

# HITZHIKE

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--James I (from "A Counterblast to Tobacco," 1604)

The reason it's been so long between issues, you see, is because I went to Australia after all.

Yes, I know, I carefully explained why I couldn't afford to make the trip if I didn't win DUFF, and when I wrote the last issue's editorial I had given up any hope of going to the Aussiecon. And I was right, I couldn't afford it. But I could scrape together enough cash to do it, and over the course of the early summer my good sense deserted me entirely and I decided to go. The moment came, a conjunction of time and place and people that wouldn't come again, and I simply refused to pass it up. This has left me quite poor this fall, and not at all well provided

hitchhike--ii

while I look for a place to settle down for the winter and search for an alternative to the office work I was doing in DC, but it was worth it. For the full story you'll have to wait until I write a trip report.

It was late winter in Australia, cold and rainy, but the cherry trees were in bloom and everything was very green, like California at the equivalent time of year. (This was especially poignant since we had just left California at the end of its summer, when everything was hot and dry and brown.) I was traveling with Susan Wood, as I had been for most of the summer. We were also traveling with 58 other North American science fiction fans, on the three-week Aussiecon group flight that had been organized by Grace and Don Lundry. (The only way I could justify to myself taking a short package tour like that was to think of it as a scouting expedition, and to assume that I'll get back someday with enough time to do it right. After meeting so many fine people in Australia and New Zealand, I'm more certain than ever that I will be back.) The flight was as little organized as it could be, but by its nature it had to be at least partly a group deal; to get the relatively cheap airfare, you have to spend a given amount on ground accommodations. Most of these were taken up by rooms at the con hotel during the Aussiecon itself, hotel rooms in Sydney the night after we arrived and the night before we left Australia, and the three-and-a-half days in New Zealand at the end of the trip, which were conducted on a much more touristy basis. (I must write sometime soon about the difference between being a "traveler" and being a "tourist.") Most of the time Susan and I made our own trip.

The heart of the trip for both of us was people. I had only really known John Bangsund, from letters and fanzines; Valma Brown and Leigh Edmonds, from meeting them when they were over here last year and from reading Leigh's fanzines; Bruce Gillespie, from meeting him at Torcon and of course from his fanzines; and a few others from fanzines or from their trips to North America. Now I have made lots of new friends in Australia and gotten to know better the ones I already had.

Perhaps the most unexpected friendship I developed was with Carey Handfield. I had only known him as a name that kept cropping up in Australian fanzines, but Susan had been corresponding with him about their mutual interest in Canadian and Australian literatures, and by virtue of this I got to know him. Carey is a tall, husky young man who lets his shoulders slump and so tends to look less fit than he really is. He has a freshly-scrubbed look about him at times, and he's usually quiet. When I first met him I felt he could easily be a typical introverted science fiction fan, big and amiable but bumbling, spending most of his life behind a typewriter. He's nothing of the kind. Carey has quite a few sides to himself, undoubtedly more than I caught a glimpse of. He's extremely competent at whatever he does (hardly an attribute of the average fan!); he seemed to be the one person on the Aussiecon committee that everybody else knew they could rely on. (Not a slur on anybody else on the committee, merely a description of Carey.) His hobby, aside from science fiction, is bushwalking--hiking, backpacking through the hills and plains and deserts of Australia--which is something I would dearly have loved to have time to do with him. (The mountains around Canberra, with their park-like expanses of grassland dotted with eucalyptus trees, looked like they would afford some fine hiking, and Carey assured me that there were excellent trails in those parts.) He also has the literary interest to be trading booklists with Susan and to have set up an interview for her with someone at Melbourne University about the possibilities of her going back on a Canada Council grant to study comparative Canadian-Australian lit.

We lucked out when Carey decided that he needed to get away from Melbourne for a brief vacation once the Aussiecon was over: he offered to drive us to Canberra, thus saving us money and a long train trip and giving us much more chance to see

hitchhike--iii

the country in between than we had ever expected to have. If the weather hadn't been cloudy and rainy, we would have made it a two-day trip and taken the scenic way into Canberra through the Snowy Mountains, but as it was the only deviation we made from the Hume Highway, the straightest and most heavily-traveled route, was on coming out of Melbourne, where Carey took us by an alternate route that took us over a reasonably mountainous part of the Great Dividing Range and gave us a fine view in the distance of the Dandenongs. (There are places where the Great Dividing Range is little more than a few hills, and even Mt. Kosciusko, Australia's tallest mountain, is only 7316 feet high.) We saw a great deal of rolling country, cattle, sheep, grass, and eucalyptus trees. Scores of varieties of eucalyptus ("gum trees"), in a great deal more variety than what I was used to in California. There's something very odd about a eucalyptus forest: because none of the trees have very thick foliage, there seems to be no point where the ground is completely shaded, and you have the impression that the heart of the forest is always somewhere else.

Another unexpected phenomenon of the trip was that several of the people I got to know better were among the North American fans. In a way, it made me glad that Rusty Hevelin won DUFF, because otherwise he wouldn't have been along on the trip and I would never have gotten to know him as more than a passing acquaintance at American conventions. In fact, we may have set a new tradition for fandom, or at least for the Down Under Fan Fund: all three of the candidates ended up making the trip. Jan Howard Finder had flown to the States from Italy to be on the Aussiecon flight.

It was no surprise at all--although it was certainly a bit ironic--that I had to travel all the way to Australia to meet, at last, Ursula Le Guin. She has been the only science fiction writer to truly excite me since I stopped being a teenager, and the only one I've wanted to meet purely on the basis of what she had revealed about herself in her work. Her books have tapped into most of the deep streams and ways of perception that I'd like to embody in my own writing, and meeting her I found her in no way less than I had expected; but I discovered a whole added side that no description I'd heard or read had prepared me for. She's a very ordinary human being--which is not a very usual thing to be. She has a twinkle of mischievousness that complements rather than detracts from her essential dignity and grace. She might be one person I would suggest to Alexei Panshin, in response to his letter last issue, as one of my heroes--except that nobody so down-to-earth and unpretentious and friendly should be pushed up on a pedestal marked "Hero." (The only other person I could think of, Alex, whom I might regard that way is the poet Gary Snyder, and I'm sure that if I met him I'd find the title "hero" equally inappropriate.)

But you'll hear all about the Australian trip and the people I met when I do a trip report. I had a few other experiences over the summer, too.

On our way west by train in June, Susan and I stopped for a couple of days in Edmonton, Alberta, where we stayed with Sharon and Doug Barbour. Doug is a poet and a teacher of Canadian literature at the University of Alberta, and the thesis he's been working on for years now is on science fiction--specifically Delany, Russ, and Le Guin. You can get some idea of his sensibilities from his letter in this issue; he's a nonstop talker when he gets going, and his no-capitals style is just an expression of that on paper. Sharon is less involved with fandom or sf, but she's articulate and perceptive in talking about the levels of illusion and game-playing that people relate to each other on. Both Sharon and Doug were bemused, I think, to have a traveling noncon descend upon them from two different directions at once.



In Edmonton, you see, as we headed west, we were met by traveling fan Michael Carlson, on his way back east from a visit to Seattle. Mike strikes me as very much the person I might be if I had accepted the invitation to go to Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, when I graduated from highschool, instead of heading west to Stanford. He travels as much as I do, but--except for this last trip, which I think was his first time west--his range is mostly from New England down to Virginia. (He has just gone back to college, as a graduate student in English, and he's now living in Montréal.) Mike is one of those people I can get along with well on any level, and we can shift levels constantly and feel comfortable on all of them. He also throws a mean frisbee.

While in Edmonton, we went to see Calvin and India Demmon. We went first to the offices of The Edmonton Report, the weekly news magazine that they both work on, and then met them at home and sat around talking for a while. It was an awkward scene, I'm afraid, because I tried to do two things at once and they wouldn't go together. I was trying to catch up on three years with India and especially with Calvin, and at the same time I was trying to introduce my friends to each other. It mostly ended up with me and Calvin talking to each other, trying to feel each other out after all this time, while Susan, Mike, and Doug sat and watched. I'm sorry we didn't have more time, because if they'd had time to get to know each other I'm sure that both sets of people would have gotten on very well, but it just didn't work out that way.

Neither Calvin nor India have changed that much since they left San Francisco, but there is one big difference: they're doing something now that involves them totally. The communal group they're living with, and the magazine the group publishes, take up all their time and all their energy, except for what they put into raising their kids (and I don't really think that that's separate from the rest). They don't have much time for outside things, but they were pleased to see me and made what time they could. They both seemed happy and centered.

With a twenty-page lettercolumn, I have no room to write any more. And here I haven't even mentioned the day we spent at the Zen Center in San Francisco with Andrew Main, or the week we had an apartment to house-sit on Russian Hill, or staying with Alicia Austin in Los Angeles and seeing the Scythian exhibit, or visiting Cathryn and David Miller on their farm outside Saskatoon, or riding down the Oregon and California coasts with Frank and Anna Jo Denton, or staying with Rick Mikkelson and Lynne Dollis in Vancouver, or...or.... But there isn't any room. I've had all these excellent letters waiting all summer to see print, and I'd rather publish them than keep rambling about my travels. (I hate it when I let too much time elapse between issues. I'd like to keep them short, under an ounce for the postal weight, and get them out more frequently.)

