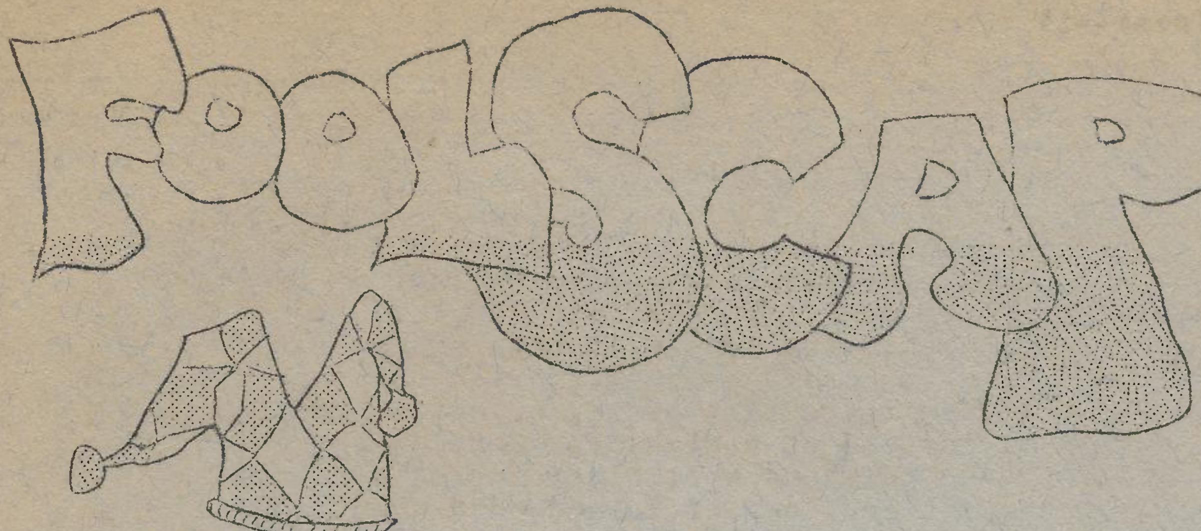

This is FOOLSCAP #12, written, edited, and published by John D. Berry, 1000 15th Avenue East, Seattle, Washington 98112, for the February, 1977, mailing of the Fantasy Amateur Press Association, and for a few friends. FOOL is available outside of FAPA solely on editorial whim. This is Quand Même Publication No. 99, and the date as we begin is Sunday, January 16, 1977. Are we there yet?

> "It is wonderful how preposterously the affairs of this world are managed."
>
> --Benjamin Franklin, 1784

This afternoon I took my lunch hour (or lunch forty-five minutes, to be truthful) sitting on the edge of a wooden dock along the Lake Washington Ship Canal, or Salmon Bay--I have yet to understand which of them encompasses the other or where either of them leaves off, in this confusing city that's built on both salt water and fresh--and I mused on the familiarity of the smells, the sounds, and the feel of the maritime wind on my face: the sheltered, island-studded waterway of Puget Sound somehow contrives to seem awfully like the Vineyard Sound that divides Martha's Vineyard from Cape Cod, clear across the continent in southern New England, and my senses are filled with the scent of nostalgia as well as longing. From any one of the ferries that ply this westerly Sound, the low hills and cliffs and the broken inlets look very much like the islands of that singular part of Massachusetts where I partly grew up, although those eastern islands would never be covered with the evergreen darkness and bristle of Douglas firs. Perhaps my nostalgia is partly anticipation, since I'll be going back to the Vineyard to see my mother while I'm in the East, and I haven't set foot on the island in two years. Another part of it, though, is just my lifelong tie to the coast and the sea. It's strange to realize that I've never traveled out of at least potential sight of land on a ship, when the sea is so much a part of my life and my imagination. The first time I ever spent months inland, in the middle of a continent (Europe), I felt trapped, and the flat farmlands in central France depressed me more than any other geography I had ever encountered, even though some of those farmlands bore my name.

(My family name is French, and somehow related to the old province of Berry.) I have since learned to enjoy and appreciate the Great Plains of both the United States and Canada, and I've found that the variety and grandeur of the great mountain ranges can almost compensate, but in the end I have to live near the sea.

