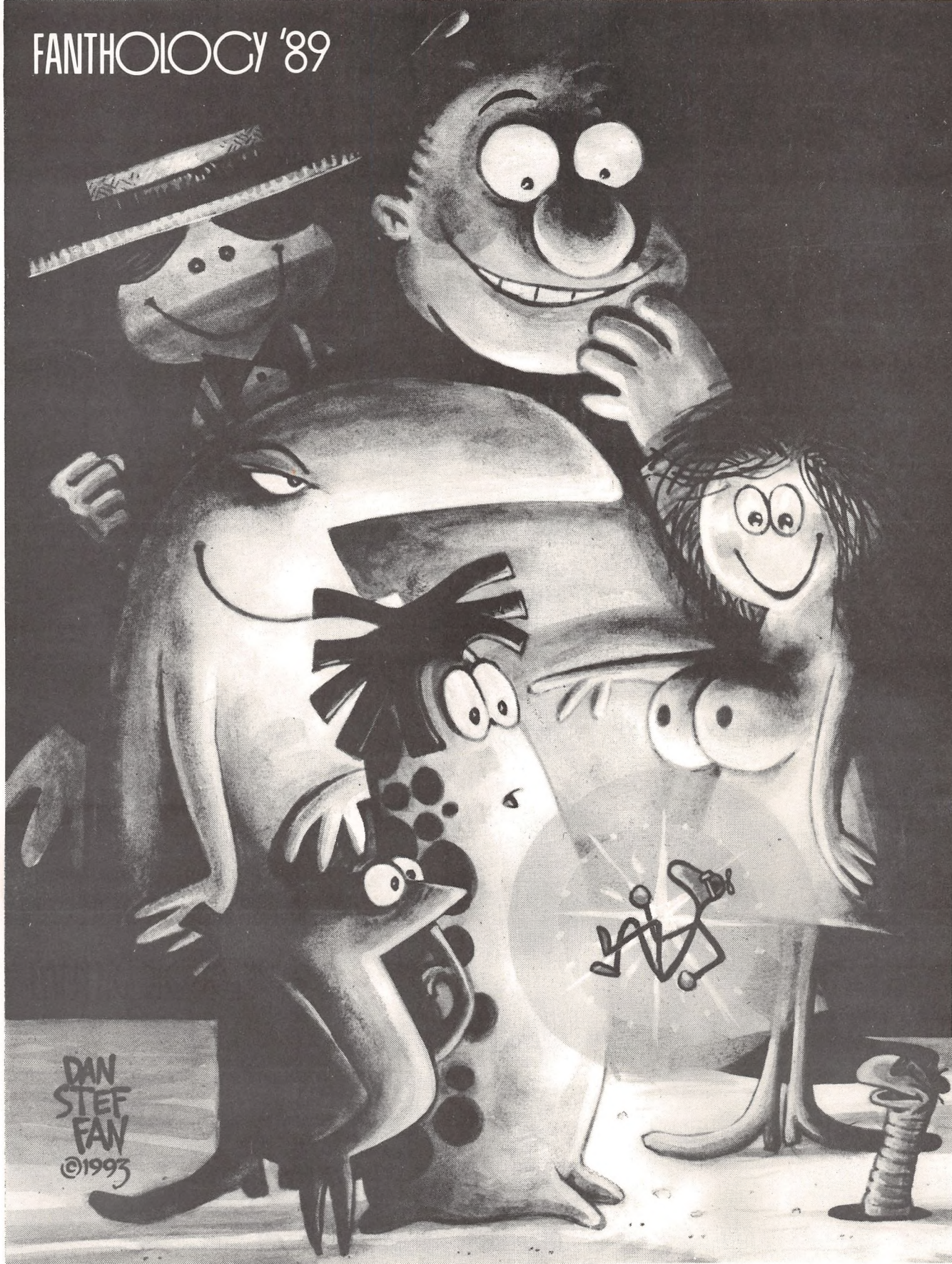


FANTHOLOGY '89



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Edited and published by Andrew Hooper. Layout and design by Carol Root. Stenciled and printed by Mark Manning. Financing provided by Steve Swartz. Consultants: Don Fitch, Jerry Kaufman, Robert Lichtman, and Mark Manning. This is Drag Bunt Press Production #160. Published for the benefit of Corflu Ten, May 21st, 1993.

Fanthology '89

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TOWARD A THEORY OF THE FANTHOLOGY

By Andy Hooper

What is the purpose of a *Fanthology*?

It seems to me that we need to answer that particular question before we can do any of the rest of the work of preparing an anthology of fan-published writing. Any fan editor ought to be able to wade through a given pile of fanzines and find enough pleasing material to warrant the issue of a collection of reprints, and he or she need have no other thesis than his or her own aesthetic sensibility. But this *Fanthology* purports to be more than merely an agglomeration of fan articles which I happen to like. It is tied to a specific year, a particular period in the long history of fandom, arbitrarily determined by the calendar, regardless of what events in the fannish firmament it may thus straddle or incompletely encompass. Whatever other criteria we may select, *Fanthology '89* is expected to have something to say about the year 1989 as it was marked in fandom.

Given that as our baseline assumption, there is still a lot of room for decision. Is our object to present a historical record of the year as it was reported in fanzines, regardless of the literary value of that reportage? To what degree does it fall to the Fanthologist to preserve the provenance of the material reprinted? If we assume that the reader of the collection has no access to any of the material in its original format (and indeed, if we do not assume this, the collection loses much of its significance), then we might be well advised to try and reconstruct as much of the material's original context as possible.

We would want to include all the art which accompanied a piece's first publication, make some observation of the material surrounding it, the cover art which graced the issue, the letters which it subsequently inspired, and so forth. If possible, some commentary from the author and/or original publisher, with the benefit of hindsight, would serve to complete the context and perspective of our collection. After all, if self-revelation and self-reference are, as has often been suggested by theorists such as D. West, the building blocks of fannish writing, then no reprint without access to the interpretation of the author can adequately preserve the significance of anything published in a fanzine.

We can leave aside this conundrum if we so desire by abandoning the historical objective, and trying

instead to collect what we see as the "best" fan-writing of a given year. Of course, this opens a whole new area of contention and conjecture. Where, for example, will we place our definition of "best" in relation to the fannish and the sercon, the eternal Scylla and Charybdis of fanac? Will we favor the most traditional form of fan-writing, the personal essay, and exclude poetry, fan-written science fiction, book and movie reviews, and that most important but least appreciated art-form, the letter of comment? All of these questions have gone through my mind in the past, when reading various fan's laundry lists of fan-writing which they would include in their "dream fanthology" for any given year. There seldom seems to be any particular critical focus to these lists; they seem merely to be the sum of all the articles which the author would choose to reprint if they had no limits on their finances and if staples of infinite size were available to them. Sometimes, as in the case of *Fanthology 86*, edited by Dennis and Pat Virzi, and based on a list of materials drawn up by Mike Glycer, there has been an effort to feature a sampling of all of the ideological and stylistic variety found in the fan-record for a given year. I think this is the most successful approach taken to the problem in recent years, and it has been imitated with a lesser degree of success in projects collecting 1987 and 1988. These, and other projects, have avoided asking the big questions of function before determining their form, and I think they must be counted as having suffered for it. For even if we decide that all we require of fan-writing is that it succeed on its own terms, it is imperative that we know what those terms are.

So, mindful of all that, what will we find within the pages of *Fanthology '89*? Well, like most things in life, this collection is a compromise. I have tried to balance the questions of historicity with those of aesthetic quality, while remaining realistic about the physical limitations of the form. What results will hopefully be several things at once; a representative sample of the state of the field in 1989; a collection of some of the better fan-writing by some of the more noted fan-writers of the day; and a record of some of the important thoughts and events of the year in fandom. Naturally, in trying to do all of these things at once, this collection will really succeed in doing none of them. Many controversies and concerns of 1989 will receive

no mention at all within these pages. Many writers who made substantial contributions could not be included due to space -- or because neither I nor any of my correspondents in preparing this fanzine had access to their work. And in some cases, the reader will be certain that the work chosen will not approach the best writing produced by a given author in 1989. The explanation for their inclusion, if you need one, is that I liked them. There has to be some benefit to this job, after all....

Before I move on to a consideration of the individual works themselves, I want to say a few things about the subject of how and why this collection came into being, and what might need changing about the way we produce *Fanthologies*.

This collection has been assembled and produced as something of an afterthought, something which one would never infer from the amount of work that has been put into it. When we began work on Corflu Ten, it was a given that we would put a lot of effort and resources into the production of a special fanzine project. This is something which has been true of almost all Corflus; #5 produced *The Incomplete Terry Carr* and *The Portable Carl Brandon*, #6 published the *Chuck Harris Appreciation Society Magazine*, and so on. Beginning with Corflu Ocho, an annual *Fanthology* was published by the Corflu committee or some arm of it; 1987 was handled by Richard Brandt, and Mike Glyer and Marty Cantor took on 1988. Doing this two years running seems to have created the notion that running Corflu carries with it the responsibility to do the next annual *Fanthology* in line.

When the Corflu Ten committee decided what they would like to publish, the idea of doing *Fanthology '89* didn't appeal to them very much. They didn't think it reflected the interests or values of the committee or their view of fandom very well. They decided instead to reprint a debate on sexual politics and science fiction which appeared in Jeff Smith's fanzine *Khatru*, and to update the arguments presented there with comments made by the surviving authors nearly twenty years later. I thought it was an intriguing and daunting project, and one which certainly represented the zeitgeist of Madison fandom better than a general *Fanthology* would have.

This attitude was not shared by everyone in fandom, as it turned out. A number of other fans felt that it would be of much more service to fandom at large if Corflu had gone on and done *Fanthology '89*. To what degree this represents political prejudice against the

ideas expressed in the *Khatru* project, I don't really know. But as I eventually had little to do with the latter undertaking, and had more than a few ideas about how a *Fanthology* ought to be done, I decided to seek funding and support for producing one as a benefit for Corflu Ten and Eleven. I am pleased to say that you are holding the results of those efforts in your hands, and I am very pleased to see that we could produce this in addition to the other Corflu festivities.

BUT. I resent very much the implication that we were in any way compelled to produce this fanzine. To do so not only imposes limits on the freedom of the Corflu committee, it takes a step towards limiting who shall have the right to produce future *Fanthologies*. For every decision I have made in creating this collection, there were dozens of alternative decisions I could have made, and I would be very pleased to see how some of those might have turned out. Fandom has far too many "official" and "national" and "world" events already; I should hope that the act of collecting good fan-writing and publishing it with some connecting thesis would not be one of those quasi-patented practices which discourage competition and diverging opinion. After all, if all information is truly to be found in fanzines, we will need a lot of fanzines to be published.

But. As to the material at hand: I'm pretty darned impressed with our way of life if this is the kind of record it leaves behind. Like everyone else who does this sort of thing, I was left wishing I could include twice as much material as I did. I have to admit that came as something of a surprise to me. 1989 was one of the worst years on record for general-distribution fanzines, with apa-hacking, on-line fanac, general ennui and the lingering effects of the destructive feuds of the mid-eighties keeping many former editors and writers from pubbing their ish. Robert Lichtman, who has been keeping a tally of the fanzines he has received since 1986, lists the total output of his mailing list as 130 fanzines in 1989. This was not the lowest total of the past seven years; that was in 1990, when Robert received only 115 fanzines. But in 1989, production of American fanzines actually dropped below the total issuing from Britain, 55 to 61. It was the low point of American fanzine fandom to date. And while there are a number of articles reprinted here which originally appeared in British fanzines, it is American fandom which unavoidably draws the most of my attention.

I think things have been getting steadily better since 1989, but I was worried about what I would find when I went through my pile of fanzines produced that year.

Well, I found I didn't have much to worry about. I discovered a process which I call Hooper's Theorem. This states that as fanzine production as a whole declines, the quality of the individual fanzine actually seems to increase. We could attribute this to a number of factors, but probably the most important is that as fanzines become less common, the fanzine reader becomes more forgiving of their shortcomings. But before we attribute this entirely to declining standards, let me assure you that the data indicate that crudzines die first. Or, editors who don't know what they're doing don't know why they should keep doing it, either. Anyway, there was a lot of good stuff crammed into that little 130-fanzine sample.

One of the best things of 1989 actually happened in 1988. This was Tropicon VII, which imported Walter and Madeleine Willis as Fan Guests of Honor, their first trip to America in 27 years. Naturally, the event had to be immortalized in print, and Walter himself was more than equal to the task. His account of the trip, *The Enchantment*, was edited and published by Joe Siclari and Edie Stern, and was put together so nicely, with such time-binding panache, that I had to use it to lead off the *Fanthology*. Walter's account of the con itself is reprinted here, the definitive record of the convention fans called "Corflu 5.5."

The second piece I chose for the *Fanthology* came from one of the best new fanzines of 1988 - 89, Mark Manning's *Tand*. Given the power to do so, I would see to it that everyone reading this had a complete run of *Tand*, but lacking that, I decided to run a short poem by Jessica Amanda Salmonson, alongside the appealing Taral illustration which inspired it. Mark is one of the few fan-editors who is really comfortable publishing poetry, so it seemed appropriate to use one from *Tand* #2.

Joseph Nicholas has long been one of the most important writers in fandom, notable both for the depth of thought and political conviction which he brings to his fan-writing, and for the violent reactions he often elicits from his readers. Joseph was on a pretty good roll in 1989, so I decided to reprint a piece from the fanzine he co-edits with Judith Hanna, *Fuck the Tories*. His essay, "On the Mall of Memorials," appeared in the sixth issue of that fanzine. Have subsequent events proven Joseph's assumptions right or wrong? I leave it for you to decide.

Another watershed event of 1989 was Corflu 6, held in Minneapolis, over...well, I remember it was still pretty cold, but I think we did go to a baseball game, so

it must have been at least April, but could have been as late as June. Anyway, one of the highlights of a weekend fraught with delights was the speech delivered by Jeanne Gomoll, the convention's Toastmaster. This weekend marked the beginning of a period of *fafia* for Jeanne, and in her speech, she explained all the reasons why this was necessary. It's nice to have her back. The piece originally appeared in *Pulp* # 15, edited by Avedon Carol and Rob Hansen.

1989 was back when *FOSFAX*, the fearless libertarian beacon of the middle-south, was still appearing on a monthly basis. The clubzine of Louisville fandom is best known for its lively and fractious lettercol, and for reviewing a large percentage of the sf released in any given year; but many people don't make note of the fanzine's often outrageous sense of humor. One example of this is provided by Dale Speirs' wry "Articles Which I Never Read Past The Abstract," which appeared in issue #136, edited as always by the doughty Tim Lane.

One of the things which I wanted to be sure to do was recognize some work which appeared in lesser-known fanzines, and which was written by talented people not regularly spoken of in the first echelon of fan-writers. In these categories I found *Rabbit-Ears* #1, a remarkably literate fanzine on television and its culture, edited and published by Mog Decamin, and Terry Garey's "Why I Like To Watch Other People Work," an article from that first issue. Terry is one of the legion of fine fan-writers living in Minneapolis, who seem to tumble forth in large numbers and at unpredictable intervals, wearing their red noses and big floppy shoes as they issue from the bus. If they ever got organized at anything but hosting parties, they could take over fandom.

Dave Langford is certainly far from unknown, possessing as he does almost as many rockets as Britain has in its independent nuclear deterrent. I feel sick giving him any more press than is absolutely necessary, but I think you'll enjoy this little excerpt from his *Sglodion* #1, entitled "Several Days in May," which offers some pretty amusing insights into the perils of pursuing professional and fannish goals in the same fortnight. It's also one of the few things that Dave has written since he was six that isn't already reprinted.

Continuing with the dual themes of work and travel is Dick Lynch's "Paradise," which is reprinted from the sixth issue of *Mimosa*, edited by Dick and his wife Nicki. *Mimosa* won the 1992 Hugo for Best Fanzine, and the sixth issue, like most of the others, featured a wide variety of material from an excellent stable of

writers. But Dick's piece does two things that most of things in the fanzine's history have not. First of all, it concerns itself with relatively contemporary events. And second, it seems to capture some of the quality of Dick himself: a little quiet, maybe even laconic, but possessing a wicked sense of fun. Anyone who can find something amusing in a coal field is certainly invited to my party.

Confronting the realities of life as dictated by work is Judith Hanna, in her piece "Food in Real Life," also from *Fuck The Tories* #6. Anyone who has come home after a fourteen hour day and stared into a full refrigerator which contains nothing you want to eat will surely understand.

Algernon D'Ammassa's "The Marlboro Man Scratches His Balls" rather defies description, as did the fanzine in which it was originally published, Colin Hinz' *Novoid* #6 (No, I do not have some odd compulsion which makes me pay attention only to the sixth issue of any fanzine). *Novoid* is one of the many zines which have walked the line between the fannish and avant-garde self-publishing communities, and D'Ammassa is a writer equally comfortable in both. I don't always know what to make of his writing, but I know more people ought to read it.

Elise Matthesen is one of those writers of whom it will one day be said, "Did you know that she was a fan-writer before she became famous?" Another denizen of the big Minnesota clown car, Elise is capable of both wild humor of the Bozo kind and deeply moving introspection. Her account of a near-miss with assault, and tactics she used to avoid it in "It Doesn't Feel Like Winning," falls into the latter category, and appeared in the fourth issue of her perzine *Penny Dreadful*.

More writing concerned with sexual issues, albeit on a more detached and humorous level, is the excerpt from Owen Whiteoak's *Kamera Obskura* #5. Owen was one of the most entertaining writers to arrive in British fandom in the eighties, and he published a dizzying succession of fanzines before becoming embroiled in a ruinous feud and walking completely away from fandom. I miss his writing; I only just discovered it before his gafiation. A cruel business, this fanac....

Certainly one of the biggest events of 1989 was Noreascon III, the 50th anniversary Worldcon. While there are a lot of fan editors and writers who compose Worldcon reports every year, one of the most dependable and entertaining is Mike Glycer. Mike is a multiple Hugo-winner for his newszine *File 770*, and brings real intensity to convention-running and the many machinations associated with it. His conventions

reports are in consequence a tapestry of events seen and unseen, and he always gets stuff that no one else does. In this excerpt from #82, however, he isn't digging up any dirt; he's just sharing the pleasure of a birthday party for fandom, the sentimental lug.

One of the great truths to be learned about fans is that fandom is often only one of their many hobbies. Candi Strecker, publisher of the manic popular-culture fanzine *Sidney Suppey's Quarterly and Confused Pet Monthly*, has so many interests that we haven't heard that much from her in fandom for a while. But she's still out there, pursuing one jones or another. In this article from *SSQ&CPM* Vol. 5, No. 4, she writes about her calling to haunt thrift stores and garage sales in search of Metlox Poppytrail squiggle-pattern lung-shaped nut dishes, in "Attack of the 50-foot Dish Queen."

For me, one of the greatest pleasures of being a fan is in exploring the history of the fandom. I guess that's pretty obvious, or I wouldn't be interested in putting together this anthology. One of the most notable exercises in fan history of 1989 was *Cry of the Nameless* # 187, a "39th anniversary" issue of Seattle fandom's most famous clubzine. The issue, edited by F.M. Busby and his child-bride Elinor, and published by Jerry Kaufman, featured a remarkable array of famous fan-writers, talking about their memories of *Cry* and the days in which they wrote for it. Two of my favorite sections were written by Madeleine Willis and Ted White. Madeleine's story is a tiny gem, a little window into the hey-day of Irish Fandom. And Ted starts talking about Charles Mingus, and works his way onto numbered fandoms, and tries to fit the Crygang into that theory of fan history, and brings us back around to Tropicon, which he considered a reason to have faith in the the state of modern fandom.

And so it goes. Out of this jumble of dislocated parts, some kind of picture emerges. It may not be the most exhaustive account we could give of 1989, and it might not be the best writing we could have reprinted from that year. In fact, I'm sure it isn't; nothing by me in the mix, after all. But if you got separated from the rest of your fmz and had nothing but this collection to remember 1989 by, I think you could do a lot worse. I've enjoyed putting it together, and I hope you'll enjoy reading it.

-- Andy Hooper, 4/7/93

from THE ENCHANTMENT

By Walt Willis

FRIDAY, 2ND DECEMBER, 1988

First thing Friday I took photographs of the view from our room. It was so complex that I knew I could never remember it, and really I needed a movie camera to record its property of constant movement. There were the busy roads round the hotel, the intracoastal waterway with its complexity of piers and harbours, thronged with shipping and pleasure craft. And receding into the hazy distance in every direction an infinite landscape of trees and buildings, everything clean and clear and cared for. I used to say America would be nice when it was finished; well, here it was finished, and a beautiful job it was too. It reminded me of what one of our Ulster businessmen said after seeing the immaculate landscaping of Long Island estates: "It just shows," he said, "What God could have done if he had had money."

We went down to breakfast about nine. The restaurant was quite small, adjoining the swimming pool. It was a nice morning, we thought, but the locals seemed to feel it was cold, judging from a notice chalked beside the door reading "Good morning. Brrr." The tables seemed to be fixed to the floor and were either for two or four people, so there was none of the joining friends for breakfast which is usual at conventions in our experience.

So after breakfast we were still by ourselves, and decided to have a look at those fabulous shops in Las Olas Boulevard while we had this chance. But it seemed much farther than it had in the car, and we didn't seem to have our usual energy for walking, and not long after crossing the great drawbridge over the intracoastal waterway we turned back, near a nice looking restaurant called *The Banyan* which we filed for future reference. On the way back the bridge was

up, and we sat a while on the little retaining wall of the waterway, in a grassy part in the shade of a tree, watching the fish, which were about a foot long. It was very peaceful and pleasant. But soon we noticed simultaneously that we had been joined by a number of ants and that the drawbridge was up.

Back at the hotel we waited in ambush on a big sofa opposite the Registration Desk, with the intention of apprehending any fan who had been hoping to sneak into the hotel unobserved. A notable victim was Moshe Feder, who asked when the next *Hyphen* was coming out: I asked him about his letter of comment on the last one, which he had promised in Brighton. He said it was nearly finished and, desperately trying to change the subject, commented that he had always thought that meeting me was like meeting someone out of the Bible. I said he needn't expect any miracles, my being here at all was miracle enough. He asked was it not strange to have this dual role of contemporary fan and legend; reinforced by Geri Sullivan's advice ("The first and only duty of a Guest of Honor is to enjoy himself" -- ed.) I said yes, sometimes, but I figured there was only one me and people just had to make the best of it. What You See Is All You Get.

Other pleasant people came and went, but eventually there was a lull and we went to the hotel restaurant for lunch. After we had ordered I remembered that we hadn't got our low sodium salt, so I went up to our room to get it. Hurrying back to the restaurant I almost collided with a red-haired girl. "Hi," she said, a little tentatively, "I'm Geri Sullivan?" For a split second my fine mind considered this proposition. Certainly the girl in the photograph had been much smaller, older and above all less alive than this radiant creature, but there certainly was a resemblance. Then with an

almost audible click the two coalesced like the images in a stereoscopic viewer. "Of course you are," I reassured her, and swept her before me in triumph into the dining room to meet Madeleine. There with an uncharacteristic imperiousness induced by euphoria, I commanded the waitress to move us to a larger table, which she did with alacrity. I can't remember what we ate, or indeed if we ate anything at all, we had so much to talk about.

However before we had exhausted the subject of Chuck Harris, let alone the Nielsen Haydens and Arthur Thomson, we had to leave the restaurant and go upstairs to the penthouse floor. There the afternoon became a succession of pleasant surprises, culminating in an event of sheer astonishment.

First there were Steve and Elaine Stiles, whom in a way I met twice. There was this familiar friendly face I could not for some reason immediately put a name to, and then there was Elaine to make me realise it had been my old friend Steve from Brighton who had somehow changed his appearance. I felt a little guilty about this, but remembered that both Chuck and I had failed to recognize Teresa at Brighton, just because she had changed her hair, and anyone who can do that deserves sympathy rather than censure.

After lunch I must have remembered to change the recorder on my camera from trip mode to convention mode, i.e., to record time instead of date, so I am able to state with complete authority that by 2.43 pm Geri and I had met Alexis Gilliland. He reminded me of George Charters, but you would have to have known George to realise what a compliment that is.

Then there was Georgina Ellis, all the way from Canada. Now that we had finally met I asked her to confess once and for all whether or not it was true that she had come into fandom as a result of reading a copy of *Hyphen* found lying on the floor of a Calgary bus station. Lately I have had the uneasy idea that Bob Shaw or I invented this legend as a pretext for some ghastly pun about a Read Litter Day. She told me the Truth. It

is not suitable for those of a nervous disposition, but I will share it with anyone who sends me an oath of secrecy, written in blood on the back of a ten dollar bill as a guarantee of authenticity.