It's a cool, overcast night in Oregon. The winter rains have started. I'm staying with Paul Novitski, in the house that he shares with his two sisters and a couple who came out here from Rhode Island, on a quiet residential street amid the trees of Eugene. Paul has just finished typing up some material for the science fiction class he's taking at the local community college, and I'm working on a fanzine. I'm getting pretty tired of being on the road; in another week or so I'll be heading north to look for a place to live in Washington state. This is the fifth fall in a row where I've been looking for a place to live. Perhaps by the next issue I'll be able to give you an address of my own. (I'll be doing another issue soon, trying to balance between avoiding the Christmas rush and getting it out before the postage rates rise.) Think I'll end with a line from an old Lead-belly song:

Well, I feel like walkin'  
And I feel like lyin' down.

# letters



PAUL NOVITSKI: I'm really surprised to discover someone else who knows of Gordon Bok. I heard his album with Peter Kagan and the Wind when I lived in Ocean Park, Washington, itself a tiny fishing town. To tell the truth I wasn't terribly turned on by Bok (though Peter Kagan was a nice eerie song); probably if I heard him again (it's been three years) I'd feel differently.

I really share your desire for a bookshop-cum-restaurant. At some point in my life I'd really like to start, or work in, a small comfortable eatery where people are encouraged to spice their soup with Hesse, Kerouac, Russ, and Le Guin. Unfortunately I can't imagine how a book-browsing place could possibly break even, especially if it's not a restaurant but just a coffee-and-tea house. I suppose it would almost have to be part of a private residence, or one room of a building that brings in enough income to support it. There's a chance that someday I'll be able to make the Reality Library into that sort of thing. I'm considering cleaning out the garage of my current house and putting the library in there this summer, with a rug and a hot-plate and a couple stuffed chairs and pillows. But that requires that I be there for long chunks of time on a regular schedule, something my present flighty lifestyle just wouldn't encompass. Hey, John, why don't you spend a couple months in Eugene this summer? Between the two of us....

Thank you for including the Henry Miller quote about solitude in the wilderness. When I lived on Vashon Island I rented a summer cottage down on the water; my backyard was a forested hillside thick with fern and birdcalls and sweet smells of undergrowth and fir--after living there a while, even when I was working swing-shift at the noisy foul ski-factory on the island, I found my mind lulled by the lapping waves and gentle scenery, until the interior of my head was almost completely still, and like a quiet pond reflected the sights & smells & feelings of the world so much more clearly and vividly than I'd ever experienced. I felt purified. At the same time, though, I kept getting these nagging impulses from some one of me scolding me for letting my mind go idle. I was guilty for doing nothing! How warped our culture is.

Now I've been living in Eugene (again) for two years, and my head is continuously flinging thoughts back and forth. I get very few moments of real stillness. I've got habits again. Oh, lord! These days it seems like so many people are getting closer to establishing a comfortable medium between total idleness (and starvation) and total frenzy (and ulcers): particularly growing their own food, which is a way of providing your own keep and at the same time slowing down, or meditating, or finding that stillness, whatever you want to call it. I wouldn't want to be a full-time farmer, but I don't think I'd have to to supply myself with vegetables.

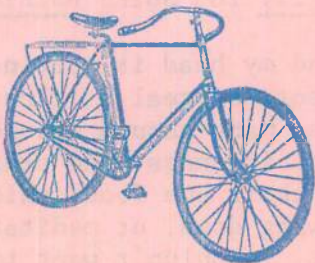
Ray Nelson's predictions were fascinating: I love it, just love it when people put themselves out on a limb like that, even if the Big Risk is only to find out they were wrong. I'm not sure I agree with Ray's image of the U.S.A. (concentric circles radiating from Berkeley). I think every community or energetic individual is an origin of radiation that mutates the whole. Telegraph Avenue may be one of the most powerful foci of California, but California is not the entire country, whatever its inhabitants may believe. (Actually, as I begin to argue against Ray's predictions I find them pretty solid, at least as far as California goes: and America has such an amphetamine-driven cultural heart, most influences spread from coast to coast in a very short time, even when the immediate causes (such as the proportion of Chicano inhabitants) are not present.)

I find many members of the Younger Generation (those leaving high school) to be remarkably straight, in late 60's terms. Alcohol, money, marriage, house-buying, established forms of political expression (such as elections) have become more important than they were ten years ago. It's as if the entire youth culture were cycling back to the 50's. With a few important overlays of cultural change, such as balanced sex roles. One issue that Ray left out that I think will become increasingly important in the next five years is the horrendous condition of our penal system: the realization that prisons don't rehabilitate, that the only prisoners capable of "behaving perfectly" in jail--and who are therefore paroled--are the psychotics. I think the death penalty will become common again for crimes of violence, and probation made more popular for lesser crimes--or some basic change in the way people are handled when they defy social sanctions.

Alice Sanvito's letter is interesting: for the past three or four months I've eaten no meat at all, as contrasted to once every couple of weeks in previous months. I've finally begun to get the hang of balancing proteins (Diet for a Small Planet is a great help) but I get anaemic when I stop eating cheese and eggs. Alice's additional information about dairy animals being regularly slaughtered for meat throws another complication into the business of trying to live without unnecessary killing. I usually buy eggs from a co-op that gets them from a farm on which the chickens are grazed on fieldgrass and grain, instead of being pumped up on hormones and special grains. It seems to me that chickens could conceivably be left to die of old age on a farm like that, though probably the economics would be prohibitive.

Your exchange with Ted White is a nice solid hub for this HITCHHIKE to turn on. I find myself agreeing with both of you so much it hurts. I've had several bouts with collective living--and one communal--in the past few years, and none of them have been successful in the long run. The deficiency I see in myself that relates to these failures is simple selfishness: I'm used to devoting about 90% of my time to myself, and therefore tend to find myself, after living with other people for a few months, being my usual unorganized and slothful self, leaving the brunt of the drudgery to others. For myself, I see learning to live communally as a positive direction, a growth need, from my present egotism. This country is in the rotten shape it's in today for exactly that reason: everyone has been brought up to struggle for their own private slice of the pie: an income, a piece of land, a house, a car, a stereo, etc., with little or no thought to others. We--and I

guess I mean especially we men--have been trained to see other men in the "job market" as competition and nothing else. Women, relegated to the home, have been taught to envy and compete with other women over issues like laundry and floors and husbands and children. The most important countercultural movement I see happening today is one of people shaking loose from this kind of possessive, ego-dominated consciousness and into one that is more mutually supportive. Feminism is part of it;



so is masculism, food co-ops, community consciousness raising in general. The feeling, spreading out across the peoplescope, that we're all in this together. The Odonian society that Ursula Le Guin depicts in The Dispossessed could never work on our lush Earth, but it's certainly the direction we have to work toward in order to survive the coming few decades as a species.

As you point out, "collectivism" is probably closer to the ideal than "communalism." We're not going to lose our territoriality soon, if ever; we'll always need a room of our own, books and records and time of our own. But it's getting to the point where our GNP, once spread evenly, will simply not support an entire house and lawn for every two or three people. Especially if you even out the world's GNP among its inhabitants. So the Paul Novitski's and Ted White's of the world will have to give, somewhere.

Back to collective households, though, I see a great parallel between them and monogamous marriages. Perhaps we shouldn't expect them to last indefinitely. It's very difficult for most people I know to live for more than a year with one set of people, however small or large a group it is. Anthropologists are fairly certain that humans derive from a nomadic species: perhaps it is simply not in our blood to stay in one place a long time. To me that makes sense and feels right; it also helps explain why cities breed schizophrenia like they do.

Susan Wood's letter about appearance vs. identity reminded me of all the alienation I felt from the "straight" community when I had very long hair, and also the alienation I felt from the "hip" community when I cut it very short. Last March I even went so far as to ask a friend to shave my head, which alienated me from practically everybody. Changing my outward appearance has really been a heavy learning --it's really shown me how much we assume about a person's inside from their outside. These days I'm working on another aspect of that same problem: I tend to look at, and be attracted to, women who conform to my own standards of physical beauty. My standards aren't totally different from Vogue's or Seventeen's parameters; rather they overlap a little, and include a lot of other women (and men) who you'd never see in the appearance-oriented media. But still I'm reacting to people first and foremost on the basis of how they look, largely a hereditary matter and not much changed by their lifestyles. Although on one hand I don't see anything wrong with feeling sexually attracted to certain women (usually by their faces), I do recognize it as (I think) an extension of the "objectification" process by which we are brought up to view people as sexual commodities. I still haven't found a resolution to that contradiction I see inside me.

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((Several years ago, while I was still a student at Stanford, a theater group played on campus. It was called the Barbed Wire Theater, and it was entirely made up of ex-convicts. The play they were touring with, which had also been playing in New York City, was a dramatization of the effects of prison life on a variety of people--including, what hit closest to home for most of us in the audience, a young kid on a six-month sentence for marijuana possession. That play was what first brought home to me how thoroughly rotten and viciously ineffective our penal system was. I bought an associate membership in the Barbed Wire Theater, which put me on their mailing list and gave me a wallet-sized card. Unfortunately, the card was stolen with my wallet a year and a half ago, and I hadn't heard anything from the Barbed Wire Theater in much longer than that. Does anybody know anything about them?

