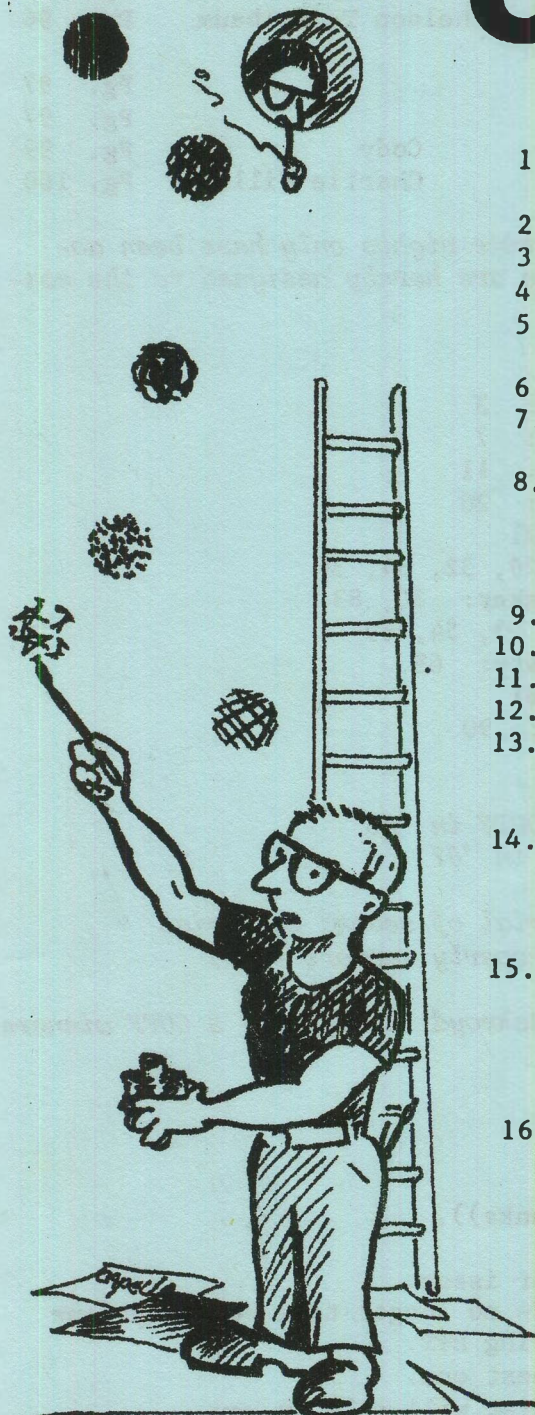




berger

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I'M LEFTY)

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*This fanzine supports: Marty and Robbie Cantor for DUFF in '85
Cesar Ignacio Ramos for TAFF in '87*

*Britain in '87 (see end material of second editorial
for how to properly support this)*

*and welcomes Rob Hansen, Jack R. Herman, and Justin Ackroyd (TAFF, DUFF & GUFF winners)
to L.A.CON II.*

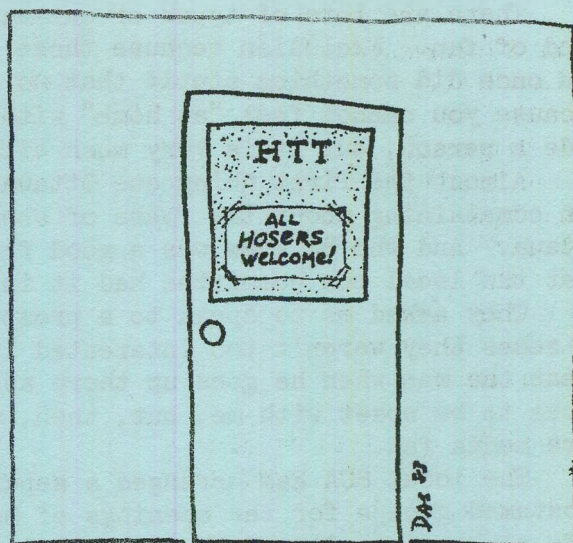
WHY YOU RECEIVED THIS

- ☒ We trade.
- ☐ Would you like to trade?
- ☐ You locced/contributed/sent old fanzines ((many thanks)).
- ☐ We would like for you to loc/contribute.
- ☐ Your contribution(s) is/are being held for a further issue.
- ☐ You subscribe. ☐ Your subscription has run out. We no longer take subscriptions so you will have to Do Something to continue receiving HTT.
- ☐ If you respond to this issue we will send you the next one.
- ☐ You purchased this copy. Thank you. Our psychiatrist will call on you.
- ☐ Your fanzine has been reviewed in this issue. You have the right of reply.
- ☐ You have been ~~televized~~ mentioned in this issue. You have the right of reply.
- ☐ It has been so long since we heard from you that we will have to stop sending HTT to you if you do not Do Something soon.
- ☐ Editorial whim/wher.
- ☐ If you gave HTT a first-place vote for the Best Fanzine Hugo place an "X" here and thank yourself from us.
- ☐ If you placed an "X" in the previous line place an "X" on this line and go to your nearest psychiatrist: do not pass "GO", do not collect \$200.

HOLIER THAN THOU XIX

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(even though we will honour those already in existence).



*After all, at HTT
"No hose barred," eh?*

WE'RE ALL FANS.....AREN'T WE?

BY robbie cantor

As people will discover once they get to (and read) Marty's editorial, a lot has been happening around the HTT homestead lately. Apart from everything Marty mentions, we also took a trip to Canada finally: I got to see my parents and friends after a year and a half absence, and Marty got his first look-see at his new in-laws.

The trip was enjoyable and I could have easily wished for it to last longer, except..... Well, the "except" is quite complex.

In this issue of HTT, back in the Loc Ness Monster (which some of you may already have read), some of you may notice that I am getting a *little* pissed off. The tendency of some of our readers to assume that, now that I'm co-editing HTT, I'm no longer a mediafan is extremely annoying, and quite patronising, in my view.

I'm sorry I cannot cooperate and turn into a purely fannish fan so that all of you can quietly explain away my lack of supposed "mediot" mentality and behaviour as a fluke, a rarity -- just a fannish fan who temporarily went astray. But I am more a media fan, in the sense of interested in television and film, than any other type, even if I am also interested in many others areas of fanac (Marty thinks of me as a multi-media fan).

