

GRUNT

This is the first issue of GRUNT, the magazine that strikes out from the heart of the city. GRUNT is published by Calvin W. "Biff" Demmon, formerly of Los Angeles and Berkeley, now c/o Larry Ivie, 31 West 76th Street, New York 23, NY. GRUNT #1 is a rider with Minao. We would call this a QWERTYUIO*PresS* Publication, only we don't think Mr. White would like that. This is a QWERTYUIO*PresS* Publication.

EGOBOO: A couple of weeks ago we attended the World Science Fiction Convention in Washington, D. C. This issue of GRUNT contains our report on that Convention. However, before we get to it, we have some long-overdue egoboo to dish out, and we will do it here. This week's egoboo goes to Ron Ellik, Russ Martin, Greg and Jim Bonford, Jerry and Mimi Knight, Ed Clinton, Roy and Chrystal Tackett, Ted White and Sandi Bothke, Esther Davis and Henry Dupree, Rosemary Hickey and Mr. Hickey, Richard Enay, Avram and Grania Davidson, Bob Lichtman, Larry Ivie, Les Gerber, Andy Main, Gary Deindorfer, Les Nirenberg, John Koning, and Carol Carr, Don Fitch, Alva and Sid Rogers, Lowell and Carla Moore, and one Jane Doe.

Not necessarily in that order.



DISCON 1983 -- With Chapter Headings

Well, there we were at the Statler-Hilton in Washington D.C., on Thursday evening, August 29, 1983, just itching to get drunk or something. There were already several fans milling around in the lobby, even though the con wasn't to start officially until the following Saturday. I was all hot to meet in person all the people I'd been corresponding with for years -- all the New York Fans -- when, without warning, Fred Patton dropped from the ceiling and got my attention.

"Gary Deindorfer and John Koning are looking for you," he said. "They are in room W-907, and you can call them on the telephone."

I called up room W-907 and a female voice answered. "Hey," I said, "is Gary Deindorfer there?"

"Yes," said the female voice. "I am Gary Deindorfer."

Well, that is a lie, as you can well imagine, and I have just told it to keep us both awake here.

Anyway, somebody answered and said "Come up here right away; I am Gary Deindorfer and John Koning is here and there is someone else here who wants to meet you."

Then a female voice said "Come up here right away; I have been dying to meet you." Everybody talks like bad dialogue from a B-movie at a convention; you may notice that this is true after you have finished reading this report.

"Look, lady," I said. "I do not know who you are, but I will come up there anyway, for you sound mildly sexy over the telephone, even though I am sure you are ugly as 'sin' in person."

"Hee hee," said the female voice over the phone, but not fast enough for me, because I had already thrown down the receiver and was vaulting towards the elevator.

CHAPTER II -- Dialogue in a "Lift"

"What does the 'W' in front of a room number mean?" I asked the elevator operator on the way up to room W-907. People are always asking me what the "W" in my name stands for, and I hoped to find a clever answer.

"It means 'West,'" said the operator kindly, shoving the third floor into place to make room for an old man. "When you get off the elevator, you go that way." She indicated a direction with the front part of her arm.

CHAPTER III -- The Fanass Hospitality Room

I was standing in front of the door. It said "W-907" on it in letters. I composed my face carefully with my fingers. I was all bound up inside, because I was about to meet two of my best friends whom I had never met before, and also some girl.

I knocked on the door.

The door opened swiftly, accompanied by the sounds of a deep voice cursing. I walked into a room ablaze with light, and was instantly confronted by a handsome well-dressed blond youth, wearing glasses and smoking a pipe. "I am John Koning," he said. I later found this statement to be true.

I whirled about to seek the source of the deep voice. Standing half-illuminated in the bathroom door was a stocky individual with a moustache. "I am Seth Johnson," he said, extending his hand. "Pleased to make your acquaintance."

Well! Here was more than I'd bargained for! Seth Johnson was not unknown to me, of course. I had first heard his name mentioned in something written by Gary Deindorfer. And in fact, I was later to learn that this person standing in the bathroom doorway was Gary Deindorfer. (To get even with him for telling this lie I have given him the moustache in the paragraph above.)

"Hello," said a sexy voice behind me, coming from John Koning, or, as I was shortly to learn, from John Koning's direction. I whirled about once more. Standing near Koning was a slim brunette, about 15 or 20, to whom I was at once attracted. "I am Lee Thorin," she said. "We used to be in the CRAP together."

"And I am Herman Melville," I said. "I do not know who you are, lady, but I am attracted to you and will call you 'Lee Thorin' if you wish."

At this point it is only fair to point out that I am giving myself all the best lines here so as to appear to be funnier in print than I am in person. In reality, the above conversation was dominated by Bhub Stewart, who -- and this is certainly a tribute to his own magnetism -- did not actually arrive at the convention until the next day.