I asked David Miller, who lives on a functioning farm outside Saskatoon, about the practicality of letting your chickens die of old age: he confirmed what I thought, that it's not economically feasible.

I don't really believe the old saw about not judging a book by its cover; I think that the life you lead does make a deep impression on your appearance, and that inasmuch as you're judging by things that are

influenced by a person's environment (not, in other words, whether someone's nose is big or small), you'll get some indication of that person's character. You won't do too well, though, if you rely solely on that kind of judgment; it's only an indication, and it can be dead wrong.))

DOUG BARBOUR: anyway, having perused--slowly--the HITCHHIKES you left with me (i am after all trying to rewrite this thesis thing, & it is a slow, most painful process to try to tell someone who hasn't read the book what i want to say about them), &, as i am resting a bit this late saturday aft, i shall attempt to loc just a bit of the material contained therein. of course i can't talk about it all, the 3 issues here in front of me, & the other 2 i read while you were here. but a lot of it is thoughtprovoking, & so what has been provoked most readily & in the most articulatable manner will likely surface at some point.

i was interested in the 'places of power' concept. query: is niagara falls a place of power? (aside from hydro-electric) i ask this not merely out of devilish fun, because i think it is not--now--but once was. for us whatever power there might have been there has been pretty well leached out by the tons of tourist trade & the advertizing trade which trades on their emotions. but cast yourself back to some of the early natives or the first whites to ever see it. for them it must have had 'resonance.' resonance: 'places of resonance.' i think i like that better than 'places of power': for me the suggestions associated with 'resonance' are ethically (? ethically? maybe that's not quite the word i want; possibly ethics shouldn't be invoked, in fact i suspect they shouldn't), no, not ethically, perhaps aesthetically (East Hetically, you know, just around the corner from West Andonguard Forthee) aesthetically superior to those associated with 'power.' i suspect there are some falls in the world which haven't been drained of 'resonance' by hype; they're probably very special places for those who know them.

speaking of such places of resonance, however, i really appreciate the concept; and have a few i can think of immediately. 2 of them are on vancouver island, not too far from one another, & in fact you pass through one to get to the other. they are Cathedral Grove & Long Beach. both are somewhat touristy, but that doesn't really affect them, they soar beyond the day to day petty concerns of humanity, & you can, as an individual, relax into the more eternal aspects of their presence if you want to. although Cathedral Grove is owned by macmillan-bloedel, which systematically cutting all the rest of the forests of vancouver island down, it stands itself, & it is a cathedral. i feel awe among those huge trees, reaching out to touch a living thing that was around about the time of the Magna Carta. Long Beach is something else, it's all that sand & what's covered by it, it's the smooth waves forever rolling in, the rocks that straddle the beach after a few miles, where the waves can roil & crash, & after you climb over there goes the beach for miles again. all the space there forces one to notice the tiny things. it's just overwhelming, a never-boring place of subtle revelations. those 2 i shall return to for spiritual solace. the last time we were down there, we also toured the gulf islands. spent the night on galiano, & ended up sleeping beneath the stars. that was also revelatory for me the city boy. i was worn out but just couldn't keep from gasping at ALL THE STARS out there! the poem enclosed called 'on galiano island' is an attempt to capture some of that feeling. we forget that with all our lights we have blanked out the huge tapestry the night sky presented to everyone as short a time ago as, say, 50 years. a place of resonance? im not sure, but that night's light resonated in me. Maligne Canyon also proved a place of deep witchery for me, but that was a result of man cohering things that met while i was spending a few days there. i was in a space that allowed that space to speak to me as it might not have done another time. but the poems will show you what i mean.

on to other things--there's so much! i enjoy your talk, it feels real even when you do get carried away & begin making those lofty generalizations your faith-

ful readers refuse to let you get away with. the whole 'fannish access catalogue' aspect of HITCHHIKE is interesting & often divertingly delightful--i think of susan's and eli's letters, among others. i loved your idea for a coffee-house, sidewalk cafe, bookstore for browsers, until i thought about its possibility in the real world. it seems too much like a daydream, & i suspect it will remain thus. which is too bad, cos i'd love to visit there. alice sanvito makes some interesting points about vegetarianism, which others profess too. we often go quite a few days without eating meat--after all it is expensive--but we never give it up. i dont mind admitting im a carnivore, & i find that after a certain period of time i yearn for some kind of meat. eating it that way, however, as a treat, makes it seem truly delicious in a way that many over-consumers of meat probably no longer enjoy. i guess i admire the vegetarians, & we have often made meals for our vegetarian friends which are yumptious indeed. since i dont really have anything against eating meat, though, i cant work up the moral fervour to give it up.

ted white's letter is really interesting & gives me some idea of why he is so highly thought of as a fanwriter. it deserved, even demanded your lengthy reply. as is usually the case in such things, youre both right & wrong, mostly when either of you gives in to generalization. what about checking out jane jacobs's The Death of the American City (i think that's the title) for some of the information you need to conduct that argument about suburbs. by the way, joanna russ dislikes them as much as you do--see her presentation of the Earth as a huge, crazy suburb in And Chaos Died.

as i read along i was formulating a letter of some pith & moment about how we had all been changed--even the squares--by what had gone down in the 60s (it was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was, as usual, a time of change, but a lot of the changes snuck up from the inside). then i came across alexei panshin's letter in #24. it says almost all of what i wanted to try to get at, & does it brilliantly. the note of hope at the end is also nice. "change-in-being" is also a dynamic process, & like most of the processes which we are caught up in --not watching, but participating in, often without knowing that--it is mostly below the surface & beyond easy analysis. what a lot of your letters reveal is that people have undergone some rather incredible--even to them--changes over the past 10 years or so. we think differently, even if we dont consciously realize that fact. whether we all do, is another question, which appeared to be answered in the negative by the nixon triumph in 72 (by trudeau here). but i like to think/ hope that that was a last resurgence of a kind of mentality that not only rules the heads & hearts of a large number of people but also still lurks in all our heads at different levels of strength. maybe? maybe so. i am rambling, he said, with his usual perspicacity. what i mean is that i know i think about others, & am able to accept a wider range of otherness in people than i could in 1965. why? well, because, despite the fact that all the revolutionary rhetoric was no more than pious bullshit, & despite the fact that rock is big business now--but still in the best hands, even the Rolling Stones for example who, for all their jet set travelling, have not sold out in their music, which is where what they are & do counts, a source of energy--too much went down in the last decade that altered consciousness in those subtle, long-term ways we cant easily pinpoint & write a TIME story on. something began to percolate in a lot of heads during that time, & it may, if we're lucky, eventually pop to the surface of a lot of mentalities, a little boiling energy-thought, another nudge against the stasis-machine, something's happening. maybe? i hope so. & so does alexei, even if he cant read delany's great novel. ah well, we cant all be perfect.

your comments on staying in saskatchewan were finely hued, & to the point. often it takes an outsider to see clearly what insiders assume so easily they dont even notice. you showed yourself a good reporter at the party & other doings, & i enjoyed reading it. places where you can lay down roots. that's a big canadian concern right now. regional writers for example are reveling in how they can use their regional roots to dig out universals in their writings. even if you move a

letters--vi

lot, as i have, you try to get into wherever you are, to live there, so you can write out of it. it's difficult, but it's also so damnd worthwhile.

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((Thank you for doing one thing that nobody else has done in response to HITCHHIKE, and something that I had thought about and then not done myself: you've evoked the feeling of your own places of power. (I like the phrase "places of resonance," but I also like my own phrase.) I hope to get a chance to go to Cathedral Grove and Long Beach in the next few months.

This is the kind of letter that makes publishing HITCHHIKE worthwhile.))

WILL STRAW: ((writing from Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, where he was working during the summer:)) The climate was instrumental in driving me out of Ottawa for the summer; the city isn't phenomenally hot or anything, just typically, for that part of the country, and I remember last summer as having been a lazy and wasteful one. So I wanted to come north, though with 24 hours of sunlight, it gets equally hot here most days. (Don't ask me about temperatures: with the conversion to the Centigrade scale, I have lost my feel for the Fahrenheit scale and given up acquiring one for the new system, so I'm not aware of temperatures anymore.)

I've noticed a strong feeling of Northern Regionalism up here, and felt slightly alienated as a result, though the fact that those who practice it most exuberantly are often people who have been here only three or four years makes one doubt its validity. This city is full, right now, of people from the south and east who have come here because there is lots of money to be made, fast, and a certain amount of resentment on the part of the year-round inhabitants is inevitable. I remember feeling some of this when I went around looking for work my first few days here--then I mentioned that I'd lived in a northern community in Manitoba several years ago, and I was In. (I remember the Director of Personnel for the Territorial Government walking over to the window when I'd told him that, narrowing his eyes and smiling grimly, then saying: "Well, you know what this northern business is all about.") There is no Northern Separatism movement that I'm aware of, because the North couldn't stand on its own economically as yet, but there are movements to give the Northwest Territories provincial status. If the proposed MacKenzie Delta pipe line goes through (there are hearings currently being held to determine this), the economic boom that results will likely mean regionalism will rise sharply. What I've liked most about Yellowknife this summer is the return to the frontier-type life that I'd experienced in Manitoba: frontier in the sense that people have a more direct control over building their lives and a greater influence on their futures. If I was success-oriented, I'd stay here, because I've already had several offers for upwardly mobile job transfers, and it's reassuring to know that I can probably always return here if I want to obtain some kind of economic security.