Then there was Linda Bushyager, and Richard Brandt with a message from Pat Mueller, and Amy Thomson all the way from Seattle with an equally nice message from Jerry and Suzanne. And here was Joe Green with his new wife Patrice. And -- and --

And good Ghod, here was Shelby Vick! A distinguished looking Southern gentleman, with a neat beard, and very prosperous looking, but unmistakably still Shelby. Admittedly this identification was assisted to some slight extent by the fact that he was wearing a T-shirt with SHELBY VICK on the front and an original puffin: and on the back the legend YOU HAVE JUST MET SHELBY VICK.

I found this very satisfactory. For 36 years I had thought of Shelby Vick as the father of the T-shirt as literary medium. Since I first saw him at Chicon II in 1952 wearing a shirt very like the present one, I had observed his creation grow in the mundane world in eloquence and importance, so that now at parties T-shirt speaks to T-shirt across crowded rooms and entire political manifestos are set out on them, with commendable brevity. How different, and perhaps more peaceful, might have been the history of the world if Shelby Vick had been active before Karl Marx. And of course it is now only a matter of time until someone produces a T-shirt version of *Wuthering Heights*, along the lines of Monty Python's semaphore version.

I found that since I last heard from Shelby he had gone into the insurance business, Suzy having evidently convinced him that if he could sell me he could sell anything. Sure enough he had done quite well, and had now retired. I told him that while he was wasting his time making money, we dedicated fans had been busy making him into a fannish legend as the founder of TAFF; and that, seriously, everyone here was grateful to him for having gladdened the lives of so many people.

We were still talking when Joe came along and told me that Ted White and rich brown had unexpectedly arrived, having driven all the way from Virginia. I looked around and it was true: there was Ted at the Registration table, with a substantial figure who must be rich brown. It was like the time at Chicon II when I fancied that Burbee and Laney were about to appear in our midst on a pillar of fire, except that this time it was actually happening. Madeleine and I stole up behind them. I asked, "Is this where you get to meet Ted White?" while Madeleine, ineffectively concealing her name badge, asked rich brown for his autograph; but he knew at once who she was.

Ted and rich slid effortlessly into the life of the round tables and the endless party that was the convention, now subtly enriched. ("I have been in fandom for 54 years," said Art Widner, in an aside, "most of them spent editing articles by rich brown.")

We left at 5 for the "Introduction to Florida Fandom" and "Opening Ceremony", where various members of the Convention Committee introduced themselves in an informal way. I thought this was a lovely idea, for often you do not get a chance to meet the people who are working so hard behind the scenes to help you enjoy yourself. Even this time I have regrets at not having been able to thank every convention worker individually.

Then Edie formally opened the convention and introduced us Notables, which was our first exposure in this role. We survived it, and probably went then to have something to eat, but the next thing I remember was **The Night Of The Round Tables**. We were back on the space platform again, for what was billed as the "Meet the Celebrities Party - 8 pm to ??", and there was now a cash bar ("Come with me to the Cashbar," I murmured to Madeleine, dreadfully dating us both) but really it was the same happy party going on and on into the night, now better than ever. There seemed no reason why it should ever end as each group alternated effortlessly between laughter and serious discussion, and people moved about endlessly as the mood took them in

a sort of Brownian movement -- you might say a richbrownian movement, I thought, watching the perceptive way he helped things along.

I think of it as one of the most memorable occasions of my life, so why is it that I can remember so little of it? I remember the time-binding feeling at the beginning, when Joe asked Madeleine what she would like to drink, and she asked for a Tom Collins, remembering that the last time she had had one of these was in New York in 1962 while waiting for the bus to Chicago.

I remember asking Ted White what his trip was like, those two days and 1,000 miles of fast driving, and finding I wasn't the only one disturbed by the behavior of expressway traffic. I also remember getting into one of those serious constructive discussions you can have with Ted White about fandom. He might have lost his lean and hungry look, but he still thought a lot and was a dangerous man to parade an ill-considered idea in front of. I advanced the proposition that after the influx of talented women into fandom, the next most promising development was the entry of confans into the fanzine field. He doubted this, suggesting that confans might just produce their own style of fanzine, outside our tradition, like a literary equivalent of fancy dress. I argued that by Sturgeon's Law 90% of any style of fanzine, even ours, was crud. What determined the nature of a fanzine was the feedback the editor got, and feedback was our field of expertise. It was up to us by our letters of comment and reviews to help the editor produce the kind of fanzine we like. I don't remember what devastating rejoinder Ted had to this, but I do remember wishing Charlotte Proctor was here.

I remember Moshe admiring an old photograph of Lee Hoffman and wondering that Madeleine allowed me to visit her, thereby deftly insulting all three of us. But Madeleine was able for him: "Ah," she said. "You haven't seen a photograph of me as I was then."

I also remember that round about 12 we were thinking what a wonderful convention this could turn out to be if only we could get through



our program appearances tomorrow without utter disgrace. Maybe we should get a good night's sleep to improve our chances. So we went off to bed. It was with some reluctance because although we had talked more tonight than we would normally do in a year, we felt far from talked out. We had difficulty in coming down from this exalted state and turned on the television, to find coverage of a golf tournament. Even this had no interest for us, but it did make us realize how tired we really were so I clicked off the remote control and we sank into a deep and tranquil sleep.

SATURDAY, 3RD DECEMBER, 1988:

Next morning after breakfast we went for our usual walk (usual!) along A1A as far as the World Windsurfing Championship. The beach for a hundred yards was covered in shoals of windsurfing boards and I took a photograph of the spectacular scene for my son Bryan.

Back at the hotel I entered the Dealers Room for the first time, determined to repair as many gaps as I could in my knowledge of contemporary science fiction. There seemed an awful lot of stuff based on *Star Trek* and *Doctor Who*, neither of whom I had watched for years, and many of the other authors were unknown to me. None of the vile hucksters had a copy of the only book I was specifically looking for, the Hugo-winning *Watchmen*.

So I was delighted to espy Amy Thomson, and threw myself on her mercy. "I have money," I said. "I want to buy books. Help me." I thought this might be a prospect as attractive as what *Vogue* one supposed to be the secret ambition of all women, to be naked with a chequebook. I explained that my favorite authors used to be Van Vogt, Hal Clement and Theodore Sturgeon. Since then I had liked Sheldon's *Up the Walls of the*

World, Sagan's *Contact* and Priest's *Inverted World*, among the contemporary science fiction that had trickled into the Donaghadee Public Library.

Amy examined the entire contents of the room, and I rejected some of her suggestions from prejudice about the plot or distaste for the blurb, and we ended up with:

The Forge of God, by Greg Bear
Great Sky River, by Greg Benford
Terry's Universe, edited by Beth Meacham
Smoke Ring, by Larry Niven
Dawn, by Octavia Butler
Adulthood Rites, by Octavia Butler
The Dispossessed, by Ursula LeGuin
Always Coming Home, by Ursula LeGuin
 (in tribute to Jeanne Gomoll's TAFF trip report)

In addition to this motley crew I also bought books by some more reputable authors, like F.M. Busby, Lee Hoffman and Bob Shaw.

As I was leaving, Mitch Silverman could be heard appealing to the room at large for the title of a story by Van Vogt about a stellar expedition which is overtaken by a later, faster expedition, finding itself on arrival literally *passé*. There was no reply, so I said, "Far Centaurus". "Gee, that's right," cried Mitch. "Say, it's great to have one of you oldtime fans around who knows these things."

Quite pleased with myself I left the books in our room and rendezvoused with Madeleine in Becky Peters' art show, quite the best organised one I had ever seen. We also studied with a sort of awed diffidence a neighboring display of publications of mine, some of which I don't have copies of myself, assembled by Judy Bemis with the assistance of Lee Hoffman.

But the programme was starting again and we thought it might help to be familiar with the

ambience when our turn came. It was all reassuringly friendly and informal. We listened to the panel on marketing sf with about 20 other people, and then one in the smaller program room on "Creating Creativity" with Will Eisner, Vincent Miranda and Lee Hoffman. It also now included Ted White, who had been roped in by the gleeful organisers the moment his car crossed the State line.

It was all very interesting, but Lee had not got a word in edgewise when we left for my own turn in the main program hall. I thought it was very sensible of Joe to schedule our "Interview" for 1 pm, because only those really interested, or already nauseated, would forego lunch; but furtively counting the house I realised there were about 45 people here. I took a photograph of them, asking them to 'Smile please', and then we were off.

Joe and I had done nothing by way of rehearsal, but that was ok by me because I am by nature a counter-puncher. I had no trouble thinking of things to say, people seemed to be able to hear me and understand my funny accent, and I had to pause several times for laughter to subside. In no time at all it was nearly two o'clock; I could hardly believe it was all over. I thanked Ted White, who had been a big help: at one time we had a fascinating little public debate going, with Moshe Feder.

Thinking back, I don't recall seeing any recorder, and I don't remember much of what was said. I do remember near the beginning being asked what my future plans were in fandom and answering that I would probably confine myself to writing letters of comment, letting the mantle of Harry Warner settle softly on my shoulders...like dandruff. The only trouble with this scenario, I went on, was that I was older than Harry Warner. Someone in the audience vehemently denied this: "nobody is older than Harry Warner." I said there was a possible alternative. I had in my attic a working electric Gestetner and in my correspondence file a suggestion by Bob Shaw that I publish for him an occasional installment of his "Glass Bushel"

column to help him with his correspondence. If this was to happen there would probably be reader's letters, and editorial interpolations and heaven knows what else.

There was a sort of general discussion about *The Enchanted Duplicator*, of which my most vivid memory is of Ted White saying he first read it under his desk in High School. I was quite taken aback. It gave me a most peculiar feeling, comprising I think elements of nostalgia, affection, surprise and sheer awe.

I also remember being asked why I had never written any science fiction after the first issue of *SLANT*. This was a question which had never occurred to me before, and I speculated aloud that it might be due to the fact that everything I wrote in those days was designed to fill space in my fanzine and *SLANT* #1 was the only fanzine I had no other contents for. The things I wrote after that were little essays designed to fill the space between contributions. Eventually a surplus of these developed and I unloaded them onto Lee Hoffman. Fiction cannot be cut up into convenient lengths, but there was another reason I stopped writing it. It attracted very little comment, whereas the essay stuff in *QUANDRY* did. It was possible, I suggested, we were all together here today because of a letter in *QUANDRY* 9 from Joe Kennedy, which had a profound effect on me. I had never experienced egoboo like it before.

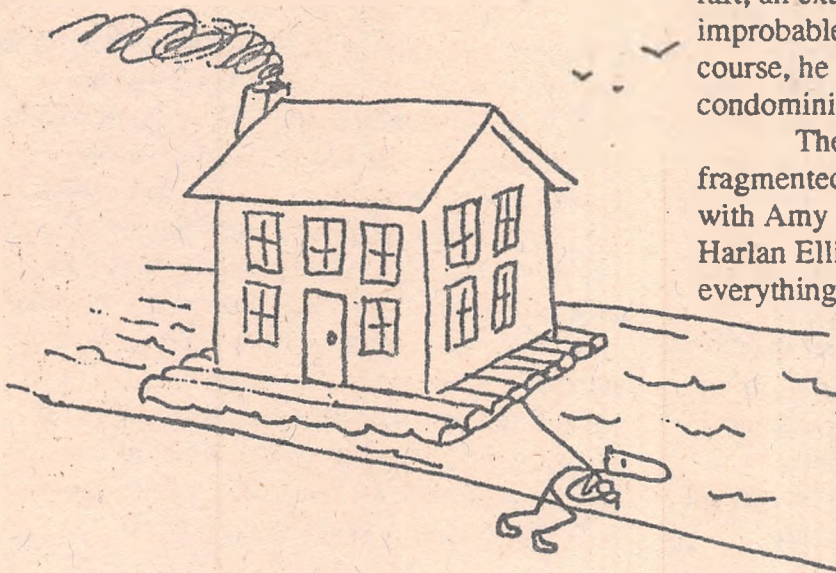
It was an ideal letter of comment because it said not just what he liked, but why. He said for instance that my stuff was urbane. I had never been called urbane before: in fact I doubt whether any fan had ever been called urbane before. At least I knew what it meant, and I always think you can't be urbane if you don't know what it means. I was reminded for some reason of Chuck Harris's famous remark, "I ain't half bloody suave myself."

We went for lunch, but Madeleine didn't eat much because her turn was still to come, at 3 pm and she was more nervous than I had been, knowing the propensity of her throat to seize up after three sentences. But I thought she did very well. She was on a panel about fannish

contretemps, and coped convincingly by keeping her contributions short and to the point, giving an impression of relaxed composure. I thought she was great.

We left the program for a happy world in which we had nothing to do but enjoy ourselves, which we did. It was back to the round tables until we were evicted by the banquet preparations. I see among my all too sparse notes of this period one reading "Geri Bubbles 4.40 pm". I don't think that this means that Geri was any more effervescent than usual at that point in time. It merely denotes the moment when in my opinion Burbee's watermelon story was superseded as the classic fannish anecdote. No longer would one fan ask another, have you heard Burbee's watermelon story? Henceforth it will be, have you heard Geri Sullivan about the bubbles in her dining room table? I have heard Burbee Himself tell the watermelon story, and I am here to tell you that Geri's story is funnier. Cleaner, too.

Later came the banquet and Poul Anderson's Guest of Honor speech, both of which were excellent, the first surprisingly so. The food was so good I suspected the hotel had let out the contract. Poul's speech was thoughtful and original, and will certainly be published. There was also a performance by members of the Society for Creative Anachronism which I am sure was much enjoyed by many.



Afterwards there was more conversation, so interesting that everyone in our group forgot the masquerade entirely and came back to reality only just in time for the most tasteful event of the evening, the sampling of the prizewinners of the Dessert Contest. After everyone had had their just desserts the occasion developed into a large room party, and we have learned that these are not for us. Once the background noise reaches a certain level we can no longer hear what anyone is saying, and can do nothing but smile benevolently. After a while this tends to pall on all concerned, so we stole away to our room.

SUNDAY, 4TH DECEMBER, 1988:

On Sunday morning we woke early, took a photograph of the dramatic sky over the Intracoastal Waterway, and had a leisurely breakfast with the Sunday paper provided by the hotel. One could easily get used to this way of life.

Then we went along to the artist's symposium, a sort of quick draw contest featuring Alexis Gilliland, Gail Bennet, Phil Tortorici and Phred. At first we formed two-thirds of the audience, but attendance gradually increased. It was very entertaining, sometimes in unexpected ways. Once Phil Tortorici drew attention to the fact that before our very eyes a two-story house was being drawn along the coastal Waterway on a raft, an example of the fact that life was more improbable than the artist could imagine. Of course, he explained, it was only the tip of a condominium.

The rest of the day seemed curiously fragmented. I remember a hilarious conversation with Amy Thomson and Georgina Ellis about Harlan Ellison. What is this gift of Harlan's, that everything he does seems the stuff of legend? My contribution was the time he telephoned me in Belfast from Cleveland, at a time when I didn't have a phone.

I went back to the program to see Poul Anderson's "Interview"

and then we went to lunch. On our way back we overheard Joe auctioning ten minutes of silence by Mitch Silverman: I heard later that a syndicate acquired a full 70 minutes.

I finally said hello to Hal Clement/Harry Stubbs and passed on the usual greetings from James White. I pointed out that we had been passing one another in this way at Conventions, like icebergs passing the Titanic, for nearly 40 years, and it was about time I told him that he had always been one of my three favorite authors; and thanks.

FM Busby asked me to contribute to a special revival issue of *Cry of the Nameless* and in a fit of nostalgia for the writings of Wally Weber I agreed, though I should have held out for at least a letter of comment on *Hyphen* 37. Then Art Widner pointed out that there had never been a fanzine in which both Burbee and I had appeared, and -- which I could not deny -- if there was to be such a fanzine, he was the man to publish it. Would I contribute if Burbee would? I agreed to that too in the euphoria of the afternoon, though I did stipulate that I had to see the colour of his Burbee first.

The we all went to the **Chuck Harris Auction**, which was amazing in the pleasantest possible way. It brought in a total of \$683. Atom's coloured cartoons which had hung on the door of the Oblique House fan attic for many years, went to Linda Bushyager and Moshe Feder for \$275, bringing the fund to its immediate goal. They had me write certificates of authenticity on the back. There were other munificent bids and it was all very nice. Fans have always been generous by nature, and it was good to see that a time had come when they could show it.

It used to be that the life cycle of the science fiction fan was as depicted in the advertisements in the pulps. He first appears there as a young weakling getting sand kicked in his face. Then, having presumably dropped out of high school through excessive concentration on the Charles Atlas exercises, he has to take more correspondence courses to "join the well paid ranks of the trained men". But he fails here too,

no doubt because of excessive reading of science fiction, and has to take heavy unskilled labor. This gives him a hernia ("RUPTURED? THROW AWAY THAT TRUSS!") and he is unemployed. The worry of this makes his hair fall out and he succumbs to religious dementia, joining the Rosicrucians.

Fortunately, having seduced a young lady by hypnotism, he marries her and they give birth to a son, who is allowed to read science fiction and asks for a Commodore 64 for Christmas. Now the first generation of personal computers is meeting the first generation of computer-friendly users. Society has evolved to the point where it appreciates the fine minds and broad mental horizons of science fiction fans, and our young hero gets a good job designing software which, figuratively speaking, kicks sand in the face of all the beach bullies.

After the auction there came the "Closing Ceremony", and then it seemed that people were leaving who to my mind had only just gotten there. It was a shock to have to say goodbye to both Amy Thomson and Charlotte Proctor inside ten minutes, and then Alexis and Dolly Gilliland, off to the Bahamas. We were beginning to think of the convention as something that was coming to an end instead of going on forever as it should.

I think rich brown started our retrospection by pointing out that TROPICON had been CORFLU 5.5, by which he meant that slightly more than half of the people who had been at the last CORFLU had been here. Ted said I had been like a magnet, attracting good people from all over. I think it was magnet he said: it may have been maggot, as in bait. It had been a wonderful convention, he thought. For one thing, he added in some surprise, it was many years since he had attended so much of the official program. I agreed. Nothing had gone wrong, everything had worked, everybody had been kind to everyone else and everybody seemed to have had a good time. Such a thing was unheard of.

Now it began to seem more urgent than ever to us that we should see FM and Elinor Busby. Each couple had come something like

4,000 miles to see the other, and we had not yet had one of those long neighborly chats we used to have in 1962. We had always felt we should be next-door neighbours, calling in every now and then to borrow a cup of correcting fluid.

But we couldn't find them, so we had something to eat by ourselves and went back to the convention floor. Next thing we heard was that they had gone for dinner, so we went down again and found them at a table in the corner with Art Widner and Georgina Ellis. We organised the movement of a couple of chairs, not without some difficulty and Buz's help, and ordered two cups of tea. When they arrived even the good cheer around me could not distract my attention from the fact that the tea was cold. It was cold, even by the standards of American hotels, where their tea is as good as English coffee. It was so cold I seriously considered the possibility that I had ordered iced tea by mistake.

As inconspicuously as possible I sent it back. When it returned I was more sure that it wasn't iced tea, but that was all. There was less danger that my spoon might become a superconductor, but the tea was so far from being hot that I thought it might take the whole evening at the current rate of improvement to bring it above room temperature. So we just left it, and forgot it, until Buz ordered four cups of tea for his lot.

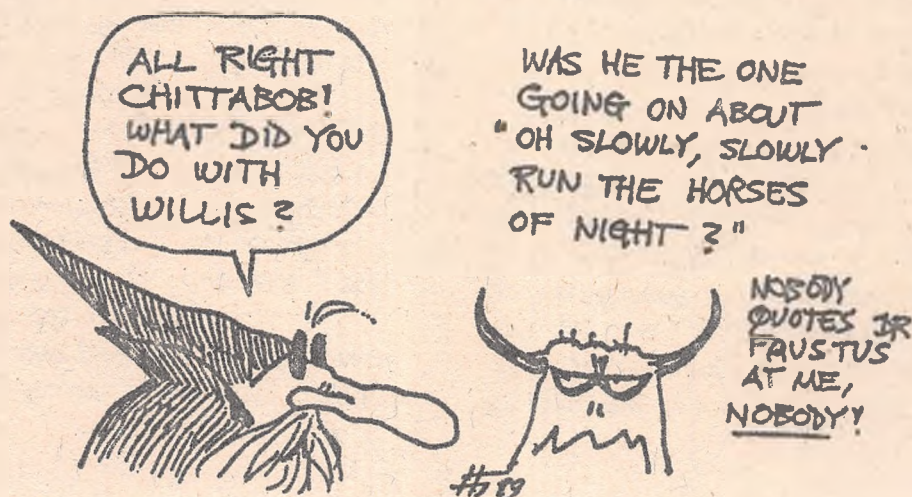
I knew what was going to happen and it

did. The tea was cold and Buz sent it back. I also knew what was going to happen next. Buz is not a man to take things lying down, and there was going to be a confrontation worthy to rank with Roger Graham's pogrom about weak coffee which is still spoken of in hushed voices among the survivors along US 30.

Sure enough, when the tea came back it was still cold, and Buz pointed this out with a deceptive geniality which would have had anyone who knows him climbing up the curtains, gibbering. Even the waiter felt something of this: trembling, he took the tea away again. There was a long delay.

What is it with us and the Busby's I wondered, that every time we meet there is some disaster involving tea? In 1962 a full breakfast teapot disintegrated in Madeleine's hand, an incident that became known to us as the Great Teapot Doom Scandal. And now this. Then with a dread such as can be known only to those who lived through the Brighton Worldcon, I realised the full horror of what was happening. For three days the forces of chaos and evil, which lurk in every convention hotel, had been held at bay by Edie Stern, as they can be by the pure at heart. But only an hour ago she had herself declared the convention closed. And now, here at the periphery of the hotel, Edie's enchantment was wearing off. A Satanic horror was even now consuming the weakest part of the hotel, the kitchen. I explained

CRISIS AT CON'S END



this briefly to Buz -- hell, the Convention's over, was the way I put it -- as we discussed what to do next, and when the waiter returned to explain that somehow the "apparatus" didn't work, Buz let him live. Of course the apparatus didn't work; it might never work again.

We hastily retreated to the Convention floor, where the living heart of the of the Convention was still beating, in the person of Geri Sullivan. She sold me a post-supporting membership of Minneapolis in '73, which costs -1¢, and gave me the requisite 1¢. This seemed a trend in the right direction, but I was perturbed by the implications of the Convention bid and sought the advice of Moshe Feder, in the absence of Sid Coleman. Knowing fandom's ability to turn fantasy into reality, I asked, as with South Gate in 1958 and the Dream Issue of *Astounding*, is there not a danger that we will make Minneapolis in 1973 actually happen? That any minute now Fandom, perhaps the entire Universe, will go into reverse and hurtle backwards in time in the direction of 1973?

Taking out his battery operated Occam's razor, Moshe shaved off this fuzzy thinking from the situation. He had consulted Stephen Hawking about this and it was all right. It was just that Minneapolis liked to party.

Because of my relief about this, or maybe it is some characteristic of Minneapolis parties, I find I remember absolutely nothing more of that day.

MONDAY, 5TH DECEMBER, 1988:

Immediately after breakfast next morning we packed our stuff and I carried it down to the car. There was as much of it as ever because although we had distributed the crackers and Coca-Cola to deserving fans, we had acquired a number of priceless artifacts, including a blow-up globe of the world, helpfully annotated, from the Minneapolis group. Just what I had always wanted. No, seriously, I remember that as a child there was a time when what I wanted more than

anything was a globe of the world. It had taken me some time to get it, but here it was.

While I was cramming stuff into the trunk, a young man came up and asked for money for breakfast, and I gave him a handful of small change. Shortly afterwards, another one came along asking for bus fare to get to a job, and I gave him the rest of it. I was glad of the opportunity. I was so happy there was nothing I wanted to do more than give things to people. Then I went over to the "7 to 11" store to buy some postcards.

Everything packed and ready to check out, we went back to our former lair in the lobby to say goodbye to anyone we had missed, and perhaps even meet the fans from Toronto who were supposed to be there and whom we had been looking out for in vain. We were also looking out for Art Widner, who had wanted to buy us lunch today in return for our hospitality in Ireland. I had a note of his room number, but there was no answer when I called it.