And that sea should properly be a traveled one, filled with islands and broken coasts, not merely the abrupt edge of a land-locked world; most of California felt very odd to me, and Oregon even more so, because the coasts of both states simply drop off into the ocean with hardly a break, nary a bay for hundreds of miles. People don't use that ocean, or not most of them; it's an edge for them, instead of a highway. Here on the north coast, the glaciers and God knows what other geologic forces have scoured out a varied coastline, one of islands and mountains and fjords, and a varied waterway to fill the spaces between. The Northwest Coast Indians used the sea as their highway, since much of the land was nearly impassable for the thick tangle of forest; the white men came and cleared many of the trees, to build a culture on the land. But even so, there's a strong maritime culture here; as I sat on the pier eating my lunch, I saw a panorama of bobbing masts, of sailboats and power boats, of pleasure craft and fishing boats.

I would like to make the sea more a part of my day-to-day life. I have fantasies of running a small boat among the islands of Puget Sound, ferrying supplies and passengers and whatever would bring in some money to keep me afloat. I know that to do that would require a master's license, and I do not know what is needed to get that; the fantasy remains just that. But I know I'm dissatisfied with the way most people go out on the water, in power boats or sailboats, simply to sail (or zoom) around with nowhere to go. They invent complicated courses for racing, just to find something to do while they're out there. What I want is to use the water, to have a boat and sail it because that is my way of getting around, not because it's a way to escape from the land for a while.

I wonder if Ursula Le Guin had these islands in mind when she wrote of Earthsea?

(July 20, 1976)

> "His view of the world featured swift disasters set against a background of lurking doom, and my cooking did nothing to contradict it."
>
> --Margaret Atwood
> Lady Oracle, p. 210

Been doing quite a lot of reading lately, especially of historical novels. As if in celebration of the Bicentennial, I balanced two books against each other: Citizen Tom Paine and The King's Rangers. The first, by Howard Fast, you're probably familiar with; the second, by John Brich, perhaps not. Paine is a fairly well-written book, but it's filled end to end with propaganda, most noticeably in lofty paragraphs about the spirit of liberty and the noble souls of the common folk of America. The King's Rangers is, as far as I can tell, written by an American, but with extensive help from Canadian archives, and it concerns Butler's Rangers, a Loyalist corps in upstate New York and western Pennsylvania during the Revolution; it's a dumb book, but written

with reasonable competence and interesting for its viewpoint. I'm looking forward to reading Kenneth Roberts's Oliver Wiswell, which I expect to provide a much better perspective on the Loyalist side, simply because Roberts is a much better writer than Brick.

I just started to get into Kenneth Roberts's work, and I did so through the agency of the latest issue of The Co-Evolution Quarterly. Stewart Brand wrote a paean of praise to Roberts in that issue, although his complaint of neglect during the Bicentennial seemed undermined the other day when I saw a new boxed set of expensive paperback editions of four of Roberts's books in a bookstore window. The book I wanted to start on, based on the blurbs and descriptions that I'd read, was Arundel, but the public library's copies seem to be perpetually on loan. I actually own a paperback copy of the book, which my mother gave me several years ago and which I promptly filed on the shelf in Bronxville without reading (ungrateful wretch!), but that copy is still sitting on the same shelf, which is a little inaccessible to me from where I now live. So I settled for taking out of the library a volume called The Kenneth Roberts Reader, with a varied selection of his essays and parts of his novels. One of the first things that caught my attention when I delved into the volume was the claim, by the writer of the introduction, that it was Roberts who revived the custom of drinking hot buttered rum in America. I've read the chapter on the subject (from Northwest Passage), and it gratified me to see that his character, while making the drink with hot water, complains of the lakc of hot cider and insists that it should properly be made with that instead; that's the way I learned to make it, from Hilarie Staton's friend Susan Kutner, three years ago, and that's the way you'll find it prepared in certain homes in Falls Church on cold winter nights. Most other hot buttered rum drinkers I've encountered seem to have had it only with water.

Today good fortune smiled on me, because when I happened to mention my search for Arundel to Frank Denton, he promptly loaned me a copy. Already I'm getting buried in Kenneth Roberts's gnarled, meaty prose.

