pimp." Yes.

I think, however, that I'll stand by what I said in my letter in DoS #47: that the labels the femlibbers (now there's another label) get all charged up about are essentially unimportant. ~~Human~~. If ships are commonly referred to as "she" why are combat vessels "men of war"?

As for the law debate, well, I comply with those I must and tend to

ignore the rest. There are so many laws these days that I suspect we all break dozens a day in the course of ordinary living without being aware of it. Perhaps that's the big problem: there are too many laws. And enforcement is far too selective. If one has the means or the pull one can get by with almost anything. Or else get a Presidential pardon.

[I think RoyTac almost agrees with me on language. He understands why I would resent being called a "media person" (sure I would!), but he doesn't think that calling a woman a "man" is important. Ah, well. Personally, I think that to some extent at least people should have the right to pick their own labels, or to reject labels that others try to pin on them. I used to be a "liberal," but that has become a dirty word, and it is employed to conceal rather than to describe my views; so I now try to resist all political and religious labels].

Diana W. White
635 Oak Lane
Winfield, IL
60190

"Obedience to law" has to rank in the top 10 of everybody's favorite bullquestions; it was a golden oldie when God was a boy. Your zine displays many points of view, but they are all intensely personal. Since this is an abstract question it seems to me some considerations are missing, and the absence of these considerations keeps the issue from assuming intelligibility.

You and your correspondents wrote of bad laws, unjust laws, repressive laws, and stupid laws. From this it follows that there must be good, just, non-repressive and wise laws, all these judgments being made with respect to some standard. What is the standard? I can see only one inference in most of these letters: that a law is bad, unjust, repressive or stupid if the writer doesn't like it or if it interferes with some desire. It has never been my impression that law is a do-it-yourself project, but perhaps I am wrong. I hope I'm not. I hope you have some concept of justice lurking under your self-absorption, and that this concept takes cognizance of the rest of us, because somehow I don't have a hell of a lot of faith in the notion that justice is what Don Thompson thinks it is.

There is nothing any intelligent person would object to in efforts to protect the private lives of individuals against absolutists in morals and the moral life of individuals against absolutists in law. It does not follow that because this is desirable it is also logically necessary or conceptually possible to separate law and morals. Indeed, no one argues that it has ever been done. There can be no clear division of law and morals so long as there is no agreement on what moral system or what political system is valid. The entire distinction between "inner" and "outer" action which are supposed to distinguish between law and morals is meaningless to those who hold to a morality of consequences rather than to a morality of intentions.

The question of rights is different from the question of morals. It would be impossible to identify the moral situation without appeal to some rule. What is the rule by which you judge a law to be silly, vexatious, peurile, vicious or whatever? It is impossible for any moral agent to do as you ask and leave it up to you to decide. Suppose your rule is Never on Sunday? I'm afraid Don D'Amassa has the only tenable position: In the absence of articulated rules which appeal to some recognizable principle of

justice you are obligated to obey the law. Law abidance is a moral situation in itself. It follows that if obeying the law is moral then persuading or giving examples of lawbreaking is immoral. This connection is logical, not moral! In other words, the law is innocent until proven guilty. And you and your correspondents haven't made any kind of case whatever for your side. All you've said is that some laws vex me and some laws have consequences I don't like and thus I reserve the right to obey or disobey as I see fit. No wonder people keep passing laws to regulate the likes of you! Since you don't articulate your system of morals and since you claim to accept only your own and not what your neighbors think of as the commonly accepted one, it may very well be necessary to enjoin you from committing a good many immoralities! As others might look at it here is the problem: You claim to act out of conviction in a moral situation, but don't state what these convictions are, so it is not for strangers to judge on the basis of your past acts; they don't know them. They simply try to protect themselves in the future from the (possible) evil consequences of your acts. This is one of the disadvantages of a pluralistic society as well as one of the advantages--that you have plenty of right to be a moral dissenter but not an arbitrary lawbreaker.



You have not addressed the basic questions which must be addressed by one who dissents from the law. Some of these are: What is justice? What is law? What is legitimacy? What are rights? I am not suggesting that you produce the definitive treatise on these questions, but you should address them at least sketchily in justifying breaches of the law in order for others to determine whether you are a principled citizen or a criminal. After all, if I were raped I would hardly accept the rapist's natural right to indulge in his sexual satisfactions. Or if I shot you, you would hardly accept my statement that the rule of men was oppressive and unjust and that I had the right to attempt to

overthrow them with violence. There just has to be more to such an argument than that.

It would appear from your letter that your correspondents disagree with Don D'Amassa. I don't, and I'm glad to know there's one sane person out there.

[I'll try to disregard that last statement; it probably doesn't mean quite what it says. As for the rest of the letter . . . Well, to begin with, the views expressed in Don-o-Saur are intensely personal because DoS is a personalzine, not a philosophical journal, and I hope to keep it that way. I am interested in the personal reasons for people's actions much more than I am in the abstract philosophical reasons or justifications for those actions. It might be nice if everyone could explain every decision within the context of a fully worked out, coherent, consistent and logical system of philosophy;

but except for Diane and Don (and my son Bruce, perhaps), I know hardly anyone whose lives operate on that level. Most of us are motivated by much more concrete concerns; we do not view the matter of law obedience as an abstraction but as a very real and immediate problem that must be dealt with in practical terms every day. Denys Howard has some thoughts on this; I'll turn the forum over to him]:

Denys Howard
P.O. Box 8975
Portland, OR
97208

The position taken by Don D'Amassa and others (that we have a moral obligation to obey laws) is both surrealistic and, ironically, reminiscent of my own beliefs years ago. It is a mirror of all the old parts of my life from when

I was in college, learning to be an intellectual and learning that debate was more important than action. When I became sexual, towards the end of my college career, I entered an outlaw territory, and I have yet to return to the confines of "nice" society. When I realized I was gay, I realized I was illegal. Would Don argue that I should have been celibate in order to obey the law, or that I should have made love with someone in public and then gone to jail as a 'witness' to the absurdity of anti-gay laws? (And it isn't even the right to be sexual in public that we want, after all).

Understanding that both dope and the sex laws are illogical, I looked under their surface and began to recognize the true function of laws in our culture: to maintain the power of those who have it now, and to keep power out of the lives of those who lack it. It is not property owners, DuPonts, Rockefellers, or even nice middle-class men who serve time in jails, get beat up by cops when they run red lights, or get subpoenaed by grand juries fishing for ways to destroy organized opposition to the government.

I have learned not to expect police protection under any circumstances. I have learned this by being in situation after situation where, according to the letter of the law, I was protected, yet having police refuse to intervene in any way. I cannot now imagine any circumstance under which I would ask for the police to become involved with me. In my community, we are often engaged in legal struggles with the white men who control our housing, our food, our transportation; but we do not expect them to obey the law from any moral or ethical imperative. Those people break laws (the laws they hire legislators to write) with startling alacrity in order to maintain their control. In return, I am more than willing to break laws in order to increase the control I have over my life. It is only the nice people in between, and who have their anger bought off with \$15,000 salaries and whose children learn lies every day in public schools, who still believe that obeying laws is an ethical or moral question.

