

Flash Point

number three : Patrick Nielsen Hayden : Jumping Jesus Bar & Grill, 4712 Fremont North Seattle WA 98103 : ee#193 : published weekly : 5-29-81.

V-CON '81 *Scene: Coffee shop, Vancouver Holiday Inn Harbourside.*
PATRICK: Um, I'll have the, er, um, the Reuben. (Thinks: \$4.50 for a Reuben?)
Forty-five minutes elapse.
OLE: You know, they certainly seem to be taking their time with your Reuben.
PATRICK: Well, you know how it is in Canada. First they have to find a Jew.
Thirty more minutes go by.
WAITRESS: Your Reuben, sir.
OLE: (Inspecting sandwich) Three ounces of chipped past-rami on dark rye, open-faced and topped with saur-kraut & process Swiss. My, my.
PATRICK: Well, you know how it is in Canada. They never did find that Jew.

The hotel was like that. As Ole later noted, the same cooks & kitchens served the \$20-a-meal top-of-the-line restaurant as served the coffee shop that sold me the open-faced Reuben -- which just about says it all about Holiday Inn as a chain. It didn't much matter, though, just as I doubt it ever much matters to the mundane guests of the Holiday Inn Harbourside; since, with the possible exception of some of the more improbable & luxurious ski lodges, I don't know offhand of a hotel with a more spectacular physical setting. We stayed in (Toastmaster) Jon Singer's free room, which looked out from the tenth floor across the water to North Vancouver, Burnaby, and the mountains beyond; and in between us and the mountains (which, in Vancouver, are neither the distant-horizon ranges of Seattle or Denver nor the rugged-but-miniature in-city buttes of Phoenix, but rather real, cloud-capp'd Olympians whose lower reaches wade in suburbia) we could watch, gently snookered in our high window, a veritable panoply of human transportation technology: huge freight trains disembarking from ferries, fleets of semi-trucks driving onto container ships, seaplanes taking off and landing, giant Chinese oil tankers, helicopters buzzing the treetops of Stanley Park -- the entire stamp-album cover's worth, and free, too. So the hotel could be forgiven, even if its outrageous prices probably did do more than anything else to scare away habitués of the local con circuit and keep attendance down to a mere (mere!) 600, thus financially denting the concon and incidentally making for one of the more pleasant, uncrowded cons we've been to since moving to the Pacific Northwest.

Who was there: Sharee Carton from Edmonton showed up, along with the news that she's moving to Vancouver soon, partially simply for its proximity to Seattle; Amy Thompson from Moscow, Idaho was also around (and, in fact, may well be in Seattle as I type); the Palmers came complete with Tilda and the hitherto-never-seen Golden Brainard, co-editor of *Kumquat*; Singer, of course, was all over the place, doing his usual toastmaster bit (his fifth time for that -- I suspect Jon has a fair career ahead of him as one of those semi-professional con toastmasters like Silverberg, or Ed Bryant, or Robert Bloch; he has the moves down pretty well) and telling reasonably rotten jokes along the lines of "How many Texans does it take to eat an armadillo? Two -- one to watch for oncoming traffic", etc etc.; and of course the usual bunch of Seattle people, enough, in fact, for the by-now-traditional Group Of Fans Who Get Together At A Convention To Go Out And Eat Only To Realize Too Late That They're All From Seattle. (Monday morning, this time.) And, of course, there was Bill Gibson, crisp & electric in canonical Bill Gibson clothing and complete with an utterly Bill Gibson sort of Machine: the Sony Walkman, it's called, and what it is is a tiny cassette player, built entirely around the cassette, weighing about half a pound and complete with a little holster to attach it to your belt with and tiny featherweight headphones to listen to it through. (There are no speakers; this is the Japanese boom-box, completely polite.) The sound quality, incidentally, is impeccable; I've heard full-sized stereo component set-ups that sounded far worse. Anyway:

the presence of this little item had its own surreal effect on a lot of room parties at the con: everywhere I went, it seemed, there were people engaged in animated conversation, and ebbing and flowing and moving and flashing eye contact and generally engaged in all the various frenetic activities engaged in by people in crowded parties, and there was Bill Gibson, and not far away there were two people (the Walkman has two sets of headphones), staring off into space, eyes glazed, Plugged In, Out Of It, looking for all the world like androids getting another battery charge, or perhaps a fix of Drugs, gosh. (I shouldn't skip Bill Gibson Himself, of course, so I'll just note that he was his usual gas to hang around; like a few other people in fandom -- Clifford Wind springs immediately to mind -- Bill has built himself an amazing, seamless Character, just substantial enough to be entertaining yet not solid enough to seem affected. Writes pretty good, too.)