And it's not as if I didn't have bookmarks halfway through a few other books. My historical range has been wider than that dictated by the Fourth of July. I finally went back to one of the authors I had prized when I was young, Rosemary Sutcliff, and read one that it seems everyone else has read but I hadn't, Eagle of the Ninth. (In case you somehow haven't either, it's about Roman Britain, and it's quite good.) And I went back once more, this time to a book I had read well over ten years ago (about the time a movie was made of it, and it was reissued in paperback, I now find), called The Long Ships, by Frans G. Bengtsson. This is a long saga of a viking named Red Orm and his voyages around the turn of the millenium, and it has something in common with Roberts's books in the quality of the prose. It reads almost like one of the Norse sagas turned into a novel. There is none of the auctorial aside or judging that you find in so many historical novels; it's all told straight-faced, with the values of the vikings themselves being the only ones (besides good writing) evident in the prose. The book was written in Swedish, and there is no copyright date given for the original, but an earlier translation of the first volume was published in 1942 (under the title Red Orm); this version, translated by Michael Meyer, came out in 1954. I would be interested to see the first translation, just to compare the two and see how much they differ. I'm sure that the tone of the book as I read

it is owed largely to the translator, but I wonder whether it was a faithful rendering of the tone of the original in Swedish, or his own invention. In either case, it's an excellent book, well worth rereading after over ten years.

As if in tandem with this, although in fact chosen for other reasons, I am reading Carl O. Sauer's Northern Mists, which is not fiction, but a very readable study of early European contact with North America. Again I picked up on an author through The Co-Evolution Quarterly, which has quoted Sauer many times and just reprinted an article about him written just after his death. He is a cultural geographer (or was, rather, unless you prefer the "literary present"), and as such he is a synthesizer, and that's the kind of non-fiction writer I most enjoy.

I'm also in the middle of Captain From Castile, which I mainly knew as the source of a silly movie with the gaudiest soundtrack I have ever heard. (This book, like most of these that aren't library books, was bought second-hand for a ridiculously small price. Between the used bookstores and the frequent garage sales around here, there's a wealth of second-hand reading to be had. I'm only now getting into used books, which most fans seem to be born with a nose for.) Captain From Castile is another dumb book, but entertaining, set partly in early 16th Century Spain and partly on Cortez's expedition to Mexico; the Spanish part has a great deal to do with the Inquisition and its terrors. It's been fascinating to compare the varieties of Christianity, and the way the characters have viewed it, in Spain of the conquistadores and in Scandinavia and Western Europe at the time of the late vikings.

There are a few more books lying around with bookmarks in them, but not every volume I read sparks me to say anything about it. I did read Dick Lupoff's two stories about the spaceships sailed by Australian aborigines (or their descendants, anyway), "In the Dream Time" and "Sail the Tide of Mourning," both of which I liked very much. I haven't spent so much time reading fiction in a long time.

(July 10, 1976)

"Been away for three months, and everything in your refrigerator turns into a science project."

--Anon, KZAM radio

The wind outside is whistling and roaring and howling, beating with the surf on the shore, while inside a small fire is dying slowly. As I sit here in a wood-paneled, picture-windowed house just a few yards from the cliffs of the Oregon coast, as I stare quietly into the orange embers in the fireplace, I find that my mind is musing on the nature of this coast. It's a coast that stretches nearly unbroken all the way up from California, and on beyond where I sit now into Washington to the tip of the Olympic Peninsula. Beyond that lie islands and fjords and sounds and straits, a broken and different coastline.

There is a continuity to this long western edge. I've wandered up and down it from Astoria to San Diego, and I've lived near it--but never on it--in the cities around San Francisco Bay. I came out from the East, from a childhood and an adolescence spent in southern New England and southern New York, to this wholly different coast that most people approach from the land, not the sea.

When I lived on the Peninsula below San Francisco, with my

life centered in the flatlands and the foothills that faced the Bay, I would sometimes take my old car and drive up into the hills, over the ridges and down the long, twisting road to the coast. It was a separate world, an abrupt end to the land of hills and redwoods and eucalyptus, a sharp cliff and a dusty grey beach and a spray that coated my glasses within minutes of my arrival. I would run or walk along the beach, wrapped in my jacket against the ocean wind, or I would squat on top of a cliff and watch the waves crash on the rocks below. This would be a time to clear my head, to get away from whatever complexities ringed my life on the other side of the hills; a chance to get out of the warm, human houses and streets and into a raw world of elements in motion.

I never felt at home in that world. It was a place to go for a while, to stay only until I got cold, or hungry, or lonely, and the tug of life and human shelter pulled me back into the land. And I noticed that though there were towns along that coast, they were mostly small, and somehow forlorn and lost against the ocean and the cliffs.

Even when I lived in San Francisco itself, I would look on it as an expedition to take the bus out to the beach. Although the houses extend right to the coast highway, they don't face onto it, and the city as a whole is turned toward the Bay.