In Canada, I spent some days in the home of a media fan. He and his friend just down the street have produced audio tapes, films (Super 8) and costumes -- all from their own imaginations, all requiring many "fannish" qualities, as they have been described to me by the readers of HTT.

But these mediafen, in spite of being prolific readers, creative individuals and a lot of fun to be around, no longer participate in any of the Ottawa fan clubs. None of 'em, not even the media ones. That's one of the things which brought out the "except".

Fandom in Ottawa -- the place where I *became* a fan -- is suffering the horrors of exclusion.

There are lots of types of exclusion. Exclusion because you aren't the "right" kind of fan. Exclusion because those in power don't like you. Exclusion because you once did something stupid that *no* one is *ever* going to let you forget. Exclusion because you cannot feel "at home" with the other fans. This last comes more from inside a person, but it is very much effected by those outside of and around you.

Almost the first thing one Ottawa fan did after my arrival in town was to begin complaining about the flaws of another fan who was no longer even living in Ottawa. And who he knew was a good friend of mine. He followed this by the news that the local con committee had it in for me. Why, I do not understand.

They asked me to speak to a prospective guest for their con, which I did. But it seems they weren't too interested in my daring to care how they are going to treat the man when he goes up there as their GoH. I fail to see how this could be cause to be upset with me, but, then, what would I know? I am, after all, only a mere media fan.

The local SCA has arranged a separate group of "Invasions for All Occasions" (costumed groups for the openings of movies) which excludes the local Star Trek and s.f. clubs, in spite of the fact that those two groups helped start the custom.

The local convention was originally the joint enterprise of the s.f., Star Trek and Comics clubs. Now it's an independent body which will not allow the common members of the original founding groups to attend meetings unless they join the committee. It also doesn't bother to report to the executives of any of the founding clubs. It was happy to take their money, but won't let them know what's being done with it.

The Star Trek club, in large part, has decided to be angry with a few of the original members of the s.f. club and so the cross-over memberships have decreased considerably.

Not that they needed to. Most of the original members of the s.f. club, including its founder (it is a young club -- not more than 10 years old), no longer attend meetings or social events. They find themselves increasingly at odds with the new people "in charge", and thus find it easier to simply drop out.

I left a city with clubs that had numerous inter-connections, where everyone could go where they chose and not be excluded unless they had *really* fouled up. And I do mean *really*. Beer and alcohol were banned at one party once because someone had tried to molest a couple of the very young female fans while under the influence. That's pretty extreme behaviour, but all that was done was to remove the alcohol, not the guilty party. But now, not living up to expectations or being prone to fibs are considered major crimes requiring harsh treatment. What galls is that one of those busily excluding others was almost the target of such exclusion himself except that I persuaded others to give him a second chance.

I returned to a city where the s.f. club barely draws 12 people to one of their more popular events -- a pun competition -- and the regular bi-weekly party is in danger of dying out because people aren't willing to host them any more. Half the people I know no longer talk to the other half.

I spent most of *my* time with the people *I* liked the most. Granted, I couldn't reach all of them, but I did my best to and those I was able to reach either felt excluded by the clubs they once belonged to or didn't want to get involved in the endless politics which are the staple of fannish activity in Ottawa nowadays. For that matter, that's just about how I feel, too. And that's the whole of the "except".

Except.....that it doesn't really end just because I'm no longer there. I am finding myself feeling more and more excluded by you, the readers of HTT. Because you are assuming something about me that isn't true. You try to force me to fit that acceptable mold which you have created out of whole cloth to "explain" me. Sure, I have lots of interests. Sure, I'm not just a media fan.

But I *am* a media fan nonetheless. In my way, and for my reasons, I find something in mediafandom which I cannot find here in the pages of HTT.

Give some of you your way, and I would have to give up that which I find in "Doctor Who" and other media interests, because it's not "quite right". I'm one of you now. At least, according to *you*. But I'm a stubborn person. I wouldn't give up my friends in Ottawa just because those in power wanted me to, and I won't give up my media interest for you people. I am *not* "outgrowing" my media interests.

It's perhaps time a few of HTT's readers got it through their thick skulls that there's a *media* fan co-editing HTT. Trying to make me fit a pre-conceived notion of your own is just another type of exclusion: exclusion of reality in favour of the imaginary. You, like the Ottawa fans, are depriving yourselves of the friendship, company and enjoyment of others who might surprise you if you gave them the chance. Sort of like I surprised Marty.

Exclusion doesn't *just* hurt the one being excluded y'know.

--- Robbie Cantor

THANK YOU

BY

marty cantor



Ring.

"Hello?"

"Marty, this is Craig."

"Hi, Craig. What can I do for you?"

"I have some bad news."

"The Worldcon has been cancelled."

"Worse than that."

"Oh?"

"Yes. Holier Than Thou has been nominated for Best Fanzine Hugo."

(silence)"...er, ah..."

(silence - more sputtering - more silence)"...I do not know what to say."

"You can say whether or not you will accept the nomination."

"Well, sure!"

It is not so much that I have not wanted a Hugo nomination for HTT, but that I did not really expect it. The telephone call, and this being the first time, well, it is a bit of a shock. I will get over that, but the pleasure will remain. And something else.

You see, we have some plans for the zine, and we hope that the changes we make will create a zine that is even better than it is now. Despite this nomination we intend to push ahead with our planned changes (no laurel-resting here), and we hope that most of you will approve of them. We strive, ever, for a better zine; we doubt that it will ever be perfect, but there is pleasure in the striving.

As long-time readers of this zine know, HTT exists in its present form because it is highly interactive with its contributors. So, to them must go many thanks for making the zine what it is. And, as it is probable that all, or most, of the nomination votes came from its contributors/readers, thank you's must also go for nominating HTT. A *very* important thank you goes to Robbie -- her co-editing is more important to the zine than she seems to believe.

Of course, you must realise that you have all absolutely *ruined* my plans for

doing some partying during the Hugo ceremony! Well, I usually attend programming *only* when part of it, so I guess that I should attend, for the first time, the award ceremony. It is not so much that I expect to win, but it would be bad form not to go -- and there *is* a chance of winning.

Personally, though, a win will be somewhat anticlimactic -- just getting onto the short list is satisfying. Besides, I understand that the Hugo Losers Party is lots of fun.