Well, it really was Lee Thorin, and that night we threw a big party in Room W-907 (The Fanass Hospitality Room, which I immediately adopted for my own sleeping, thanks to the generosity of Deindorfer and Koning). A lot of people got drunk. It was at this party that Warren Brick and Gary Deindorfer evolved their now-famous theory of

humor, which they explained at length throughout the remainder of the con to anyone who would listen. "There are four types of humor," Warren said. "Earth, air, fire and water."

"Earth humor," Gary would say, "is body humor, like, 'Hey, I'm going to burn off your arm.'"

"Air humor," Warren would say, "is intellectual humor, like, 'Hey, somebody just burned off John Updike's arm.'"

"Fire humor," Gary would say, "is very sadistic humor, like, 'Hey, I'm going to burn off both your arms.'"

"Water humor," Warren would say, "is humor that doesn't quite make it, like, 'Hey, I almost burned your arm off.'"

It was a great party. Even before I had anything to drink I drove Ron Ellick's car across the state line to get some liquor and scraped the side of it against a fender. Mr. Ellick nearly split his gut with laughter when he found out about it.

CHAPTER IV --- Plain Talk

It is about time for some plain talk here. Let's be honest. I did not take notes at the convention. I was not even planning to write a convention report. So, of necessity, this is all a pile of crap. From here on, I will make little or no attempt to place things in their proper order, or to tell the truth, or anything like that. Maybe you will like this "Last Year at Marienbad" approach. (This, incidentally, reminds me of my favorite joke about "Last Year at Marienbad," but we have more important things to get to.)

CHAPTER V -- Sketches (1): Les Nirenberg

I do not remember when or where I first saw the name "Les Nirenberg." Probably it was back in the good old days of the Carbon Reproduced Amateur Press, when Jerry Knight and I were flunking out of the University of California at Berkeley together. Or maybe it was written on a toilet seat. Well, whenever it was that I first saw it, I immediately formed a mental picture (in my mind, of course) of Les Nirenberg, just as many people do to amuse themselves during life.

I met Les Nirenberg at the convention.

Les Nirenberg does not fit my mental picture. He's too big. He's too energetic. He's too old. ("He's too much," as a girl told me, starry-eyed, but I will withhold his name from that to protect him.)

Les Nirenberg is wildly funny in person. He has a face which, in the words of Les Gerber, "looks as though it were carved from a rubber potato." Les Nirenberg can make you laugh just by moving his face around. That's the kind of a guy he is.

Les Nirenberg and John Koning and Gary Deindorfer and Les Gerber and I went into the stationery store next to the hotel to pick up some white paper and marking pencils. We wanted to post placards around inside the hotel telling how to get to the Fanass Hospitality Room incorrectly. (It sounds stupid now, but it wasn't. You had to be there.) When Les Nirenberg walked into the stationery store, he took over. He started ordering the clerk around briskly, feeding him one-liners, and hawking "The Panic Button," all with the same mouth. The clerk was amused. He laughed at Les and accepted a free copy of "The Panic Button" willingly. We exited, staggering from laughter.

About a half hour later we were getting out of the elevator on our way to the Fanass Hospitality Room when we stumbled across Ron Ellik. We excused ourselves. He was obviously shaken by something. "The clerk in the stationery store next to the hotel," he said, "was disturbed by you people, and--" Fortunately at this point somebody shot him in the back of the head.

Well, that's "Sketches" for this con report.

CHAPTER VI -- Phillip N. Bridges Asserts Himself

"I want you to meet some friends of mine," Gary Deindorfer said at the costume ball. He hauled me through the crowd and introduced me to an old friend of his from work, and his friend's new wife.

"Hello," I said.

Things went on like this for some little time. Gary's friends didn't know anything about science-fiction fans, but they were greatly amused by all of us. I was astonished by the resemblance of Gary's friend's pretty wife to my old high-school flame, Sandy Sell. I was just about to grab her and kiss her suddenly when along came a tall, thin, middle-aged, white-haired man wearing a convention badge which identified him as "Phillip N. Bridges."

"You people will have to leave," said Phillip N. Bridges to Gary's friends, smiling jovially. "You are not wearing convention badges."

Gary and I both spoke harshly to old Phil about this, and he disappeared. We thought that everything had been settled.

However, about five minutes later Phillip N. Bridges reappeared, accompanied by the policeman who had been stationed at the door to keep out the Merely Curious.

"These people will have to leave," said Phillip N. Bridges loudly, pointing to Gary's friends. "They are not wearing convention badges." And the policeman escorted Gary's friends out, as courteously as he could under the circumstances.

Gary and Ted White and several other people and I left with them. I looked closely at Phillip N. Bridges' badge on the way out. I have never before taken such an instant dislike to someone, and I wanted to make sure I could remember how to spell his name.

CHAPTER VII -- How I Finally Met Warren Brick

I have always been an admirer of the writings of Warren Brick. I regard him as one of the funniest people now writing in fandom. You can imagine my pleasure, then, at hearing that he was going to be at the convention. I had never met him, but several New York fans had.