I know what you mean, though, about people in the west having a sense of where they are; people from Ontario tend to think of it as the absence of place. This is a concept that gets tossed around a lot up here: the difference between living somewhere where you're always aware of where you're living, and living somewhere where you aren't. There's nothing more identity-less, I've found, than being of British descent living in Ottawa (unless it is being of British descent in Fort Erie), and I have to get away from that every few years.

Joan Barton, one of the people I lived with in Ottawa, was a Stringband fan and had and played their first album, and I liked it a lot and kept intending to buy it. I've been amazed at the number of records sold up here that I'd never find down south: full of songs about musquitoes and the MacKenzie River and Yellowknife and 24-hr. daylight. June 20th, the eve of the longest day of the year, all the stores in town stayed open until 2:00 am with special (but not very) bargains.

letters--vii

Raven Madness they called it; the Raven is the symbol of the city.  
(181 Fifth Ave., Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA)

((In contrast to your speculation about the Northwest Territories, Saskatchewan's regionalism comes out of a province that is very poor, and whose population is actually shrinking. (This is something of an acid test: if you're willing and able to put up with a Saskatchewan winter, you've really got a commitment to the place.) At the same time, Alberta, which was once as much a source of prairie radicalism as Saskatchewan, has turned around and become boom-town conservative since the discovery of oil. (That is almost entirely second-hand; I haven't spent enough time in Alberta to get much of a first-hand impression.) How, I wonder, does Alberta regionalism differ from Saskatchewan?))

ALICE SANVITO: Was just reading Eli Cohen's comments in HITCHHIKE about "Right livelihood" as a part of the Eightfold Path. Been thinking about that lately in terms of moving back to the city & getting a job so I can buy a piece of land. Chances are (maybe not) that I'll get a shitty job. Most city jobs are really weird jobs in one way or another, and it's pretty difficult to make a clean living. One thing I love about the country is that the work we do is the kind of thing I can feel real satisfied with. At the end of the day I really feel like I've done something. If I'm doing some work for someone else, I know I did a good job for them and gave them a fair deal. We were really fortunate to be able to work for ourselves this winter. When Jerry went to work a few days putting up hay with some local folks, he came home & said he'd forgotten what it was like to work with other people. Some of it was nice but some of it was weird--guys telling boring dirty jokes & getting into subtle macho contests. \*sigh\* Very different from when we were working in the woods together & could look up & see the pines on the side of the hill waving & get a rush like we'd just taken a hit of acid.  
(Rt. 5, Box 26, Bunker, MO 63629)

ROBERT LICHTMAN: Every time an issue of HITCHHIKE comes, I grab it up and read it avidly, and dig on it, and say, "Well, I've got to write a letter to John Berry as soon as I can," and then that's generally the end of it. Usually there's so much happening around here that personal letters come about last. Today, before starting this letter, I wrote my parents (!) for the first time since January. However....

You keep sending it and I keep enjoying it, so now that I have my chance.... I've been working in the Farm Print Shop. We have two Harris offset presses, one with a 29x36 blanket and one with a 23 1/4 x 23 blanket for some handle on how big they are. We also have a little Davison "duplicator" which would print up a dandy fanzine, and which we use for forms, labels, and that sort of thing. There's an antique (50-year-old) Seybold paper cutter, a folder, and a perfect binder which is the machine that makes a stack of pages into a paperback book. We do our collating by hand, still, just like in fandom. We have three air conditioners spotted around to keep the paper and equipment at a more or less even temperature, and which are a real joy to have in the hot, often humid Tenn. summer. I've been working there for a couple of months. So far I've been mainly integrating the paper cutter, doing the shipping, and helping out around the binder. This keeps me really busy and while I want to learn how to run the two Harris presses, I really haven't had the time to get into it.

What's got us jumping in the Print Shop these days is The Farm Vegetarian Cookbook, into its second printing (15,000 copies) after the first printing (10,000) sold out in a month. It's a mass-media oriented (4 1/4 x 7 paperback) book and we're getting big orders for it from news agencies and bookstore chains all over the country. And it's just beginning, it seems, 'cause we ain't hardly gotten out the word yet. This is a good place to say that we really got off on Alice Sanvito's

letter in #24 about where the dairy products part of the meat industry is at, 'cause Stephen's been saying that for years and our cookbook is about a diet with no dairy products or meat in it. For anyone who's interested, you can get it from the Farm for \$1.95 plus 18¢ postage. Order from The Book Publishing Company, The Farm, Summertown, TN 38483.

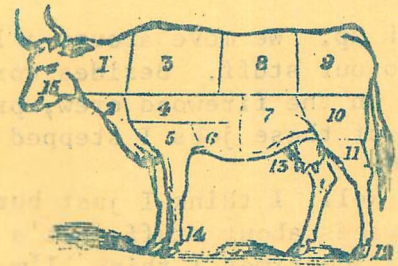
The thing about working in the Farm Print Shop as opposed to working a print shop anywhere else is that we're all doing it 'cause we want to, and we want to get out the stuff we put out for more than just the money, so we're all really into it and having a good time, and if we get burned out by the machinery--which happens now and then 'cause the Print Shop is one of the two noisiest spots on the Farm to work, the other being the Flour Mill--we can just pack it up and go swimming at Rattlesnake Falls for a few hours, or play frisbee, or whatever. This is true of all our gigs; we get a lot done, but we're not opposed to being free form and having fun, so long as the work does get done.

My wife, Denise, and I live in a house in the "downtown" part of the Farm. We have three sons, the oldest one of which is just 4 years old. Another couple with two kids lives with us, too, except that they left last week to go out on the road selling the Cookbook and our other books (& records) heading in the direction of Northern California and planning to go up to B.C. and across Canada. They'll be gone about two months. Our house is pretty small by suburban standards but it fits us all fairly good. The main living area is 16 x 24 feet and there's two pretty roomy sleeping lofts over it. There's a kitchen off that, and an 11 x 13 foot kid bedroom off the main room in another direction and down a couple of steps. From outside, the main part of the house looks like a Dutch Colonial (or Cape Cod) roof set down on the ground. This house we live in is one of the oldest on the Farm and quite a few folks have gotten to live in it. We've been in it about a year and feel really lucky to be here.

This is not our only farm, by the way. We have fourteen other farms all over the country. The largest and most established of those is the Wisconsin Farm, near Ettrick, Wisconsin, which has around 90 folks. We have a farm in southern Florida, near Homestead, which is 120 acres of prime southern Fla. agricultural land which we lease for \$2/acre/month (a fantastic low rental). We're getting that land ready now to plant in the next few weeks or so for a harvest in October and November. We're getting trucks together to haul food all over. We'll be hauling North to sell in the vegetable markets along our route, and we'll be making deliveries to our farms along the way. Selling the vegies will cover the cost of trucking and probably return a profit as well to expand the operation. In more down home terms, we're hot for fresh lettuce and tomatoes in the winter time! Other farms we have are in Kentucky (two farms), Virginia, West Virginia, Colorado, New York, California, Washington, Alabama, Missouri, Puerto Rico, and Canada. We have two couples living in Holland outside of Amsterdam, and there's a couple in Sweden who are not from the Farm, but of it. They're film makers who came to the Farm a couple of years ago and made this really nice documentary about the Farm for Swedish TV which is now part of the high school curriculum in Sweden. They stay connected with us and we send them our publications and records to distribute in Sweden.

But what Terry Hughes must want to know is, What is it like to live on the Farm anyway? It's a lot like living in a small town. It is a small town. We have lots of stuff happening all the time and we all have to work hard to cover it. Besides farming, we have our vehicles and farm equipment to keep up, our roads to keep in shape, our whole medical trip to keep together, a store to keep running to distribute food and sundries, a big canning and freezing center to put up food for the winter months, various utilities (electrical, plumbing, water delivery to areas without running water), etc. We have our own laundromat with a crew of folks to keep it running smoothly. We have a soy milk dairy where we produce 150 gallons of soy milk a day for distribution to the Farm and some of our neighbors. The soy dairy also includes "Janie's Bar & Grill," a take-out snack bar serving

ice cream (made from soy milk, of course) amongst other things. If you need groceries you go to the Farm Grocery Store and take what you need; the only limitations might be where we buy a certain fixed amount of something and then we'll put up a sign saying, for instance, "Sugar, 1/2 lb. a person" so it gets shared out equally. If you need money to do a trip in town, you go to the Petty Cash Lady and if she has money, she fixes you up and when you're done with your trip, you turn in any change you might have. All our babies are delivered at home here on the Farm (with some exceptions as come up now and then). All three of our boys were delivered here. We have a clinic with nurses who live on the Farm and we have a stoned doctor in a nearby town (not a beatnik doctor, by the way, an older man who's also the doctor for that town and who used to be the Mayor of that town) who comes out here every week or two and holds clinic for the Farm. We make our money through our publications some, but we also send out a lot of folks to work off the Farm, largely in the various construction trades (framing, roofing, painting, etc.) and with the money we get back from this labor we run the Farm. Another thing we have is our own phone system: the Beatnik Bell Telephone Co. A town south of here that had a small independent phone company for years had that phone company bought up by Ma Bell and their old, inadequate (for them) equipment was replaced by newer stuff. They gave us their entire old system, circuitry, phones, miles of wire, and all, in exchange for some labor (planting some seedling pines). We've built a block building to hold the circuitry, run wires out all over the Farm, and now we have 68 phones on the system and will have more as we string more wire. Our goal is a phone in every house that wants one. Our phone number is 92643. Before this phone system happened, we had another, primitive phone system to connect us up for emergency communications, but this system is much better.