Michael Shoemaker argues that "man" as in chairman, mailman, etc., does not mean male except to the ignorant and that "man" also means "people" in German. Michael's argument was well-formulated and persuasive and set me back for a while. Until I found out that his facts were all wrong. The suffix 'man' in the English words like chairman is derived from the German



noun 'Mann,' which means the same as the English words 'man' or husband. The German word 'man' is the indefinite pronoun to which 'all' refers, but it is not etymologically linked to the English word 'man.' Also, I cannot find any basis for his assertion that the English 'people' is the same as a German word 'man.' The only German words I could find that might fit are the noun and pronoun referred to above. The German words which mean the same as the English 'people' are 'Leute,' 'Menschen,' and 'Volk.'

John J. Alderson
Havelock, Victoria
3465 Australia

Your articles and the letters in DoS 47 on law breaking left a few things up in the air. I perhaps would not have bothered to write, but the situation here in Australia gives the whole business an air of utter unreality. Secondly, as I am acquainted with a system of law that obviates the main difficulties, it should be of interest to know of the system that is infinitely freer than ours in Australia, and apparently yours in America.

In Australia there are two ways in which one may be lobbed. 1. You break a written law, that is, commit murder, drive an unroadworthy car, happen to glance in an open window whilst a girl is getting undressed. (If a man gets undressed without drawing the blind and a girl looks in the man still gets pinched!). 2. You get charged by the police with doing something or possessing something, and that charge automatically makes the act or possession an offence. It is no use the accused pleading that what he was doing, or the possession of the something is perfectly legal, the only defence is to prove you did not do the act, or you did not possess. Several years ago, to illustrate the point, someone was printing their own dollars and one man was caught and charged with (a) printing counterfeit money (b) possessing a Gestetner 2001 Offset printing machine. I think the first charge was not proven. On the second charge the Crown Expert Witness testified on oath that it was impossible to print counterfeit money on that type of machine. But to no avail, the man owned that machine and did time on that account. Yet you, I, or anyone else can go and buy one of those machines without license, registration or anything else except the money. One other beautiful case was that of one of our ancestors who was transported to Australia for "being in an oven."

Australia began as a prison and our Governments still govern it as a prison. We have no rights of a free press, of assembly, or worship; indeed basically, we have no rights whatever, and the only limits set on governments to the passing of laws is that they do not trespass on the law-making rights of another government. A Shire Council cannot levy income tax, nor the Federal Government collect rates.

It is little wonder then that our attitude to law is fundamentally different from that of Britain or America. There is a general attitude that no matter what you do, you are breaking



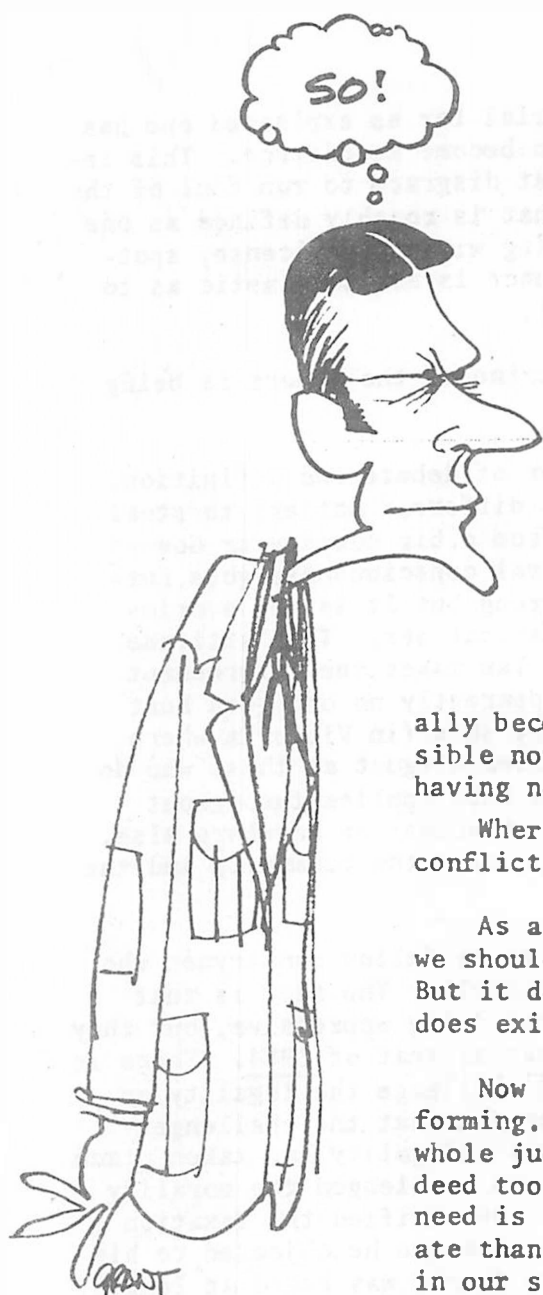
a law; whether or not this is right is immaterial for as explained one has only to be charged with an act for that act to become an offence. This includes being idle. Consequently it is no great disgrace to run foul of the law here if the offence is not a moral one, that is roughly defined as one that does not actually hurt another, say fishing without a license, spot-lighting, or drunken driving. (My own conscience is not so elastic as to include drunken driving in non-moral offences).

So, apart from the moral laws, the real crime of the others is being found out.

As to what are moral laws, that's a matter of debate and definition. Most of us regard murder as wrong. Theft is a different matter; to steal from a poor person is most heinous, to steal from a big company or Government instrumentality is different. But our moral consciousness goes further; virtually all males regard adultery as wrong but it is not a criminal offence, adultery being defined as extramarital sex. This attitude which has arisen from not having any rights in law makes the enforcement of non-moral regulations very difficult. As apparently no one gets hurt when you shoot a kangaroo, lots of kangaroos get shot (in Victoria where it's illegal by definition) and only the expressed disgust at those who do shoot them is liable to protect kangaroos. And this applies throughout and as morality and ethics are not much taught at school or anywhere else, it is a very difficult matter to preserve and protect the community and the country in the less obvious ways.

Now all this may come as a surprise, even to my fellow countrymen who regard themselves as free (they learn that at school). The fact is that we owe what liberty we have to the Government not being oppressive, but they have all the machinery for an oppression as great as that of 1984. There is however, in most cases, reasonable provision to challenge the legality or morality or what-have-you of a law. But it provides that the challenger must break the law first and until that technical illegality has taken place the law cannot be challenged. I have a friend who challenged the morality of the way the Government spent his income tax. He notified the Taxation Department that he was not paying his income tax because he objected to his money being used for armaments. He was taken to court, was heard at length, commented on his case, and fined five pounds. The second offence has some really dreadful penalties. This provision is, in general, the only right we have, but the interesting point is, in relation to the argument, that the law provides for the law being broken so that it may be challenged. It is, in short, in Australia, perfectly legal and necessary to break the law in order to challenge it, but you must be prepared to pay the nominal fine if you lose.