Warren and I have been corresponding for nearly three years now, and I wanted to meet him and find out if he was as funny in person as he is in letters and in his fanzines.

I finally ran into Warren, quite by accident, at the party Thursday evening. He was wearing Terry Carr's name badge, and when I said, "Hey, you're not Terry Carr," he looked at my name badge and smiled widely.

"Calvin Demmon!" He said. "I'm Warren Brick."

Well, that's how I finally met Warren Brick.

CHAPTER VIII -- The Best Party Of The Con

Last weekend Ted and Sandi were driving out to Pennsylvania to see the house they plan to buy, and they invited me to go along.

"The best time I had at the con," Ted said, as we were driving along the Turnpike, "was at the party up in Terry and Carol's room. That was a good party."

"Yes," Sandi agreed. "That was the best party of the con."

"Les Gerber did his Elvis Presley imitation," said Ted. "He sang 'Heartbreak Hotel' and played his nose between choruses."

"And Pete Graham sang 'It Certainly Is A Wonderful Thing,'" said Sandi.

"He's the only one who knows all the words," Ted explained.

"That was the best party of the con," Sandi said.

"Say," said Ted, turning suddenly to me. "You weren't there, were you?"

IX -- Lenny Kaye

I owe a lot to Lenny Kaye.

Lenny Kaye followed me around a couple of nights when I got a little high. He stayed relatively sober, and was thus able to tell me in the morning whom I'd insulted and what kind of evil I had wrought.

If Lenny Kaye tells anybody else all that stuff I will kill him.

X -- Warren Brick Strikes

Sometime early Saturday morning, when parties were running wild all over the hotel, a whole bunch of us decided to go out to get something to eat. Les Nirenberg, Jon White, Lenny Kaye, Pat and Dick Lupoff, and I were all in the group. We decided to go to the nearby White Towers, an open-all-night hamburger place.

Warren Brick went with us.

Warren was pretty high, and he is very funny when he has been drinking. When we asked him to go with us to get something to eat, he said "Sure," and he put his drink in his pocket and followed us out.

When we got to the White Towers we all sat down at a tiny table. Warren put his drink on the table and sat next to Pat Lupoff. A fraternity convention was also being held in the hotel, and in the White Towers that morning were about three or four frat boys, wearing their red frat fez-type caps.

"Hey," said Warren to one of them. "What is that red plastic you have on your head?"

"That is no plastic," said the frat boy, obviously not amused.

"Are you a homosexual?" asked Warren.

"No," said the frat boy, scowling manfully.

"I am," said Warren Brick.

"That's queer humor," he said, turning to Pat Lupoff. "Hey, you're a lot sexier in person than your husband." Then he put his drink back in his pocket and left.

Well, I still like Warren Brick.

XI -- Some More Chapters

I have a lot of other ideas for stories about the convention here, but somehow I'm just not in the mood to type them all out. For what they're worth, though, here are the chapter headings for the rest of my report:

John Koning And His 144 Rubbers
 Lee Thorin -- Demolition Expert
 I Insult Bob Leman
 Dick Lupoff Insults Me
 Dick Lupoff Is Looking For A Fat Lip

Maybe I will finish this report some day and send it off to Shirley Camper. Anyway, in the words of Les Nirenberg, "It was a great convention, and I'm only sorry I couldn't be there."



FARLEY AND THE CHAIR HE WAS

Once upon a time there was a little boy named Farley Granger. He was not the Farley Granger. Farley wanted to be a Movie Star when he grew up. "I want to stand in front of those Kleig Lights," he often said, "and assume the personality of another individual. I want to immerse myself in this individual, until I become one with him and am him, and we are the same and think the same thoughts." Farley Granger wanted to become a Method Actor.

Farley's ambition caused him no little trouble during his early years. Often when he had begun to practice in the living room someone would come in and sit down on him, thinking that he was a chair. Once in the Grocery Store somebody put a penny in his eye, thinking that he was a gum machine. Farley never dared practice in the bathroom.

When he grew up Farley headed right for Hollywood. He burst on the scene like a nuclear test ban. Everybody wanted him. Some people wanted him for chairs, some for tables, some for sinks. One producer, working on a cowboy movie, wanted to use him for a pair of swinging doors in a saloon, but at this Farley drew the line. "What," he asked indignantly, "and get my hinges blown off?"

At last he got a part as a human being. It was a leading role, in fact. He was very excited about it, and, when the film was In The Can, the critics were excited about it too. They were unanimous in their praise of the movie. "This is the first time," one said, "that an American producer has dared to make a motion picture without a hero. This bold move has swept away a lot of conventions and showed us, once and for all, that the motion picture camera is not just another toy to take to the beach. Only one thing about this film puzzles us, although it is surely tremendous symbolism: what was that large overstuffed couch doing in the center of every major scene?"

Farley returned home a hero. There was a large crowd waiting for him at the station, but they were all disappointed when nobody got off but a very large, very rich bass violin.