In the intervals I wrote postcards to Chuck Harris, Vince Clarke and Arthur Thomson, telling them the CRH fund had met its target and of Arthur's contribution to that goal. We said goodbye to Poul and Karen, Jeff Schalles, David Singer, Nancy Tucker and others I didn't have time to take photos of. We were joined by rich brown, who was waiting for Ted White to get up and face the world.

Eventually Ted did appear, still protesting he hated goodbyes but saying them anyway. "It was a great convention," were his final words.

Then we helped Geri Sullivan wait for her taxi. I felt guilty about not having offered to drive her to the airport. But the responsibility was too much for me. If I crashed the car, Minneapolis would never forgive me. Why they might just take back my globe. So I just carried her case down to the taxi, resisting with great difficulty the temptation to tell the man to drive carefully.

Then we handed in our own keys. The hotel felt empty and the lobby was quiet. We sat on for a while, wondering whether or not just to get into our car and drive back to the *Villa*

Caprice, when Moshe Feder came and asked us had we any plans for lunch. We explained we'd been trying to get Art Widner but there was never any answer from his room. Moshe wandered away thoughtfully and came back to tell us we had the wrong number. Art had been looking for us and would be along shortly. (How does Moshe know these things? It can't be Stephen Hawking all the time.)

Art asked had I any ideas for lunch and I suggested *The Banyan*. Moshe said he would wait for Joe and Edie and join us later, and Art and we strolled over the huge drawbridge for the last time but one. Its corrugated surface emits a loud growl under every vehicle, a strange sound which puts one in mind of dragons, and which will linger in the memory of everyone who went to Tropicon.

Soon ten of us had assembled in the sunny open air restaurant. There was Joe and Edie, Moshe Feder and Lise Eisenberg, Art Widner, Lee Hoffman, Jay Haldeman and Lisa Gibbons, and us. It was, I thought, like like one of the great feasts at the end of *The Lord of the Rings*. A long table under an enormous banyan tree; at one end the wise young queen, at the other her doughty

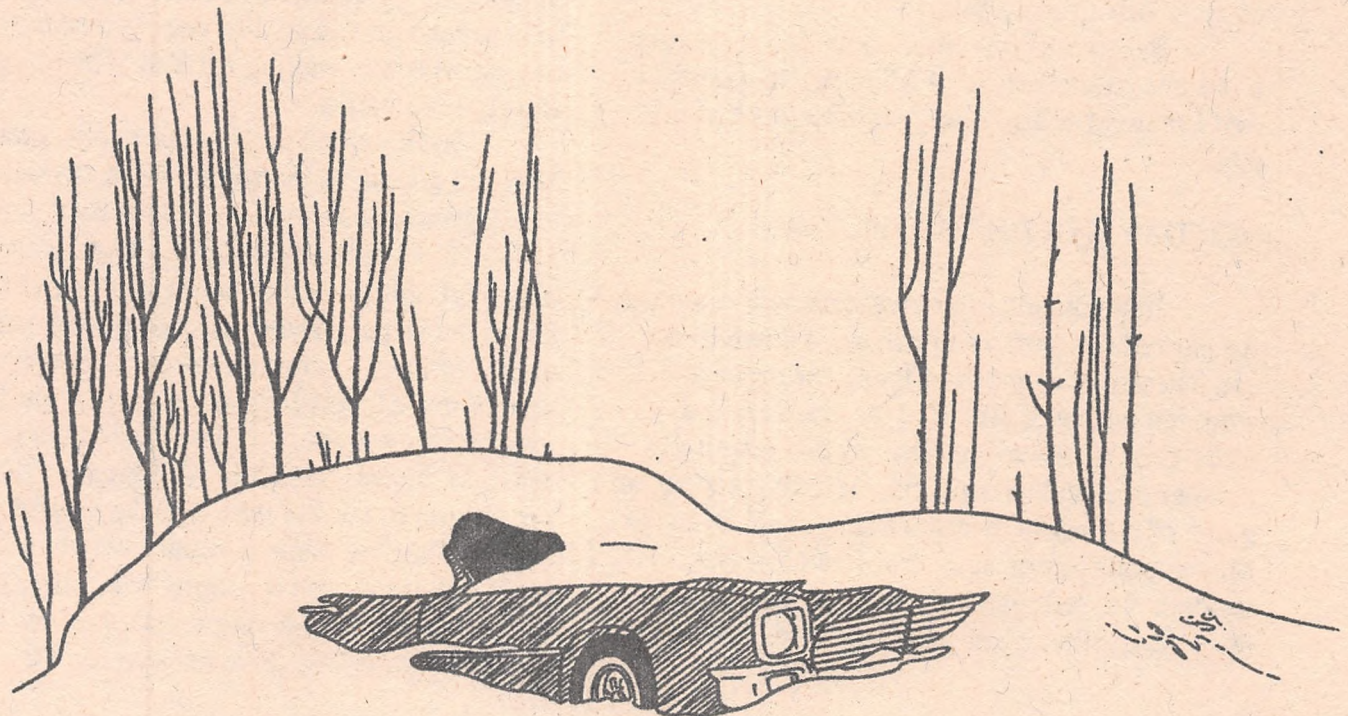
champion: in between, the other survivors of a great adventure.

But people of a less elevated turn of mind were thinking about food, and Moshe was actually in conversation with the young waiter. "I thought so," he called to me, "he comes from Northern Ireland." The Waiter said "Belfast!" and I replied "Donaghadee!" wondering again how Moshe does it. How could he pick from all these funny accents this one person who speaks normally; as normally as me, indeed, for the waiter obviously came from my own East Belfast, that well of English undefiled.

The shock of hearing the first wholly intelligible voice for more than two weeks made me realise that shortly I would be going home. It seemed incredible, but there was life after Tropicon.

So it was time to draw the bottom line on that enterprise, and it had already been uttered. I turned to the person who was responsible for us being here, our Elfin Earth Mother. "Edie," I said, "Ted White...last words of. Quote. It was a **great** convention. Unquote."

Edie got a pen and wrote it down.



FIRST CHEVY TO THE NORTH POLE

By Jessica Amanda Salmonson

A musselman barber whose name was Kamir
Vacationed in chilly Toronto
He rented a car, saying, "I'm out of here!"
But got himself turned around pronto.

Farther north, farther north, India's barber
Freezing his turban and auto
Cursing a storm front and grinding the starter,
Striving to drink himself blotto.

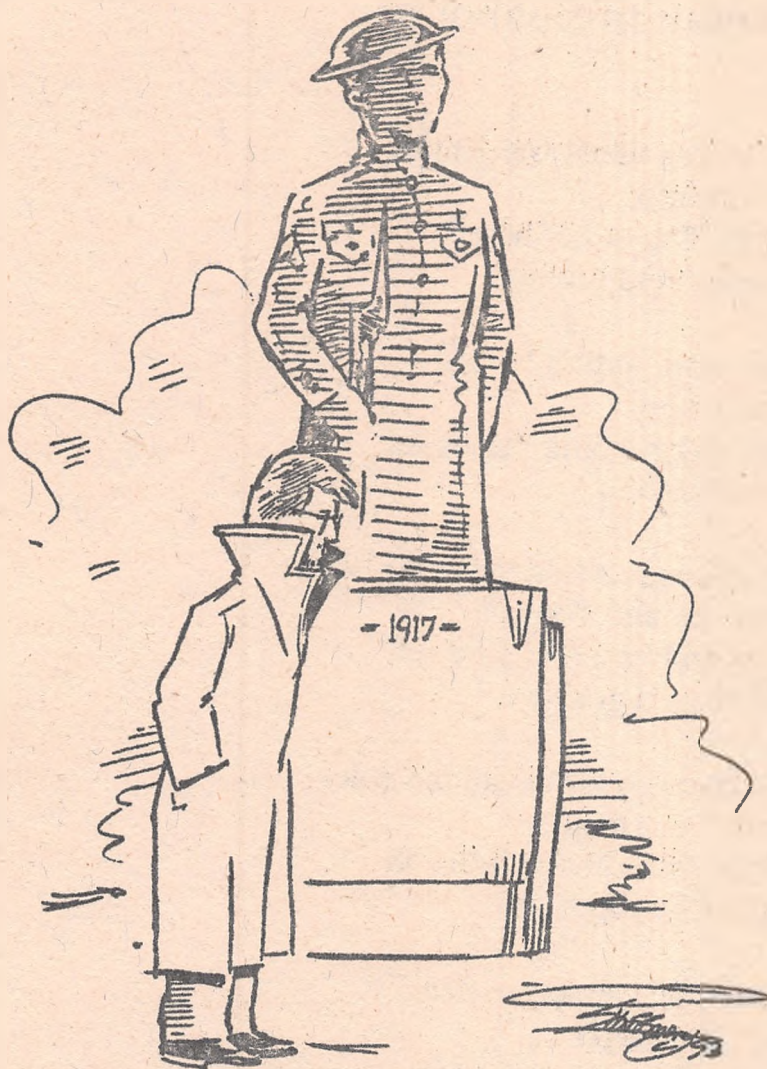
The map that he followed promised the Wild West
Home of the Lone Ranger and Tonto
The map was inverted and he never guessed
He never arrived where he'd gone to.

Someday when the glaciers return from the poles
"The ice age returneth," our motto--
The musselman barber will roll and he'll roll
And thaw out in south Colorado.

Remember my children this lesson so dear
Never to confuse left from right
And never to drive like that fellow Kamir
With your turban wound on too tight.

ON THE MALL OF MEMORIALS

By Joseph Nicholas



backs. The monoliths were grouped into four short ranks, two to the left and two to the right, with at the centre a monumental stone eagle with partly outstretched wings. It certainly looked impressive.

We walked slowly around it, looking at it in the way that tourists usually do, seeing it, but not in detail; taking it in, but more in the sense of ticking it off a mental list of Sights Seen. And then, with time running out on us, we moved off towards South Street Seaport, looking to tick that off the mental list before evening became night and we had to meet Patrick and Teresa Neilsen Hayden at the Second Avenue Jewish Deli. But on the way we had time to stop to look at another memorial: the Vietnam Memorial, New York's own, much less famous than the one in Washington DC. So much less famous, in fact, that I hadn't known it existed: it wasn't marked on our map, and I can't now find it in our guide book. Despite which, it impressed me rather more -- and I remember it rather better -- than the merchant seamen's memorial.

It took the form of a short wall, some seven or eight feet high and perhaps twenty to twenty-five feet long, made mostly of translucent green glass bricks. On the surface, in raised lettering, appeared excerpts from letters written by soldiers in the field -- some of the excerpts highlighted by the simple expedient of using white rather than green glass for the bricks. This highlighting was not to draw attention to the literary brilliance of the excerpts in question, or to the heroism of the events they described, but to demonstrate simultaneously how ordinary and how pointless the war was -- the transient pleasure of a cold beer after a long day's patrol, the

"This is my favorite memorial in the whole of New York," said Stu Shiffman.

We had just gotten off the last boat back from the Statue of Liberty, he and Judith and Moshe Feder and I, and were standing in battery park before the memorial to US merchant seamen killed during World War Two -- a set of tall black monoliths facing out towards Liberty Island, the names of the dead carved into their fronts and

after a long day's patrol, the boredom of sitting around in camp waiting for something to happen, or sad little vignettes of watching best friends going home in body bags; and to preserve equality and anonymity none of the authors were identified. This had apparently been a condition for the selection of excerpts when the memorial was being planned; and thousands of letters had been submitted to the organising committee.

"What a waste," said Stu. He wasn't talking about the memorial, but about what it represented.

Moshe admitted, in an unusually quiet voice, that he had only just escaped the draft: that if the war had continued for another six months he would have been called down to the recruiting station and sent off to fight in Vietnam.

We read the excerpts, we looked at each other, and we went on towards South Street Seaport. There had been only two other people there, a young man and a woman whose expressions as we walked around the memorial indicated that they perhaps resented our presence, that we had interrupted them in some way. Perhaps one of the excerpts was from a letter by a relative who had not survived the conflict, and this quiet Sunday afternoon in downtown Manhattan was their chance to remember him in peace. And it was certainly more peaceful there than I could ever imagine it being at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC.

Almost everyone knows what the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC looks like, so no descriptions of it will be appearing here. (Everyone who's seen the film *Hamburger Hill* will remember that the opening shot is a track along it with the sunset reflecting back into the camera lens.) "Did you like it?" seems to be the question everyone asks you; and it's difficult not to admit that, yes, it's really rather well done: less a war memorial, a thrusting tribute to those who gave for the cause, than a liturgy for the lost, sombre and downbeat. Although, as everyone said when it was first installed, you can't actually see it until you're practically on top of it: dug down into the ground rather than erected on the surface, it is

invisible from the road; and even from the top of the Washington Monument, in the centre of the Mall, it's hidden by the trees which surround it. So it's not surprising that, a few years after it was completed, a small sculpture of three GIs was erected before it: the only part of the Memorial, apart from the lists which tell visitors on which panel the names appear, that does show above the ground.

Then there are the right wing causes that have accreted around it, attempting to subvert its purpose to assist their own. Here, after all, is a memorial to loss and failure. And there are the stalls run by people who believe that after all this time there are "Missing In Action" prisoners still alive in Vietnam: collecting signatures on petitions, selling "Nuke 'Em Now" badges, and exhibiting posters demanding that Hanoi immediately release the remaining MIAs and offering a billion dollars for the first Communist defector to make it to freedom (sic) with one in tow. **A billion dollars!** Apart from wondering where they'd get that sort of money in the first place, it was clear that the basic economics of such an operation were simply crazy. What would they do if two defectors escaped to "freedom", each with an MIA in tow? Or three, or four? And if the people running such stalls really believed their own rhetoric about poverty-stricken peasants ground down by the iron heel of etc., etc., wouldn't a few thousand dollars have been equally as tempting? (Which still left aside the problem of how such a peasant would come to read the posters in the first place....)

We walked along the Memorial, looking at it with those tourist eyes, taking in the totality of it rather than the detail. Although it was a bright sunny day, and the temperature was nudging 80 F, the atmosphere around it seemed somehow different: cooler and off-putting. I felt the mood physically lift the moment I stepped back onto the mall proper, back towards the things it seemed intended to celebrate.

We had previously been in the Lincoln Memorial, constructed to commemorate the president who had fought a war over (among

other things) the principle that no man had the right to enslave another. We were on our way to the Jefferson Memorial, constructed to commemorate one of the nation's founders, on one of the interior walls of which was a quote from the Declaration of Independence concerning the right of the USA to determine its own government. On a previous day, we had been to the Washington Monument, constructed to commemorate the man who had led the nation to victory over the British. All tributes, in their way, to the hopes and ideals of the republic's founders and leaders. And if the Vietnam Memorial seemed to represent anything, then it was a betrayal of those hopes and ideals by the founder's latter-day successors: People who had substituted military force for political wisdom, who had retreated from rationality and maturity into Cold War-derived dogma.

A shadow of this seemed to underlie the activities around the MIA stalls. **We can't bomb you flat, but we can offer you a billion dollars!** One began to wonder if the USA, as a nation, had learned anything from the collective trauma it had experienced in Vietnam.

Echo answers: well, at least Reagan didn't invade Nicaragua. Indeed, it's interesting to note that -- despite being so obviously desperate to provoke an equivalent of the Tonkin Gulf Incident that allowed Johnson to send the Marines into Vietnam -- Reagan had great difficulty persuading anyone but the CIA and a handful of far-right anti-communist zealots to match his support for and adulation of the contras. Congress might have funded them for a time, but manifestly didn't like them -- and opinion polls have indicated consistent popular opposition to direct US military involvement in Central America. The most Reagan could get away with was rattling sabres on manoeuvre in neighboring Honduras and conquering Grenada with an invasion force slightly larger than the population of the island itself. Hardly a ringing endorsement of his oft-stated intention to "make America great again". The reason being, of course, "the Vietnam syndrome": once bitten, twice shy.

But at this point one has to ask whether this is because the US government has finally recognised the limits to global power -- both to its actual physical extent, and the extent to which it may permissibly be wielded -- or whether it's because the US public doesn't want any more of its sons killed in overseas adventures in support of the Pentagon's geo-strategic interests.

The nineteen-eighties have seen a small spate of films about the Vietnam War -- *Platoon*, *Gardens of Stone*, the already mentioned *Hamburger Hill*, *Full Metal Jacket*, *Bat-21*, the forthcoming *In Country*, and most recently *Good Morning Vietnam* and *Saigon* (the latter of which is not so much a war film as a police thriller which happens to be set in wartime Vietnam: the ultimate reduction of a once so divisive issue to just another scenic backdrop). One ought to be grateful for such films because, whatever their individual political stance, they do at least represent some attempt by the USA to come to terms with the Vietnam experience. But only some attempt, because their view of that experience is actually rather limited; one seen almost entirely from the point of view of the soldiers in the field, slogging on under pressure from both the guerillas and the military brass, doing what they were told to do and suffering enormous losses in consequence. While this both ennoble their efforts and demonstrates how cynically they were often used, it avoids directly confronting the causes of the war, the misuse of power that it entailed, and its effect on the Vietnamese themselves -- indeed, the Vietnamese hardly ever appear in any of these films, and when they do they are either the enemy (*Hamburger Hill*, *Full Metal Jacket*), peasants who get in the way (*Platoon*), or innocent children who have to be taught how to behave like Westerners before they can be accepted as real people (*Good Morning Vietnam*, and I'm sure I don't have to point out how thoroughly patronising and offensive that depiction of them is).

(The same is true, incidentally, of *In the Field of Fire*, the SF anthology of Vietnam stories

edited by Jeanne Van Buren Dann and Jack Dann. Over two-thirds of its six-page introduction are devoted to discussing the post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, from which Vietnam veterans suffer; one might be forgiven for thinking from this that US soldiers were the war's only victims. Not a single word is said about the colossal environmental, economic and social destruction visited upon the Vietnamese; and when they appear in the stories at all they do so mostly as bit players. The only one which attempts to view the conflict from their point of view, and to express their feelings, is that by Craig Strete -- himself an American Indian and thus an ethnic minority in his own land.)

"As a movie subject," wrote Robert O'Conner in "Out Of The Meatgrinder" (*The Guardian*, 8 December 1988), "Vietnam offers a special marketing challenge. The film-maker must reach an audience harbouring disparate memories of the actual event. The goal is to sell tickets equally to those who fought in the war and those who marched against it." And he concluded: "One of the continuing problems of Vietnam is the failure of the American public to confront the war fully. Hollywood's decision to semi-confront it -- based on the best of marketing principles -- is compounding that problem." And in the course of his article, O'Conner quoted Vietnam veteran and university academic William Adams, who had earlier remarked in *Mother Jones* that "our future images of the war will...owe more to our film-makers than our historians."

Ultimately, it is only historians who can explain the causes of wars; film-makers can only show their effects. As the old saw has it, one has to learn from the mistakes of history in order not to repeat them; but if that history is being written by film-makers what, if anything, are we likely to learn from it? That shooting people makes them bleed? Hardly a very original insight -- but one that, because it is presented in a popular and readily assimilable form (i.e., film), tends to have the edge over those offered by less accessible and more cerebral means (i.e., history books). And all around, I fear, are signs that the USA, as a nation,

has not learned the lessons of Vietnam: is still to prepared to use force where rational argument would suffice -- to attempt to win outright and thereby impose its order and values on everyone else rather than settle for the trade-offs and compromises that are a necessary part of smooth international relations.

This is not to suggest, I hasten to add, that the US government is raring to invade anyone who disagrees with them. Force comes in various kinds, and where direct military confrontation isn't suitable a number of alternatives are available -- all the way from paying someone else to do the shooting for you (the contras, the Afghan mojahedin) to undermining their economies via the IMF and ruining their indigenous culture by flooding it with Michael Jackson tapes and TV soap operas. There are, in other words, many different means of continuing the struggle for global domination; and defeat in Vietnam does not appear to have weaned the USA away from that goal.

One obvious example is the new Bush administration's attitude towards Gorbachev and the Soviet Union. All through Western Europe, people are welcoming his disarmament initiatives and wondering whether, without political support from outside, he can survive the conservative forces ranged against him from within; but in Washington DC the new Bush administration has publicly stated that it intends to blunt the so-called "Soviet peace offensive" by putting relations with the Soviet Union on the back burner and leaving Gorbachev to "twist in the wind". The theory here, according to Secretary of State James Baker, is to see whether more concessions can be forced out of him; but one would have thought that there was nothing more calculated to ensure his downfall and replacement by some Brezhnevite hard-liner who can be counted on to resume the Cold War where it left off in 1983. Conspiracy theories aside, it seems clear that an ex-CIA functionary like Bush, and the defence contractors looking to maintain their order books, would prefer that scenario to one in which disarmament continues and international

compromises have to be made. With Gorbachev, there is little if any political rationale for the "modernisation" of NATO's battlefield nuclear weapons to replace those removed by the INF treaty; without him, it becomes much easier. (Although I think that in truth Bush has made a huge political mistake; Gorbachev will survive, and NATO's attempt to "modernise" will only repeat the blunders and insensitivities that marked the earlier deployment of cruise missiles, thus further widening the political rift between the USA and Western Europe.)

Without Gorbachev, in short, the Cold War can continue. And never mind (further evidence of Bush's misjudgement) that the rest of the world doesn't care for it anymore and wishes it were over. As *South* phrased it in an article about him in its January 1989 issue: "One aspect of the new administration can be predicted with confidence: its frame of reference remains 'the American century'. The US will continue to deny the reality of its economic decline, the importance of *perestroika* in ending the Cold War, and the primacy of environmental and economic threats over those of Soviet world domination."

The past eight years have been marked by attempts to overcome "the Vietnam syndrome" by engendering a climate in which armed combat is no longer so stigmatised. One has only to look, for example, at the treatment given to it at the lower levels of popular culture to realise how glossy and wonderful it can be made to seem -- and on the sociological theory that it is at precisely this level that a culture reveals its deepest hopes and fears, it is important not to overlook or dismiss what happens here. Missing from the previous list of films, for example, was the Rambo trilogy: a straightforward attempt to rewrite the history of the Vietnam War to transform the loser into, if not a winner, then at least someone who'd managed an honorable draw. Never mind the host of *Rambo II: Missing in Action* clones (most of them seeming to star Chuck Norris) which never achieved a cinema release (or were ever intended to) but went straight onto the shelves of the video rental

merchants -- *No Surrender, Force of One, Death Before Dishonor*, and other titles that mercifully escape my recollection -- and which will probably be seen by more people than will ever see *Platoon* or *Full Metal Jacket*, and be commensurately more influential. After all, they are full of action. They have people solving their problems by blowing them up or shooting them dead. The bad guys always lose. How could anything be more popular?

Those who can read without moving their lips have probably graduated to the kind of books advertised in the pages of *Locus* as "mercenary science fiction" (a sub-genre that is almost exclusively a product of the eighties). *The Fleet: Counterattack*, edited by David Drake and Bill Fawcett, features a bunch of brave Earthmen versus "the savage Khalian invaders", who in the illustration resemble insects (doubtless with a monolithic hive-mind), with a blurb which claims The Fleet as "still the best defence". *Crisis of Empire: Cluster Command*, by David Drake and Bill Dietz, tells us that "nobody believes in anything beyond the boundaries of self" and that an exceptional few have "the duty of maintaining a military-civil order that is corrupt, despotic, and infinitely preferable to the barbarous chaos that will accompany its fall". *Beamriders*, by Martin Caidin, has various SDI gimmicks and "the rescue of a US scientist from a cell beneath the Kremlin". There's another volume in the series *There Will Be War*, edited by Jerry Pournelle. And on, and on -- just as Chuck Norris seems to dominate the video war market, so Baen Books seems to dominate this field; and the sub-texts of their publications hardly need stating. Everyone's grown soft and complacent; politicians are venal; vigilance is paramount; and only the military can save us. (And the insectoid hive-minds of the savage Khalian invaders will turn out to have been a metaphor for the Soviet Union all along. Gosh, how surprising.) Truly, this is pitiful rubbish -- yet it presumably sells by the tens of thousands.

One might just be able to overlook this Cold War adventurism did echoes of it not surface

in more sophisticated science fiction novels. For example -- and for all the excellence of its writing -- Lucius Shepard's *Life During Wartime* conveys an air of weary inevitability about its imagined war in Central America: it won't be quite as it describes, but that it will happen sooner or later, he seems to say, is undoubted. And do not intimations of other US military involvements appear in other works by various other contemporary SF authors, such as William Gibson and Bruce Sterling? And does not this assumption that such involvements will happen itself help to reduce the likely public opposition to them?