Probably several hundred fans have already started to reply to this letter before getting this far. My own views are not as stated above. As a practising Christian I have to take an ethical view of the law. My range of what are moral laws are thus different from my neighbours. I believe it wrong to steal, full stop. But I don't believe it wrong (though it is illegal) to fish without a license, shoot on Sundays where it won't annoy anyone, distil spirits (I don't), let prickly wattle and briar roses grow, to build a house without a permit, or do my own plumbing (though I am not a licenced plumber). Those laws are hard to justify on any grounds and to



me carry no moral obligation. My personal opinion of Governments is that they are banditii, whose reason for making laws is to cut out competition. I am, in other words, an anarchist, one who does not believe in the State. (The Australian Aborigines are anarchists in my sense of the term; they certainly do not want for Law.

Now this brings me to the system of law I mentioned at the beginning. That is the law of the Scots. Its principles are simple and have worked for centuries and still work. They are briefly:

No act is illegal unless specified so by law.

No law is valid until it has been accepted by the people by their obedience and automatically becomes void if not enforced. (It would be impossible now in Scotland to try anyone as a witch, that law having not been used for centuries.

Where the law and the freedom of the subject are in conflict the law must yield to the freedom of the subject.

As a country with British law there is no reason why we should not have Scottish law rather than Common Law. But it does show that an infinitely better system of law does exist.

Now it is my contention that our law does not need reforming. It needs scrapping, in every respect, with the whole judicial and penal and law enforcement agencies. Indeed too our Parliaments as law-making bodies. What we need is a simple set of principles, somewhat more elaborate than the Ten Commandments; morality and ethics taught in our schools; and the removal from our society of the disabilities that cause 98% of our so-called crime. Oh I know Plato had something like that in mind too, and so did

Jesus. I am not unaware that I am an idealist, I've been a Christian too long not to be. We, that is genuine Christians, do not live by rules and regulations, we don't have to do things, we don't have to not do things. When one knows that their body is the temple of God that body will not be abused; when one knows that the bloke next door is one's brother and his body too is the temple of God, he will not be easily hurt. I know it's idealism and that it won't work immediately for an entire society. But it's having an ideal that counts, something for which to steer.

Until we can frame a better society, a just society, all we can do is to protest against bad laws. Laws that are pointless in my opinion carry no moral obligation, laws that are immoral or illegal present one with the moral obligation to disobey them, though like the early Christians one be thrown to the wild beasts.

"If he had not been a criminal we would not have handed him over to you" - JOHN 18:30

Paul Anderson, Rich Bartucci, Janet Bellwether, Alan L. Bostick, Richard Brandt, Howard Brazee, Bill Bridget, Brian Earl Brown, Avedon Carol, Ann Chamberlain, A. Bertram Chandler, Cy Chauvin (*thanks for APA-Z; really enjoyed it, but I probably won't get into it either, not because I don't want to, but for lack of time*), Sue Clarke (*a very moving letter written just after the terrible train crash in Sydney*), Merritt Clifton (*it's probably the kind of etch you use; I can't get the A.B. Diak masters to work on my press; I'll write*), Lora and Ralph Collins (*thanks enormously for the book!*), Buzz Dixon, Carolyn "C.D." Doyle, Joan Dick, Brendan DuBois, Graham England (*my British "agent"; I'll send you some more copies to begin agenting with*), Patrick Hayden, Art Hayes, M. R. 'Hilde' Hildebrand, Barry R. Hunter, Ben Indick, Fred Jakobcic, Jaron Lanier, Sam Long, Steve McDonald, Ken Millett, Jodie Offutt, Pauline Palmer (*thanks for the clippings ((one about Thea Alexander, one about the Dinosaur brotherhood)); I hope to meet you in Vancouver*), John Robinson (*con advice heeded*), Jessica Salmonson, Ronald M. Salomon, Stu Shiffman (*what will you do if Flushing wins?*), Nigel Sellars, Willie Siros, Dave Szurek (*two long letters -- or more accurately, one long two-part letter; a combined total of nearly 40 pages, which I would love to print in its entirety, but*) David Taggart, John Thiel, Robert R. Taylor, Mitch Thornhill (*a wonderfully warm, magnanimous, understanding and forgiving sort of person whom I love like a brother!*), Dr. A. D. Wallace, Harry Warner Jr. Leah Zeldes, and . . .

Why, I thought there were more than that. I guess it's because so many of the letters ran to several pages that the stack looks bigger than usual. My apologies if I have overlooked anyone.

Here are some changes of address:

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from 11 Churchill Close
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from 132 Hove St.
Downsview, Ont. Canada
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Jessica Amanda Salmonson
Box 5688 University Station
Seattle, WA 98105

from Box 89517
Zenith, WA 98188

George Senda
601 O'Farrell St. #412
San Francisco CA 94109

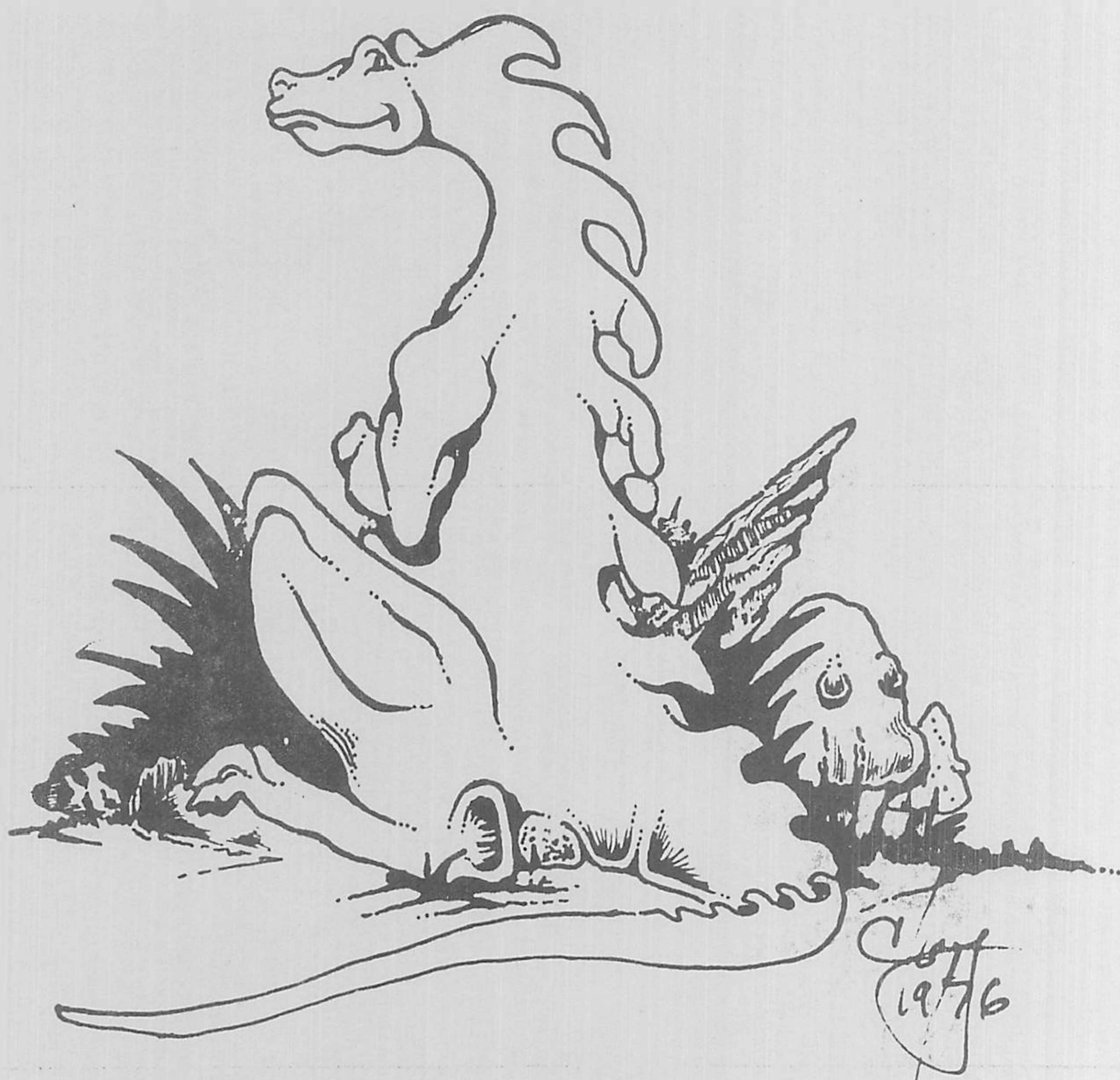
from 124 Turk St. #505
San Francisco 94102