We welcome a new contributor to HTT -- his column will become, we hope, a regular feature of the zine. For this issue, though, not only has Richard Bergeron contributed an interesting first column, but he has created our cover -- and *each* cover has been individually signed by him. In effect, each cover is an original signed print -- a collector's item. All in all, an auspicious beginning, here, for Richard, a fan of uncommonly good writing and artistic ability.

Also making a first-time article appearance in these pages (he has looded before) is Dave Langford (many time Best Fanwriter Hugo nominee) with his speech at SEACON/EUROCON, and another new addition to these pages is old-time fan Irish John Berry with another major trip report. We hope to see both of them in these pages occasionally.

Unfortunately, due to space considerations, "The Law and Order Handbook" was squeezed out this time -- Chapter 6 will appear nextish.

We owe somebody a copy of HTT#18 - we received from the Post Office a copy with the mailing label missing. The intended recipient had a check mark next to the contributed/looded line and the postage was paid for domestic delivery. So, if you fit the above criteria and you did not receive #18, just let us know and we will send to you the returned copy.

Please note a change of policy -- we will no longer accept subs (even though we will honour all subs now in force). The demand for copies has become so great that we have had to raise our print run, again, this time to 350 copies -- and this is getting too expensive (and time consuming) on a zine as large as HTT, so we are eliminating subs as one way of easing off the pressure. If you must buy your first copy of HTT, so be it; we would hope, though, after purchasing one copy that you would continue getting the zine with payment in the fannish usual (locs, trades, contributions of art and written materials). We will continue with our usual policy of culling from our mailing list those who do not contribute something at least once a year. If we can go to all of this trouble, so can you.

Britain is Heaven in '87. Yes it is -- and I am one of the agents for the bid. So send me \$2.00 to get your pre-supporting memberships (said \$2.00 will be good towards your membership when we win). Those North Americans of the Canadian persuasion should send me \$2.50 in that flavour currency, which will also be good towards membership. After you send me your money, be sure to join AUSSIECON II so that you can vote for us. Hey! We are all fanzine fans in this bid, so vote for the Worldcon you want. Do it! Make cheques payable to Marty Cantor, *not* to Britain in '87 - I will send you a receipt. Also please indicate that the money is for the bid rather than for a copy of HTT as the price for both is the same.

--- Marty Cantor

This reminds me of a dream I had years ago about a gun that shoots into the past. You fire it, and the bullet hits whoever or whatever was in the place you were aiming at anywhere from several hours to several years ago, depending on how far back it's set for. So if you want to knock off the President, for instance, you go to a hall he once spoke at, fire a few shots at the rostrum, and come out to find he's been dead for several months or however long. --- Thom Digby

Does Freedom of speech allow one to shout "Where's the beef?" in a crowded vegetarian restaurant? --- Gregor Puziss in LASFAPA 92

BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO SHOOTING THE SHIT

BY
thom digby



Frequently in informal social contexts one hears references to "just shooting the shit" as if it were a simple pastime with no thought or prior preparation necessary. This is far from being the case. Indeed, attempts at shooting the shit in the wrong place at the wrong time, or with improper equipment, can result in serious trouble.

Just as one should not think of playing golf with a baseball bat or of going scuba diving in full football uniform, the shit-shooter should not dream of embarking on this endeavour with improper weapons. This writer recommends a pellet pistol or a BB gun.

To many, shooting brings to mind firearms. FIREARMS ARE TO BE AVOIDED! Although some experienced shit-shooters use them, they present too many dangers for the beginner, especially when shooting the shit in public restrooms.

Most restroom walls are finished in tile or hard plaster which will create an echo-chamber effect. This can magnify the report of a firearm, greatly increasing the chances of drawing the unwelcome attentions of such people as security guards or building management. Even though many security guards can be bribed, this is one field in which it does NOT pay to advertise! In addition, in the confines of the average toilet stall some firearms can be loud enough to endanger hearing. Although firearms can be silenced, silencers are heavily frowned on by the authorities in many areas. Getting caught shooting shit can get you into enough trouble as it is without the possible additional charge of possession of a silencer. Pellet or BB guns, on the other hand, are by their nature relatively quiet and in many places are less unlawful than firearms.

A second problem with firearms is that of possible damage to the toilet bowl, for which the shooter would be liable if caught. BB or pellet guns generally do not have enough power to cause much damage.

An additional danger from using firearms is the possibility of a ricochet. If you are wounded by a ricochet from the inside of the bowl it may have picked up germs which could cause serious infection. A ricochet from a BB or pellet gun would generally lack sufficient power to break the skin, especially on low power settings. Most shit is fairly soft, so that a low power setting on a pellet gun is usually sufficient.

Some shit-shooters use slingshots. These are OK, although most shooters feel it isn't really shooting unless some kind of gun is involved. The bow-and-arrow is not recommended. Arrows will not flush properly afterwards, and are usually considered non-disposable. If you like washing shitty arrows, fine, but most people do not relish this task.

Heavy artillery is out of the question except in very special circumstances. Not only are the noise and damage problems of firearms present to an even greater degree, but the relative lack of portability of artillery severely limits its use. Also, mortars are not well suited to the downward trajectory normally needed to reach the contents of a toilet bowl. They are sometimes seen, however, at large outdoor shit-shooting festivals, where there is room for the normal parabolic trajectory of artillery and where entire restrooms are erected just to be blown up.

Festivals are recommended for meeting potential shit-shooting partners. Information about festivals can often be found on restroom walls, or buried in the classified ads in some gun publications. Beware of individual shit-shooters who leave their phone numbers on walls. Many of them are not bona-fide shit-shooters at all, but frauds or sexual perverts. Do not send money to such people, or agree to meet them alone in isolated places.

At festivals bulletin boards are often provided where groups seeking new members can advertise. If you are good at meeting people, introduce yourself around. Remember, however, that in this field you are a neo. Don't get too pushy.

Before agreeing to go shooting the shit with anyone, you should find out something about their reputation in the field. Do they tend to take dangerous chances, such as using high-powered rifles in airport restrooms? Do they provide their own shit to shoot, do they go to places where people often neglect to flush, or do they seek out plugged-up toilets? Do they prefer high-class restrooms where bribes for security guards can be expensive, or crime-ridden slums where shit can be found in the hallways? These are matters of preference, but it is better to go with people whose tastes in such matters agree with your own.