We are organized like in the Book of Acts where it says, "And all that believed were together, and had all things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." A few folks who live here have put upwards of \$20,000-\$30,000 into the pot, while other folks have come here owing a bunch of money. We don't differentiate on that basis; the folks who came here with a lot of money don't get to live any fancier than the folks who just came. Also, some of us have rich, generous parents and some of us have poor or tight parents, and we aren't into having all the rich folks' kids get fancy houses laid on them by their parents (as started to happen a couple of times). If parents want to make that sort of contribution, we believe in sharing it out for something to aid the whole farm. We have a lot of projects that need money going at any given time, and we have a bank lady who is also the Farm business manager who keeps that part of our thing integrated.

We all interact a lot and we have to be in really good agreement and be friends and loving with one another to bring this number off, and Stephen's teachings help us to do this. Some folks look at the Farm and say, Well, Stephen holds it all together by being a strong leader. But he ain't a leader, he's a teacher, and like he says, "If you lose your leader, you're lost, but if you lose your teacher, there's a chance he taught you something and you remembered it, and you can keep on doing your thing." We get lots of chances to check this one out, 'cause Stephen has spent nearly a year in jail recently and we didn't fall apart and he goes out on tours and speaking engagements pretty regularly and we've been keeping it together. Also, there are all those other farms that don't have Stephen living there (though he tries to visit them when he can) and they all have to keep it together on the basis of his teachings rather than his presence. We all keep each other straight by being upfront with each other, which works good if you keep a sense of humor about it and don't take position on the other person. If we don't keep bailing out, we'd sink of all the subconscious (unspoken-of stuff) that would

letters--x

stack up. We move around a lot and change jobs a lot trying to work out good ways to do our stuff. Besides working in the print shop, I've run our grocery store, been on the firewood crew, promoted our records, and been one of the Farm buyers. Some of these jobs I stepped out of to do something else, other times I've been fired.

Well, I think I just burned out back in there somewhere. I could ramble on for pages about stuff that's happening here, but...what's a "lifestyle letter" anyway? Sometimes I think, I'm this old science-fiction fan who happens to be living in this far out science-fiction movie. That's some level of perspective, except that it's more real than that, living here. There's a lot of talk in HITCHHIKE about what the 70s is all about, and I think that the Farm is one of the answers.

By the way, even though I put out my last fanzine somewhere around 1968 (I don't have them anymore so I can't say for sure) and I've written maybe 15-20 letters to fans so far this decade, I'm kind of half-interested in seeing what else is happening and if anyone wants to send me their fanzine I'll have a look at it and if it gets me off (and if I find the time) I'll respond. If you got to have a letter back on every issue, though, forget it. I've really appreciated the way you've kept me on your mailing list, John, considering how poor a respondent I've been. HITCHHIKE isn't the only fanzine I've been getting since coming to the Farm, but it's the most consistently a turn-on.

(The Farm, Summertown, TN 38483)

((Good to hear from you. I too tend to think that the Farm is one of the answers to the question of where we're going from here, although it's not one that I would want to join myself. I'm fascinated to hear that a film about the Farm is part of the Swedish high school curriculum. What exactly does that mean? That every high school kid in Sweden sees the film, or just that it's used in some places for special programs? And what kind of material is it used with?

I like the way you named your publishing operation The Book Publishing Company; just as the whole place is called the Farm and the print shop is the Farm Print Shop. Total simplicity. It's in the same spirit as naming a cat Cat. Or Dog.

I can ask you a question that I've wondered about off-and-on for years now: why "beatnik"? Is it to suggest some kind of historical continuity?

Robert also included a copy of The Farm Report, which is just that, and a small newsprint booklet called "Yay Soybeans!" which is about the Farm's approach to food. I don't know if they're free or what, but you could always send a few stamps for postage to the Farm address and ask, if you're interested.))

TERRY HUGHES: I read this issue while riding on the bus home from work, just as I read the previous issue. It helps to pass the time and take my mind off traffic jams. Unfortunately it is not always easy to read to the greatest effect. Take for example the paragraph in which you made mention of "decaffeinated Bourbon Santos coffee"--I read that as being "decaffeinated Bourbon Street" and my interest really perked up. The idea of a decaffeinated section of New Orleans does more for my sense of wonder than does the reality of smelly old coffee.

(866 N. Frederick St., Arlington, VA 22205)

RAY NELSON: Alexei Panshin's letter bugged me.

He asks, "Are we all marking time while we wait for the Seventies to start?" I answer, "Speak for yourself, Alexei."

It's quite possible that nothing has happened since 1969 on Alexei's farm in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, but fortunately Alexei's farm is not the whole universe. Nothing ever happens on farms. Things happen in cities, particularly certain

letters--xi

cities, like New York, Paris, London, and Berkeley.

I can think, without trying very hard, of one theme that is characteristic of the Seventies, and that is transexuality. No decade in history (including the '60's) has made such an effort to transcend traditional sexual roles. If we're talking about rock stars, let's mention David Bowie, the New York Dolls, and, to a lesser degree, Alice Cooper. All of them either performed in drag regularly or used a transexual name. Or let's mention Elton John, who doesn't exactly perform in drag, but is still an image of a "glitter queen." Baez makes a new album and it sounds great out on the farm, but in town it's great only as a stroll down memory lane. It has nothing to do with the Seventies. If someone were to say the fag rock stars aren't very good, I probably would agree, but nobody can say they're not there. Nobody can say they haven't struck a special, characteristic note in our present world.

I can think of another theme of the Seventies...nostalgia. Alexei's letter, in fact, is partly an exercise in nostalgia, nostalgia for a fabled world where, to rip off a cliché, it is always 1969. Since 1969 we've had the Manhattan Transfer, Bette Midler, the Pointer Sisters, Linda Ronstadt;--all reviving old styles and songs from the Andrews Sisters to the Everly Brothers, wearing costumes of the 30's, 40's, and 50's that sometimes look as if they were bought in the Goodwill clothes bins. Dr. Strange, which is a "new direction" to Alexei, is a 60's nostalgia item in the cities. If there is a Big Man in the comicbooks in the 70's, it's got to be Conan. It's Conan, not Strange, that has expanded into several different comicbooks and spawned a howling horde of imitators. I'm not sure Strange even has a comic of his own anymore. I haven't been following it. (I haven't been following Dagwood and Blondie either.)

The thing is that in the 60's we were waiting for some kind of New Age of Aquarius. We waited, and waited, and waited. As the 70's dawned, most of us got tired of waiting and went home, but there's Alexei out there in that open field, still waiting, all alone, hopefully humming "Baby Blue" and scanning the sky for angels.

I don't think it's important to live in one's own time. I tend to live partly in the twenties and partly in the Victorian Era myself, with occasional hops down-time to Century One. But not to even know one's own decade exists...I mean, that's a Wonderful Thing!

Maybe it's quiet out there in the boonies, with all the birds and bugs and cows. Maybe you live longer there.

But oh boy, if you ever come back to town, have we got a future shock for you, Rip Van Winkle!

(333 Ramona Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530)

(( "Nothing ever happens on farms." I think I'll just sit back and contemplate the absurd wonderfulness of that statement....

Nostalgia is hardly unique to the 70's, even in the context of modern fads and fashions. The United States has been markedly nostalgia-conscious since at least sometime early in the Sixties. But why? I see it mostly as a response to future shock, to the pace and complexity and uncertainty of American life in these years. As such nostalgia is often nothing more than an escape valve, even a way to hide your head in the sand--but it is also often an attempt at getting back to our roots, integrating our present with the past we grew out of, so that we can grow forward into the future.

But the examples you cite of culture in the 70's make me feel you've proved Alexei's point. The question is not really What is characteristic of the 70's? Decades are only arbitrary divisions, and I don't think they have much worth in a discussion like this except inasmuch as the habit of thinking in decades influences people's actions. The question that both Alexei and I are asking is, Where is our growing edge now, as

a culture? As part of that question, we have to ask Where have we been? and Where are we going? The questioning of sex roles and the investigation of new alternatives is part of that growing edge--but I think that Elton John's "glitter rock" is not. It's precisely because stuff like that is so conspicuous that we have to ask this question.))

REDD BOGGS: I admire HITCHHIKE considerably, but sometimes I get a little distressed with its shortcomings. You have much talent, but are wasting it carelessly, and I worry about it in the same way I would if I saw someone tossing his money to the wind in \$50 and \$100 bills. The soundtrack accompanying this documentary, "The Life and Times of Travelin' John," is fine, and getting more brilliant with each installment, but the picture now and then gets awfully dim. The light fails entirely, sometimes, when it comes to dealing with people, who are seldom pictured at all, and almost never vividly.