I

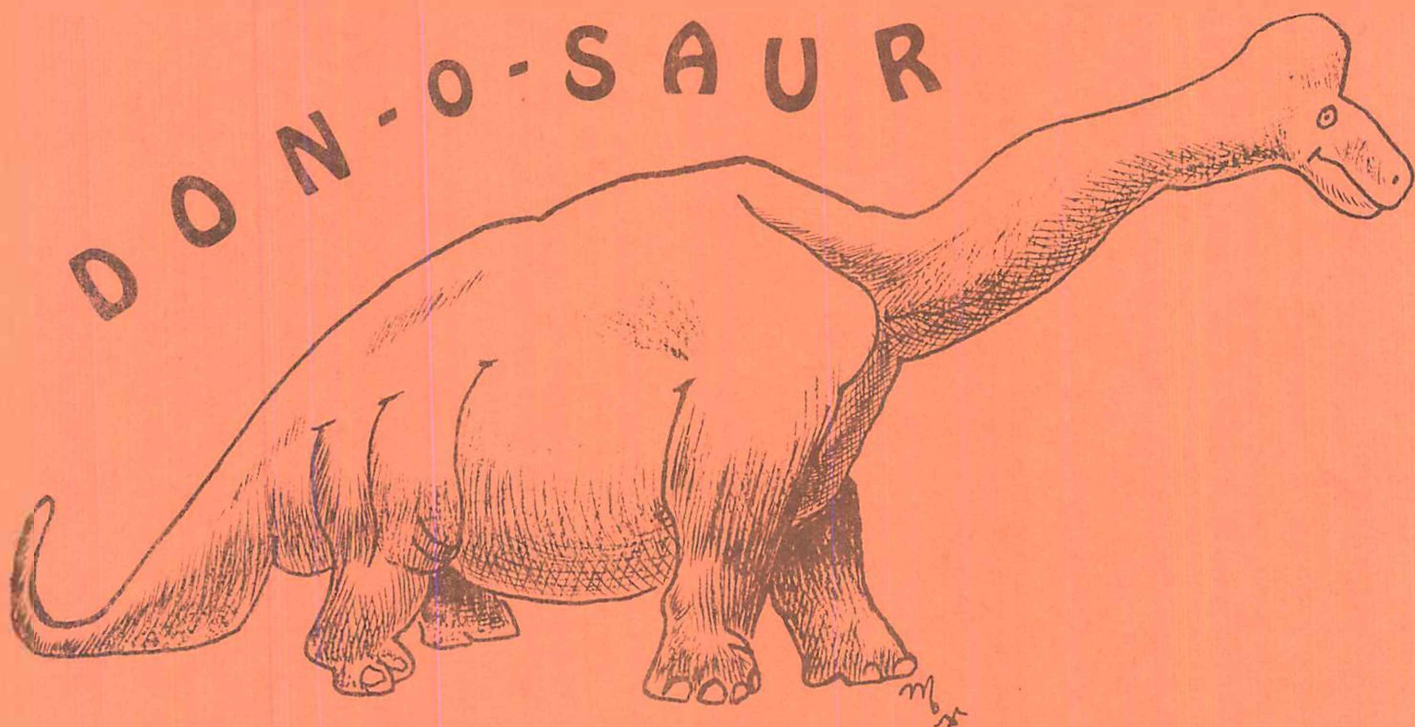
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Heard

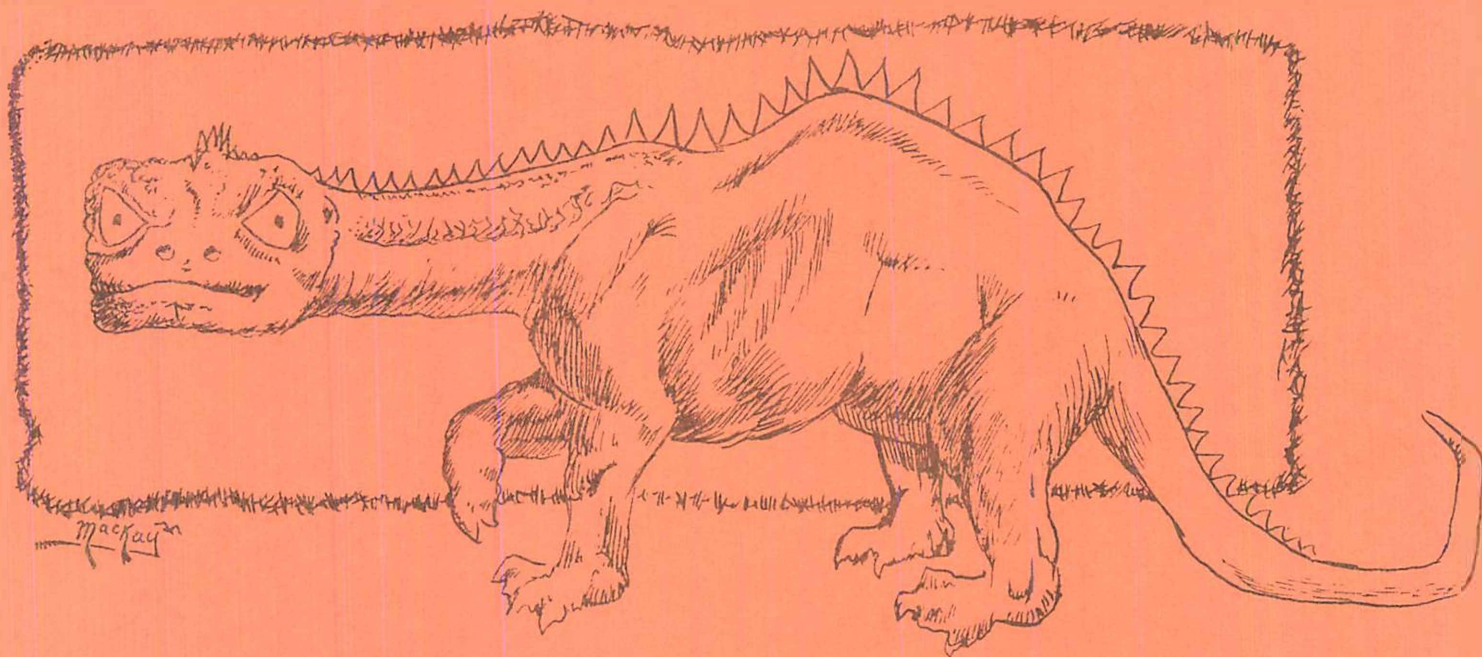
From:



DON-O-SAUR



TALES



A Fiction Supplement

INTRODUCTION

These stories were written near the end of Winter Quarter 1976 by Metropolitan State College students enrolled in English 252 -- Science Fiction Writing.

It was an in-class exercise. I set up the basic situation and general guidelines: It could be any time, any place, and the viewpoint character could be anyone or anything; the character is however in his/her/its own home (or equivalent) and is about to prepare a meal. The protagonist takes a package from the freezer (or equivalent) and unwraps it -- revealing a human head.

My final instruction was that my situation could be freely altered or interpreted, so long as the exercise bore *some* resemblance to the one specified.

The students had an hour and 20 minutes to write as much as they could.

This was intended as an exercise in imagination, visualization and description. At most, I was looking for some vivid accounts of the shock and horror of opening that package.

Instead, I got stories. These are the ones that I considered the best.

My apologies to the students for my nearly year-long delay in getting their stories published.

(Most of the stories had titles; most of the titles were bad puns. I have decided to omit the titles and list the stories only by the author's name).

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Cover and interior drawings by Barry Kent MacKay

Malori

Allen

Megan walked into the pantry and opened the sliding door. She reached into the mess and pushing out of her way a box of tea bags and a can of coffee, she grabbed a bag of noodles.

Walking back into the kitchen, she put the noodles on the wooden counter top. Turning, she pushed her hair out of her eyes, then walked to the ice box. Onion, yes, she needed an onion and several carrots. She opened the right hand door of the ice box, stooped down and peered in. The inside of the ice box was very dim. It was also jam-packed, much like her pantry. She took several jars and covered bowls out and sat them on the floor beside her. Annoyed, she pushed several things out of her way, then swore when she knocked over a glass of juice.

"Why can't he drink the stuff instead of setting it in here where it will get spilled?" she growled. She got a rag from the sink and taking out several more packages she cleaned up the mess. She then found the onion that she had been looking for and also three sorry looking limp carrots. She examined them and decided they would do. She put the packages back into the ice box haphazardly, then picked up the carrots and onion and returned to the kitchen counter.

She cut into the onion with a sharp knife, cleared away the dry outer skin, then chopped it into small pieces. She blinked back tears and waited until she had washed her hands before she wiped her eyes. She looked at the carrots with a fleeting expression of disgust on her face.

"Oh, well, who would know that they died horribly before being cooked?"

She cleaned the carrots, sliced them, then stooped to get a large kettle out of the pantry. She heard the front door slam and looked up, her hand still on the rim of the pot.

Ramon walked into the kitchen and she smiled at him. He put the large wicker basket he had been carrying on the counter.

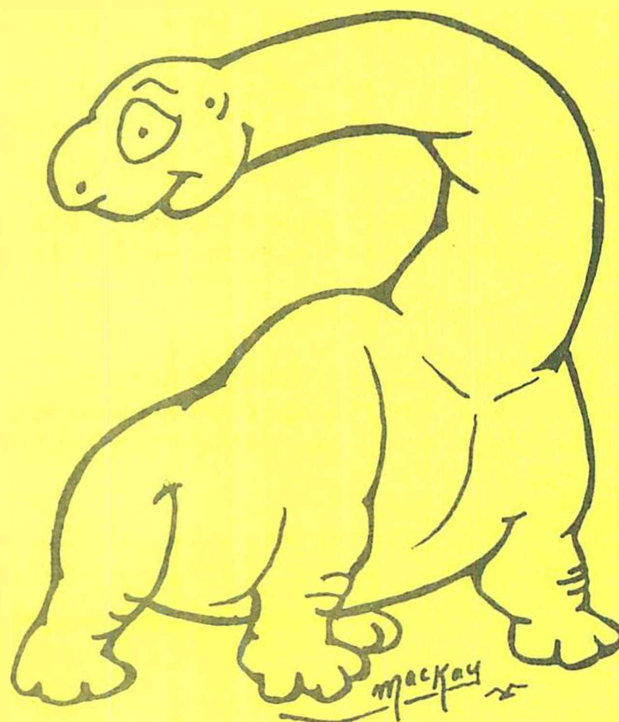
"Did you get everything?"

"I think so. They didn't have any fresh cream so I walked to Jacobson's farm and got a jarful. It was a little more expensive, but that's O.K."

"What time are they coming?"

"I don't know. Don't worry. You have plenty of time." He smiled and put his arms around her.

She let him hold her for a little



while, then pulled away and started taking things from the basket. She opened the jar of cream and smelled it. The thick white liquid was fresh. She stuck a finger in, then licked it.

"Meagan!" Ramon said. "You know everyone has to eat that. Can't you use a spoon?"

She laughed and turning around grabbed him by the sides of the face and gave him a quick kiss. "I have my hands in everything else you eat. Anyone who eats in this house eats food that I have touched."

"Yuck," he said.

They both laughed. Meagan turned around and continued taking things out of the basket. Last of all she took out a large object wrapped in butchers paper. She set it on the counter and started putting the other things away.

"Hey, can I have one of those apples?"

"Sure," she said, taking an apple from a bag she was getting ready to put away and tossing it to Ramon. He caught the apple, shined it against the rough cloth of his pants and bit into it.

"Sounds good."

"Yeah." He pulled a chair out from the table and sat down.

Meagan returned to the counter and started unwrapping the package that sat there. She examined the head. It was a good one.

"Ramon, I wish you'd had the hair removed," she said, running her fingers through the coarse black hair.

"I'm sorry. I just didn't think about it."

"Ah well, you know it's just going to take that much longer."

"Come on Meagan, don't panic."

She was looking at the head. At least the black hair had been cropped close to the skull. Blue glazed eyes stared in horror at nothing. The mouth was a gaping hole.