Up here in Oregon, this pattern is even stronger. The Coast Range divides a narrow strip of windblown coast from the fertile, populous inland valley of the Willamette. I am here today on a whim, as an expedition from Eugene because my friend, with whom I've been staying there, felt that we should go to the coast before I left. "Go to the coast"--the phrase implies, rightly, that the coast is always someplace else, a spectacular stretch of scenery that you go to in order to get in touch with the wind, the ocean, and the rock. Very few people actually live along the coast.

I thought tonight about staying here for a day, in this sturdy house within the unending sound of wind and wave. I considered it, and I thought of how I love the sea and by preference will always choose to be near the water, but I realized that the center of my life is not here on the coast; for the present moment it's back in Eugene, fifty miles and a whole world away across the mountains. And in that is the difference between this coast--all the way from southwest Washington down to whereit begins to get warm and balmy in southern California--and the contoured, maritime coast I grew up on.

I'm used to a coast where people live and work, where they look to the sea as much as to the land, where the two are both broken and varied and they interpenetrate and mingle. Here there is no such thing; this coast is a clear line of demarcation between two different worlds. I would like to live on the sea, but I am much less interested in living on the edge of the land.

(Charleston, Oregon, November 1, 1975)

"What though youth gave love and roses,
Age still leaves us friends and wine."

--Thos. More

I spent most of the past month in Vancouver, broken only by a couple of days back here just prior to the V-Con. The first two weeks were given over to working oh HITCHHIKE (which was a much bigger task than I ever wished it to be; next issue has got to be

smaller!); the two weeks after the con were spent recovering, running off the fanzine, and attending a series of plays that were part of Festival Habitat, the cultural celebration surrounding the UN conference in Vancouver. In along with that we sandwiched a two-day trip to the west coast of Vancouver Island, which put me back in touch with the wild country after too many months of city streets and public transport. I brought back some shells and stones, and a lot of sand in my boots. Both the V-Con and the last of the plays, Cruel Tears, deserve more than I feel ready to give them tonight, but I might remark on the rest of the theatrical stuff.

I saw a lot of good theater in Festival Habitat. Two different productions by Theatre Passe Muraille from Toronto, a topical radical morality play by Tamahnous Theatre (local to Vancouver), a French-language revue/monologue from Québec. The last was a tour de force, but the lady who performed all but a few supporting bits spoke very rapid Québec French, and, although I appreciated the show and could tell that she was a masterful actress, I could follow only a fraction of what went on. It pointed up to me how limited my French is, even though I can speak it with some fluency, and how difficult it is to understand humor in another language. The morality play, 84 Acres, concerned a cast of homesteading hippies in northern BC, the old man (Oldtimer) on whose land they were living, and his rotten lost nephew, a truly magnificent villain, who returns with a deed to the land and dreams of *development.* His ultimate victory comes from the triumph of the Repulsive Party in the provincial election, and the defeat of all that is good and true and decent. The play had been written since the BC election in December, when the Socreds tossed out the NDP, and the audience knew its cues: they booed and cheered at all the appropriate moments. It was all very obvious and very partisan, yet well-done and theatrical.

Theatre Passe Muraille is an energetic troupe; I was amazed at the amount of jumping and running around that they do in the course of a production, and by the end of the evening all of them have sweat flying off their noses. Their two plays were interrelated: The Farm Show is just that, an eclectic series of sketches and dramatizations that add up to a portrait of farm life, taken from their experience in a particular region of rural Ontario; 1837 The Farmers' Revolt is a dramatization of the rebellion of 1837 in Upper Canada, which piqued my interest and will send me scurrying to the history books to learn more about it. The latter gave me an ironic feeling, because the rebellious sentiments of the farmers seemed so close to the feelings behind the American revolution, yet the Canadians were very consciously making their stand as Canadians, as something distinct from the United States that was then burgeoning to the south.

I knew I had forgotten something: Codco. Codco is self-described as "the Newfie joke that bites back." It's a troupe of actors from Newfoundland, all of whom met while working with Theatre Passe Muraille in Toronto, who have now put together their own production that reflects the place they come from. Newfoundland is a running joke in the rest of Canada, and Codco take that identity and turn it right around. They are devastatingly funny, especially in a sketch that satirizes the style of theater that Passe Muraille excel in, with great dramatic narratives and actors portraying objects or symbols. Then there is "Morton the Dying Child Molester," which would doubtless become a fannish class if more

"Actually, of course, I'm always planning on a triumphal re-entry into fandom, but somehow I never get around to it."