Echo answers: but writers are products of their times and the times in question are the eighties; and military intervention is a constant of the global picture. Are you suggesting, says echo, that writers should ignore this, and write utopias instead? To which I reply: no; but I'd rather they questioned it more openly rather than appeared so readily to accept it as given. Thus it is that we hit the matter of the role of art in raising public consciousness about political and social trends; about the extent to which the artist provokes their audience to question what they see and hear, or to accept the arguments they propound.

It's undeniable that David Drake and Chuck Norris are part of the right-wing's attempt - albeit piecemeal and disorganized -- to make it possible for the USA to once again resort to direct military force where it feels the circumstances warrant. Not just to shoot down Libyan MiGs or invade tiny Caribbean islands, but to engage its perceived opponents in very large numbers in defence of its economic and strategic interests. The next such locus of conflict, I think, is likely to be the Philippines; and in that the USA will apply all the military lessons it learned in Vietnam to fight the war in a manner intended at least to avoid defeat. The only question then is whether the American public will actually support such a war -- whether, in fact, the experience of Vietnam has decisively turned the public against overseas military adventures, or whether this was just a temporary blip in their general support for South's "American century".

Visiting the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC, and examining the MIA stalls that have grown up around it, I found it difficult to avoid the conclusion that while its builders intended it to be (as I said earlier) a liturgy for the lost, others had managed to subvert it to their own purposes -- to transform it from a memorial to military folly and foreign policy failure to a memorial to failing to do the job properly. After all, had not Richard Nixon seriously considered the use of battlefield nuclear weapons against North Vietnam? And did not the MIA stalls, in their expressions of clear hatred for the Vietnamese, suggest that next time there wouldn't be any MIAs because there wouldn't be an enemy left to take them prisoner?

One final image remains with me from our trip to the Vietnam Memorial. As I walked along it, I became separated from Judith and caught up, for just a few seconds, in a group of people whose dress and badges clearly connected them with the MIA stalls. With them was a shorter, portlier man in a dark suit, to whom they were pointing out aspects of the Memorial and their operations. He looked every inch a typical US Senator. For a moment, our eyes met; and he probably noticed the peace badge that I was wearing, with the classic downward-pointing trident symbol of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. Then he looked away, and I went on past. I didn't recognise him then, but I remember his face: one which at the time of writing has been appearing in the news rather a lot.

It was John Tower, George Bush's proposed Defence Secretary and the man of whom it has been said that he never saw a weapons system he didn't like.

"Yes," he was saying, "I'll try to work with you on this as much as I can."

He clearly had not learned from the Vietnam experience; but I can only hope that enough of his fellow citizens have.

A TANGLE OF FANDOM

By Jeanne Gomoll

When Fred Haskell asked me to be Corflu's Toastmaster, he made politically correct, concerned noises about the title. Did I really want to be called the *toastmaster*? he asked. Wouldn't I prefer the more generic honorific, "toaster"?

I told him that Toastmaster would be OK with me, but that I appreciated his sensitivity to my strident feminist inclinations. However, I failed to explain why I wouldn't pounce on this particular example of male linguistic privilege and demand instead, a humorous title like "Podium," or a revisionist one like "Toastmistress."

The reason I am going with Toastmaster this weekend, is because of the dreadful "Gomoll Toaster Curse." I assure you that the thought -- for once -- of being a master of toasters would be thrilling to any member of my family, and I'm not going to miss this chance. Ever since I can remember, our family has owned defective toasters. No sooner is a new toaster purchased, than it develops eccentricities involving incinerated slices of toast, ear-piercing noises or downright dangerous side-effects. In fact, there's never been a healthy toaster in any Gomoll household that I know of.

For example, toasting bread at my parent's home has always been a game of chance. Some days your slice of whole wheat might pop up only slightly dry but not very warm to the touch. Other days a smoking cinder leaps out of the chrome machine, and when you attempt to remove it from its slot and give it a decent burial, it instantly disintegrates into millions of crumbs.

"That's how aliens die," I once told my sister Julie -- then 5. "They just disintegrate into a little pile of dust when they get killed."

"**Alien bread!**" Julie shrieked and refused to eat toast for weeks. She was a little weird back then and reacted fearfully to many commonplace

things. Like she always screamed whenever the egg lady delivered eggs to our house. None of us have ever found out what she imagined in the name "egg lady," but she cowered in her bedroom whenever the little old lady came over to our house.

We all took the Gomoll Toaster Curse with us when we left home. Julie's toasters used to traditionally lose control of their noise-making mechanism. When your toast popped out of one of Julie's toasters and the wailing and screeching began, you might have sworn that some thief had broken into the elaborate kitchen security system. I used to expect sirens to start whooping and police helicopters to land on the roof within seconds. Breakfast time isn't a good time for shocks like this. (Breakfast time isn't a good time to be awake, is what I usually say.) But suddenly you're leaping two feet in the air and dashing into the kitchen to pull out the toaster's plug to stop its unholy, cranking alarm. Julie got used to it eventually. She had to. Every toaster she owned before she moved down to Austin inevitably developed this otherworldly shriek. One time she attempted to harness the mechanism for **good** rather than evil. She attached a timer to the toaster to wake herself up in the morning. I can't remember if it worked, and these days -- since she moved to Texas and turned into a morning person -- Julie's particular variety of the Gomoll Toaster Curse seems to have evolved. One slice of her toast now takes upward of 10 to 20 minutes to brown. By the time it's done, it's lunch.

Since I've left home, my folks' toaster has taken to physically assaulting my younger brother Danny, popping with no warning and shooting toast in his eyes when he comes to check on its progress. I wonder what his teachers thought when he showed up at school with a black eye and blamed the toaster. My brother Rick and I have

both owned toasters whose thermostats break down and must be wrestled with in order to release the toast inside them. I'm not surprised anymore when my toasters turn on me. I do get some measure of revenge by forcing bagels into the slots made for thin-sliced bread, which only hastens the inevitable breakdown.

Well, that's the Gomoll Toaster Curse.

And now I live with Scott who still owns the toaster his parents bought when they were first married and gave to him when he moved away from home. He hasn't unpacked it and I sympathize with his distrust. I wouldn't want to risk losing a prize heirloom either. That toaster wouldn't last a month longer if he brought it into the kitchen and it came under the influence of the Gomoll Toaster Curse.

I hope that the Gomoll Toaster Curse hasn't affected this convention. I apologize if there have been any spontaneous combustions, alarming noises or burnt out elements. But I must say that I'm really enjoying the unusual sound of people calling me a toastmaster.

Burnt-out elements. Lately, I've been wondering if I've become a burnt-out element of fandom.

Following in the great tradition of post-

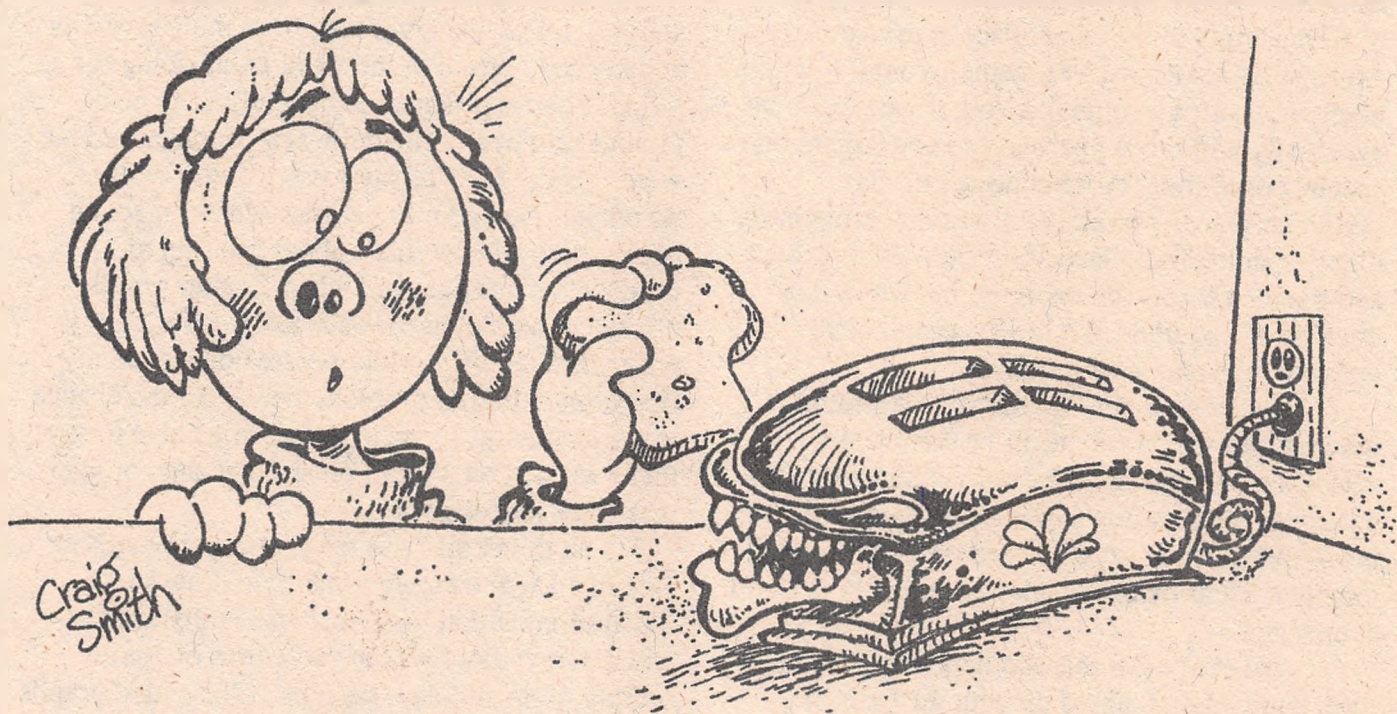
TAFF-trip semi-Gafiation forged by my predecessors, I've been out of touch with most of you during much of the last year.

Before you ask...it has not been because I've been finishing my TAFF trip report. Neither has it been because I've been working on the next *Whimsey*. The thing about TAFF is that you put your life on hold while you're doing it -- not so much the trip part but the administering that goes after it. And since retiring, I've been taking care of my life. I've been involved in all sorts of very unfannish things. I've been entirely engrossed...even obsessed, with some very mundane activities.

The house Scott and I bought in February seems to have taken control of my life: it gobbles up all available daylight and money.

The job at which I used to sneak moments and material to do fannish projects has gotten so exciting in its own right, that I've been forgetting to take lunch breaks and often lock up hours after my normal quitting time. I've been learning to do graphics on a Macintosh computer. I've been telling people that I've changed careers and it's true.

There have been other personal things going on to that resulted in my spending a lot of time with my family. My brother has AIDS and



the crisis is drawing my family together. It's also affecting my political involvement. In fact this is going to continue to draw me away from fannish things for a while more.

And it's all very unfannish, you know....

...But no doubt, it will all eventually get written down in articles that are fannish in spite of it all. Even when my back is turned and I'm thinking about anything but this community of ours, it's impossible not to begin the process of retelling it all to you in the fannish idiom. Even when I'm furthest away from direct participation in fandom, I'm getting ready to bring it all back and weave my experiences and ideas back into fandom.

This is not what I would call gafiation.

I've got a theory about friendships. If you look at life like a drawing and your life in particular like one line that scribbles in and around the surface of the world -- that draws more detail here than there, or that merely outlines an area over there -- it sometimes happens that lines run parallel once in a while. Sometimes two lines are drawn exactly tangential to one another and, for a while, we find ourselves exactly in sync with another person. Personalities, ideas, emotions -- whatever -- click. But if that's all that happens -- if we're simply in the same place at the same time, working on some project together, going to school together, sharing a mutual friend or whatever, we eventually will move apart and cease to share that special connection, those concerns or that particular place -- whatever it was that brought us together in the first place. And later we look back and maybe cherish the memory, but we've lost track of one another. We never became really tangled up in one another's lives.

But sometimes, friendships develop in wild tangles which can never be completely sorted out and can never be cut without seriously damaging each person's life line or the piece of the world that was created because of their being together. Their paths become inextricably connected.

Most of us in this room have gotten our lives completely tangled up with the fannish

community. When I try to explain my involvement to people outside the community, who expect me to sum it all up in a few words, I feel utterly frustrated. I either give a simplified, false answer, or subject the poor person who thought they asked something innocuous like "how are you?" to a very long confusing story.

I was walking down State Street in Madison with a Hugo the other day. (Tim Kyger lent it to me for TAFF fund-raising on the condition that I get it mounted. And I had just picked it up from the trophy shop that did the job for me.) A store clerk saw its metal nose sticking out of its sack in my arms. (Lots of people saw it. I'm glad I wasn't trying to get it through airline customs for all the distrustful glances people were shooting my way.) After I told him that it was a Hugo and had given him a dignified, serious explanation of what a Hugo was (which was confusing enough, so why say that it's a fake Hugo and then have to explain TAFF and Corflu, I thought, so I didn't), he asked the question.

"So, it this a California thing?"

When I've got more time, my own explanation of fandom and it's part in my life gets really complex.

It started out for me as a spare time activity. I was just graduated from the University and not very proud of the work I was doing for a living. I had aspirations to be a writer, to be a famous feminist critic, but when people asked me what I "did," I had to say I was a Kelly worker. So when I walked into my first Madstf meeting because they'd advertised about wanting to produce a magazine, and when I rather timidly offered to help a bit, I was actually offering my entire life, all my worldly possessions, even my first born child (no problem there!) for the chance to do something so exciting and to be able to say that I worked on a small press magazine, or later, that I was an editor of it.

It didn't take too long for that to happen. One day I was offering to help, to draw some illustrations if that was what was really needed, and the next day I was the co-editor of *Janus*, writing night and day, keeping color-coded graphs

of our schedule, covering all the floors of my apartment with little tiny scraps of paper when -- every couple months -- I laid out the issue. The week before we went to press, it wasn't unusual for me to put in 40 or 50 hours of work on the zine. I was truly obsessed.

With time, *Janus* and *Wiscon* became an outlet for my political ideas, for my own personal brand of feminism. For me, science fiction and feminism came together beautifully in those days. There was a line in Monique Wittig's classic SF, *Les Guerilleres* that urges women who lack role models to use their imagination. The line is, "...and failing that -- invent!" I interpreted that to mean that reading and writing science fiction could have as profound an effect on people as writing and reading about technological change. If we were open to the chances of social change we would be bound to take a more active role in making the future one that we wanted ourselves and our descendents to live in. It's been very important to me to find positive focus in my life, and a point of view that assumes the possibility of a better future. The literature of science fiction fans helped me to find one.

What fandom means to me...it gets even more complicated!

After about 8 years of editing fanzines, drawing and writing, and organized conventions, it turned out that I had developed skills that I wasn't even conscious of having learned. I mean it didn't immediately occur to me to list them on a resumé. But after all that time it turned out that other people looked at what I'd accomplished and were willing to hire me as a professional artist, which I am to this very day. Much more confident these days, hardly ever worried that they're going to find out the gigantic hoax I played on them by getting this job with no formal art education, I find I owe a huge debt to the very wonderful system of apprenticeship that small SF fan groups, the conventions and fanzines offer to so-called "untrained" kids with nothing but enthusiasm and egoboo for salaries. I think that enthusiasm is the best and perhaps the only real motivation for learning a thing and learning it

well, but at the time, I thought I was merely filling free time, and using fandom as a way to give myself a little self-respect when people asked me what I "did."

In fact, fandom showed me that I could do for a living what I lived for. Most people don't ever learn that lesson. But there are a lot in fandom; we've grown accustomed to people feeling entitled to support themselves by doing what they are good at, by doing what they love to do.

It all gets very tangled when I try to figure out just what part fandom plays in my life....

A few months ago I volunteered at a Reproductive Rights Coalition meeting. The RRC is a group in Madison which confronts Anti-abortionist groups when they demonstrate in front of abortion clinics. The anti-abortion groups try to grab publicity and prevent women from entering the clinics. The RRC stands up for the Pro-Choice side and helps women to get past the pickets. I think it's a real important group, and especially now with *Roe v. Wade* being reconsidered by the Supreme Court, I had begun feeling that I had to **do something** now. So I walked into the meeting and was impressed by the street smarts these women had, the politics of active confrontation, but I was amazed at something else. They seemed hopelessly muddled about how to get the word out to their members for various meetings and activities; they were at sea about how to raise money. "How about a one page, self-mailing newsletter sent out once a month? I could put one out in no time on my computer at home." And, after some suggestions were made about a cake sale and a film festival, very labor intensive, not too effective fund-raising ideas, I said, "There are lots of people who want to help, and if they can't, they're willing to send you money. Why not just ask for money? Send out a letter, explain what you do and ask for it?" To both suggestions, I received amazed, blank stares. "What a good idea! Wow!" "Can we do that, can we just ask for money?" And suddenly after a few moments I was organizing a quick and fast publication

meeting. Suddenly it occurred to me how well fandom had trained me....

A few weeks ago, a friend and I went to Madison's Civic Center box office to buy tickets to *A Prairie Home Companion's Third Farewell Performance Tour*, and had to stand in line for several hours to get them. I began chatting with folks in front of and behind us, and a little later, several of us were playing word games to pass the time. When we finally reached the ticket counter, well over 20 people around us were involved in the game and we were laughing and almost disappointed to end the game. As my friend and I walked out of the Civic Center, she rather uncomfortably observed, "You make friends really easily, don't you?" She hadn't been thrilled to find herself at the center of the spontaneous party. And I suddenly flashed on another time, another place, when my dad and I had stood on line waiting for circus tickets. I had been very young then. Suddenly dad had begun to talk to the people around us.

I had been utterly mortified. I was embarrassed and wanted only to hide somewhere or to pretend that I didn't know him -- or more importantly that he didn't know me!

And here I was fearlessly and easily doing

the same thing. I used to be a shy person, once long ago. Really. I'd conquered a lot of that shyness by the time I entered fandom, but believe me, without quite a few changes and lessons at hundreds of meetings and dozens of cons...I would not be here, now, doing **this**.

But of course one of the most tangled parts of my relationship with fandom has to do with friendships. For me, friendships that develop during the **doing** of something -- the making of art, the production of a fanzine, going to school together, planning an event together -- has always made for the most intense and satisfying relationships. And fandom, for me, is very much a **productive** place. And I've made many life-long friendships here. The tangle of lines I've made with people met throughout the last 15 years would be impossible to escape, nor do I want to. We've done some good work, and a lot of the work is ourselves.

I think we should be proud of it and never be defensive about this world of fandom that's so hard to explain to others.

Thank you. And thank you for this once-in-a-lifetime chance to be a toastmaster, a master of toast.

Throwing a weekend-long party for a hundred people does take some effort and organization, but the real credit for the convention goes to everyone who attended. We followed Susan Ryan's advice, which Fred printed at the front of the program book: "How do I throw such good parties? I just ask all the interesting people I know, make sure they don't run out of munchies, and stand back!" Susan's advice proved true, and all too soon it was Sunday night. OK, so I'm leaving out a bit, like ... the banquet, Jeanne Gomoll's phenomenal speech as the convention's toastmaster, the honors bestowed on Stu Shiffman who was selected as Corflu's guest of honor in the traditional "pull a name from the hat" method of guest selection, and the \$2400+ raised at auction for a variety of fannish causes. Keep reading fanzines, and you'll soon know hundreds of other details not included in this report. Like who's sleeping with who these days...

-- Geri Sullivan, "Snapshots of Corflu 6"

ARTICLES WHICH I NEVER READ PAST THE ABSTRACT

By Dale Speirs

Smith, KB, and JV Jones (1986) A new species of catfish. *JOUR. TUSCALOOSA ZOOLOGICAL*. 48:12-16. Abstract: A new species of catfish *Tuscaloosa montanaensis* is described. It is distinguished from other species of the genus by its brown color.

Diefenbaker, JG, L Pearson, and D Lewis (1986) A new species of catfish. *JOUR. CAND. ICHTHY*. 22:122-156. Abstract: A new species of catfish is described under the name *Lincolnia alexanderi*.

Broadbent, JE (1987) Nomenclatural errors in naming new catfish species. *JOUR. SCIOAL. BIO. AND TAXON*. 87: 67-69. Abstract: Two new species recently described are found to be one and the same. *Tuscaloosa montanaensis* and *Lincolnia alexanderi* are declared invalid and are submerged under the name *Clarias mutans*.

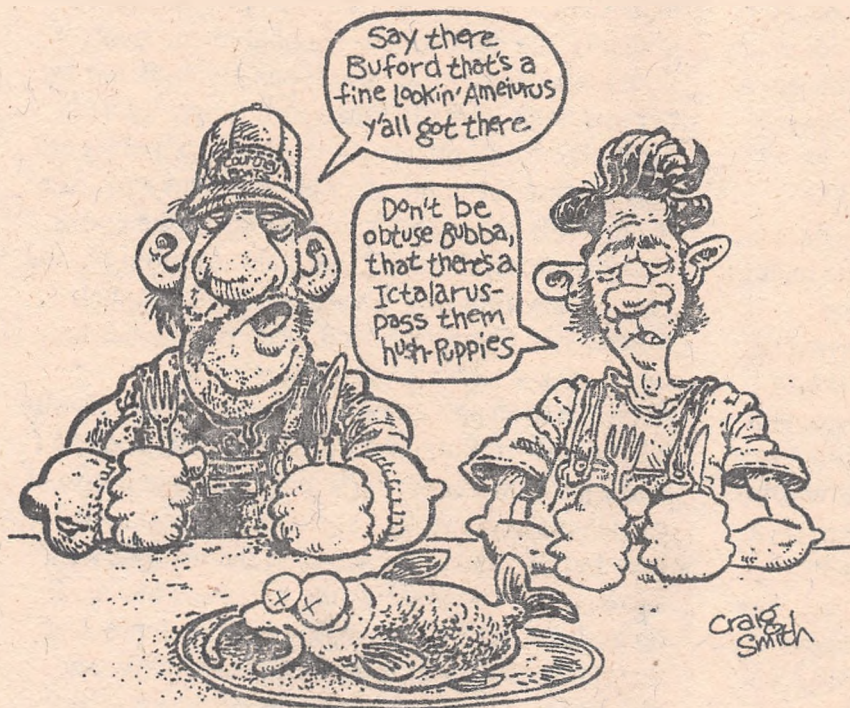
Lougheed, P (1987) A revision of the genus *Clarias*. *JOUR. WESTERN ZOOLOGICAL*. 3:5- 19. Abstract: The genus *Clarias*, which the author studied for two months in the field while a graduate student, is revised to include 97 new species, 54 new subspecies, and 12 forms.

Moore, T (1988) A revision of the catfish and codfish genera. *JOUR. UNIV. COME-BY-CHANCE* 44:78-89. Abstract: The author, using the latest advances in genetic engineering, proves that catfish are related to codfish. 217 new names are listed.

Aberhart, W (1988) What, if anything, is a codfish? *PROC. BAPTIST UNIV*. 4:37- 45. Abstract: A detailed discussion of the recent catfish-codfish controversy is given. All taxa of Moore and Lougheed are reduced to one species, *Clarias variabilis*, with 380 forms.

Bennett, WAC (1988) A retrospective look at catfish. *REV. BURNABY MUS*. 119:65- 98. Abstract: The work of Aberhart is reviewed and found wanting. *Clarias* is restored to the species outlined by Laurier (1909).

Anon. (1989) I. M. Filer 1947 - 1988. *ZOOLOGICAL RECORD* 178:87-99. Abstract: An obituary of Mr. Filer, staff member of the *ZOOLOGICAL RECORD* responsible for indexing. The reason for his apparent suicide has not yet been determined.



WHY I LIKE TO WATCH OTHER PEOPLE WORK

By Terry A. Garey

I always have. But it isn't just the motions, like our cat Dudley who would watch Ctein spot prints by the hour, his eyes going back and forth like one of those tick-tock cat clocks. We babysat an iguana once, and Dudley would watch the creature breathe in and out.

No, for me it's different. I like to watch competent people accomplish work. (Yes, Ctein knows how to spot prints to beat the band, and the iguana was one hell of a good breather, but you see what I mean.) I always loved watching my father when he did odd jobs around the house, even though it meant that I grew up with the conviction that holding boards was a complicated, exacting business and that knowing which screwdriver was which was at least as important as nuclear physics.