"What tribe was he from?" She started cleaning the upper layer of skin from the top of the skull with a knife.

"I have no idea."

"Oh well, it doesn't matter." She put the head into the pot beside her. She scooped up the chopped onion and carrot and sprinkled them over the head. Then she filled the kettle with water until the head was just covered.

"I hope he tastes good." She set the kettle on the stove. She

sprinkled in a generous amount of salt and pepper, then turned the flame on beneath the pot.

"I just wish you had had the hair removed. The butcher always does a much nicer job than I do."



"Latest starvation count: 499 sections C and K," the news flashed abruptly.

Gary Singh

"Ha-hee-ee-haa! Bonk!" a reel of clown laughter and a horn nose followed.

Myers

"Let them eat cake," the D.J. in fluffy hip boots puffed.

The pale deluge of the yellowed sky was unconcerned. The pink-trimmed female waddled with manequin hips among piles of electrical equipment. The rush of grey hail squinted from outside.

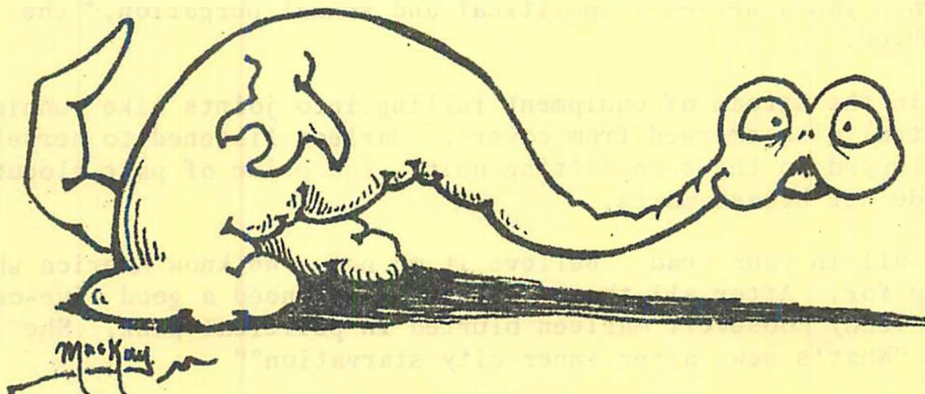
Passing glimpses of evening weather, upcoming weather from the satellite were placed on the hear-scope. From the other side, another horizon's colors didn't matter.

Carmain pressed the transmit button with a single cold finger. The sky was becoming greasy.

Outside, a high rise of radio antennae pounced lights in quick gradations. Colors rose and fell. Inside the almost sky-distant fortress, Carmain decorated the fluff surroundings with delicately strewn nylon. Lightweight sensuous chairs were kicked for rearrangement. They floated in place. She thought of how difficult it had been to get the woman's show on the air: Even if I repeat what they think, they are scared of what I say. Shit, I'm about as radical as childbirth.

Marleen warped on the purple circuit. "Hi Toots." Her blue-black astral eyes peered through the window breach. "Let me in," she cooed. "You think I could live forever on a D cell."

Porous doors opened in a solid flash. Opaque to translucent mirrors leaked light into the parlor.



"I could not enjoy this job if it weren't for the company." Carmain grinned red-orange lips.

"I know, dear. My God. What good is playing music to millions of people if you never see one. I mean a D.J. is a D.J."

"I still don't like the term jockey applied to me."

The girls laughed.

"Well, don't be such a high flown workhorse. You're beginning to think like a man's mind," Marleen said.

"At \$19.90 a pound, I could well deserve to give it a thought."

"It's that expensive?"

"Supermarket's so damn high, even the ladies' co-op doesn't do a good turn."

Marleen's blackish velvet glove placed a soft caress on her friend.

"Well, what do you say we get the show on the road. You want to announce Reality Hour?"

"Sure. Which world disaster do you think is appropriate?"

"Just anything that will make them feel good about themselves. I put on starvation last round because I was so mad about those food prices."

"Well I guess I'll spin on."

"Sure."

Both women walked in mannequin movements, but busily. There was a show to do.

"Let's hope the world feels better." It was a statement that needed no response. The vast array of bio-gear in files and columns, an army of electrode feelies would be a monstrosity to the unskilled. Disciplined and knowing action brought the cacophony of equipment, of needlepoints, amplifiers, and hookups into a single working unit. "Phew! Easy as cake!"

"Hope for a happy disaster -- put a smile in your misery -- Lady's Home Radio brings you a series in political and sexual purgation," the pre-record rambled.

From within the stream of equipment falling into joints like running dominos, a central disc emerged from covers. Marleen listened to herself on tapes not plugged to the transmitting unit. The pride of past elocution fluttered inside her breast marks.

"Reality, all in your head. Believe it or not. We know America what you are looking for. After all these years you just need a good five-cent disaster," Ms. Teddy Roosevelt Marleen blurted in political pink. She turned aside. "What's news after inner city starvation?"

Somewhat under her breath, Carmain muttered, "Bring out the sandwich and see."

Walking to the refrigerator, the girl retrieved the bundle. Inside the coated and price-marked paper was the head. The Medussa head of a curly man.

"Put it on the spindle."

"Give it a whirr."

There were maternal and contented smiles about it all.

The bio equipment wielded by adept hands jabbed the head onto the pronged spindle with hookups following.

"You would never believe \$19.90 a pound for a stupid head, would you?"

"I'd take a bargain brain any time."

The head revolved from slow to fast on the spindle. Steadfastly peering, luminescently lit green eyes rolled at 45 r.p.m. Then the brain melt. The drop of acid on the lips of the inner nerves.

"Just listen to that DNA fizz." The statement was more a cheer.

The curly brain began to dissolve in fuzzed reactions recorded on the ultrasensitive devices of the radio station. Cells could be heard grunting in pink solution.

"And now the thoughts of Irvin Borsh . . . "

" grzzle . . . zpp . . . det . . . stuuu..pid bitch -- whur --I'm gun to kell dem all . . cut her tits an make her eat dem . . . Old women - I'd like to kill dem all ... they're so nasty . . ."

"And friends, he nearly did. Irvin Borsh, arrested June 16, killed over a hundred real people. And he once had the braingraph of a boyscout. Startling but true. He said more. Let's listen . . . "

A shrill laugh came from the blackish velvet and pink females at Lady's Hour, while on the radio the melting brain of Irvin Borsh continued.

#####

Sharon Nastick

Wednesday is Ursula's day off. Wednesday is also the day my club meets at my house. I take it upon myself to prepare the main snack for my friends, anything from cheese balls to petits fours to the tipsy-est trifle this side of London.

The club arrives en masse at 6 o'clock, so at 2:30 I begin to look through my refrigerator and pantry to see what might be left over from the weekend festivities. I was involved in this activity some months ago when I found a lumpy brown-paper package tied up with kite string in the rear of the freezer. Thinking that I had found a roast or a chicken or a rarer delicacy, I pried it out of its corner and carried it to the sink for closer inspection.