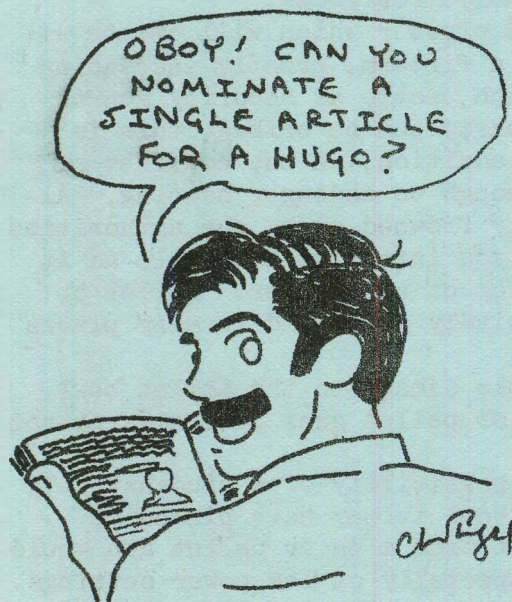
Another item often overlooked is finding a good lawyer who understands shooting the shit. Lawyers in general are good at this, but not all are willing to defend people on the various trespassing and vandalism charges that can arise if things go wrong. Again, festivals are places to obtain information.

As you know, shit is full of germs. In addition to normal good sanitation practices such as washing hands afterwards, not attempting to salvage used bullets, wearing a waterproof laboratory apron or similar splash protection and washing it with disinfectant after use (or better yet, using disposables), one

should obtain immunization from the diseases commonly carried by shit. Again, at shit-shooting festivals one may find a doctor who understands the problems involved.

Besides being places to meet people and clearing houses for information, festivals are fun. Imagine, for example, a modern fighter-bomber squadron unleashing its awesome firepower on a large field latrine area. Now THAT is shooting the shit!

--- Thom Digby



the strange
art of the
holiday
snapshot:
notes
towards
a
principia
fanica



BY steve higgins

From the moment this article saw print first in September '83, I've had my doubts about it. These were crystallised by my experience at the opening night of the British NOVACON, in Birmingham, last year. In the past I had been used to having large quantities of any issue of my fanzine to spare. Long before my faculties were dulled by alcohol that night, my supplies had been completely replaced by copies of innumerable titles, of most of which I'd been previously unaware. I noticed at least as many floating around the convention which I never received. These were not the hopeful first attempts of tentative neos, but third or fourth issues of established fans. Whilst I had been preoccupied elsewhere, it seems the renaissance this article is still expecting had finally happened, and I hadn't noticed.

Since I attempt a certain degree of scientific and logical rigorousness in my approach to fanzine criticism, I don't think it's too pretentious to attribute a methodology to it. This methodology is obviously an empirical. I try to derive my observations from nothing more than the phenomenon of fanzines as I find it, without imposing any intuitive speculation (the key word here is, of course, 'try'). As such, this article cannot pretend to any universality in its conclusions. Fundamentally this is a description of British fanzine fandom in the early '80s; and though its lessons may be applicable, it has no claim to any definitive authority over any area of fandom in ten years time, or ten years in the past, or in America. Fandom appears to be a result of consensus; what fandom is in any time or place is

a result of the interaction of the individuals which make it up there and then. An approach to a more universal theory should perhaps begin from some sociological basis (for a good example of which see Anne Warren's "Being Different" in *SOME DAYS YOU EAT THE BEAR...*)

Given the events described above, this article no longer even seems to be a valid picture of British fandom, on its own premises. I fully intend to explore much of this in future. Such altered circumstances, and an exposure to an American audience, does allow the possibility of comparison, which may in turn allow the discernment of what there is within which may well be universally applicable; equally, the article was at least partly intended to define the methodology itself. I hope you will find something of interest.

--- Steve Higgins, March 1984

"I don't need ideas... I want someone with a little more perception than myself to codify my own ideas."

Greg Pickersgill, WRINKLED SHREW 7

I'm not very interested in reviews. In its simplest form a review is little more than a literary 'Which?' report. It may explain the dazzling idea which constitutes Arnold Tharg's latest paperback and make a quick value-for-money judgement. This could well be useful if you're a card carrying member of the Tharg fan club and haven't saved up enough pocket money to buy a copy yet, but it tells you bugger all about his contribution to literature.

Once some scale of values which refers to other examples of the same kind of thing is applied, we are approaching some form of criticism. No genuine criticism can come about without some understanding of the form being dealt with - what it is supposed to do and the ways it provides of doing it. Once this is established we can find ourselves in a position to not only assess any particular example, but to discuss ways in which improvements may be made, difficult subjects approached, standards raised. This is an altogether more interesting exercise.

Since WRINKLED SHREW 7, D. West has been contesting that the criticism of fanzines cannot continue without a 'proper detailed theoretical basis.' Any damn fanzine reviewer will tell you his prime interest is to take the fanzines under consideration to draw insights into fandom and fanzines in general, if only to produce a column which will stand as entertaining reading in itself. The alternative (other than nothing at all) as far as fanzines are concerned is the collection of capsules that used to be run in MATRIX last time I read it. Unless you're the BoSFA's latest recruit there is no need to be told the sort of information contained in such things.

In the relentless pursuit of fanzine criticism I was on a fan panel once. I had a horrible time. There were lots of traffic points in my notes in front of me, and I found myself totally incapable of explaining them in front of an audience. Blame that bugger Collick. I was very flattered that anyone had noticed my fanzine reviews at all, and had no hesitation in agreeing to appear. I'll know better next time.

The final conclusion of the discussion was that fanzine publishing is a cyclic affair. In periods of great activity, everybody is constantly inspired by the flood of fanzines through the letter box to get in on the action. Anyone not doing anything feels left out of all the fun going on and the praise flying about. More fanzines appear, the flood continues, the process perpetuates itself. This is the sort of healthy fannish atmosphere everyone would like to see.

From my impressions the mid-seventies were such a period, although I only caught the tail end, and these impressions were coloured by the excitement of a neo discovering fandom. At such times there seems to be a clear, common idea of what should be done, and how to do it. At some stage this sense of direction is lost, the question arises of what to do next. Everything begins to flounder, fanzines appear less often, and no longer seem as exciting. Sources of inspiration dwindle, and with them the very level of activity. The climate of fanzine publishing, like the act, also seem cyclic, suffering from periodic fluctuations.