Which about uses up V-Con in terms of printable gossip & interesting Event. Really, not much took place, but it was comfortable in a way that, say, Norwescon has never been for me; even the fugg-heads in attendance behaved nicely. In fact, as far as I know, nobody got into any major altercations, to calamitous events that will rock fandom to its core took place, and no feuds got started or reached any, you'll pardon the expression, flash points. About the least enjoyable single aspect of the whole con was the ElRon Awards ceremony/brunch -- which we attended free on tickets given by Fran to Teresa in return for her program participation -- and even that was carried off with grace & savoir-faire by David George, an unknown to me but a marvelous speaker. (Which didn't stop me from slipping out halfway through the ceremony. I have never liked roasts, "worst of" award ceremonies, or any sort of thing that gives large groups of people the chance to me loudly, belligerently, and anonymously nasty. There's no responsibility in a crowd, you know? You can feel it; they develop a sort of hardee-har-har laugh that almost nobody uses on an individual basis. I can do without it. But, as I was saying, that's just me.) The banquet, on the other hand, was fine, featuring enjoyable & casual speeches by the guests leading up to Vonda's giving a hysterically funny narrative of her adventures writing that Star Trek book (you know, Vonda McIntyre, the woman who killed Captain Kirk?). It was, all around, mirable dictu, a Nice Con. We needed one of those.

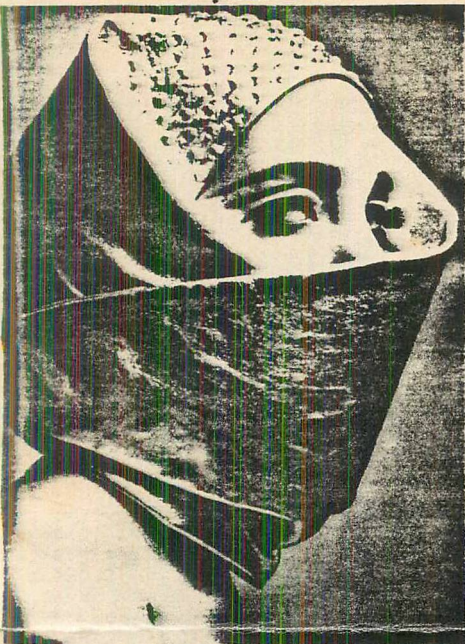
THINGS I'LL BET YOU DIDN'T KNOW Dept.: Try this one. Did you know that offset is cheaper than mimeo? At least, as far as *Telos* is concerned, it seems to be. According to my calculations, we could have taken that entire bloated last issue, typed it in columns, pasted it up on magazine-style boards, shot the whole thing down 66.6%, and had it printed as an 8½" x 11", center-stapled, 32-page affair, much like, say, *Out-worlds* -- and spent about the same amount of money. But I wouldn't have had to crank the goddamned mimeograph machine. What's that you say? Mimeography is inherently fannish? Here, speak up. Let me take down your name. Now: just how fannish are you interested in being? Because I've got these already-typed stencils, see, and ...

Well. No promises. But we'll be doing a little exploring of future options: and if it turns out that it's cheaper, easier, and generally more convenient, well, I never did much like fuzzy paper anyway. Besides, *Zed* is mimeographed: which ought to constitute satisfactory ablutions to the Secret Masters. Yes.

Anyway, part of that abovementioned "exploring of future options" involves experimenting with type-reduction levels, *which* is why you're going blind reading this issue of *FP*. Next issue: 72 point type. Ought to be easy to write.

"Shut up," he explained. -- Ring Lardner

Would you do it?



Orbach's

Would you do it?

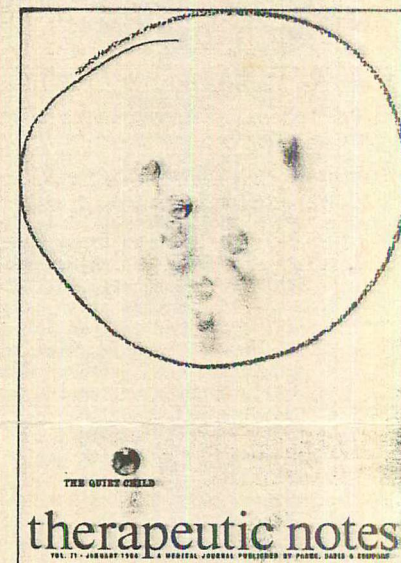


Orbach's

"...The Orbach's ad is a vector of intentions and its theme, told in endlessly inventive & tasteful ways, is that high fashion, style and all the ancillary personal benefits are yours at low prices. This *Leitmotiv* has been so efficacious that those who can afford high fashion at high prices prefer the thrill of the hunt at Orbach's.

"For the past few years Richard Bergeron has been the principal art director for the Orbach's account, carrying on a legacy left by Bob Gage, now part of the Doyle Dane Bernbach firmament. For these ads Bergeron works in almost inseparable co-ordination with Judy Protas, who has written enough Orbach's ads (15 years) to have become part of its genetic code. The union of art and copy, a hallmark of DDB ads, is unmistakably evident. (...) The significant growth of Orbach's business over a score of years should be the final answer to any non-believers. Doubtless Bergeron, Protas *et alii* have been doing something right."

-- *Graphis* #122, 1965



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art director Richard Bergeron
 designer Richard Bergeron
 photographer Alan Vogel
 copywriter Liz LeMay
 agency L. W. Frohlich
 publisher Parke, Davis & Co.
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--Annual of the
 Art Directors'
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