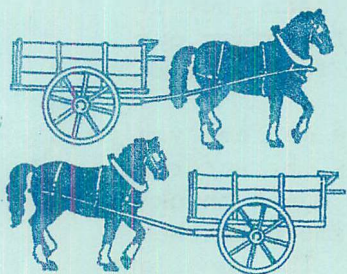
You stand by the dusty highway, thumb extended, you fly over a sea of clouds and descend like a god, but alas--despite all your talk about regional differences and local culture--too often you might as well be forever schlepping from kitchen to study, with a cup of tea in your hand, to chat with a faceless ghost you call Susan Wood. In contrast, how full of lively picture, how crowded with human figures, are Mark Twain's Roughing It and D.H. Lawrence's Sea and Sardinia, two very dissimilar examples of clear and eloquent description of travels to far-off places and strange peoples. With such a gift as yours, you should strive to emulate the best writers.

The scene portrayed in #24 of "gay cruising" in Regina's Victoria Park is a partial exception, as is your depiction of your flight on Allegheny Airlines, but even these little vignettes where people appear and even talk are less vivid than your casual reminiscences in the same issue about "the Eastern humidity" during the summer. The people at that "Canadian cultural fandom" party you attended are hardly described at all, while the house where the party took place is at least partly revealed to us. Weather, landscapes, houses, and sculpture move you far more than humanity.

I suppose you may fail to describe Susan Wood and Eli Cohen on the theory that many readers will have met them at conventions. But it's your view of them, after all, that's important here. It is a curious thing that you evoke, if you don't really describe, a prairie sunset, but not the people without whose existence Regina would be another nameless point on the western prairies.

But there's a greater shortcoming in HITCHHIKE than this. It's less lack of picture than lack of a sense of reality. This dissertation in #24 about regionalism is symptomatic of this lack. It is all very well to nurture such local culture as exists, anywhere in the world, since there is all too little of it--though in the case of Regina it sounds as if people are carefully tending pigweed under the strange impression it's petunias. But it's quite another thing to live in a cultural desert and say you love it. The people who objected to Regina at that party were probably not expressing an abstract concept like "East v. West," but were rather reacting in horror to the relative absence of good restaurants, grand opera, string quartets, foreign language cinema, art museums, and intellectual stimulation in general, especially large libraries, out there on the prairies. They would have felt the same way in Labrador, Madagascar, or Arkansas. It's unrealistic to theorize about silly regional prejudices when all that's occurring is a civilized abhorrence of the brute existence.

In all your talk of Saskatchewan, you fail to mention two important facts about "the emerging scene in the province": (1) Saskatchewan has a steadily declining population, despite a few people like "Dumptruck" who "decided that they belonged at home" and came back to Saskatchewan to stay. (2) Saskatchewan elected a socialist government



in 1971, after having one earlier (1944 to 1964). Surely these factors, for good or ill, influence life in Regina far more than the existence of Humphrey and the Dumptrucks or a privately published novel (about what?) by "the Moosejaw Kid."

Anyway, this "thrust" toward "regionalism" strikes me as a shuck. "Regionalism" is such a good gimmick that it will probably be pushed by the powers-that-be because of its divisive function, in the same way that "ethnic" movements are being pushed now. Divide and rule is still a verity of life. "We are getting back in touch with the land we live on," you lyricize, "and we are regrafting ourselves onto our abandoned roots....We should be becoming aware that...the roots...grow differently in one place than in another. It is those differences that are important...." I don't agree with you. We are only now reaching the point where we can all live together, more or less amicably, in the way that our founding fathers envisioned. Why seek to emphasize old, outworn, and often imaginary differences? Our roots (in this country) grow out of two curious documents, written by rebels, and now held in common by all 50 states and all regions: The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

I have been anti-Establishment all my life--though on some occasions, I confess, this has been with me, as it seems to be with "Dumptruck" and Ken Mitchell, a case of being unacceptable to the Establishment rather than an unwillingness on my part. But from reading your letter column in #24 I guess I can never be "counterculture"--if that means wearing long hair and beard, smoking dope, eating "organic" food, reading comic books or even "comix," listening to popular music, watching far-out TV shows like "Hot L Baltimore," or believing that science fiction is Significant. One would think from Alex Panshin's letter that every Schlimmer-verbesserung of our age is somehow important. It seems to me a singular commentary on the times that we must desperately look for signs and portents of a New Age in the dustbin of juvenile fads and entertainments. Most of the things Alex mentions are only commercial crap for children, with less creativity than a jackass breaking wind; or are mere propaganda vehicles on behalf of the status quo; or else are devices for cluttering people's minds with trivialities so they won't complain about beef prices.

Panshin talks about political changes and events, and frets about "getting fucked over by people with power," but he doesn't even consider political action as a means of improving things. Instead, he moons over the high cultural attainments of "Baez," Roger Zelazny, and "certain" comic book hacks (unnamed) who write and draw something called "Killraven." He mentions the Vietnam war, but fails to remark one important development of the 1960s: the so-called "student rebellion," which first ended the Red witch hunt on campuses that had gone on since 1950, and then went on to become an influential part of the opposition to the war. At Berkeley the Free Speech Movement of 1964 segwayed a year later into the VDC (Vietnam Day Committee) which in October 1965 staged an impressive rally and march that, I think, stirred and troubled the popular conscience hereabouts. The whole "rebellion" culminated in the events of May 1970 during which students took over many large universities all over the country in a massive response to Kent State and the Cambodian invasion. This affair may indeed have been engineered by the CIA for its own inscrutable purposes, but the people I knew who were involved were indubitably sincere and incredibly idealistic. Here was a real instrument for radical change.

Jay Kinney says one of the strong supports on which the counterculture of the '60s was built was the slogan "Make Love Not War." Actually the Establishment must have approved of it, and may even have formulated it. Sex preoccupies the mind as little else does, and people obsessed with making love won't rock the boat but only the bed. Making love makes new cannon fodder for making war again in the future. Maybe one way to cause the New Age to begin--Alex Panshin says it hasn't yet--is to rewrite that durable slogan. How about "Make Revolution Not Love"?

Food prices will be higher tomorrow, medical treatment and funerals will be prohibitively dear, and gasoline will be in short supply. Muhammed Ali, Bob Dylan,

and Lily Tomlin (whom I never heard of before) will have no solution. The storage tanks at Hanford, Washington, are leaking atomic wastes into the Columbia river, and Roger Zelazny can do nothing about it. But maybe if all the people got together we could cause some changes.

(PO Box 1111, Berkeley, CA 94701)

((My writing has been criticized a couple of times before, by friends of mine, for lacking fully-described people in it. There's some truth to that. Over the whole of my published writing, I don't think it's true, since I've spent quite a number of pages describing individuals over the years (which I usually try to do briefly, with a few strokes of the verbal brush implying the rest), but I've noticed that less of my writing recently has been about individual people. There are reasons for this. One of the most important is that I'm a generally private person, and I'm not inclined to write publically in a fanzine about my close personal relationships. (To do so would be to make frozen, static models of situations that are usually quite fluid.) That leaves only people who are not that important to me to describe. I do, quite often, but naturally those descriptions are not going to be as vital or vivid as the descriptions of places or ideas that move me.

And yes, although I never thought about it consciously, I felt no need to describe either Susan or Eli since I thought that most of the fans reading this fanzine would have some mental image of them already. Besides their having attended cons for years, they both publish fanzines with circulations much larger than mine, and their mailing lists overlap mine to a large extent.

The other major reason for the lack of individual descriptions in my recent writing is that quite often I haven't been trying to describe people: I've been talking about ideas, or (much more subtle and harder to pin down) about feelings, or about places. There are some things that I'm trying to express in my writing--things that are lost by being baldly stated, some of them, and certainly need to be shown, not told--and most of these things are not centered on individual people. (They are, ultimately, but not immediately.) I'm currently--over the last several years, in fact--developing a very strong awareness of place, and of the particularity of each place; it may be that this is especially strong in me now because it was so thoroughly absent in me when I was a boy. In any case, don't fault me for lack of people when I'm talking about a prairie sunset.

The criticism has some weight, nonetheless. I could, for instance, have made the individual people in my discussion of the Regina party come alive more as people. I'll try to keep that in mind.

The rest of your letter, though...Redd, you've missed the point. You've missed the whole point. It's not just this letter, or HITCHHIKE--if it were I'd expend more energy on trying to make you see what I mean--but it seems to me that you missed the point nearly a decade ago, and you haven't noticed it once in all the years since. You seem to have picked up on the radicalism of the 1960s, without ever understanding the changes in consciousness that underlie it. None of the attributes you catalogued are necessary to being a part of the "counterculture," but you're quite right that you're not likely to become a part of it. You not only don't share the common experience to any significant degree, you seem to have no idea of what it's all about.

What sums up our differences, perhaps, is your paragraph about slogans. You're seeing reality in purely political terms, which is only a wiring diagram for getting some things done; it's a very limited way to describe the entire nature of reality. Even human reality.