On TV these days, I can watch all sorts of people doing all sorts of things, whether it's *This Old House*, Julia Child, *The Frugal Gourmet*, or *Hands*, an Irish production that shows up on The Discovery Channel every now and then. Norm Abrams of *This Old House* is my hero, with his big broad thumbs and broad belly. Norm always knows which kind of nail to use and why, he always knows how to test for dry rot, and he quietly does his work, only getting a little excited when he gets to use a new power tool. The host of the show grandstands around and leads the homeowners through their paces, but Norm gets stuff done. He does a good job, despises waste and clutter, takes his time when he needs to, and explains the practical end of carpentry with a love of simple beauty and a job well done that warms me to the marrow. To watch Norm balance on a board in order to get some shingles on right, ignoring vanity and gravity, thrills me more than any leaping pair of male thighs on MTV possibly can. After all, when Norm is done, someone has their windows on straight and plumb; when MTV is done all that's left is sweaty spandex.

Julia Child was my first hero, though. I could watch reruns of her gaily dismembering a chicken over and over again. I will never cook a pot of tripe unless I am forced to by starvation, but I'll watch Julia do it: gluing the piece of pastry over the hole in the baking jar to seal in the aromas.

It isn't the tripe I'm watching, it's Child, who loves what she does and loves explaining what she does. She is parodied by comedians quite often because of her subject matter and her rather ungainly person and easily mocked voice, but they always miss the point. The point isn't that she's tall and plain and near-sighted and sort of hoots when she talks (they also portray her as fat, which she isn't), the point is that she loves food, she loves cooking it in a particular way, and she loves showing other people how to do it. She's **passionate**. She's not a snob. She teaches how to do peasant dishes much more often than she teaches how to do *haute cuisine*. She shows the audience the ugliest fish imaginable and treats it with respect and affection. It has given its life for her and she's going to make sure it isn't wasted. Using her own body as illustration, she points out which joints from the steer are best and why. She makes little jokes and ironic sallies as she cooks, strewing flour about the place and squinting at the prompter without her glasses to see how much time is left. She rends dead lobsters with her bare hands, and hacks into artichokes with determination and aplomb. Her deserts are usually a bit funny looking, but I don't care that she can't make perfect cream swirls and chocolate leaves. I care that she cares, that she does her best, and I love her obvious satisfaction at the end of every show, when she presents the items she has made on a nicely set table, bringing civilization out of the chaos of nature. Julia Child is my hero, and my own cooking, even in times of poverty, has been the better for it.

Hands is an Irish series that has run three or so times on The Discovery Channel, a cable TV channel that runs nature programs, documentaries and the like. I discovered it by accident and was enthralled. Someone somewhere and somehow decided to do this series on the old hand skills that are fast disappearing in Ireland and other parts of the world: shoemaking, tailoring, spinning, candle-making, the making of bridles and saddles. Each half-hour show depicts, with beautiful photography and sensible commentary, real people making real items. The shoemaker explains his trade, showing how he chooses the leather, who does what part of the operation in his shop, explaining how the old handpowered tools work, and even how they are made, what the materials are, where they come from, where they are used, and how the shoe goes together. We see a pair of shoes made from start to finish. We see the piles of hides, the linen thread, the old pots of polish and glue, and old experts and the newer journeymen (and journeywomen), and we watch their hands cut and slice, stitch, trim, nail and glue, pull, fit, tug, polish and produce a pair of shoes that will last for a long, long time, and cause no one who made them even a second of embarrassment.

I watch an old man make a violin, and old woman explain why she's pouring kerosene on wool before she spins it, and he talks about his youth in the shipping industry and she remembers how she knitted stockings and sweaters for her husband and eight children for forty years.

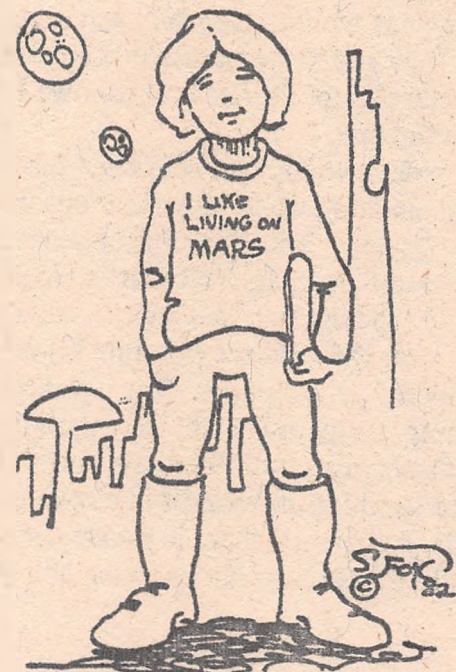
I watch chandlers hand-dipping wax for the candles for the churches, and hear them comment that most people can't afford the beeswax ones much any more. I watch a tailor whip-stitch a lapel into submission and mark across hand-woven tweed with a stubby piece of chalk so he can cut the line later when he gets to that bit. I watched in fascination as he measured his client and guided his choice of material so that the cloth was suited to the coat, as it were.

Part of me keeps saying, oh well, these modern days, but the beauty of it makes me proud, somehow, and makes me want to attack

my next project, whatever it is, with all the attention and skill I can offer it.

So that's why I love to watch other people work. I wish there was more stuff on TV like those programs. I want to know how the world works. I want to know about the auto workers in Buenos Aires, and the wine makers in Italy, the clerks and bookbinders of India, the dancers in Sri Lanka, the farmers in Britain and the women who sweep the streets in Russia. I want to know more about the people in China, Africa, Pakistan and Kansas, and what they eat, how they make their living, how they raise their kids.

It beats knowing if Cindy will finally get Jeff to raise the ancient voodoo curse he cursed her with when he gave her Margy's underwear by accident because Vince had amnesia and couldn't get to the hospital on time to see Lorina give birth to a two-headed calf, thus revealing the truth about old Mr. Sims and the new nurse in the urgent care ward and their illegitimate son who is secretly an artist who sculpts gladiolas in butter and sells them to keep his stepmother in the style to which she is not accustomed and who is really his grandmother except that she walked out on his grandfather years ago who had remarried and didn't know anything about the curse. Or the gladiolas. But they never **show** him making the gladiolas. If they did, I might watch.



SEVERAL DAYS IN MAY

from SGLODION #1

By Dave Langford

20 May 1989: Hazel and I are brooding on Mexican. Nottingham is terra incognita ("I bet," I said, "there'll be a Maid Marian Industrial Estate."). Shall we madly hire a car which will lie around being expensively unused for the actual con, or try the rail route already deplored to me by impartial committee man Greg Pickersgill? At once the phone rings and Hazel's father asks if we would care to accept a scrofulous, cast-off family vehicle to save the "waste" of having it scrapped. Plot turns like this would cause complaints in fiction.

With the remorselessness of Greek tragedy, Hazel's brother delivers the car and plunges us straight into horror with the information that someone has nicked the tax disc. Vast penalties loom. Spurred by fear, I suggest a ludicrous implausibility: could it have fallen off the windscreen and into the air vent? To universal scoffing we do things with probes and forceps. The magic piece of paper is in the air vent...but if this happens within seconds of acquiring the thing, what ghastly sequence of Langford Vehicular Horror Stories is to follow? I may have to do a fanzine.

Meanwhile, why does everyone fall around laughing when told about this car?

21 May: Tell Chris Priest about car. He falls around laughing. Tell Martin Hoare. He cheerily predicts that "my style of driving" will turn it over the moment I venture beyond 40 mph. Tell my father, who asks, "The usual rusting deathtrap, I suppose?" No, I say proudly, I am told it has a rustproof fiberglass body. He falls around laughing and asks if I've counted the wheels. Apparently there is a widespread theory that all 1976 Reliant Kittens have only three. I

admit it's a naff name, but after double-checking I definitely make the wheel count four.

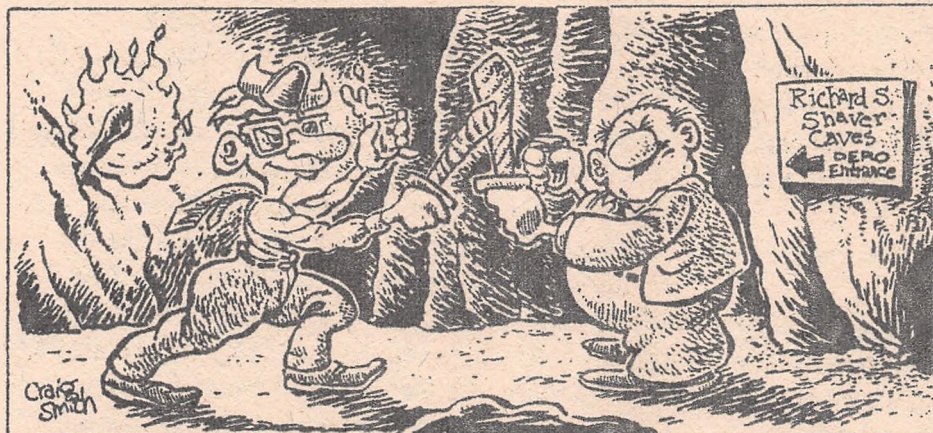
22 May: Paul "John Grant" Barnett is visiting for varied reasons, and after Sunday night is luckily too hungover to fall around laughing. The car lies idle while we revise our *Guts!* for its lucky new publisher (straws will be drawn at Mexican). This is tricky work, since all Paul's chapters are on *this* sort of disk and all mine are on *that* sort. Luckily I've written this wonderful transfer program which very nearly works, apart from throwing in an extra space at every pagebreak. This is easily solved by converting all pairs of spaces in the text. I fail to notice that thanks to a peculiarity of the WordPerfect word processor, the process also converts all dashes to single spaces. After a long day's revisionism the MS is left printing out: of course the ribbon fades to pale grey before we reach the pub, the paper jams at about our third round, and we reel home to find the last 60 pages mockingly printed on a single line. And, oops, I've run out of ribbons....

23 May: "The bearer of this scroll, namely, David Langford, is summoned to attend the quest of a lifetime. Your adventure begins at 11 am prompt, outside Chislehurst (Kent) Railway Station!" Oh dear. Today is Paul's launch party for his other co-written efforts, *Joe Dever's Legends of Lone Wolf*, being spinoffs from nothing less than Fighting Fantasy Gamebooks. The promoters wish to celebrate this in cavernous gloom, amid the savage clash and parry of rubber swords...and I, yes, unimportant Langford, have been chosen to accompany Paul on his quest for publicity.

Our adventure begins much earlier than 11 am. All the best epics involve grueling journeys through pitiless conditions; the London Transport

strike forces us into major street credibility via a long stagger from Paddington to Charing Cross during the heatwave. "They wouldn't believe it, us two crossing London on soft drinks." I muse. Paul waves a bottle and cries, "Perrier louts." Shrivelled and sweat drenched, we finally attain the Chislehurst Caves, and it all goes ape.

"You." I am told, "are Sir Conrad, a knight who prefers the banqueting hall to the battlefield." This sounds like journalistic typecasting. I beg to be something more suited to my critical image, like Langford Hackrender, barbarian scourge of the pulpsmiths, but this is not permitted. Shepherded by persons in arcane robes or knitted chainmail, a band of literati and media hacks bears hurricane lamps nervously into the tunnels.



The subterranean journey is of course punctuated by loud encounters which are doubtless thrillingly choreographed were it possible to see anything. Magical types fire off mystic cap-pistols, and there is a disquieting move towards audience participation. I enjoy the sadistic spectacle of a Radio Midlands chap being stripped of his symbiotic tape recorder and thrust whimpering into the darkness to hit things with a padded stick.

Our quest's goal is a dank, lamplit cavern where the party is plied with such delights as "swamp viper" (which I discover too late is cold smoked eel...backbone, skin and all). More welcome but no less dangerous is the "Laumspur cocktail" promised in the invitation: after finding this to consist of legendary tequila and alchemic vodka with just a smidgen of herbal cranberry

juice. I nervously switch to plonk. As the booze flows copiously, several guests grow very thoughtful about warnings that (a) no one should stray out of sight for fear of being lost in 22 chilly miles of caves, while (b) there are no toilets down here. Let us cast a diplomatic veil over the ensuing scenes.

"God, this is so naff," says a Real Journalist who does not appear to be taking any notes.

More role-playing fun lies in store! The now sodden visitors are invited to win a grand prize by solving riddles which costumed characters will pose on request. ("Who is the General with a fondness for crushed velvet?" Er, Haig?) Though boozily acquiescent, I fail to get

the hang of this: approaching a hideously made-up dwarf wielding an inflatable axe, I try a tentative "Excuse me, good sir," and at once she takes huge offence.

Egged on by evil Paul, I have another go, this time selecting a fellow in a plethora of straps and studs capped by a nova-burst of bleached hair. "Hello, costumed person, tell

me your riddle."

"I'm not in a costume, you bastard," says Wayne, famous editor of *GM* magazine.

Paul and Joe Dever are dragged piteously off to sign 1,000 copies of these Beaver-published "Lone Wolf" novels ("Look," says the inevitable someone, "an open Beaver." Kindly hands prevent his escalation to a split Beaver). I locate a native guide and head back towards the sun, falling over from time to time....

Pick up printer ribbons in Tottenham Court Road, as I discover to my surprise next morning.

24 May: What? Who? How? Where? When? After a groan-laden day of the software business ("I've just seen your car," says Chris Priest, and falls around laughing) I reprint *Guts!*, all of it, and subsequently notice those missing

dashes. Far overhead, Concorde passengers nervously complain about the screams.

25 May: Re-edit and re-reprint *Guts!* Rebellious thought that all this toil and pain wouldn't be so bad if it were actually a good novel.

26 May: Pleasant drive to Mexican: that is, until the tyre explodes. With herculean efforts we bang and ricochet into a lay-by. "Fear not," I tell Hazel, "there is a spare, we are well provided, your father left the car all stocked with jacks and things." Having jacked up the Kitten with strange ease (aren't estate cars supposed to weigh more than this?), I find Hazel's father sets great store by his spanner, and has kept it. A trek to a nearby tea-van and the purchase of many cups results in the grudging loan of a genuine wheel-nut spanner. It is the wrong size. Keith and Wendy Freeman sail past and, seeing the sybaritic mugs of tea, do not rush to our aid. At risk of tannin poisoning, I set about further ingratiation with a view to the teaman's adjustable wrench....

This sort of thing never happens with hired cars. I wonder why.

Mexicon: As Jorge Luis Borges inexplicably failed to write: "One of the churches of Tlön maintains Platonically that such and such a fizzy beer, such and such a greenish-yellow colour at breakfast time, such and such a programme stream, make up the only reality there is. All men, in the climactic instant of the real beer running out, are the same man. All conventions are the same convention." Mexican is, as expected, fun, and as expected it soon blurs...aided by the surreal directions for reaching the main hall from the bar (which is on the same floor) by going up these stairs and through this labyrinth and along echoing corridors and round a bit and down another staircase **except** when the restaurant is closed it's open as a short cut **but** wrong use of this route will incur instant terminal reprimand....

Bits I remember: Greg Pickersgill telling the opening-ceremony audience why I'm not on any panels. ("Because you're a deaf cretin, Langford.") Avedon Carol shouting for 48

minutes at a weeping Harry Bond just now convicted of Wrong Thoughts. ("This is a learning experience for him," mumbles D. West. "It would be wrong to intervene.") Algis Budrys writhing under the lash of Judith Hanna's opinions on Scientology (all her facts carefully credited to me). Three superlatively enlightened editors expressing cautious interest in *Guts!* before even being bought many drinks. Sneaking away for a quiet Tandoori with Terry and Lyn Pratchett only to find three quarters of Mexican derisively crammed into our chosen restaurant. Alex Stewart showing off the cover of his fabled "sex in space" anthology, something other than the car at which fans can fall around laughing. And the discovery, almost exactly as predicted, of roads repellently named for Maid Marian, Friar Tuck, etc.

Bits I missed: Greg Pickersgill telling Rob Hansen the alleged error of his ways. ("I don't want to see you at any more conventions!") Katie McAulay -- no more Hoare, please -- scorning Paul McAuley as one of those pathetic Irish persons who can't even spell their own names. (Paul is considered by Chris Atkinson and Abi Frost as a potential toy-boy, but on closer examination gets rejected.) Hazel's explorations of Nottingham and forming of the conclusion that this is the best ever convention city for people who don't like conventions. ("But you haven't been to New Orleans," interposes T. Pratchett.)

Bad moments: Harry Bond saying, "I've just been looking on the fanzine pile and found a copy of your *Cloud Chamber* 1 dated 1976!" (Avedon's point of view instantly seems more reasonable.) Total inability to wedge answers to the Sunday-paper detective quiz into the femtosecond between Roz Kaveny reading out and answering each question. Virtuous attempt to survive Monday morning on foul low-alcohol drinks. Under the withering gaze of the rudest car-park attendant known to exobiology, the Kitten loudly refuses to start.

Much later: "This is the smallest car I've ever been in!" says effusive Moshe Feder, but there is no room in the back seat for him to fall around laughing.

PARADISE

By Dick Lynch

I remember the day well. It was a warm late-summer day in 1980. I had recently taken an engineering position with a large, government-owned utility company (the Tennessee Valley Authority), and this was my first trip to the coal fields of western Kentucky. I had hopped a ride with a fellow worker, and after a long drive we had stopped at this little greasy spoon diner for lunch just outside the coal-fired electrical generating plant where we were scheduled to be that afternoon. I was still pretty green to my new job at that point; before TVA I had worked as a process development engineer in a research laboratory, where the biggest concerns were keeping whatever hazardous chemicals you were working with inside the fume hood, and making sure your monthly progress reports got to the secretary on time. Not here, though. I had always wanted a job that put me out in the field a little more, doing something a little more interesting and with a little more practical applications than developing chemical processes that nobody seemed interested in. Well, I had gotten my wish.

The little car we'd requisitioned from the TVA motor pool had been one of those no-frills Pintos that Ford had made in the last year they were built. With hard hats, overnight bags, and equipment we were bringing to the plant, it was a tight squeeze to fit just the two of us in there. It kind of reminded me of the limerick about the Young Man from Boston/ Who bought himself an Austin; the car was a little bigger than that, but not much. The car was even more no-frills than most, because it lacked basic human necessities like air-conditioning and a radio. The lack of air conditioning we managed to cope with. Having no radio, though, presented an inconvenience we couldn't overcome; even conversation tends to peter out during a long, four-hour drive. There was one other thing a radio could have provided us -- the news. Lots can happen in a four-hour

stretch when you're effectively cut off from humanity. In this particular four-hour stretch, something **did** happen that had we known about it, we probably would have turned the car around and headed directly back to Chattanooga. Because there are some things in the world you just don't want to mess around with, and one of those things is a coal miner's strike.

The United Mine Workers in recent years seems to be losing some of the clout it once had. Coal prices have been on the decline worldwide for several years; mines have closed or curtailed their work forces, and miners are moving on to different, less backbreaking, and safer professions. They're no longer such a feisty lot, either; it takes a lot more nowadays to enrage them as a group where organized action will take place. One of the things that will set them off, though, is when a utility brings in coal produced by non-union mines. TVA had done just that, and now there I was, right in the middle of a wildcat strike that was just starting to get ugly. The little roadside diner was called the Red Rooster; turned out that it was UMW central, as far as this little disturbance was concerned. Coal miners are usually depicted as big, dumb, hulking brutes; these guys looked to be no exception. I was in favor of leaving right then and there, but Bill, the fellow engineer I was travelling with, insisted that he was hungry, and By God, he was going to have something to eat. We had just placed an order for hamburgers, which looked to be the least disgusting thing on the menu, when Bill saw two guys near the doorway, reading what a third guy had just tacked up on a bulletin board. I'll say one thing for Bill -- cats have nothing on him in the curiosity department. So before I could grab him to pull him back down in his chair, he grabbed **me** by the arm and as he was pulling me over toward the bulletin board said, "C'mon, Dick, let's go see what's going on."

With a great sense of dread I followed him, if only to be a little closer to the door. Bill, though, knew no fear. The object of interest on the bulletin board turned out to be some newspaper clipping that was sympathetic to the UMW, which had previously lodged complaints about importing coal from non-union mines into an area where union miners were being laid off. There was a big placard, in fact, right next to the clipping that read "This Is a Union County". As Bill read the clipping, he started chuckling to himself, undoubtedly about how unbiased local reporters and editors had become lately. He didn't seem to realize that all the while, his antics were starting to draw the attention of some of the miners who heretofore had been pretty much minding their own business. Finally, two of the bigger fellows seated not too far away put down whatever delicacies they were eating, looked at each other, looked at us, then started easing their chairs back from their table a bit, as if they were getting ready to get up, come over, and check us out to see just what was so funny. It was obviously time to take some drastic action, so I turned and gave them what I hoped was my broadest, friendliest smile while talking out of the side of my mouth: "Okay, Bill, let's get ou-u-u-ta he-e-e-re!"

It was very soon after that we were back in the Millennium Pinto and headed for the plant. Bill grouched a little about not being able to eat his lunch, but didn't have an answer when I pointed out that two big guys had almost had us for lunch. As we approached the plant, signs of labor unrest were more obvious -- groups of people, some carrying "On Strike" placards hanging around the plant entrance highway, a state police car or two watching the situation, and a big coal-haul truck by the side of the highway without a windshield (the cop said it had been shot out). Somewhere, about halfway down the plant entrance highway, we decided we didn't really need to stay overnight in the area, after all, so we just dropped off the equipment we had brought with us, turned around, and headed for home. It wasn't until we had gotten all the way to the county line that Bill

laughed, turned to me and said, "Well, Dick, you've just been to Paradise."

And you know, we never **did** get anything to eat that afternoon.

But wait! There's more....

I had originally intended to end this article here, but I find that I can't yet. I've lost count, but after that first trip to the Paradise Power Plant, I must have returned there maybe a hundred times more. And each time I returned, I found out there was something new and interesting about the place I'd previously missed. There's lots more to tell about it. For instance, there's how it got its name....

Old-timers at the plant told me that once, maybe thirty or forty years ago, this part of Kentucky was indeed a wonderful place, with hills and valleys, beautiful forests everywhere, and the Green River as a source of water and transportation. It was off the beaten path, and relatively undisturbed. Right on the Green River there was a town named Paradise, that was settled by the deliberate, slow-talking kind of people that still live in that neck of the woods. There's still enough wilderness around there that I can imagine what it must have been like; the original settlers must have thought they'd found their equivalent of the Promised Land. Then, back when the nation was in a period where new energy reserves were needed for the war effort and ensuing population explosion afterwards, some mining geologists from the Peabody Coal Company discovered there were large coal reserves in that part of the state. So the coal company moved in and bought up all the land, then moved everybody out, razed the town, and strip mined the land for coal. A songwriter named John Prine even wrote a song about it:

"And the coal company came with
the world's largest shovel;
And they tortured the timber and
stripped all the land.
Well, they dug for their coal till
the land was forsaken;
Then they wrote it all down as the

progress of man.
And daddy, won't you take me back to
Muhlenberg County;
Down by the Green River where
Paradise lay.
Well, I'm sorry, my son, but
you're too late in asking;
Mister Peabody's coal train
has hauled it away."

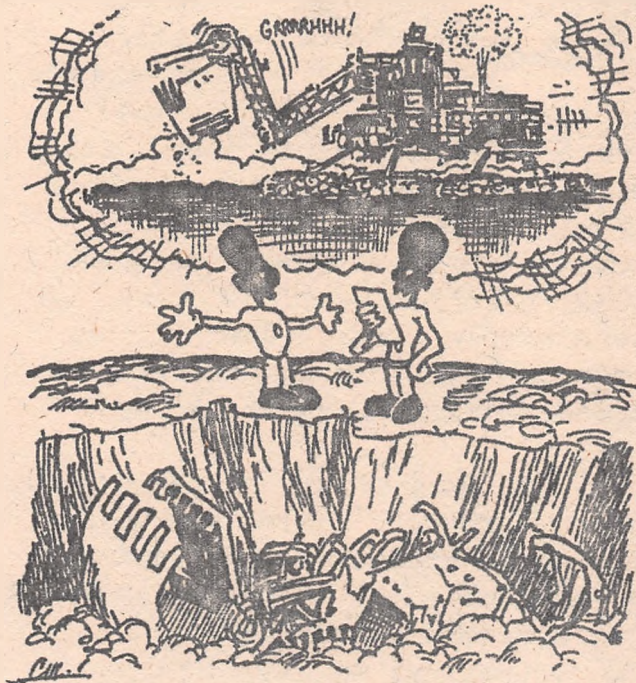
Once, I was in the right place at the right time to be invited to visit the world's largest shovel referred to above. It was used to remove the 170-or-so feet of what is euphemistically called "overburden" so that the eight foot thick seam of coal could be mined. The result was one of the largest holes in the ground I've ever seen. It was so large, in fact, that the first time I went to the mine, I didn't grasp the scale of the place until I saw a tiny section of rock at the lip of the mine fall lazily in slow motion to the bottom. Only it wasn't *really* in slow motion; the depth of the mine and the distance of the fall made it seem so. Once the true perspective snapped in, I could see the little toy vehicles down on the floor of the mine were actually bulldozers the size of a bus. The shovel itself had to be one of the mechanized

wonders of the world; it was taller than a 20-story building, as wide as an eight-lane highway, and could remove 115 cubic yards in one scoop. One gulp from that monster, and your whole front yard is gone. Another and your house disappears, too. When I got inside, I was astonished to find that it was controlled by a single operator, located in a cupola about five stories up. When we got to the "roof" of the cab, at the ten-story level, it was like being on a ship in a storm from the constant back-and-forth motion of the shovel while it continued to remove dirt and rock. I was told that if I had been crazy enough to climb all the way out to the end of the shovel boom, I would have experienced about one-and-a-half gravity centrifugal force as the boom swung around.