This sounds suspiciously like the cyclic theories of fandom to be found in a-

bundance and justly treated with scorn. But there is no implication that these fluctuations have any regular pattern, that the same actions are repeated, or that all this has any mystical significance. The principle it depends on is the common cliché that the motive for publishing fanzines is to invite response. This means that when the level of activity is as low as it has been in the last five years, there is a feeling of isolation in producing an issue, rather than the sense of participation in some communal endeavour.

The infamous 'fannish renaissance' of the summer of '81 was, if anything, the exception which proves the etcetera. Despite the illusion of renewed activity very little of any real worth emerged. There were the EPSILONs and the WALLBANGERS, reliable but pedestrian fanzines. There was the appearance of SBD, which was exciting, but had nothing solid behind it. It failed to continue because Greg couldn't sustain the energy beyond a single issue. Half the material produced at the time consisted of nothing more than enthusing over how great it was that everybody was doing fanzines again. The excitement of once again participating in something more was there, but it was hollow, and could only feed on itself.

The inevitable corollary is that it is not enough to have lots of fanzines floating around, there must be lots of fanzines being read, which requires the existence of fanzines worth reading in the first place. I once thought that a really big fanzine, full of lots of high-powered stuff by loads of different writers could get people really excited and prove there was still life and talent and perhaps provide the spark. Both TAPPEN and STILL IT MOVES came out of this period, and there was OUT OF THE BLUE, but none of these have yet reached their sixth issue. I'm surprised Harry and Kev can still remember their title (I had to think damned hard when I started this thing). This is hardly a healthy fannish scene.

The present failure of fanzine fandom has been done to death as long as I've been in fandom. As West said in "Ah, Sweet Arrogance", "Even Ian Williams is making hollow bonging noises", and that was three and a half years ago. When I turned up to my first SILICON draped in safety pins Rob Hansen was spouting semi-mystical nonsense about having reached the end of the road in terms of fannish development, and having nothing left to say or do. At that time TD was at its peak, there was SEAMONSTERS, GROSS ENCOUNTERS laying it on the line, Joseph Nicholas almost making sense.....

But the uncertainty and the sense of loss of direction was there. Things have declined since, and nobody is very happy about it. Phil Palmer has complained that such a view is unfair to the likes of SECOND HAND WAVE, Cyril Simsa's AMANITA and NEW RIVER BLUES. It is undoubtedly true that the most creative and original stuff in British fanzines at the time went annoyingly unnoticed within these pages. But 2HW was usually facile in the extreme, AMANITA obscure, and NeRB messy and vague in its intentions. Above all, none of them managed to be genuinely fannish fanzines, but seemed like something else masquerading as such. All seemed too pleased with their own subject matter, and ignored the reader.

So what has actually been done about it, in between all the shouting? There's D. West's DAISNAID 8, sorry, "Performance", yet another exercise in how to pub your ish for the price of a box of typing paper and a single stamp after your hamster's died and left your duplicator defunct. Malcolm Edwards, he of the much feted 'personal element' (of which, more later) has been making noises which indicate he may yet recover from this parasitic infestation. There's Jimmy Robertson attempting to get to grips with real life in FELICITY. There are the Women's Apa and SHALLOW END, both of which I know only by repute, but seem to be having beneficial effect if NUTZ is anything to go by. And there's Phil Palmer's THE CHOCOLATES OF LUST 2.

CoL is an ace fanzine. It is flawed in many ways, containing articles on relativity and the Impact Theatre group and long lists of songs which fail to come to life; there are obscure collages in the corners of pages and stange letters begging free cameras from Kodak; but there are also remarkably good articles from Nick Lowe, Geoff Ryman and Cyril Simsa, and a competent support feature from Alan Ferguson. It is also probably one of the most visually engaging fanzines I've seen, even if it lacks something in the integration of artwork and writing. Fandom may sneer at artwork elsewhere than on the cover, insisting that it is 'only words that matter', and John Jarrold may ask "...are we three year olds that we need to relax our atten-

tion every two pages by looking at pretty pictures?" But Palmer knows a shrewd editor can use the same attractions that were used to make us learn to read in the first place to draw his readers in. We might not like them, but we have to compete with such underhand tactics. No one would argue that literary ploys like a strong, attention-grabbing first paragraph are essential, but when such ideas are applied to non-verbal form the knee seems to jerk.

CoL's probably the first successful example of the sort of thing Phil defended in 2HW, AMANITA and NeRB. The visual style is the sort of thing Cyril Simsa tried to apply to fanzines before (and had a hand in here), the offbeat choices of subject matter recall NeRB. His success lies in the achievement of that quality of fannishness his predecessors lacked. Even in the unsuccessful pieces, such as Phil's relativity article, he seemed to be straining against the limits of an impersonal choice of subject in the attempt to break down the walls. The good bits, Nick, Cyril and Geoff, would not seem out of place in TAPPEN, but that they have an immediacy, liveliness and an element of surprise rarely to be found there. One is reminded of the accusations that the traditional fanzine format stifles experiment and creativity by their insistence on the solid virtues of the good old fannish fanzine. Perhaps it would be truer to say their inability to find 'fannishness' outside their own familiar territory. One is also reminded of the argument that fannish writing should abandon the cosy territory of incestuous humour and face the challenge of genuine human experience. Even Nick Lowe's superficially trivial "Lavortories" expresses moments of real life which conventional fannish writing not so much shies away from as seems completely unaware of, in the process putting FELICITY to shame. It's not so much a different approach as a slight shift of emphasis which reveals new facets of the same objects.

The reason for FELICITY's failure is probably that it comes uncomfortably close to the American soul-baring school often feared to be the only alternative to light-hearted anecdotal rambling. Again, there is a failure to pay attention to the reader, a failure to make contact. The writers are all a little too concerned with their little tragedy, and not sufficiently concerned with making it relevant to the poor sod reading it. The articles, however, important to the writers, remain stories on the page. Nevertheless they show a good grasp of what they're attempting, and certainly never descend to the depths plumbed by the American analysts couch school. FELICITY is an important step in the right direction. The problem seems to be the idea that 'real life' necessarily consists of tragedy and pain, which is no more true than to say it consists of a string of witty one liners. The recognition of this and the ability to communicate it is what puts CoL up at the top.