On a more specific level, I think you're wrong in your analysis of regionalism and regional culture. Yes, the people at that party who felt culturally isolated in Regina were reacting to "the relative absence of good restaurants, grand opera, string quartets, foreign language cinema, art museums, and intellectual stimulation in general...." I don't know how valid the inclusion of large libraries is, since the farmers of the Canadian prairies are remarkably well read. But my point was precisely that those people were more concerned with what they were lacking because they weren't they weren't at the center of fashion and power than they were about where, in truth, they were. And it was made more poignant by their relative ignorance of the cultural renaissance--on a local scale--that was happening right under their noses. The people who had grown up in Saskatchewan, left, and then come back were much more solid people, better centered and more firmly rooted in their own selves, than those who felt themselves to be exiles in a colonial outpost.

I wouldn't try to judge which has more influence on life in Regina, the existence of local people who consciously choose to stay or the political and demographic situation of the province. Both have wide effects. I find the example given by Humphrey and the Dumptrucks, Ken Mitchell, David Miller (the luthier who lives on a farm outside of Saskatoon), and a considerable number of others to be extremely important to the way people who live in Saskatchewan think of themselves.

The roots of American culture run considerably deeper and are much more numerous than "The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution."

There's one thing I agree with you on, although I wouldn't share your descriptive terms nor, I think, the spirit behind your statement: it does seem to me a singular commentary on the times that we must desperately look for signs and portents in some of the out-of-the-way corners of our culture that Alex Panshin was looking in. But I, like Alex, am more interested in finding the "hopeful on-goingnesses" than in giving myself up to the prevailing disintegration.))

JOHN SMITH: Your idea--asking all of us '60's radicals where we're finding ourselves in the more smoggy consciousness of the '70's--is a good one. I've often wondered the same myself, and take great interest and pleasure in the thoughts of fellow travellers on the John D. Berry hitchhike. In talking about where we are in the '70's, however, I find it necessary to muse a bit on where we were in the '60's.

The '60's were a time of coalition. Progressive forces have a long, important, and neglected history in the United States, but rarely have they had the power we all felt in the '60's. The source of this power was not in any one social faction's particular ideas, but in the fact that all progressive people--populists, third-world activists, ex-beatniks, middle class liberals--started looking at one another and saying, "your struggle, your problems, your goals, are the same as mine." The coalition had a large and diverse base sufficient to force the political and business leaders who control the United States, let alone the media, to take notice.

A perfect example of this coalition is that metaphor of the '60's, rock music. Rock grew directly out of sources deep into American culture, yet was none of these sources and more than all of them at once. It had elements of blues and jazz, influence from rural and urban folk traditions, significant traces of classical and pre-classical European music, and even a sense of mysticism and Eastern thought. You could relate to rock from your own particular perspective. But more importantly, once into rock, you contacted other perspectives, and could hear the world through the same channels as someone from a totally different space. People found in this sharing the synergy that comes from making connections where none existed before. The rock coalition had a broad enough base to force itself onto the corporate controllers of recording and broadcasting, and became a network for the radical

ideas rock musicians and audiences brought from each respective heritage.

The rock coalition only lasted a few years, though. By the early '70's, people started being aware of their differences again. The Dead moved into the country, the Airplane hijacked a starship, John, Paul, George, and Ringo each found their individual trips more meaningful than the group experience. Blues and bluegrass people reasserted their independent identities, and other groups and individuals followed one of dozens of paths out from the core of rock, until only a hollow shell with neither soul nor spirit remains in what we call rock today. Furthermore, as each group withdrew from the rock coalition to explore its own style, defensiveness and competition reemerged in place of the communion which rock had striven for. Musicians and listeners whom I know today feel a much greater need to justify their own style to themselves and to representatives of other styles than we did a few years ago.

In political terms, the fragmentation of rock meant the breakdown of the unity of consciousness which characterized the counter-culture. Five months into the '70's, the massacres at Kent and Jackson happened. Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young sang, "We're finally on our own," and indeed we were--on our own with neither economic base, army, nor much chance of surviving as a legitimate culture. The anti-war and civil rights movements had generated tremendous publicity and had brought many diverse people to progressive ideology and action, but they did not by themselves lead to a strategy for taking over and organizing the means of production over which any culture must have control if it is to survive.

Over the years, as the initial energy of the movement has faded out, survival has become the crucial issue. The old rallying cries, "stop the war" and "end racism," have given way to increasingly complex and often contradictory analyses of imperialism and oppression, reflecting and renewing the factional differences which we had temporarily overcome. Many who opposed the Vietnam war as a cruel military intervention into a small foreign country hedge at the more esoteric argument that the U.S. intervention in Chile has been no less imperialistic. Regional and national differences have reemerged, too. We realize that being radical in San Francisco means something different from being radical in Detroit. Factionalism and insecurity have intensified within communities as well. How far can we compromise without being co-opted? Can we live in the cracks of capitalism, secede from it, or must we change the whole system first? When does ripping off the ruling class become ripping off ourselves?

These and other unsolved questions have occupied our energy in the '70's, as we try to develop a viable people-oriented economy out of the bankrupt one which brought us the Vietnam war and the race riots. They are tactical questions, and the most hopeful approach to them is where radicals have retreated somewhat from the rhetoric of mass organization and focussed in on smaller groups. "Grassroots" and "community control" have become popular phrases. Neighborhoods are organizing through food co-ops and other anti-profit businesses, and the communal lifestyle is expanding into such diverse activities as community drug programs, media organizations, theatre groups, law firms, and auto garages--all experimenting with forms of collective ownership and administration. The Black Panthers have focussed in on community survival programs and have slowly built a power base in Oakland, while La Raza Unida has taken over one south Texas county and is gaining influence in others. The United Farm Workers union has survived into the '70's and is reminding the labor movement of what worker control over the situations of work means.

The women's and gay movements are bringing the revolution even closer to home, and are having as profound an effect on our sociology as the anti-war movement had in the '60's. The sexual identity crisis has exposed the ugliness of capitalist social relationships as alienation not only from our labor, but from our own hearts as well, a situation where the rip-off has become an accepted mode not only of economic relationships, but of interpersonal ones.

Of course, there is a lot of personal agony and frustration in all of these activities. The problems are still a lot easier to see than the solutions. A few

large corporations still control most of our economic and political lives, and increasingly, our personal lives. The development of alternative sun and wind energy has been largely choked off by a rigid economy which must put most of its capital into giant oil companies and "public" utilities. Military contractors continue to extort money out of public funds by threatening to lay off all their employees if their demands for war contracts are not met--Rockwell and the B-1 bomber, for example. Against this background, my description of a developing community economy seems optimistic indeed. Still, in lots of places out here, the force of life carries on. Can it develop into a genuine alternative to the great cultural death which the United States has embraced?

(422 Palo Alto Ave., Palo Alto, CA 94301)

("Capitalist social relationships"? That seems to me to be emphasizing the smaller part of the whole. I consider sexual relationships, if not all social relationships, to be much deeper than economic ones. Even if you can see economic influences on the way people relate to each other emotionally, I don't think that's the basic factor.

I like Gary Snyder's admonition--it's one of those synthesizing statements that pulls together a lot of things I couldn't quite put my finger on--"Economics must be seen as a small sub-branch of Ecology...." Yes; right.))

BRAD BALFOUR: I'm sitting here, late at night, cars on the freeway trailing in the background. The house is cooler than earlier but still warm. My parents' airconditioning has been broken for a week and I'm feeling the summer as it really is. So I've been lying in the den reading your blue-papered hitchhike. Funny it should arrive today; I had just dug out the last issue and was going to get out a letter on it. Then comes this travel guide...hmmn, so you're on the road again.

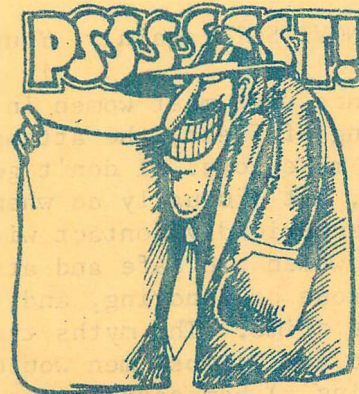
I wish I were. The summer brings out that spirit of free movement like heat waves naturally rising off the ground. I'd love to be moving up that coast of California again, up highway 1, the edge of the coast and the whole country not more than a few hundred yards away. Now that is facing the edge both literally and figuratively, all puns intended.

California is such an edge with its mix back and forth and all the changes its borders contain. It's that swirling mystery land of the American dream. So much of it is that vision both conventional and...bohemian. Success in Southern Cal and freedom up in Northern Cal. And so much of the polarities of this country too. It's a place of all sorts of passions and a place to carry them out.

Now this isn't to reiterate comments of an earlier issue on the split east/west, but rather to talk about that moving spirit and how, for America, the west is best. You just don't find those born and bred in the west moving east, other than to NYC. And they only go there for fame and fortune. Which, generally, can be found in LA anyhow, if that's what you're looking for.

Now when I do move on, and I am planning on going out west, I hope to be moving with direction. I'm much less pastoral and idyllic than you, John, so my moves and travels are in terms of what I can accomplish with them in terms of profession. I hope to develop my ties and then carry my work and abilities out west to do what I do here but on a much grander scale. And as in my own case, that's what the dream and myth of the west holds for me and America. Let's see, where did I read somewhere that America is a land of myths, not history?

So even with failed journeys out west and frus-



tration, even bitterness, Americans still live with their dreams. And keep building because of them. Of course it's time to use a little of the history and sift out the best of the past as a foundation to rest the dreams on.