It was the mightiest machine; the largest self-powered mobile land machine ever built. And it doesn't exist any more. About three years ago, the strip mine finally ran out of usable coal supply, after some 30 years of production. The big shovel was such a dinosaur that it was cost prohibitive to move it to another mine. So they just salvaged all the electrical parts that were of any value, lowered the big boom one last time, and covered the whole thing over when they filled in the pit. I can imagine that some far-future paleontologist will think that metal monsters once roamed the earth, when the metal bones of this behemoth are uncovered again someday.

There was also an underground coal mine in addition to the strip mine in the vicinity around Paradise; the place is *very* rich with coal. And, with some trepidation, I and a couple of co-workers took a trip down there. I don't think I could ever be a miner. I wasn't particularly scared up on top of the big shovel; just awe-struck from its immense scale. Down underground, I couldn't help wonder if that particular section of rock ceiling was just about ready to come down, right on top of me. And the miners seemed to take particular pains to point out parts of the ceiling where there had been rock falls. I guess they found it an instant cure for visitor cockiness.

The trip down there was pretty eventful in itself. I guess I had expected something safe and



boring like an elevator, or at least a walkway. Instead, we got the tram ride from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. I kid you not; there were enough twists and turns, low ceilings, and stomach-churning drops to put any amusement park to shame; they should have sold tickets for that thing. When we got down there, we found that the depth of the coal seam being mined was only five feet. This meant that six-foot people like me had to adopt a new way of walking around -- like Groucho Marx in *Duck Soup*, we grasped our hands behind our back, bent over forward slightly with our chins jutting out, and did a sort-of bent-knee waddle. The only things missing were bushy eyebrows, horned-rimmed glasses, and cigars. Dave, one of my co-workers, later asked me if he looked as foolish down there as I did to him.

And speaking of foolish, it always seemed that whenever something bizarre or surreal happened while I was at Paradise, Dave, Bill, or Dave and Bill were somehow also involved. Like the time we were snowed in there one weekend. Dave was driving around a rental front-wheel drive Toyota, and was surprised at how easily it got through even the deep, packed snow that snowplows throw in front of driveways. The car was making it look so easy that Dave was losing all fear of getting stuck. So of course, we did.

Bill was staying at a place a few miles from our hotel, and we were to meet him for dinner, since his place had a kitchenette and ours didn't. By the time we reached the parking area in front of Bill's motel room, Dave was of the impression that there was **nothing** this car wouldn't do. I guess we should have been suspicious of the lack of tire tracks in the white snowy expanse of the parking lot, but we weren't, and Dave blithely pulled the car straight in. Or tried to, that is. We got within about 15 feet of what looked to be the curb when the car suddenly

sunk about six inches, followed by a noisy crunching sound. And it wouldn't go any farther. When we got out, we discovered that there was at least one thing that car couldn't do -- it couldn't swim. The parking area turned out to have such poor drainage (Bill had forgotten to tell us) that it wasn't unusual for several inches of water to accumulate. Dave's car had just broken through the icy crust under the snow, and had sunk down to where its bottom was flush against the ice. We had to wade through five inch-deep icy slush to make it to shore.

Getting the car free was just as exciting. We wanted to call for a tow-truck right then and there, but Dave wanted to give it one good try to free it by muscle-power before we gave it up. So,

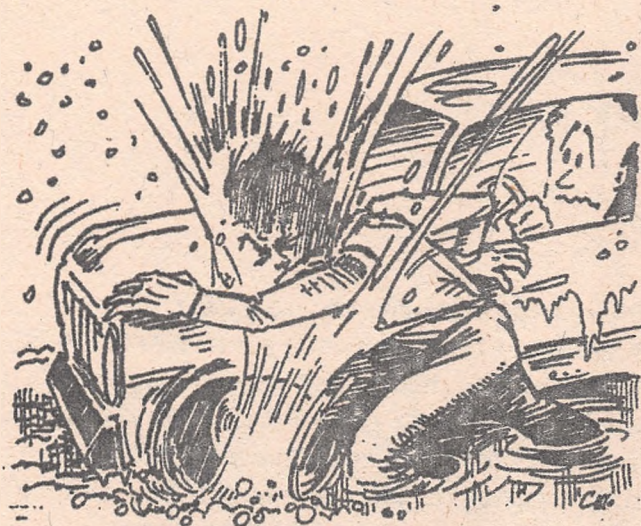
with much apprehension and fortified with three new pairs of tall rubber boots, we waded out to the car to give it our best shot.

Bill claimed the driver's spot, since he had played no active



part in getting us into this mess. Dave and I stationed ourselves at the front of the car at each headlamp; we would do our best to push the car out, while Bill kept a steady foot on the accelerator with the car in reverse gear. It was probably one of the most hopeless plans we had ever come up with, seeing as how the car was completely bottomed out; yet it just might have worked except for one thing we didn't know about.

After being immersed in icy water in sub-freezing temperature for an hour or so, the right front wheel -- the one I was stationed in front of -- was frozen solid. All the engine's torque was going to the other front wheel, where Dave was. The result was predictable: when Dave gave Bill



the signal to press down on the accelerator e-e-easy now, Bill naturally stood on it with both feet. And as Dave bent his shoulder to the front of the car in one last valiant attempt to push it free, all the torque applied to the one free drive wheel spun it so fast that it shot a geyser of ice-cold water twenty feet in the air.

And Dave, poor Dave, was standing right in the middle of it. It was quite a while before he was in a good humor again.

But wait! There's still more....

After eight years of working in the area, the sights and sounds of the place don't want to go away very quickly. A co-worker once told me as we passed the county line on the way home that one of the the greatest sights in the world was seeing the Muhlenberg County sign in your car's rear-view mirror; the dirt and filth from coal-mining and the obvious signs of poverty in the area just tended to wear you down after a while. Even poverty itself seemed to fit the paradoxical nature of the area; whole families lived in shacks so run-down and decrepit you'd feel guilty about keeping livestock in them, yet they would have a satellite dish antenna in their yard and a bright

new four-by-four pickup truck in the driveway. There were the trips to the little beer and liquor package stores just across the county line (Muhlenberg County was dry) -- on one of them we had an Indian visitor with us; when we ran into what looked to be a group of backwoods redneck woodsmen at a beer store I had a terrible sinking feeling that one of them would say something about the visitor that would lead to a complex series of events that could only end with someone beating the crap out of me (luckily, they didn't). There was the Noah's Ark of hardware stores in a nearby village, that had in its cluttered aisles just two of practically everything you might need. There was a parade of all sorts of memorable characters, places, and events. In fact, one reason why this article has been kicking around inside me for about five years is that I couldn't decide what things were memorable enough to write about.

Like the Polish visitor we had not long after the Solidarity union had been outlawed.... He was here to learn about new advances in coal technology; I hosted him for a day in Kentucky, then drove him back to the TVA Office of Power headquarters in Chattanooga. He was outspoken about his concerns for his family and friends, some of which were union supporters, but he was still interested in the rolling hills of the countryside that was passing by in front of him.

Not far from the plant, we passed through the one remaining grove of trees that somehow had escaped the strip mining that passed through years before. It was where part of the town once stood. I explained to him that here it was still possible to see wild hawks hunting rodents, and even catch an occasional glimpse of a deer. He turned to me and asked, "What is this place called?"

And I just smiled, and said, "Here? This is Paradise."

FOOD IN REAL LIFE

By Judith Hanna

See *The Guardian* Food page: get annoyed with *The Guardian* Food page. (And, for that matter, with *The Guardian* Style page with its snazzy little £200 jackets). Four frightfully clever things to do with a handful of truffles or fresh oysters, whipped up in the odd spare three or four hours before a clever little supper party. No doubt there is someone out there whose local vegetable counter stocks truffles in season, who is perfectly happy to take out a second mortgage to stock up on oysters, and who has a whole day to spend on throwing together a relaxed yet *recherche* menu for the delectation of their social circle. And, let us not forget, has laid in exactly the right wines to complement the gastronomic sensations. I hope, if I ever meet them, they will invite me to dinner.

But I doubt they are *Guardian* readers, who are well known to be earnest about ideological, as well as ecological, correctness. Does *The Guardian* not realise that all its readers are seriously concerned about nutrition, compassion in world farming, health foods, sustainable development, radical post-feminist feminism, and the scruffy Posy Simmonds lifestyle? Surely no *Guardian* reader would touch with a barge-pole that sort of hopelessly indulgent bourgeois consumerist fantasy.

Contrast real life....

Arrive home from normal working day of expounding to hysterical phones the intricacies of London road and public transport congestion, the plethora of major capital development proposals being mooted in separate discussions without reference to each other, and the need for overall strategic planning; the potential of Channel Tunnel rail services for regional economic development and for removing 4,000 lorries a day from South East roads; the contribution of motor vehicle exhausts to the greenhouse effect (some

20% of man-made greenhouse gases); the economic and environmental benefits of the town centre "traffic-calming" and pedestrianisation initiatives long since proven in Europe; and that Transport 2,000 is an environmental pressure group focusing on national transport policy, not a furniture removal firm. Also the geriatric photocopier has had its fifth nervous breakdown this week. Stand in packed carriage with nose in large male armpit from Euston to Victoria where the train terminates. Depressing traffic-packed walk from Victoria instead of scenic walk from Pimlico station.

As we approach our front door, are we flipping through the recipe cards of our mind, eagerly anticipating the opportunity to blend nutrition, taste and visual appeal into a tempting morsel or two? We are not.

We pick up the mail from the doorstep: two mail order catalogues, a Special Once-in-a-Lifetime Offer for "yes, you, Mr. Hanna", and a glossy real estate magazine offering modest studio apartments in this area for a mere quarter million. We trudge up the stairs, drop the mail in the wastepaper basket, and collapse into our wonky blue easy chair.

Dear arrives home, an energetic eruption, and falls into his word-processor. Dear is not normal. Contemplating all that energy is even more exhausting. Dear interrupts himself to nag. "What are your bag and jacket doing there?" he asks. They are quite obviously just lying where we dropped them as we collapsed. But Dear does not accept entropy. "What are your things doing there?" he repeats.

"They prefer the view out here," you explain, "they get bored in that dark cupboard." Dear is unsympathetic.

"Put them away," he nags. "Put away! Tidy up! Put away!"

You have come to realise that it is less exhausting to struggle out of the comfy chair and put them away than to cower under the torrent of nagging which abolishes all chance of peace and quiet. Once you have managed to muster the energy to struggle to your feet and fling the things in the dark cupboard, you might as well go down to the kitchen and fix something to eat. But you do not feel up to anything amounting to actual cooking.

Down in the kitchen, there is indeed food. It is all a) boring, b) too much trouble, or c) both. In the fridge are: carrots (c), brussels sprouts (c), aubergine (b), mince (b) and limp celery (a). Chops or steak you could just bung under the grill, but you used them up and the lettuce yesterday. There is some cheese. If the cute little freezer compartment had room for more than just two iceblock trays and a packet of frozen peas, you could lay in frozen meals, but it hasn't so you can't. The row of jars along the top of the cupboards contains a range of dried beans, pasta and Chinese dried things (all b). In the store cupboard are some cardboard packets of health food mixes (all c) and tins of soup. It is all food, you suppose, but there is nothing you want to eat.

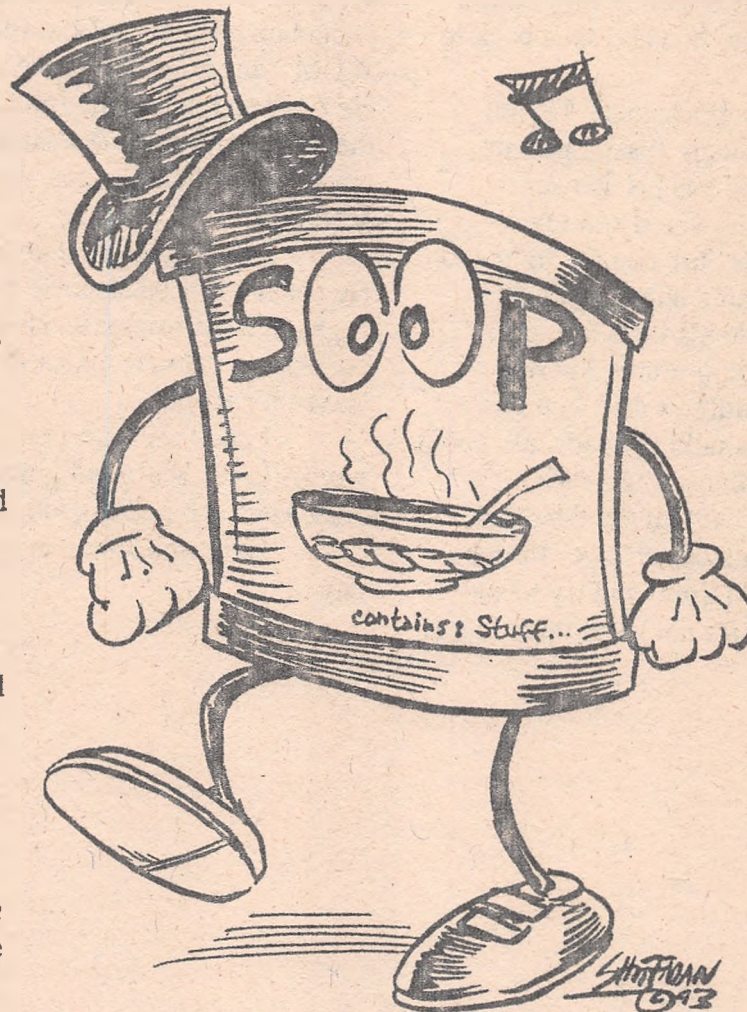
The *Guardian* Food page is no more help than your array

of nineteen different recipe books (Indian, Chinese, Caribbean, Greek, Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, vegetarian...) or than your three recipe clippings files ("meat meals", "vege meals", "etceteras"). They all assume you will put at least some, if not a lot of, time and effort into processing proper ingredients beyond mere edibility. Merely thinking of it makes you feel oppressed by domesticity.

You settle for the normal boring but quick'n'easy end of week menu of heating up tin of soup (add that element of surprise by selecting can at random) with toasted cheese. You eat. Dear does the washing up. You fall into your comfy chair again.

Now that eating is out of the way, you contemplate the possibilities for occupying the rest of the evening. You could read, but that

would mean turning your brain on. Your brain votes against this. It could just about manage flipping through the frivolous bits of *New Scientist*, but Dear is reading *New Scientist*. There is your stock of Georgette Heyers and nice quiet murders, laid in from the local Oxfam shop just for evenings like this. But during other evenings like this you have read all the Georgette Heyers already, and that narcotic has worn out its charm. Besides, the Georgette Heyers and nice quiet murders are filed in the other room. Your legs vote against anything that involves getting up.



This also rules out your knitting which is on the other side of the room. And it rules out putting on a record as too much trouble. You sink back exhausted. You realise that owning a TV with a remote control device giving effortless access to hours of soap opera could fill this gaping hole in your lifestyle. In its absence, the only thing left to do is fall asleep. Which is about all you feel up to.

Sometime later you muster enough energy to put yourself to bed.

Sometime later the alarm rings. Do you leap up, crying in glad tones "What-ho for another action-packed exciting day!". You do not. Not even Dear is that abnormal.

GETTING UP THE JOSEPH NICHOLAS WAY

6.45am: Joseph's alarm clock rings. He switches it off and gets out of bed to turn on the hot water. He gets back into bed and falls back to sleep.

7.15am: My alarm clock rings. I grunt, thump it and fall back to sleep. Joseph gets up, turns on the fan heater, and has his shower.

7.27am: Freshly-showered and towel-wrapped Joseph bounds in, turns on the light and the radio, blow-dries his hair, shaves and gets dressed. I huddle under the blankets trying to ignore Radio 4 "Today" programme Sports Round-up. The News Headlines drift in one ear and out the other. Various talking heads talk about things. More News Headlines. Then "What the Papers Say" drifts in one ear and out the other.

7.47am: "Are you awake?" asks Joseph. "Are you in there, dear?" I grunt and try to stay asleep. I would much prefer not to be there, but it

is hard to stay submerged in oblivion with Dear shaking me and hauling the nice warm blankets off. He smiles a cute smile. "Hmmpf," I grunt. "I do not like this getting up game. Take it away." He is not only unsympathetic, but repellently cheerful. He goes downstairs to make breakfast. I decide I had better trail into the shower and immerse myself in hot water and steam.

7.58am: "Fertig!" shouts Joseph. This is German for "Ready", and means he has made breakfast. I turn off the nice warm shower, pull on some clothes, and go down to breakfast. Joseph is immersed in *The Guardian* front page. "Give me my paper," I demand. He keeps the front and back pages, and gives me the rest of the paper.

We eat: Boiled egg. Muesli (Holland & Barrett own brand). He eats his toast with marmalade. I decide I do not want toast. He eats my toast with marmalade. He drinks coffee, Nicaraguan instant, black, two sugars. I drink tea, WDM Tanzanian blend, weak, no milk, no sugar. He finishes reading his front and back page, clears the dishes and starts washing up. I continue reading the middle pages, the Arts and ads section, and the comics.

Joseph goes upstairs and makes the bed. He packs his briefcase. He takes my paper and packs it in his briefcase. He picks up mail to be posted. He puckers up for the ritual kiss. He leaves for work.

I pack my bag. I put on watch, jacket, woolly beret, scarf and gloves, check for tube pass, keys and hearing aid, and leave for work.

Heigh-ho...another action-packed exciting day....

THE MARLBORO MAN SCRATCHES HIS BALLS

By Algernon d'Ammassa

"I'm not black, but there are times when I sure wish I could say I wasn't white."-- Frank Zappa

- 1 -

The Marlboro Man scratches his balls, and right-wingers and conservatives everywhere shriek in horror as yet another ripple is made in their ocean of influence. Mothers faint, fathers sputter, and children's eyes are covered. But the Marlboro Man merely continues, not caring one way or another what other people think.

The white men protest through all the media. A moral outcry is raised, and ultra-white people spout complaints that this sort of thing is not for the children to witness. Parents tighten the

leashes around their kids, telling the boys that if they are ever seen scratching their balls, OFF THEY'LL COME!! After all, if we allow kids to see the Marlboro Man scratch his balls, they'll go through life scratching: boys their balls, and girls anything else...we can't even imagine! What next? It will have to be stopped immediately.

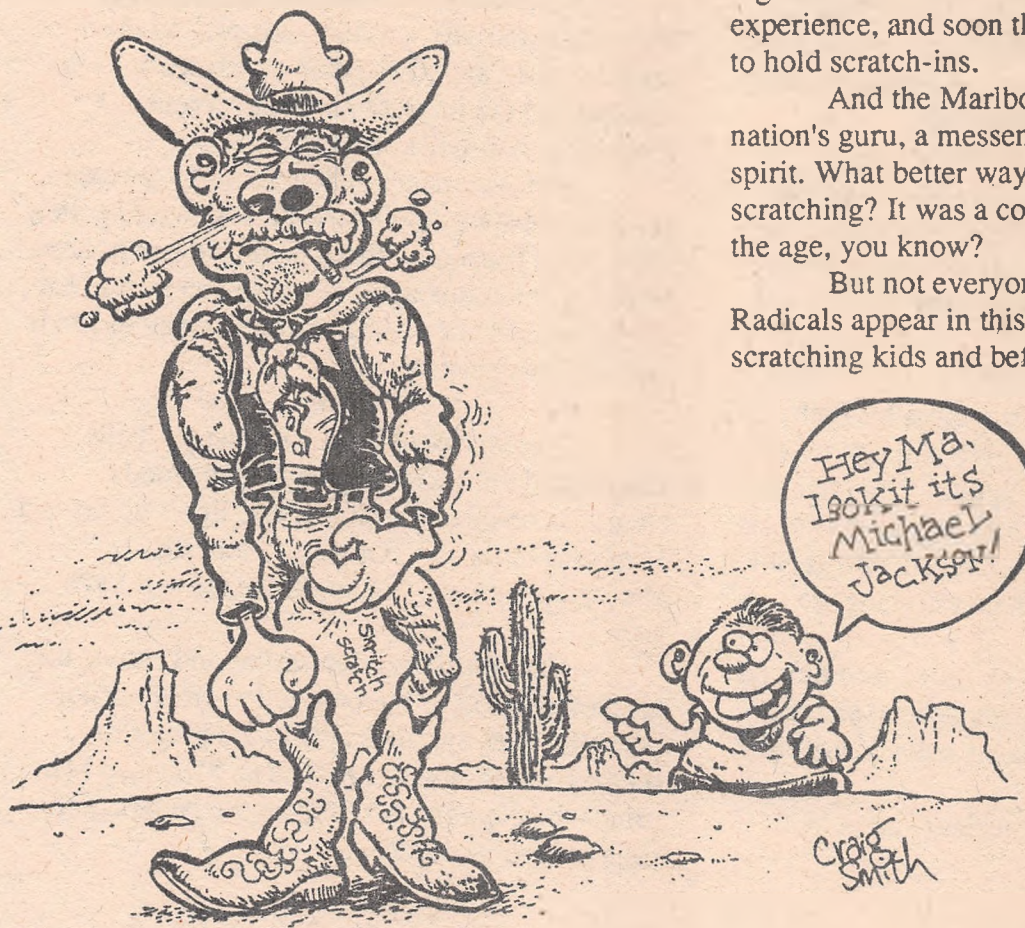
The kids decide that enough is enough. They start wearing their hair long again, and they tie-dye their shirts again, and soon the BSFM's (Ball-Scratching Freedom Movements) are all over our troubled country, particularly popular on the west coast. The children exchange messages of friendship and good will, and scratch their balls together. Children leave home to try this new experience, and soon the masses gather in group to hold scratch-ins.

And the Marlboro Man is seen as this nation's guru, a messenger of independence and spirit. What better way to express it than ball-scratching? It was a cosmic fact, man, so get with the age, you know?

But not everyone cares to be enlightened. Radicals appear in this free nation of happily ball-scratching kids and befuddled grown-ups. Some

lop off their balls to show their contempt for the whole episode.

And rumours begin to circulate that the Marlboro Man is dead. Some even say that hints to that effect can be found in the Marlboro ads. For example, you know that one where the Marlboro Man is leaning against a tree in this clearing in the woods, and the index finger on



his left hand is bent slightly? And the dirt underneath that hand is disturbed, as if it had been dug in? I think this may be a sign.

- 2 -

The Marlboro Man scratches his balls, and the caucasian intelligentsia ponder it for a long while. They can't decide if this crudity is nouveau-art or a statement via creative body movement. Perhaps a primitive variation of dance? Finally a decision is made...by scratching his balls, the Marlboro Man was making a brilliant joke. "How CAMP!" they all cry, and rush off to parties to tell their friends about it.

The Marlboro Man is invited to the Krakatoa Sushi Bar to exhibit this intellectual phenomenon for all to see and bathe in the subtle genius they were reading into it. The Marlboro Man shrugs, strolls up on stage, and begins to scratch his balls. The audience screams in ecstasy, applauding wildly, yelling for more. They leave writing outlines on their napkins for written criticisms of this daring new art form, while some ladies claim they actually achieved orgasm while the cigarette model was performing.

The Marlboro Man gets marriage proposals from ladies who are in love with him and his craft, but he breaks all of their hearts by strolling out of town. For a while, amateur ball-scratchers tour the nightclubs. They are rejected as being pretentious.

- 3 -

The Marlboro Man scratches his balls, and May Belle Jackson starts to give him a piece of her mind for being so rude in public, but her husband stops her. "Leave him be," says Thomas Jackson of Atlanta, Georgia. "When men get an itch, they get an itch, and there's nothing we can do about it."

Later, the Jacksons go home, and turn on cable-tv. On HBO is a comedy special starring Robin Williams, who grabs his balls onstage and tells jokes about them.