All this brings us to the essential question of the nature of this quality of fannishness, and Malcolm Edwards' 'personal element'. What is the difference between this and the attempt any writer must make to express his experiences in terms of the human condition common to us all?

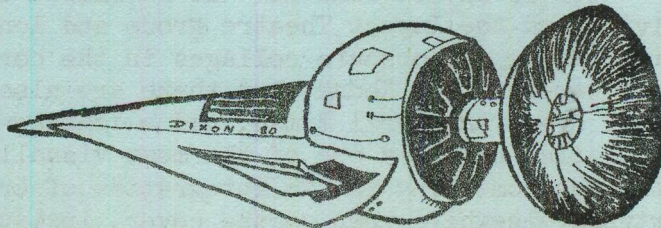
I would not be at all surprised if Malcolm were not incredibly embarrassed by now by references to his comments in TAPPEN 1. After all, he didn't really say a great deal. As Phil Palmer pointed out, it expresses very neatly something understood intuitively by nearly every reader and writer of fanzines. He speaks of "... a range of effects not possible in any other form of writing."

What effects?

"...these are the very qualities which many people dislike in fannish writing: they dismiss it as in-groupish, self-obsessed, limited to anecdotes about who said what to whom and who threw up over whose carpet."

We are obviously on controversial ground here. For further details we head up to TAPPEN 5 and "Performance". West is criticising the fanthology on the grounds of this peculiar nature of fanzines:

"Fan writing is the most context dependent form of writing I can think of and the context is...the whole fannish scene of the period in question. ...The idea that something published



in a fanzine which is 'good enough to be published anywhere' is thereby good *fan* writing is self-contradictory. Good *writing* such a piece may be, but if it is so readily detachable from the web of personalities and cross-references which give fanzines their unique character then it is doubtfully *fan* writing at all."

Having used the argument myself I can't sit on the fence pointing accusing fingers at Malcolm and D. demanding some justification of these sweeping generalisations. I say again, what effects? And (here comes the anti-climax) I answer, I don't know. It lies somewhere in the way it is done, in pitching at, if you will, a market. I've wrestled with this article for a good while now and at times felt all my convictions crumbling under the onslaught of rational analysis. I can only say I still believe in the unique nature of fanzines. I can *tell* there's a difference between the stuff I find satisfying fan writing and the stuff I read in Punch and New Society. This is how I understand the fanzines I do, and those I receive, on whatever intuitive level. And this seems to be the same for almost everyone else in fandom.

I don't need ideas, I need someone to codify my ideas. The delight with which Malcolm's comments were taken up cannot be ignored. It was continually quoted as if it said everything that needed to be said, and to most people, for all intents and purposes, it did. A lot of people's ideas seem to have been codified. Even people like Phil Palmer and Joe Nicholas seem to produce fanzines on this principle even as they intellectually deny it.

This does not, however, mean we can't explore the idea further and make a few guesses and a few pertinent observations. Let us begin at what seems like a beginning of sorts.

The neo's progress begins on his first encounter with fandom, initially as nothing more than another minority interest group, much as the local tennis club or bird watching society. His first approach to fanzines is by reference to the closest thing in his experience, namely professional magazines and club newsletters. Most fanzines he will encounter will happily suit such comparison. There are amateur, imitation s.f. magazines, often liberally splattered with fiction, and clubzines, which are no more than the newsletters of s.f. clubs. The occasional more fannishly inclined piece found within will be dismissed as clownish in-humour of no significance.

Gradually he will become aware, or at least accustomed, to certain subtle differences. The best sercon fanzines have no fiction, but may well contain references to fandom. There is an approach to the presentation of subject matter geared to a small and intimate audience which is more than a collection of in-jokes. He will probably have gathered a circle of new friends, and his interest in fandom will have become more than just an extension of his interest in s.f. He will find he enjoys reading and writing this cliquey stuff, and see no contradiction between this and his previous point of view. At this point a purely fannish fanzine will begin to make sense. He might even do one of his own. Alan Dorey pointed this out with respect to Owen Whiteoak's UGLY RUMOURS. Owen even seems aware of it himself:

"I thought I knew what fandom was all about in the first two years. Mind you, what I thought I knew kept changing."

At any stage during this process he may find the whole thing not to his taste. This may result in retreat to the sercon refuge of BoSFA, or complete rejection of the whole thing as a pointless and incestuous waste of time. Criticism of fannish fandom is often extremely vociferous in its condemnation of our 'childishness' and its insistence that fandom is about science fiction and nothing else.

Contrary to popular belief most new fans are attracted to fanzines not by some shit-hot classic of the form which inspires them to imitation, but by a potential they sense in the form. The inspiration can be found in the direst of crudzines if the right mental attitude is there in the first place. They then produce the closest thing they can manage to this nebulous ideal fanzine which takes shape in their heads, basing this vision on the meagrest scraps of information. Having so laboriously produced their first little *meisterwerks* they don't take kindly to being told they've made the inevitable beginner's mistakes and should go away and read back issues of SBD until they've figured out how to do it right. In a lull such as

cult to see from this point of view just what relevance old fanzines have to their efforts. What this amounts to in most cases is a sad breakdown in communications.

One of the appeals of the fanzine at first sight is the creative freedom it offers. It can be somewhat disheartening to see this freedom apparently denied by the infernal conspiracy of fanzine reviewers. 'Any young punk can get up and say his bit,' implies that one is not only allowed to say what one likes, but also has the ability and needs to make no great effort to do so (or that it requires any effort to do so). The word can is somewhat ambiguous. Unfortunately, in all the excitement of the first discovery of fandom such distinctions can easily be forgotten. The theory of fanzine criticism which holds that its purpose is to 'raise the standards' of fan writing is, if anything, an embodiment of the slogan in its first two interpretations. It is applied in the belief that anyone does have the ability to meet those standards, a generous belief when viewed in the harsh light of reality, and that the freedom of speech afforded by fandom is a valuable thing which should not be abused. The charge that this young punk has failed in the attempt to have his say, is often read as a denial of his right to state his opinion or his ability to do so.