It was a head; a man's head, rather well preserved. I didn't recognize him, but I wished I had known him. For a man in his mid-40s, he was very good-looking. His hair was lightly tinted with silver hairs among the black, his eyes were a luscious brown, and his tiny mustache was absolutely irresistible.

After admiring him for about 10 minutes, I carefully wrapped him up again and returned him to the freezer. Then I went about my business. I don't believe that an employer has the right to pry into her maid's affairs. But a discreet question or two the following morning would certainly be in order.

Ursula is a gem of a maid. She never speaks to me except to ask a timid question, and she works very hard to keep the house bright and clean. Of course she lacks a certain artistic flair, a sense of decor, but I can manage that myself. All I need is someone to do the dirty work.

She was in the kitchen at 8:30 sharp that Thursday morning, preparing breakfast. After making sure that she was frying sausage and eggs, not ears and tongue, I spoke to her.

"Good morning, Ursula."

"Good morning, Miss Hiness," she replied demurely as she set the table.

"Lovely day."

"Yes, Miss Hiness," she agreed, glancing at the rain flooding the kitchen windows.

"Lovely meeting last night too."

"I'm sure it was, Miss Hiness."

"I found a head in the freezer."

"Did you, Miss Hiness? How very . . ." She swooned and fell onto the table, almost upsetting my orange juice.

I pushed her into the nearest chair and splashed fresh water from the fingerbowl over her face. She gasped, opened her eyes, saw me, and nearly swooned again.

"Come, come, Ursula, get hold of yourself. We're both women of the world. I hope we can confide in each other."

"Yes, Miss Hiness," she gasped, and sat up straight.

"That's better. Now then, whose head is it?"

"Mr. Lucosi's, Miss Hiness. The milkman."

"Did you kill him?"

"Yes, Miss Hiness, I did."

"How did you go about it?"

"Oh, it was very simple, Miss Hiness. I came up behind him in the early dawn and cut his throat with a piece of glass I broke from a milk bottle."

"Ah. I thought the cutting was rather crude. And then?"

"I cut off his head, Miss Hiness, and I buried the rest of him in the petunia patch."

"Ah. I noticed how prolifically they're spurting this year. This must have been some time ago, Ursula."

"Yes, Miss Hiness. February."

"And you saved the head. Why?"

"Because he is such a good looking man," Ursula said with schoolgirlish eagerness. "And it seemed such a pity to bury his head with the rest of him."

"Quite right. And now the most important question. Why?"

"Why?"

"Why did you kill him?"

"Oh. I had a very good reason. Did you know, Miss Hiness," she whispered conspiratorially, "he was deceiving us!"

"Deceiving us? How so?"

"He was leaving us half and half instead of cream!"

"No!"

"Yes, Miss Hiness. And I warned him. I warned him that it couldn't

go on, that I might be pressed to desperate measures if he continued to cheat us. But he'd only laugh and walk away. Well, he's not laughing now, Miss Hiness, and you're having cream, real cream whenever you want it."

"Ursula," I said gravely, "you are a gem, the finest of your kind."

"Thank you, Miss Hiness."

"And now, I'll have breakfast."

"Yes, Miss Hiness."

My friends sometimes ask me if I'm not spoiling Ursula with two days a week off and her own little Gremlin to drive. Nonsense, I reply. Good help is hard to find.

And devoted help is nearly nonexistent.

After all, how many other maids would kill for cream?



"Azlene . . . Azlene, will you please turn off the alarm!"

"Marpheosophle . . . muhmm."

"Azlene, turn off that wretched alarm, please . . . and kindly keep your tail on your side of the tube."

Azlene mumbled incoherently, grasped the end of the tube with his tail and pulled himself slowly out of the sleeping tube. His black eyes blinked several times as he stumbled to the bellowing alarm. A light squeeze with two of his four fingers abruptly changed the bellowing to a pleasant wheeze and finally to a satisfying silence.

"Azlene, I've a busy schedule today and I'd very much appreciate your putting a little effort into breakfast this morning."

Azlene glanced at the bottom of the green feet protruding from the sleeping tube and mumbled, "Goddamned spoiled faggot queer."

"What's that, Azlene? Did you say something?"



John O.

Sindall

"I said breakfast will be ready in a moment, dear."

"That's fine lover. Wake me when it's on the table."

Stumbling forward, feeling even greener than usual, Azlene made his way into the kitchen. Mumbling to himself about not being appreciated, being overworked and something that might have been construed as his becoming little more than a personal maid, Azlene opened the refrigerator and stuck his wrinkled, green snout into the misty blue world that was its interior.

Rummaging about amongst the gladiator giblets, butterfly flies, thono-serous tongues and billiard balls, he espied what he knew would be a breakfast treat for his lover Durwood. With his two sets of dull yellowed teeth chattering, he withdrew his prize from the refrigerator and placed it on the oven top.

Directions: Preheat oven to 375°. Place contents of package in deep round bowl and cover with one half pound butter or oleomargarine. Add one quarter cup glucose if desired.

Azlene's protruding eyes searched the package for the contents. He certainly wouldn't fill himself with a bunch of harmful chemicals, even if Durwood didn't seem to care. Finally he found it:

Contents: One human head (with eyes removed), maraschino cherries, mono and dilycerides, sodium hexameta phosphate, fumaric acid, disodium guanylate, tumeric, dextrose, BHA, artificial coloring added, artificial flavoring, 1/10th of 1% benzoate of soda added as a preservative.

"I knew it! I just knew it?!"

"You knew what, Azlene?"

"Durwood! You're up. I thought you were going to wait until breakfast was ready." The rotund lizard waddled over to his lover and gave him a good morning lick.

"I've just got too much to do today. I thought I'd get started early. What's for breakfast?"

#####

Leigh Kennedy

Adams took the empty glass from the coffee table, glancing up at the face half lit from the lamp. "Would you like another drink?"

A frown spread on the face. "I'd really like to get down to business. This isn't a social call."

Adams hesitated, then nodded.

He stepped over the scattered newspaper on the floor and barely missed the cat's tail as it disappeared behind the sofa. He flicked on the kitchen light and tossed a few dirty mugs and plates into the sink, clearing a small area on the counter.

The package from the freezer was about a foot square. He carefully unwrapped the brown paper, then lifted the lid on the box.