"Shameful and disgusting!" cries Mrs. Jackson.

"Aw, hell, May Belle...you're such an old lady!" laughs Thomas Jackson as he switches the channel.

Showtime is showing a special starring Richard Pryor, who grabs his balls and tells jokes about them. Thomas sputters and switches the channel again. Cinemax is showing a comedy special starring Eddy Murphy, who grabs his balls onstage and tells jokes about them.

"Those filthy nigras!" he explodes. "Don't they know no manners?"

- 4 -

The Marlboro Man scratches his balls, and he is flattered in the sincerest form. The Kool Camel starts scratching its balls, and dog food ads take this new trend a step further, showing dogs as they really conduct themselves in your home. Ad lines involving ball-scratching develop...for any product. Carpet cleaner, beer, even laundry detergent.

Americans, who are kept informed by their television sets, and their radios, and the papers (which are all affected by advertising) are now handed the impression that everyone is scratching their balls...aren't you??

And Americans subconsciously decide to get with the stick, and everyone is scratching their balls. With them or without them. No one notices, no one gains status by it, few are even aware that they've even started. And so another way of life is added to our busy agenda.

- 5 -

The Marlboro Man scratches his balls, yawns, and crawls into his tent. The woods chatter as he dims his lantern and lights up his last Marlboro of the day. Outside, the head photographer says, "Okay, Strike the set! Let's go!"

The Marlboro Man smiles and crawls into his sleeping bag as the production crew outside takes the trees and rocks off to the prop and scenery warehouse out back. The Marlboro Man grinds the cigarette out, douses the lantern, and rolls over to go to sleep.

IT DOESN'T FEEL LIKE WINNING

By Elise Matthesen

Dinner at Fuji-Ya had been expensive and unexceptional: afterwards we walked across the bridge to the other bank of the river. To our left was St. Anthony's Main, referred to by a friend of mine as "St. Anthony's Remains", a yuppie shopping heaven trying feebly to seem prosperous and unruffled by economic turbulence. To the right a street led along the river, past a little park, then up to join the more populated streets leading to the University campus and surroundings. A quiet walk overhung with green trees, bordered by old flour mills of crumbling brick. A good quiet place for a robbery or murder. I had only the barest flash of disbelief as he opened the car door and got out, weapon in hand.

A concert was going on down by Riverplace past the shops and cafes of St. Anthony Main. One, maybe two hundred people listened, danced, sat, milled around. None of them was close enough to see or hear us. The opening car door was the loudest sound at our end of the street. I said later that the man asked in a strangely soft voice for my purse. I am somewhat deaf and wear hearing aids; I can't hear people's voices behind me. All I know is that I turned and looked into his eyes and saw our deaths there.

We had decided to walk on the river road because it was prettier. No ugly traffic and construction. The trees were definitely pretty, true. They just stood there as he came toward us.

I hadn't seen L since January. Once upon a time we were lovers. We had been walking on the old railroad tracks set into the river road sidewalk, balancing on the rails as we talked about love and life and art and what makes any of them any good. We reached out, joined hands as we walked the rails; both of us balanced better that way. We were holding hands when the dirty brown car began to follow us. I didn't notice it as following

then, but when he got out I knew it wasn't to ask directions. He made a soft grunting sound as he picked up the crescent wrench from the dust where he had dropped it getting out of the car. It looked impossibly shiny in his hand. I could still feel the prints of L's fingers in mine, and I thought, "Of course. This is what happens sometimes." Then my legs started running. I can't hear well enough to have heard his footsteps or his breathing, but I felt him behind me.

The car was behind us and to our left. L was closer to the car than I was. She was carrying a backpack which he ignored; he started angling around her to get to me. L is a bigger woman than I am. We were both wearing skirts, our customary attire. I was carrying my big rummage-sale purse. I had good shoes on. They let me run fast.

L stood there for a second, ready to fight. The man was bigger than I am. She said later that she felt she could have taken him, but that it was a suicidally stupid thing to try. I ran very fast and very well, and I felt a big feeling coming up inside me as I saw an image of both of us lying in the roadway dust in a pile of little red and white scraps. I roared at him. I opened up my mouth and yelled everything I have never been able to say to anyone who had hurt me. I went down the list of scars and I opened up the trapdoor where I keep all of it and I pointed it at this man.

"NO!" It was the biggest no I have ever said. It was all the no and no and no I have ever had, and I pointed it at him, and I told it his form and his face, and I sent it to him, set it to follow him until he stopped. When I yelled the first time, a red and yellow flower broke open inside of me. When I yelled the second time, the world shook like a picture seen through running water or through smoke. A third one could have stopped the hands of the world-clock.

He was a man like any young man on a park basketball court, like any young black man on Nicollet Mall on Hennepin Avenue. like anyone, really. I wouldn't know him again if I saw him. He wasn't a very competent mugger; he dropped his wrench. His friend stayed in the car, dark in the shadow of the driver's side. I wonder now what they were thinking. L said she thought it was probably just a mugging, but when I saw the wrench man coming at us, I knew that he had seen us holding hands, had seen us as women with each other. I could see it in his eyes, in his hand with the shiny steel wrench; there was something extra for us there.

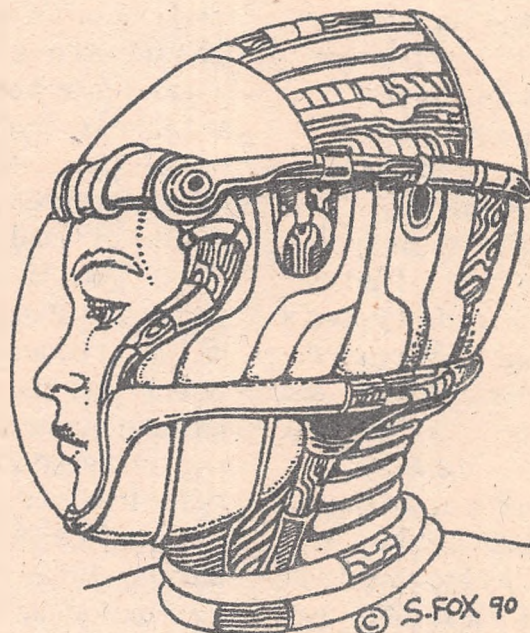
After L collected herself, spun to follow me, and made a conscious decision to start yelling, the wrench man got back into the car. They drove crookedly across the street to follow our diagonal path. We got around the corner and found an older man fixing his truck. The car came around, saw the new odds, spun around and left. The guy fixing the truck, Clarence, took us to the police station to report it. All night and all next day I couldn't get the look in the wrench man's eyes out of my mind. I kept going to the mirror,

looking into my own eyes, to make sure I was still here. Each time his face came before me I would say what I had yelled at him. "NO!" A solid word. That's what I've been doing today; yesterday was when it happened.

I was one big no yesterday. If anyone tried to swallow me up, they would have choked on the "NO!".

Someone said later that we won, that we got away. It doesn't feel like winning yet. Maybe it won't. I do have two things, though: I have the knowledge that my quick acceptance of the situation, my purposeful running, my angry yelling, my locating of allies were exactly the right thing to do. The other thing I have is my "NO!", that beautiful red and yellow flower of rage and determination and self-love. He came to steal my money and maybe my life, to hurt L, to take away our peaceful walk. He came to rob me. Instead he brought me to something I had lost and needed for most of my life. He woke up my "NO!". The flower is not in the ground where it was buried for so many years. It's out and it's up and I will not let anyone hurt me or mine.

NEVER AGAIN.



Article deleted at request of author

NOREASCON THREE: BREAKFAST WITH THE TIMEBINDERS

By Mike Glycer

Watching Noreascon's Sunday brunch unfold I thought: there may be other days like this but there won't be many, and the one we do have are to be cherished.

Isaac Asimov, an appropriate "first speaker", set the theme: "This is the fiftieth anniversary [of the first Worldcon] so this is a nostalgia brunch." Asimov attended the first one and sounded less embarrassed than proud that he had not been turned back at the door with six other Futurian rabble-rousers. Indeed, Asimov told the 1989 audience "I was the worst science fiction writer unhung." Asimov refreshed his memory of 1939 writing *The World Beyond the Hill*, a forthcoming book, that chronicles the ascendancy of Campbell (and presumably Asimov) in the golden age of *Astounding*.

With the house lights down and Asimov standing in a spotlight, the barrage of flash photography may have helped record the golden moment for some at the expense of others seeing it all. Though slow to come, an empathic order against flashes was crucial to the precious moments that followed. For the rest of the program attention moved around the room as spotlights focused on speakers at different tables, building emotional momentum as long-time pros and fans spoke about the impact of science fiction and its Worldcons on their lives.

Asimov's spotlight flicked off and a second one found Dave Kyle at a nearby table. Said Kyle, "Science fiction has not changed my life -- science fiction is my life." Kyle credited Forry Ackerman for his introduction to science fiction. As a 16-year-old Kyle sold his first sf story to Charles Hornig, who was at the moment seated at Dave's table. (Hornig's magazine folded before it saw print.) Kyle said like Asimov he was also admitted to the first Worldcon only because Sam Moskowitz didn't recognize that the

Futurians' controversial publication had been printed by Dave. When he married, Dave bragged he had 53 people on his honeymoon -- a charter flight to the first Worldcon in London.

Batty Ballantine remembered as a child reading *Dracula* late at night in the jungle of India by lantern light with jackals howling and birds making weird sounds. As an adult, she remembered the friendships she made in sf, working with the people she most admired.

Jack Williamson recalled, "In 1926 I was 18, had gotten out of a country high school with actually six years of schooling, and had no job," but in 1926 he saw Gernsback's *Amazing Stories* and can still recite its table of contents. "I read that and I was born again." With a borrowed typewriter he started writing his own sf, and next year Gernsback began buying it.

Terry Pratchett recalled that at newsstands in Britain the good magazines were on the top shelf and sf was on the bottom shelf from which he argued the shortness of British sf fans was a matter of natural selection. More seriously, Pratchett said he learned from sf that mathematics was actually interesting, which no one else was telling him. "Good old sf -- whenever I've needed you, you've always been there."

Andre Norton was wheeled from the brunch to a standing ovation. Then the spotlight picked out Kees Van Toorn, 30-ish chairman of the 1990 Worldcon in Holland. Kees invoked the name of Mario Bosnyak, who brought the Worldcon to Heidelberg, its first and only time in mainland Europe, and Kees' own first Worldcon.

Gregory Benford also went to his first convention in Germany, but 14 years earlier in 1956. Benford's father was in the Army and stationed there. Benford and his brother both had to learn a foreign language. "I had to learn English -- because I'm from Alabama." Greg's

first Worldcon was BayCon: "It's aptly been said that if you remember BayCon you weren't there." BayCon was held in the Leamington "where the rooms were so small that we were told not to complain to the hotel management but to the humane society." A professor of physics, Benford said, "It's impossible to convey what it's like to do science and write science fiction -- great freedom of movement."

Jane Yolen cast her remarks in rhyming doggerel, one a couplet expressing her wish that "A fantasy book would at last win the Hugo." Her wish was loudly applauded by everyone who has forgotten Jack Vance's Hugo for *The Last Castle*.

Forrest J. Ackerman began to recount his life in science fiction at sufficient length and with so many examples present time seemed to have lost all meaning for him, until with a gleam in his eye Forry concluded, "You can see in my fifty years of science fiction I've accomplished about as much as in a lazy afternoon for Isaac Asimov."

Mike Resnick's implied comparison between the community he and Carol found at the 1963 Worldcon and the present was like a bolt of lightning. Attendance at Discon I was 600. Rooms were \$8 apiece. The banquet was held in the afternoon because nobody could afford the evening rates, and even so the \$3 charge almost caused a riot. The most expensive piece in the art show was a cover by Frazetta that went for \$70, a price so high fans doubted it would ever be equalled. The pros wrote and performed a play for the benefit of the fans. Writers thought they could make \$7500 a year -- if Robert Silverberg ever stopped selling 30 stories a month. The huxter room sold only books and magazines. Fans who read sf outnumbered those who didn't. Resnick said that now he comes to the Worldcon mostly for business, but there is still that sense of community he found in 1963.

Japan's Takumi Shibano published the fanzine *Uchujin*, credited with the birth of Japanese fandom. He stated, "Nationality doesn't matter now. I just think of myself as a fan." In 1993 when he read H.G. Wells' *War of the Worlds* it reconstructed his view of the world. "The idea

that humanity might not be the lords of creation shocked this junior high school boy."

Hal Clement was a fan who became a science teacher and aspired to write an sf story with no science errors. He's been trying for 48 years, just like for 40 years he tried to write a chemistry test where all the students would interpret every question as he meant it.

Artist Richard Powers introduced himself tongue-in-cheek as "one of Betty Ballantine's more recent inventions." Powers styled himself a veteran of the "Rack space wars" who worked at Hearst "wielding a baseball bat" when Ian Ballantine brought him over to their team of ruffians to work with Fred Pohl "who favored a length of lead pipe."

Rather than a spotlight for Arthur C. Clarke there was a slide of his image beamed out at a large screen in front of the hall as he spoke in a recorded phone call from Sri Lanka, began: "Science fiction didn't affect my life, it created my life." Clarke spoke fondly of the genre, but didn't forget to needle Isaac Asimov.

Michael Whelan's painful shyness and self-effacement hindered his start in the genre. He would never have approached a Frazetta or a Freas for an appraisal of his work "Even though it's exactly what I needed at the time." He didn't respect the opinions of those "outside the business" while at the same time he assumed those in the business of fantasy art would be too busy, or his work would be too embarrassing. In 1974, Whelan's casual discovery of a San Diego ComiCon flyer moved him to show his work. When he came back at the end of the weekend he was amazed to find all of his work had sold -- of course, the asking price was \$15. A volunteer agented his artwork at the 1974 Worldcon. Anxiously he waited for the results and learned over the phone one painting had won Best SF -- in the professional division! He soon had his first paperback cover assignment from DAW. And it all happened in the space of a month-and-a-half.

Samuel Delany went by Greyhound to his first Worldcon in 1966, only \$36 in his pocket to get him through an entire weekend in Cleveland.

He wound up in a room for \$4.50 a night. Delany remembers 3,000 people at the con (the records show 850) emphasizing how lonely he felt among a crowd of people he didn't know and didn't know him. A fifteen-year-old who'd been to three cons took him in hand and introduced him to lots of folks. After 4 hours the kid asked Delany what he did for a living. "I write sf." The kid was delighted, "Wow -- you're a pro! And here I am showing you around the convention!" Just last year, that kid published Delany's Hugo-winning nonfiction book. (Delany didn't drop his name, but legend tells us the kid was Jerry Kaufman.)

Frederik Pohl said, "Science Fiction changed my life...it gave me a profession. The best kind. I do all the things I like, that I would do for nothing -- and people give me money for it." As Pohl waxed nostalgic about the 1939 Worldcon one began which Futurians actually got excluded from the con. Pohl claimed even he got in -- at least until Wil Sykora saw him and threw him out. Pohl claims that was no great loss. He went to the bar next door and found all the pros in there.

Emma Bull remembered as a college student she passed her time in a clinic waiting room by reading *Foundation*. Another girl asked, "Is that good? My boyfriend has been trying to get me to read it." Emma knew, "She was really asking, 'Is my boyfriend okay?'" Looking straight at Isaac Asimov Emma repeated her answer, "I allowed as how the Foundation Trilogy was pretty good." The audience gasped with laughter. The girl and her boyfriend visited Emma that very night. The boyfriend sat with Emma in front of the bookshelf comparing notes on what they'd read. The boyfriend was Will Shetterly, and borrowing a line, Emma concluded, "Reader -- I married him!"

Said Art Widner, "Like so many fen, I was the Old Weird Harold on my block, carrying home those lurid pulp magazines with nubile bimbos on the cover wearing VW hubcap bras --

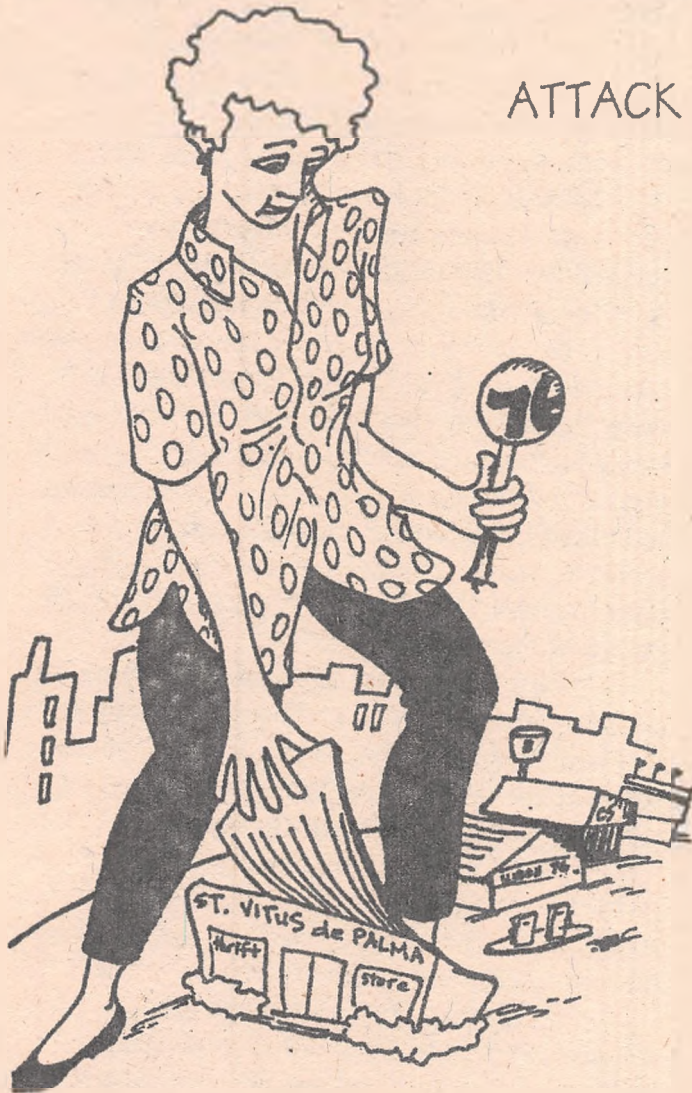
which was remarkable because Volkswagens hadn't been invented yet." Widner said like Voyager 2 after 10 years he had explored the local system, science fiction fandom, and went out to see what lay beyond. "Thirty-nine years later I came back to report: it's pretty lonely out there." He returned to fandom as an "eo-neo" and bumped into Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden "who knew who I was -- or rather, had been."

The spot light found the last speaker in the center aisle, diminutive Anita Raj who told her story. "This is my first Worldcon. A month ago I was a simple mundane and wandered into a work session for this convention. She collated, stapled and mailed, and wound up with a radio and a beeper in charge of a gang of teamsters during Hynes set-up. "Don't even try, because you can't get rid of me now."

Fans with longer memories than mine had probably identified with and been moved by all that had gone before but for me it was Anita Raj who put the exclamation point at the end of the story and brought some tears to my eyes.

Tears were probably also in Isaac Asimov's eyes for having to wait so long to top Arthur C. Clarke's dig at him. Payback time came during Asimov's closing remarks:

"About six weeks ago there was an airplane crash in an Iowa cornfield which a hundred people survived. Others unfortunately died. Newspapers reported that one of the survivors was reading an Arthur C. Clarke novel before the crash. When Arthur saw that he immediately had 750 copies made which he mailed to 750 friends, acquaintances and strangers." As a postscript to Asimov's copy Clarke wrote, "He should have been reading an Asimov novel: he would have slept through the whole thing." Asimov huffed, "I wrote back to Arthur that the reason he was reading a Clarke novel was so that if the plane crashed it would be a blessed relief!"



ATTACK OF THE 50-FOOT DISH QUEEN

By Candi Strecker

Anyone who passes through a thrift store or flea market from time to time is likely to acquire a few odd pieces of kitchenware; a juice glass with duckies marching around it, a boomerang patterned plate "like Mom had," a nutty utensil, a flowerpot shaped like a Scottie dog. The kitschy charm of these pieces -- dishes and such from the 1930's through 1960's, available in secondhand venues for pocket change -- is something most marginally-hip people of my generation have a feel for, albeit in a limited sense. What separates the serious Dish Queen from the dilettante is the intensity of our sensitivity to the appeal of dishes, which leads to our demented pursuit of them. There is an aesthetic thrill to dishes -- the joy of vivid shape and color, the appreciation of zany detail and design. But equally compelling is **the thrill of the hunt**, the way one's breath catches in one's throat as one steps over the threshold into a Salvation Army store one hasn't pillaged for, oh, at least two weeks.

Some antique stores are beginning to stock dishes from The Collectible Years, but buying dishes at book price is not part of the Dish Queen Code. Fresh fish can be purchased at any grocery store, but has that brought an end to fishing as a sport? Similarly, dishes don't really count unless they come with a story attached, involving rummaging against hope at the bottom of a dusty shelf in an unlikely store, or having a sudden impulse to pull over at a certain yard sale after passing by fifteen others, concluding with the handing over of a few small-denomination coins. The ordinary stack of dishes you see in my kitchen cabinet represents, to me, cherished memories, my personal history, my life.

Sometimes I think that the fetish-thrill of collecting dishes is that they come in infinitely recombinable sets and shapes and colors, and thus one always has more directions in which to

There is not, exactly, a hobby shortage around our household. Scattered around the living room is the evidence of dozens of my pursuits in an interrupted state of perusal: a basket full of garden seed packets, a tube of Krazy Glue for jewelry-making, a pile of videotapes waiting to be labelled, stacks and stacks of unread vintage paperbacks (purchased for their irresistible covers), unanswered letters, recipe clippings, rough drafts of cartoons. Above and beyond all these mere dabbings I have One Big Serious Hobby, one I define myself by -- editing and publishing and trading 'zines. But the big serious hobby is not the one that takes up most of my free time. I have one more hobby; God help me, I am a Dish Queen. This is my story.

THRIFT-SHOP CONFIDENTIAL

I SEE SOME GREAT THINGS LYING AROUND AT FLEA MARKETS AND THRIFT STORES THAT WOULD MAKE GREAT COLLECTIBLES BUT WHICH I'VE NEVER HEARD OF ANYBODY ELSE COLLECTING!! YOU PROBABLY WON'T GET RICH SPECULATING ON ANY OF THESE ITEMS, BUT AT LEAST YOU WON'T HAVE TO FIGHT YOUR WAY THRU HORDES OF OTHER COLLECTORS--YET.

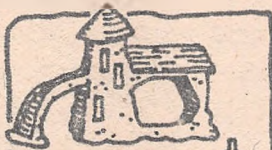
CRIMESTOPPER'S TEXTBOOK

HEY KIDS! PLAY FAIR! STOP TEARING THE T-FOR-THRIFT-STORE PAGES OUT OF THE YELLOW PAGES AT PUBLIC PHONE BOOTHS!

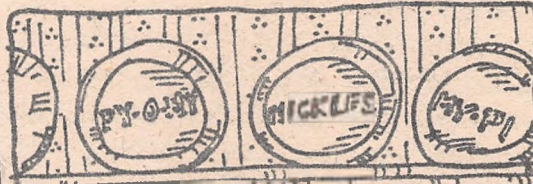
"TOM AND JERRY MUGS"



PUNCH CUPS FOR A CHRISTMAS EGGNOG DRINK. IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND IN COMPLETE SETS SO DONT TRY -- GO FOR ONE OF EVERY DESIGN INSTEAD.



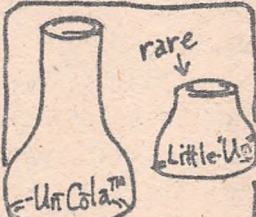
CERAMIC CASTLES, PAGODAS and other AQUARIUM SWIM-THROUGHS.



IMPRINTED TIN PIE PANS. 'WOULDN'T THEY LOOK GREAT HUNG ON A KITCHEN WALL?

NIGHTCLUB SWIZZLE STICKS!!

USUALLY FOUND ALREADY "COLLECTED" - IN BUNDLES OF 50 OR SO THAT SOMEONE GOT TIRED OF HAVING IN THEIR KITCHEN DRAWER.



THESE PROMOTIONAL DRINKING GLASSES ARE A DIME-A-DOZEN NOW, BUT ANY SECOND THEY'LL BE SNATCHED UP AS A PRIME '70'S COLLECTIBLE.



"SILVER" ALUMINUM XMAS TREES, GLITZY & UN-NATURAL. ALSO LOOK FOR ACCESSORIES: ROTATING LIGHTS, TREE TURNABLES, SPECIAL ORNAMENTS. TIP: CHECK THRIFT STORE DUMPSTERS IN JANUARY.