However much we may complain that such thinking is puerile and inexcusable, it is inevitable in most cases. The only way to teach is by example, and when examples are in such short supply we can only expect more of the same. Some cases, however, are not so innocent.

In EPSILON 9 Rob Hansen cited the pronouncement of Chuck Connors, who apparently proclaimed himself some sort of fannish Malcolm McClaren, predicting the rise of a New Wave of fandom with the aid of an almost entirely fictitious version of fannish history. Rob is inclined to dismiss this as ignorance. Given the extracts Rob quotes this is hardly satisfactory. Connors seems to have deliberately misunderstood the nature of fandom - whilst he probably was unaware of any real fannish history, this does not explain why he felt it necessary to invent any of his own - in order to foist on it his own pseudo-Guevara fantasies. One is reminded of John Owen, continually churning out CRYSTAL SHIPS which tell us how much he dislikes fandom. Who does he think he's talking to?

Fortunately such cases seem to be rare, and tend to avoid fandom to a large extent, perhaps to protect their fantasies from the disturbances of True Facts. A more common form of premature fannish ejaculation is the interminable chumminess, the excess of rhetorical questions and the misused punctuation, affected by many newcomers to fanzine writing. The best, recent example of this I could find was from Jeff Suter's PERIPHERY 8, in which Pam Wells writes:

"PERIPHERY 7 was devoted to the ~~ego-titip~~ life story of the great (?) Mr. Suter. If you want to know the *real* Jeff buy me a drink sometime and I'll tell you."

It would be unfair to characterise this sort of thing as an attempt to debase one's writing to a lounge bar chat, in the hope that readers will forget that this is writing and hence fail to notice the general illiteracy of one's offering. It does seem to be part of the defensiveness of the inexperienced fanwriter that leads to pathetic editorials apologising for their fanzine's crudeness before you've even begun to read the bloody thing. Behind it lies the embryonic awareness that fanzine writing is written conversation, distorted into the idea that it is not really writing at all. In fact it serves only as an alienation device to remind us that this *is* the printed page. The 'conversational tone' of the best fanwriting is achieved not by the transcription of verbal discussion, but by the careful crafting of an illusion of conversation.

This is found most commonly in clubzines, that intermediate stage when an entire fanzine devoted to fannish stuff still doesn't seem quite right and results in a mixed bag of casual sercon and fake fannish. But the neo's progress continues. A taste for the real fannish stuff develops, and one gets to read enough good examples to understand the ways in which it can be done successfully. The instinct becomes surer. The uncertainties fade and the facile tricks are outgrown.

Pam Wells will certainly not have welcomed my quoting her when she has demonstrated this so well in NUTZ 1. Almost all traces of earlier awkwardness have vanished from her own stuff, leaving it assured and entertaining. The articles were

not so good. Linda Pickersgill's RACON report was disappointing, Mratyn Taylor's description of life on the Isle of Man sounded like something from the Times (he must have some personal experience of the things he tells, so why can't we have the information a little less second-hand?). John Harvey's writing came out somewhat flat. All these pieces seemed to have been put together mechanically, whilst Caroline Mullan's was, if anything, a little too impressionistic. Judith Hanna managed best to convey the essence of what she was describing, a damn fine article, although all the pieces seemed to be on the right lines. In her choice of contributions Pam displays a strong sense of what makes a good fannish article. As they say in all the best books, this is more than just promising.

There is a concept in Biology encapsulated in the esoteric phrase 'neotony recapitulates ontology'. What this means is that the gestation of mammals passes through the various stages of evolution as it is presently understood. At one stage a human baby resembles a protozoan fish, complete with gills, and is possessed of a tail which finally atrophies into the coccyx, until a very late stage. There's no necessity for this within the womb, it simply happens that way. Rob Holdstock could probably tell you more about it.

A similar relation exists between the neo's progress and the development of the fannish fanzine, the one mirroring the other in microcosm. The fannish fanzine has grown out of s.f. fanzines which served the same purpose amongst fandom as punk, comics and performance art fanzines do amongst their respective communities. Eventually the social aspect has gained pre-eminence, and in the process produced a distinctive form without reference to the s.f.-based zines which are at its roots.

The fannish fanzine was not invented one lazy afternoon, nor does any fan come to it with some blinding flash of revelation. The fanzine, and any fan's understanding of it, have developed in a gradual and unconscious fashion. There are no clear-cut concepts. Anyone producing a fanzine 'understands' what they are doing on a purely intuitive level. When writing an article this is sufficient to achieve one's ends. When criticising fannish writing this is inadequate. Assessments based on gut reaction prove difficult to justify without some rationalisation of that reaction, and attempts to assess any experiment or innovation flounder helplessly.

Not only must a critic have some basis for his assessments, but the realisation of such a basis is probably the most valuable of his functions. There are two problems this presents. One is that the whole thing is so tortuously complicated that it is perhaps better left unsaid. The other is that it is far easier to spot something which is a fanzine than something which looks similar but is not. Within s.f. fandom alone there are sercon fanzines, mixed genzines, clubzines, fannish genzines and personalzines. Are we to attempt a unified theory embracing all these? If you are a bloody anarchist like Phil Palmer you start dragging all sorts of other crap into the picture.

In STOMACH PUMP 2 I tentatively suggested the concept of 'pure' fanzine. For the sake of pretentious academicism I chose the term *pure* to distinguish it from other fanzines, which are impure in the sense that they devote themselves to particular topics, and do not exist purely for their own sake. The pure fanzine, the fannish fanzine, is the only variety for which the word in itself is sufficient description. My idea was that you strip away the crap, the sercon, the clubzines, and consider the specifics of the pure fanzine alone. The other stuff, except in its attempts to incorporate fannishness, is neither more nor less than the bird watcher's newsletter. It just happens to hang around the same fandom, gets mixed into the same fanzine review columns and generally messes up the picture. In the final analysis, they are all other aspects of the same process, and must be re-incorporated by extension of whatever theory of fanzines emerges. It is the idea that they must all be judged by identical criteria which causes confusion. At this stage they provide no clues, except by comparison, as to what the fanzine is.

The great mystery has always been why the fannish fanzine emerged here. The potential ought to exist as strongly in any sphere where discussion takes printed form. But anywhere else the fanzine is more



functional. The idea of divorcing it so from its roots seems pointless. What else have we got in common? In fandom, which has itself separated from its s.f. roots, it actually makes sense. Fanzines, and writing which resembles fanwriting, can be found all over the place (I remember Alan Dorey once describing a columnist in a cricket magazine as having a fannish style), but nowhere else does one find the self-consciousness of fandom.