Jeremy Riffkin and his People's Bicentennial Commission are trying to do just that. They want to get American revolutionary thinkers away from foreign inspiration and look to the tradition that's most readily available. So build from the roots right here.

That's the same way I feel about my interest in Judaism as a source of religious and community spirit. I might as well check out the sources, shall I say, in front of my nose, rather than getting it from second hand sources.

Now speaking of travel, search, and Canada, as you do, it reminds me of my buddy Bob's quest across a continent to find a job. The continent is North America across Canada, and as Bob says, "It's that great depression tale told all over again, now in the seventies a young fellow makes his great journey to find a job." So Bob's gone now living that hobo life.

And he knows all of what you mean of a place with a feel, a region, and for Canada, particularly Québec province, has the character he needs. But rather than seeing Canada in terms of regionalism, it might be better called co-existence. The country is different from the US because, rather than assimilation, groups co-exist yet retain identities that lend Canada as a whole a more European feel. Yet with a new world freshness.

(1104 Fuhrman, Cincinnati, OH 45215)

SKIP HENDERSON: ((on places of power)) As soon as I undertook travel of any kind I became increasingly more aware of a most strange, yet wonderful effect certain natural phenomena had on me. As I began to travel more and more, and to specialize in wilderness survival, I became more articulate as to what it is that I perceive. Whether it be my childhood trips to the oceans or mountains, or my first glimpse of Niagara Falls, I have always had a certain sense of majesty, power, and respect for the forces of nature. It surprises me at how widely the variety of my appreciation has developed for this. It might be as a passively serene feeling I get from viewing the Blue Ridge from 40 or 50 miles away on a clear day. On the other hand, it can be incredibly intense, like nearing the top of a high mountain, or spending an evening next to or in the Grand Canyon under a full moon. In cases such as the last two, there is an electricity in the air, though it is definitely not the type one might find at a highly-charged rock concert. It is as though my spirit is recharged with its vital energies in such situations, giving me some intangible, but direct line with the creative forces of the universe, the powers that be. And it is a sense of oneness with these powers which I am taken with, as one might envision a pantheistic revelation of the Tao or the Buddha. I guess these feelings have been the basis for my interest in subjects of an occult nature, whether it be such things as matter-energy vortices, or the power attractions of a pyramid.

(Downingtown, Box 240A, Route #2, Kent's Store, VA 23084)

PAUL NOVITSKI (again): Your discovery of Regina's gay cruising spot is particularly interesting because it's not often that men get to experience what most women in this culture have to face every day: the stares, the judging of flesh, the attempts by men to meet eyes, make contact, make conversation, make love. I don't generally mind that kind of attention when I get it from women, but I usually do when it comes from gay men likewise, women seem to prefer to make friendly contact with strange women than strange men. An interesting paradigm: women are safe and attractive to both sexes, men are (in general) potentially dangerous or annoying, and to be avoided. Which ties in with rape being primarily a male crime. The myths that men can't be raped because A) an erection can't be forced and B) most men wouldn't resist & would in fact dig it are destroyed by considering a) homosexual rape and b) the fact that rape is primarily an act of viol-

ence and is only secondarily sexual. Although I haven't seen any statistics, I'm sure that women are raped by other women (in prisons, say) much less than men are by men. Whether cultural or hormonal, males are brought up to be more aggressive and violent than the females, who are trained to believe that they are inherently weak and should submit to the nearest (male) authority. Those generalizations precipitate on a day-to-day level in ♀/♀, ♀/♂, and ♂/♂ interactions, in the office, the store, the home, on teevee, and on the street. I think it's experiences like yours in Regina, however brief and innocuous that may have been, that shed light on the greater forces operating behind the cultural cloak of conventions and sanctions.

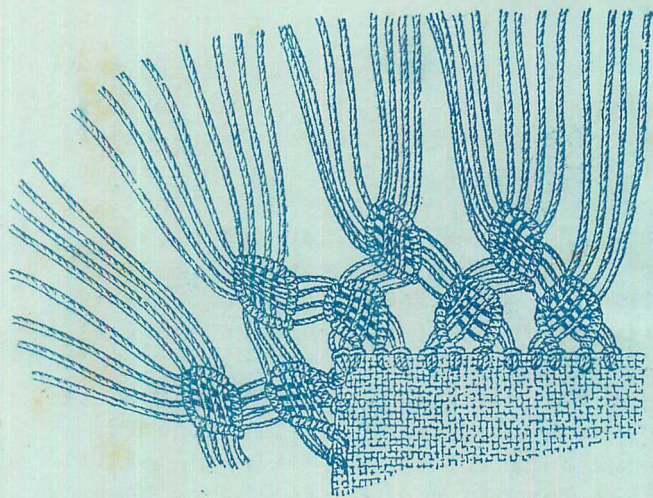
Western Canada's current struggle to assert its own identity separate from the East conjures for me the parallel of the US Northwest declaring independence from California. When most Americans speak of "the west coast" they're thinking of LA and San Francisco, just as they probably think of Toronto and Montréal when they speak of Canada. The Northwest has an entirely different character than California in climate, colors, and consciousness. Most Californians who visit Oregon and Washington during the summer and decide to settle, quickly change their minds when winter sloshes in. That's the good news. The bad news is that too many of them put up with the steady winter drizzle, ultimately turning our small cities into the same vast & ugly concrete schizurbia they fled. Immigration is encouraged, naturally, by business interests, part of the huge American delusion that survival is possible only through continual growth.

Non-business interests in Oregon and Washington have already designed a program for us to secede from the nation just after the 1976 election. Left arm!

John, I love your comment on regional differences between people, "if you try to remove them, you can't fully succeed, because they are a part of us; but inasmuch as you do succeed, you reduce us to a paler version of what we could be." Eminently quotable. I myself don't like regionalism emphasized, since it its baser territorial form it motivates xenophobia and war. But it's obvious that people reflect their environment, and those who live long in one region will become perceptively different in outlook and manner from others elsewhere. Every spring, when the Oregon rain stops and the sun comes out, I notice people unfolding like flowers--they stop hunching and relax their shoulders, they look up and around, not just down, their bodies lose a lot of the tenseness accumulated during the cold wet months. Subtle phenomena like this add up to differentiate between the living styles of northerners and southerners, villagers and urbanites, lowlanders and highlanders.

It then occurs to me that Americans are essentially a nomadic people. I think the average time an American lives in one place before moving is about five years. This along with other homogenizing factors like television has done a lot to even out US regionalisms since WWII. They still exist, but they must be subtler than those of most countries, and as you point out they're becoming fainter as time goes on.

Even within this generalized transience there's a sizeable minority of the constant movers--most in their early twenties I imagine--of which you and I are members. The longest I've lived in one place since high school has been two years; you have traveled much more widely than I since leaving home and have even gone to Europe and Australia in that time. Where do we fit into the picture of regional differences? You say you "put down roots in many places and always come back to them"--which many settled people would doubtless consider having no real roots at all. Clearly, modern trans-cultural nomads comprise a kind of "region" of our own--Global Villagers, perhaps. To a large extent I think it's impossible to effect any significant social or political change unless you entrench yourself in one locale for a few years, because such changes take time; but a nomadic lifestyle is necessary to educate yourself about human cultural and environmental variances, so that you can decide what changes can and need be made. For now I have little desire to curb my itch for the road, though I often catch wisps of wistfulness for



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letters--xx...and the end

the kind of dug-in, settled life many of my friends enjoy. Sigh. It is indeed a proud and lonely thing to be a spam.

Alexei's letter was great to read--I think he beautifully sums up a commonly shared 70's consciousness (that of dissolving the groups of the 60's to concentrate on individual karmic development, and of gradually regaining some sense of truth and direction in our culture). The "Seventies" (which is a wholly arbitrary slice of linear time except in that most people think in decades and years and centuries, which has its effects) will be characterized in the 80's and 90's probably as the decade of sexual liberation (in bed and business) and the decade in which the radical political and ecological awareness of the late sixties was legitimized and woven into the fabric of the American cultural structure.

((Also Heard From: John Carl, Rob Jackson, Ian Maule, Boyd Raeburn, Eric Lindsay, Bruce D. Arthurs, Mary Altland, Rocky Veraa, David Emerson, Frank Denton, Ross Chamberlain, and Creath Thorne.))

Do you remember when I was talking about a bookstore/lending library idea two issues ago? Well, Paul Novitski is doing something of the kind on a by-mail basis. The Reality Library is, according to its FIRST CATALOG (May, 1975; 24 pp.), "a non-profit educational organization formed for the study of consciousness-raising materials that will help us grow and survive in coming decades." The core of it is Paul's own collection, which is strong in "science fiction, non-sexist education, non-waste technology, nutrition, linguistics, etc." For \$1.00 you can become a library member for six months; that pays for postage both ways on anything you borrow, plus the catalog and the library magazine, REALITIES.

Also recommended: The CO-EVOLUTION QUARTERLY, published by the Whole Earth people and edited by Stewart Brand. (4/\$6.00, Box 428, Sausalito, CA 94965) And are you aware that that big volume you see in friendly bookstores that looks too much like THE LAST WHOLE EARTH CATALOG is an entirely new publication? It's THE WHOLE EARTH EPILOG, and it was first published last year. Buy it now. :: Oct. 29, 1975.