The hair was brown and curly and seemed wiry while frozen. He reached into the box and gingerly lifted out the head. The eyes were closed, the mouth slightly opened, showing a row of even teeth. There was some neck left, and that was wrapped in surgical gauze. *She had been a beautiful woman*, Adams thought. *Little wonder that he would go to these lengths.*

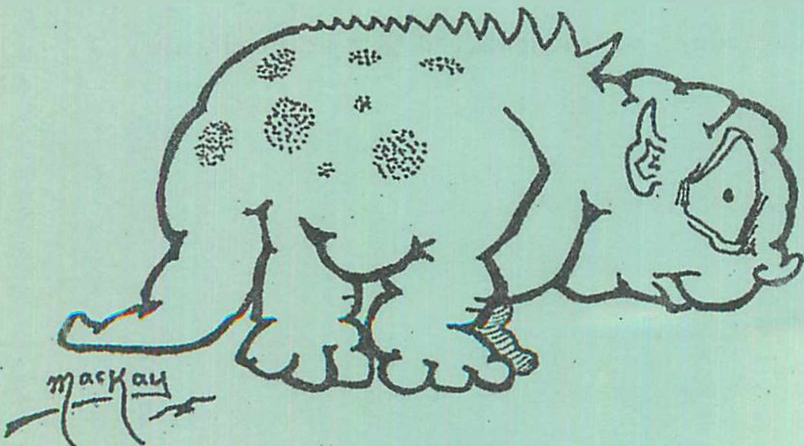
He scanned the kitchen thoughtfully, then shrugged and pulled a clean plate from the cupboard. He tried to set the head on it, but the gauze stuck to his fingers and the head flipped sideways. He sighed.

"What are you doing out there, Adams?" The voice was edged with anxiety.

"I'll be right there." Adams searched the cupboard again and found a shallow serving bowl. *She looks good with a row of pink roses at her neck*. He smiled. He tilted the head back slightly. It seemed stable against the rim of the bowl.

He turned the kitchen light out again and crossed back into the livingroom. His foot slipped on the newspaper, but he kept his balance.

"Watch out, you clumsy bastard!" The other man was standing now. His expression changed from apprehension to wonder as he saw the face fully. He reached out and



grabbed the bowl from Adams' hands.

"Oh, Shirley, honey!" The man started to weep.

Adams helped him set the bowl onto the coffee table. They both sat down. The man rubbed the tears over his face, then stared at the head. He moaned Shirley's name over and over.

Adams' stomach and bowels were churning. He watched the scene for a few moments, but when the man lifted the head and touched his own lips to those of the frozen head, Adams stood and started to pick up the newspapers and dishes from the room.

"All right," the man said, sniffing and blowing his nose. "You got something I can carry her in?"

Adams fetched the box and fresh wrapping paper and tape from the kitchen. They put the head back into the box.

"You'd better get her right over to Joe. She's starting to defrost," Adams said. "You owe me five hundred."

The man pulled a wad of bills from his pocket and tossed it onto the coffee table. "Been a pleasure doin' business with you."

"Yeah. Well, thanks. Recommend me, will ya?"

"Sure." He tucked the box at his side and patted it. "Thanks."

"Yeah."

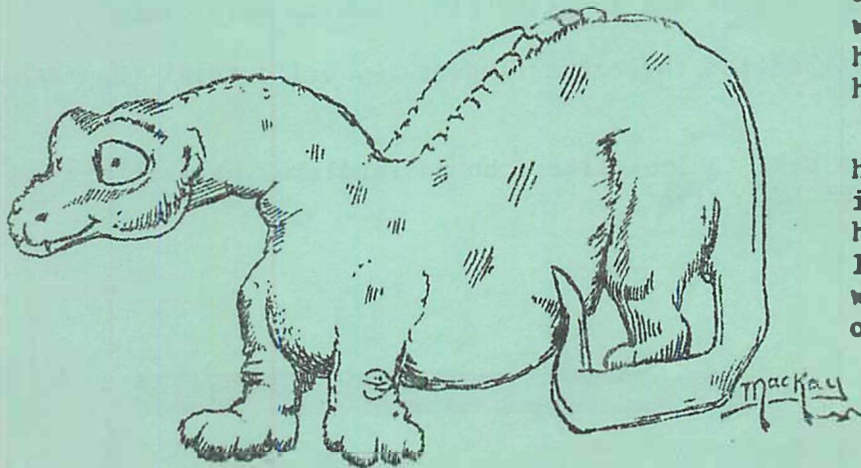
Adams closed the door and leaned against it, eyes shut. He breathed a long sigh, then dove for the money on the coffee table. He counted it.

He shot through the front door and down the damp, dark street. The man was just getting into his car. Adams leaned over the driver's side, glaring.

"You only gave me two-fifty."

"What are you going to do -- call the cops?" The man smiled and patted the top of the box on the seat close to his thigh. He gunned the car and raced into the street. Adams jumped back into the middle of the pavement and watched the car disappear. His mouth was a tight line; his hands were on his hips.

"Some people," he muttered, turning back to his house. "Sometimes I think the whole world's gone nuts over money!"



Sam reached his six-fingered hand for the freezer door.

"Some people get all the jobs; this is disgusting." He opened the door and snatched at the round package that rolled out and dropped to the floor. It came to a rest under the kitchen table.

"I want a transfer. How can I get out of this chickenshit outfit?" His voice sounded hollow in the empty room and was punctuated by a loud WHAP! as he tried to stand up too soon and hit the underside of the table with the back of his head.

"Lord knows I've got the experience for a desk job. Younger agents should have field assignments. Chance to advance . . . see the galaxy . . . who cares?"

Tim

He set the package on the table and reached clumsily across the width of the table to pull the window shade up to let more light in the room. The open window revealed the wall of a gray brownstone apartment just an alley away.

Van

"Get 40 specimens, then go home . . . Sounds easy." His hands stripped away the freezer paper, letting pieces of it drift to the floor. The frozen human head lay uncovered on its ear. The open eyes were too frosted to tell their original color and the partially parted lips showed a grayish tongue.

Pelt

"Twenty-four to go." Sam wrapped his fingers over the head and picked it up like a palmed basketball. He grunted as he pushed the freezer to one side.

"Enjoy primitive lifestyles . . . Take a working vacation . . . Feel a sense of worth . . . You too can be part of the growing empire." He punched buttons on the console which was set flush against the wall.

"Red button once, green button twice . . . Open the door and put in the ice." The head was placed in a receptacle in the wall and Sam shut the little door on it.

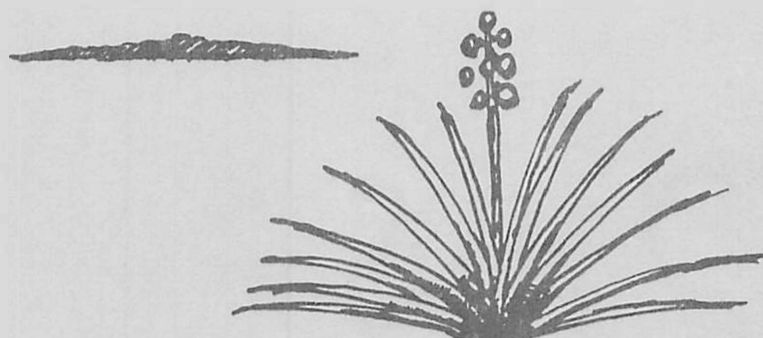
"Blue button now, you're almost done; red again, go get another one." His eyebrows puckered at the last line. "That never sounds right." He slid the freezer back.

He put on his coat and adjusted his tie with both hands.

"They never notice the extra fingers . . . I'd think they'd notice extra fingers."

Trying his best to look like a human landlord, he left his apartment to turn on the VACANCY sign.





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