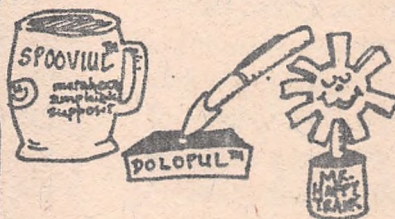
ZANY-SHAPED '50'S GLASS COFFEE CARAFES (WITH LITTLE STANDS)



GIANT WOODEN WALL-DECOR FORK & SPOON SETS



IMAGINE THE IMPACT OF 20 SETS HANGING FROM YOUR LIVING ROOM WALL. BIG FUN FOR DRUNKEN PARTY SWORD-FIGHTS.



DRUG COMPANIES MAKE UP GREAT FREEBIES TO GIVE TO DOCTORS & PHARMACISTS. ESPECIALLY GREAT ARE THE ONES WITH ADVERTISING "CHARACTERS."

FUN FACT!

THE SCIENTIFIC NAME FOR STUFF YOU FIND AT THRIFT STORES IS "OBTAINIUM"

Candi 89

expand one's collection. Even if you limit yourself to one pattern of dishes, once you've picked up the salad plates there are still the rarer dessert dishes to acquire, and beyond that the devilishly elusive egg cups. And should one seek out one dinner plate in each of the available colors of the pattern, or work toward a full set in all one color? Then one needs the rare but wonderful serving dishes, which usually feature the most outlandish design and shapes; wild teapots, eccentric divided vegetable dishes, creamers (9 out of 10 chipped at the lip), butter dishes and lids that are never found travelling together. And as soon as one manages to complete a service for four, along comes a fifth dinner plate to make one think "what the hell... why not go for a service for eight!" (It is a rueful fact of life that cool dishes only appear in sets of prime numbers -- threes and fives -- never in sets of four or eight.)

And those are just the joys of collecting a single pattern. A Dish Queen never stops with a single pattern. It's a matter of simple logic; if finding a dish in My Pattern gives me a quasi-orgasmic rush, then collecting in three patterns triples the odds of this pleasant happenstance (and once you're on your hands and knees pulling stacks of plates off the most inaccessible bottom shelf at the Goodwill, it takes no more time to rummage with three, or even ten, patterns in mind than it does to search for one.) The terminus of this line of reasoning is that one begins to acquire pieces of Melmac. Of this degradation of the sensibilities I will say no more, except to pass on the name *Branchell Color-Flyte* to those of you making an early start on your Christmas lists.

Knowing other Dish Queens adds another dimension to the pleasures of the hunt. (And let me add in passing that the term Dish Queen, of my own invention, is drawn from gay slang, but Queens themselves may be of any gender or proclivity.) First, because you can collect in their patterns too, as long as their patterns aren't your patterns. Further, only with other Dish Queens can you speak the peculiar lingo of the hobby: "Guess what I found? One of those Meltox

Poppytrail squiggle-pattern lung-shaped nut-dishes!" (Proper response: "ooooOOOOooohh!") And only with other Dish Queens can one spend dreamlike post-flea-market afternoons, handling salt-shakers and rearranging the china cabinet, whispering the locations of one's favorite thrift stores, telling tales of the Tureen That Got Away.

The funny thing about collecting dishes is that, for me, completing the collection would ruin the whole thing. To be sure, I have a glowing mental image of what the end result of my hobby should be: a complete service for 12 (plus every imaginable serving piece) in each of my three favorite patterns (Russel Wright *American Modern*, Fire-King Jadite *Jane Ray* and Franciscan *Starburst*) all lined up dust free behind the glass doors of a Platonic Ideal china cabinet. But what a dull day that would be, when I could no longer look forward to the thrill of bursting through the doors of a St. Vincent De Paul's, tingling with the intuition that a cup I need is somewhere within!

And though I dream of perfectly matched dishes, the dishes I have in "my patterns" are not the dishes I normally use. I have another secret delight: the mixed wares I use for every day meals, a hodgepodge of whim purchases and tentative approaches at finding new patterns to collect. These pieces may not match each other, and none of them exist in numbers greater than three, but I love them no less for it. My Santa Anita chili bowls, my Rodeo saucers, my nameless cake plates with smart black polkadots on white, the corny cowboy Western Traveler cups and saucers with the manufacturer's name, TEPCO, spelled out in branding irons around the rim -- bring out a little smile every time I set the table. Even my most solitary dish, a single sponge-speckled Paden City dinner plate, makes me sigh with no less dinner-table delight than a matched dozen Fiestaware teacups lined up like Rockettes. In a funny way, they let me collect several dozen patterns at once -- because as every Dish Queen knows, Even One Is A Collection.

THE GREAT SUPPER ESCALATION

By Madeline Willis

In the early days of Irish Fandom, not long after World War II, food was still rationed, and delicacies unobtainable. I remember trying a Ministry of Food recipe for bananas you made from parsnips and banana essence. It was awful.

So in those days Irish Fandom suppers usually consisted of thick slices of toast, with lots of butter. Butter was rationed too, of course, about two ounces a week I think, but my father had farming connections and I could always get butter. Walter used to say he married me for butter or for worse.

Then we all got richer, or at least less poor, and James White and Bob Shaw got married too, and the meeting place began to rotate, and the Great Supper Escalation began. Suppers became more ambitious and the hostess spent more and more time in the kitchen.

This suited Bob Shaw just fine, because he had in those days what he called a healthy appetite. Walter put it rather differently in the Bob Shaw Appreciation Magazine. He is not a

picky eater, Walter reported, "He eats everything that is put before him, and much that is not."

Finally Walter convened a secret meeting of the men and they reached agreement on a Strategic Food Limitation Treaty. Suppers got simpler again, usually sandwiches or something. In 1952 Walter went to America and brought back the hamburger, just like Sir Walter Raleigh brought back the potato.

But there were still problems. I remember one evening Bob and Sadie said they had to leave early, but the talk was so good I forgot and started far too late to make the supper. To my horror, just as I was finishing, I heard Bob and Sadie call good night. Distraught, I rushed down the garden path after them, a hamburger in each hand.

Bob cast them a longing look, but Sadie grabbed his arm and the tap-tap-tap of her high heels on our crazy paving did not falter. "Come on," she said, "sure we don't come here just for our supper anyway."

OCTOBER 17, 1989 -- 5:04 p.m. "...I can now say that I drove through the worst California earthquake in 83 years and lived to tell the tale.... My first inkling that there had even been an earthquake was the drivers all getting out of their cars to look at their tires. 25 Chinese Fire Drills going on all at once. The first big aftershock came within minutes. This is where I got my first indication that it was a big one. Just sitting at an intersection waiting for the light to change, the truck started bouncing up and down like somebody was jumping on the bumper. My first thought was -- Oh, wow, man (we say that a lot in California), I wonder where the epicenter was? My second thought was -- Oh, shit, the books!"

-- Bryan Barrett, writing in *Cartouche*

FANDOMS PAST

By Ted White

I wanted to get into the mood for this.

In the late fifties I was Seriously Into Jazz -- enough so that when I "turned pro" at the end of the decade, it was as a jazz critic. My career as a professional jazz critic was brief -- maybe five years -- but not without its rewards even now. I found myself quoted as an authority in jazz books like Brian Priestly's *Mingus, A Critical Biography*, my name is in the liner notes of two currently in-print jazz CDs, and a tape of my 1960 interview with Eric Dolphy (apparently the only tape extant of Dolphy talking, since he died in 1964) has been widely bootlegged in the jazz fraternity, especially among jazz deejays.

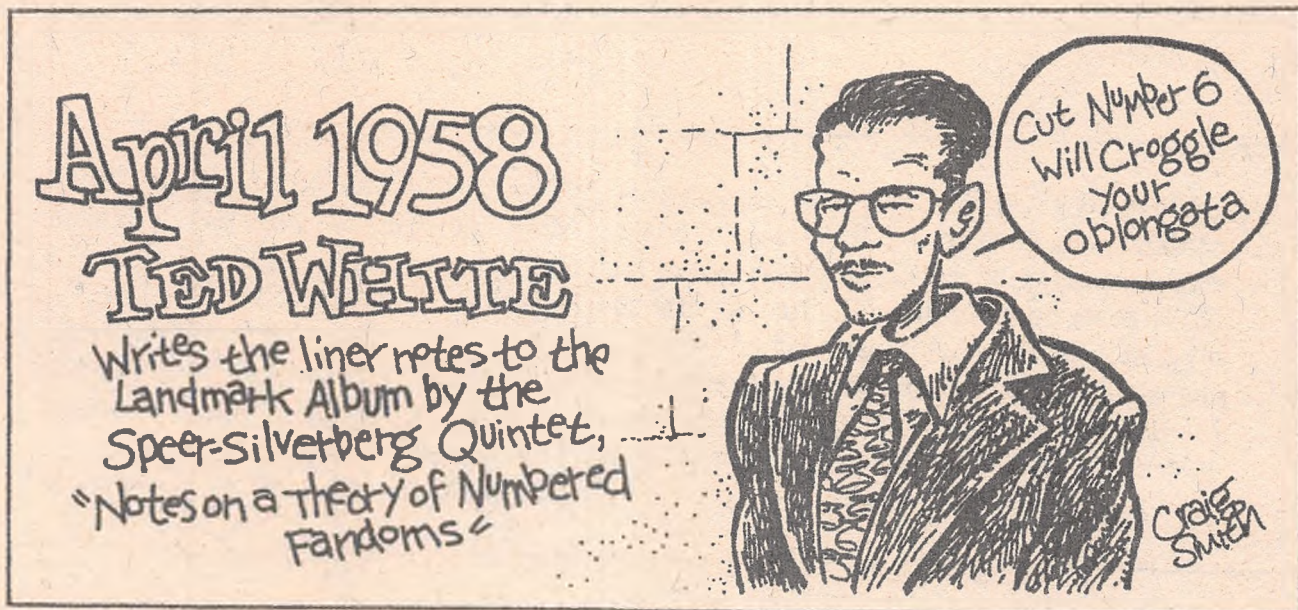
It didn't pay well, and I committed the heresy of writing about rock in 1964, well ahead of any other jazz critic, so I left that field.

But in the last few years I've gotten back somewhat into jazz. Two things prompted this. One was the dearth of good (i.e., non-commercial) rock on local radio, and the presence of two jazz stations. The other was the reissue of

jazz albums on CD. I've been into CD's for several years now, and my collection totals somewhere over a thousand. The vast majority are rock, but there are over a hundred classical CDs and over two hundred jazz CDs.

Very few of my jazz CDs are new releases. Most current-day jazz bores me. But the chance to have some of my fifties favorites on CD is exciting -- especially when they take advantage of the longer playing time available and augment the original album with added tracks. Even mono recording sounds better: cleaner, more transparent, more open to detail and nuance. Albums I haven't listened to in twenty or thirty years are suddenly fresh as well as familiar.

So right now I'm listening to the Atlantic CD of the *Teddy Charles Tentet*, augmented with about half the followup album, *Word from Bird*. The first time I heard a cut from this album was in the late summer of 1956, on my car radio, while I was listening to Willis Conover's "House of Sounds" on a local AM station. Conover



introduced me to many of my favorite jazz musicians on that program, which he did for an hour every weeknight. Then, as he still does now, he also did a jazz show for the Voice of America.

Conover used to be a fan. A very young Willis Conover blazed briefly but brightly in fandom in 1939. A few years ago he published a book about his correspondence with Lovecraft, and he's attended east coast conventions sporadically over the years; I first met him face to face at an open ESFA Meeting in Newark in 1962.

So it's appropriate that he introduced me to Teddy Charles, a post-bop modernist and experimentalist who played vibes when he wasn't sailing his yacht on the Long Island Sound. Charles' album still sounds amazingly modern more than thirty years later: a showcase for arranger/composers like George Russell and Gil Evans, who would only subsequently become famous. Listening to it now takes me back to the late fifties, when I played the lp version over and over, while stenciling ambitious fanzines in the basement of this very house. The more things change....

Last Wednesday rich brown handed me a copy of his article, "The Fanzine With No Name," which I read with interest -- especially the parts with my name in them.

Now I regard rich as a close friend, and have for more than twenty-five years. We see each other two or three times a week for such things as cards (Double-Deck Pinochle), The Vicious Circle (a writers' group), and band practice (rich recently rejoined Barbara & the Bohemians, of which he was a charter 1960's member). The Whites joined the Browns (including rich's ex-wife, her boyfriend, rich's daughter, and her boyfriend) for a Christmas Eve dinner this year, as in years past. And when things have been rotten in our personal lives, rich and I have used each other's shoulder to cry on.

I admire rich's talent as a writer; I think his "Two of a Kind" in AMAZING is a brilliantly

written story, and I think it's a shame he hasn't sold more stories than he has over the years.

But.

I don't want to argue numbered fandoms here, or with rich. That's pointless, and probably tedious for the rest of you.

But it is human nature to try to find patterns in events, to try to impose order upon chaos. Thus we define trends, focal points, numbered fandoms, and all the rest. This is how we try to understand what has happened.

When I got into fandom Speer's theory of numbered fandoms was already more than ten years old, and Silverberg's update was soon to appear. I accepted it as a given; even those fans who argued with the theory found it convenient to to refer to given fannish periods as such-and-such fandom, and there wasn't much argument about Fifth Fandom or the fandoms prior to it.

Was it a good way to describe the history of fandom? Well, fandom was hardly ten years old when Speer proposed it, and not much more than twenty when Silverberg updated it. Now fandom is almost sixty years old, and everything is different.

My theory, my realization if you will, has to do with the correlation between the *size* of fandom and the duration of an era in the number fandoms.

The first *FANCYCLOPEDIA* (written by Speer under the pseudonym of "John Bristol") had this to say in 1944:

(Under "Fandom"): "Fandom began around 1930, when correspondence between fans had reached some proportions, and a few clubs came into existence. In the following years fan magazines took form and gathered audiences. About 1935, fandom became an independent organism, and has passed thru the stages of First Fandom, First Transition, Second Fandom, Second Transition, and Third Fandom.... There are now about 500 people associated with fandom in some small way, of which about a hundred might be called real fans; the disappearance of a selected twenty might mean the end of fandom as now known."

("First Fandom"): "The period up to 1936. It was marked by interest primarily in science and science fiction...."

("First Transition"): "The period of fandom from the decline of *FANTASY MAGAZINE* in later 1936 to the Third Convention...."

("Second Fandom"): "October 1937 to October 1938, when the Quadrumvirate resigned...."

("Second Transition"): From the 1938 Philadelphia Conference to the [1940] Chicon. It was marked by the barbarian invasion, the ascendancy of New Fandom, and the consequent switch of emphasis heavily back towards professional science-fiction...."

("Third Fandom"): From September 1940 on...."

Thus, while First Fandom lasted perhaps six years, Second Fandom lasted only one year.

It's pretty obvious that numbered fandoms didn't last too long back then. First Fandom was probably the longest in duration; after it, the average was about two years, right up to Sixth Fandom.

I hope you didn't think I quoted Speer about the size of fandom just in passing. He figured, in 1944, that there were only about a hundred "real fans," with another 400 on the fringes, and only about twenty of those "real fans" were indispensable. You can be sure that fandom in earlier years was correspondingly smaller: in the late thirties you could probably cut those numbers in half.

By 1950 or so, there were probably 1,000 people "associated with fandom in some small way," and three or four hundred "real" (core) fans. Today there are likely some twenty thousand people "associated with fandom in some small way," and close to a thousand "real fans."

Imagine, if you will, a graph. The graph charts the population of fandom with one curve, beginning in 1930 and ending today, while a second (differently colored, say) curve charts the period of each numbered fandom.

The two curves (both climbing out of the top of the graph) would not exactly overlap, but they'd correspond closely. Because short, distinct

and definable eras of fandom occur in a low-population fandom, one in which everyone knows everyone else, and the group as a whole is too small to fragment easily.

The last time fandom could be described in such terms was in the fifties and early sixties.

By the mid-sixties, two things had happened. First, the, ah, Unpleasantness of 1964 had sharply divided what had been a fairly coherent fandom into two camps at war. The coziness of pre-1964 fandom, the "Big Happy Family" of fandom, was lost. And second, the development of proto-media fans (first monster fans and then Trekkies) began to swell the population. By the end of the sixties, fandom -- even the fandom found in fanzines -- had become too big to be coherent. There was no longer a single center and a definable characteristic by which one might describe a numbered fandom. Instead, there were several centers and simultaneously a return to an emphasis on "professional science fiction" (for which, read: book reviews and confessionals by young pros) side by side with a drug-culture/rock-culture fannishness among others. Fandom had become large enough for specific fanzines, like *ENERGUMEN*, to form sub-fandoms around themselves. By the late seventies there were four or five separate fanzine-publishing "streams" of fandom just in North America, and at least one other in Britain, with minimal overlap. The seventies saw the rise of apas, and it became possible to join an apa upon one's introduction to fandom, and to disappear within its insular confines while expending great fannish energies therein. Many such fans spent the whole of their time as fans in apas and were known only to apamates.

But the handwriting was on the wall by 1958. In the absence of any central (or "focal point") fanzine between the demise of *PSYCHOTIC* (first incarnation) in 1955, and the inauguration of *FANAC* in 1958, fandom fragmented. There was no center.

Those whom I think of as the central figures of Sixth Fandom (including Vernon

McCain) cast about for a dependable vehicle for their work, but the best they could find was the erratic and scrappy *OBLIQUE*, and that fanzine just didn't cut the mustard. So they retreated into FAPA, a move which so enhanced that apa's reputation that its waiting-list suddenly grew longer than its total membership (then, as now, 65).

Left to their own devices, the newcomers to fandom began rallying around their own fanzines. The first to gain an independent standing was Guy Terwilliger's *TWIG*, an overblown and pretentiously-designed fanzine whose coterie of neofans paraded their naivete about fandom. Other coteries around two older fanzines which had evolved somewhat independently of mainstream (or "Sixth") fandom: *YANDRO* and *CRY OF THE NAMELESS*. Both (unlike *TWIG*) were published monthly (which is always a help), and both drifted with greater acceptance into the mainstream of fandom in the late fifties. But in 1956, 1957 and early 1958, *CRY* and *YANDRO*, like *TWIG*, catered to their own private fandoms.

But I believe that *FANAC* gave fandom a new coherence, a new center: a new focal point. And I think the era *FANAC* launched survived from 1958 to at least 1962 (and the Tenth Anniversary Willis Fund which brought Walt and Madeleine to Chicago that year), and perhaps up to the 1964 Unpleasantness. And I don't think there has been a coherent era in fandom as a whole since 1964, for reasons that I've already gone into.

Bear in mind, however, that all I'm trying to do here is to make sense out of something: I am fitting a pattern to events, or trying to find a pattern within those events. I see little point in arguing over the details. I call the period 1958-1962 Seventh Fandom. Others call it Eighth Fandom, and yet others argue that the concept of numbered fandoms no longer applied by then. So what?

CRY wasn't a bad fanzine: it was very much a part of the middle ground of fanzines. It was much like *HOLIER THAN THOU* (albeit I

think it published a higher overall level of material); it had a long solid lettercol in which the younger fans found a forum. Rich was one of those younger fans, and he remembers *CRY* the way Eric Mayer remembers the seventies fanzine, *TITLE*; it was the place where he found a voice and a community. (Rich is too modest to tell you, but during the period he was letterhacking *CRY* he joined the Air Force and gafiated several times, announcing his "returns" with much fanfare a few months hence, and earning for himself the title "Dr. Gafia" in the process.)

I do protest rich's characterization of me as a "non-*CRY* letterhack," however. In fact I still have my *CRY* letterhack card, sent to me directly by Don Franson. Indeed, I was more than a *CRY* Letterhack; I was a *CRY* columnist. (I was also a *YANDRO* columnist. Nu?) And mine was one of the faces on several *CRY* photo-covers. So there.

So where does this leave us, here in 1989? In a strange, bloated fandom that includes and encompasses the survivors of earlier fandoms, like rich, the Busbii, and myself.

Just a couple months ago rich and I got into my car and drove 1,100 or so miles (a trip of two days with an overnight stop) to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, in order to spend a weekend at Tropicon. Then, of course, we spent another two days driving back to Virginia. (We'd expected that my wife, Lynda, would be with us, but a last-minute medical emergency in her family took her back to Oregon that weekend instead).

Lynda and I had decided earlier in the year to skip the Worldcon in New Orleans and go to Tropicon instead. The reason was two of the advertised guests of honor: Walt and Madeleine Willis.

As we drove down, rich and I speculated on whom we'd find at the convention. We wondered if we'd know more than five of the attendees.

What we walked into was later dubbed "Corflu 5.5" -- a gathering of "real fans" from all over the continent, ranging in age and fannish experience from Art Widner to Geri Sullivan.

There were between fifty and one hundred of us (attendance at Corflus runs around 100); enough for good hall parties (the hotel was obliging) and some fine room parties. But "our" convention was embedded in a somewhat larger, comics, gaming and media-oriented convention of several hundred, the attendees of which we rarely saw. Poul Anderson was there, as was Karen, and so also were Harry Stubbs and Will Eisner (who ought to be a fan and maybe is one). I expect the funds provided by the media fan memberships

were instrumental in bringing the Willises over. Nice, that.

Tropicon was a metaphor, I think, of what fandom has become: all things to all people, but with a special place for "real fans." I've decided I like the approach, and I've decided to support the 1992 Magicon bid: a Worldcon like Tropicon, writ larger. Maybe it will work. Maybe this is the New Accommodation.

Time will tell. Check this out in another twenty years, huh?

FOR FURTHER REVIEW...

As I'm sure most readers of this fanthology will agree, there were many other fine fanzines published in 1989 in addition to those represented here. In some cases, even the fanzines I chose contained other pieces which some fans would have picked first. Those people wishing to create a more complete picture of written fanac in 1989 might want to start with the following fanzines and articles:

An Elvish Orc (Vile Anchors #6), edited by Simon Polley:

Simon's "On the Charisma of Cowardice...."

The Caprician #4, edited by Lillian Edwards and Christina Lake:

Mike Glicksohn, "Taffman in Toronto"

Don-O-Saur #55, edited by Don C. Thompson:
Don's "American Educations"

Fuck The Tories #7, edited by Judith Hanna and Joseph Nicholas:

Gwynneth Jones, "Two Thousand Words: A Short, Gritty History of a Small Seedy Rock Venue"

Idea #2, #3, edited by Geri Sullivan:

#2: Mike Glicksohn, "The Eclectic Reader"

#3: David Emerson, "A Pizza Dinner Without Pizza"

#3: Jeff Schalles, "Adventures in the Wimpy Zone"

Larrikan #20, #21, edited by Irwin Hirsh and Perry Middlemiss:

#20: Linda Gowing, "A Rural Touch"

#20: Lynne McConchie, "Colditched!"

#21: Perry's "Never Mind the Width, Feel the Quality"

Lip #4, edited by Hazel Ashworth:

Hazel's "More Fascinating Facts About the Vikings"

Linda Krawecka, "Hanging Around in Bars"

Nigel E. Richardson, "Mortality and Mercy in Birmingham"

Mimosa #6, #7, edited by Dick and Nicki Lynch:

#6: Sharon Farber, "Tales of Adventure and Medical Life, Part II" (all of Sharon's medical memoirs deserve preservation)

#6: Dave Kyle, "The Great Exclusion Act of 1939"

#6: Bruno Ogorolec, "Great Jumping Grandmothers"

#6: Harry Warner Jr., "The House on Summit Avenue"

#7: Dick & Nicki's "A Visit to a Small Fanzine: The Life and Times of *Cha*"

#7: Skel's "No Way to Stand Kansas"

Obscured by Corflu, edited by Johan Schlimanski:

Johan's "Escape to Wisconsin, Fragments of an American Dream"

Linda Krawecka, "Mineaux: a cat"

Pirate Jenny #3, edited by Pat Virzi:

Richard Brandt, "A Spirit Guide for the Perplexed"

Ed Scarborough, "From Dinosaurs to Dynamos"

Pulp #13, edited John Harvey:

Tara, "Just Desserts"

Q #23, edited by Chuck Harris:

Chuck's American trip report...

Rune #79, #80, edited by Jeanne Mealy and Dave Romm:

#79: John Purcell, "Foont! Went the Mimeo: A History of Minneapolis Fanzines"

#80: John Berry, "This Sceptered Aisle"

Tand #1, edited by Mark Manning:

Mark's "My Dinner with O.T.O"