--Jeff Wanshel
in LIGHTHOUSE 12

You asked me to write about my practice of T'ai Chi.

It began serendipitously, while I was living in Washingdont, DC, in the winter of last year. I had wanted for some time ti get into some kind of regular meditative practice, and I was also at that point I reach periodically, where I realize that I've been without regular physical exertion for too long. I feel best when I'm using my body on a regular basis, although I am not a particularly athletic person. At roughly the same time that winter, I began going to a weekly square-dancing class-and-session in a neighborhood church's basement, which gave me a chance to be exuberant, and I signed up for a class in T'ai Chi. All I knew of T'ai Chi was that it was a Chinese way of meditation in motion; I didn't even know that it was also a martial art, and I didn't discover that until I had been studying it for some weeks. I had been attracted by a book I had once perused, but that was only a vaguely favorable impression in my mind. But it seemed hardly to matter which of several disciplines I chose, as long as the one I did follow felt right to me, and T'ai Chi felt like the one.

We were a small group, no more than eight in a large, white-painted room with a bare wooden floor, where dance classes were held on other nights of the week. The instructor was a young Occidental man named Warren, who spent his working days working in wood and restoring antiques in a small shop in Alexandria. He was completely unprepossessing, but he taught well. The style of T'ai Chi that he taught was the school of the master Cheng Men Chung (whose name I may have misspelled, since I have never seen it written down, although I know he has written a book).

I had an affinity for the kind of movement desired in T'ai Chi, because it resembles the movement in fencing, although fencing moves are sudden, while T'ai Chi flows, no matter what speed you go through it at. Both sets of movements, both ways of holding and moving your muscles seem unnatural at first, but I found myself falling into a closer approximation than the other students, enough so that the instructor asked me if I had studied before. (It was only after pondering this for a while that I realized the similarity with my fencing training.) All practice of T'ai Chi is an approximation: there is neither goal nor achievement to it, only practice. There was learning, because I didn't know the movements (which are usually divided up into positions, although these only mark points along a continuous path); we took up a new position, or two or three together, at each session, meanwhile practicing what we had learned before. Warren emphasized that the simple beginning of standing correctly was enough in itself; that plus the first movements to the second position could last you a lifetime.

There was only one class a week; the rest of the time it was up to us to practice. Our teacher suggested twice a day, morning and night, for fifteen minutes or more, but I was content with five minutes each morning; it was regular, more so than anything else I had ever done by myself, and I knew that for me that consistency was more important than measuring myself against anybody else's standard. The purpose of the class, once we had learned the basic positions, was to give us a touchstone, the eye of an instructor to

correct us and make suggestions when they were appropriate. For me it was also a source of energy, and a spur to constancy; I only learn best when I am pursuing something with other people.

The practice of T'ai Chi gave me a certain minimum each day, a continuity, and a sense of pleasure that I could keep at a regular practice; it was something to fall back on when everything else seemed slippery, and sometimes it provided me with an anchor for the day. I practiced T'ai Chi in my room in DC, in other people's houses and apartments around the area, in an upper West Side apartment in New York City, in a house in Ottawa, and in a pension-style hotel room in Québec City. When the ten weeks of the class were up in early spring, I didn't sign up for another series, because I wasn't sure that I wouldn't be leaving DC with the onset of warm weather, but I kept up the practice on my own. I continued doing it every day, with very few lapses, all during a long summer of travel, all the way to Australia and back again, and through the fall while I was settling into the Northwest.

After nearly a year without a class or a teacher, though, I began to slack off, and by the end of the winter just past I was no longer practicing T'ai Chi. Once I knew I was going to stay here in Seattle, I began looking for a class, but T'ai Chi seemed to be the one spiritual discipline not widely practiced in this city. And I want to find a teacher in the same tradition, simply to remain consistent, but those few who teach it here teach other styles.

Now I'm back to that state I was in when I began: sedentary, not giving my body enough use, whether by T'ai Chi or by anything else. I walk a good deal, but I seldom break a sweat. I've done a little enthusiastic dancing a couple of times recently, to country fiddle music, but neither regularly nor well. And I've lost track of that still center that T'ai Chi gave me a chance to touch. However, it may be that with so many other things coming together suddenly, I ll return to the practice of T'ai Chi too.

(June 20, 1976)

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This has been FOOLSCAP #12, the special "eclectic" issue. Thanks are due to Frank Denton for providing a mimeograph on which to run this off. Last stencil typed on Thursday, January 27, 1977.

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