Punk has often declared itself a movement, and as often denied it, but in a political, or counter-cultural, sense, with direct reference to the society at large it wishes to change; Performance (the performance art magazine, not the West article) as described by Phil Palmer, takes all human life as its subject matter, its particular focus being an unusual way of looking at life. On the other hand, fandom sees itself as an entirely independent sub-culture. Individual members may be deeply concerned about larger issues, like CND, but see their participation in fandom as a separate activity. Many even find the very discussion of politics an excessive intrusion of real life; but even those on the other side of the argument tend to feel that those voices raised in demand of direct action on the part of fandom as a body have rather missed the point. The very existence of the terms FIJAGDH and FIAWOL, although apparent opposites, both suggest a view of fandom as a self-contained compartment, whether as a complete alternative life-style or as an insignificant diversion. *Just?* What is so insignificant about a hobby?

The fannish fanzine exists by virtue of fandom's self-consciousness of itself as an autonomous body. Other fandoms are 'Train spotting' fandom, and their fanzines, if they have them, are train spotting fanzines. To suggest that this fanzine is a production of s.f. fandom is extremely misleading. We are no fandom in particular, just fandom. And our fanzines are just fanzines.

SP 2 was subsequently taken to task by both Joe Nicholas, in an unpublished letter, and Abi Frost, whose letter I ran last issue. Abi argued that:

"The positive thing about fandom is *not* the supposed sympathy of the readers; it is that publication, form, content...are entirely under the editor's control."

She then goes on to object to what she sees as "a network of people interested in writing" being "tied to s.f. and fandom as subjects for historical reasons."

Unfortunately (or not, if you enjoy this sort of thing), the network of fandom consists of people who not only meet socially, but use their fanzines as part of their socialising, and to whom this is more important than the writing in itself. As in any other point discussed in this essay, the issue is clouded by the fact that most fans are interested in writing. Even fans who couldn't write more than three words in a row without committing some gross stylistic error enthuse wildly about how well-written some article in the latest issue of their favourite fanzine is. This perhaps provides a clue. It has been argued that the ideal listener for a piece of music is one without any musical training, who can respond naturally to the emotional effect composer and musician are trying to achieve. In real life such ideal listeners tend to fall foul of simple tricks by which they can be fooled into ascribing profound vision to facile muzak. Being the world's worst cook does not prevent you appreciating good food, only a diet of fish fingers does that. In much the same way many fans without the slightest scrap of literary taste can still recognise good stuff by the way it moves them. Fan writing is a means to an end. When a piece of fanwriting is acclaimed it is not for the neat little alliteration in paragraph four, but the economy of expression that device allows.

It should be fairly obvious that the ends to which fan writing is a means cannot be achieved without the exercise of fairly basic literary skills. Nevertheless, Joseph managed to interpret my comments as an attempt to reject such considerations as a basis for fanzine criticism, or at least assign it a secondary role. The simple fact is that if a fanzine article is not a good article, it cannot be a good fanzine article. Conversely, no amount of technical brilliance will make an article into a good fanzine article if it is not cognisant of the specifics of fan writing. Neither question is more important, since both criteria must be satisfied before the seal of approval can be awarded.

Such arguments are often used to elevate one particular form of writing over others (quite commonly within s.f. circles). Whether or not the fact that something is more difficult makes it 'better', this fallacy rests on the assumption that there

is a 'mainstream' of writing which requires nothing more than the ability to write posh prose. Stylistic exercises may possess intrinsic interest for readers so inclined, but, despite Abi's contentions, fandom does not generally consist of such readers, and fanwriting is not practised to such ends.

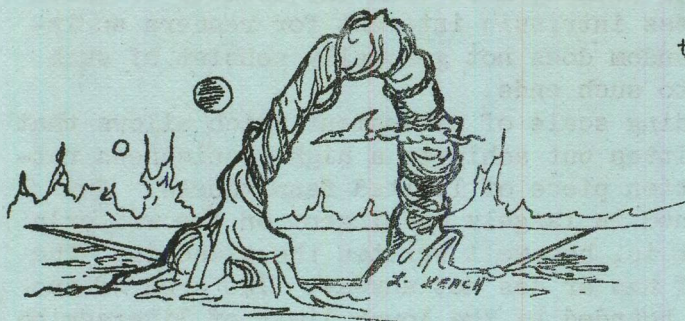
This leaves the floor open for a sliding scale of assessment which allows that a piece which is not particularly well written but achieves a high fannishness rating may get more points than a better written piece of limited fannishness. Any *degree* of fannishness which can be discerned is largely contingent on the writer's ability to convey feelings and ideas, that is, how well written the piece is. The quality of fannishness is really a case of has or has not anyway. The area of successful fannish writing can be said to be bounded by the lower limit of literacy on the one axis and the lower limit of fannishness on the other; anything falling within that catchment area can settle into its own place in the pecking order. The task of the responsible critic is to insist on, at least, the maintenance of those standards. The question of value judgements is of little importance, the emphasis has always been on 'doing one's best'. There is plenty of room in fandom for a vast range of fanzines of varying quality, as long as they are entertaining and successful within their limited aims.

EPSILON is unrivalled at present as the fanzine about fandom. If asked to recommend a title to a friend with no knowledge of fandom, I would have no hesitation in citing EPSILON, in the sure knowledge I'd have no-one tagging along behind me to the next convention. Most EPSILONs, bar the witty and stylish covers, are interchangeable. There is the Editorial, the regular Notions column in which some burning issue of the fannish day is addressed, sometimes a conrep or suchlike article, and a well subscribed letter column discussing the last couple of Notions and other fannish matters. In number fourteen we have some harsh words about lack of attention in class, sorry, the reading of fannish articles leading to misunderstanding; Notions is devoted to fanzine reviewing; more harsh words, this time about the success of the EUROCON bid, in tandem with a straightforward report of Rob's ALBACON; and a letter column as described above.

If there is anything really annoying about EPSILON it is that Rob never attempts to stretch himself and maybe surprise us, just once. Whilst many people have recently attempted to pump new life into the convention report - Chris Evans' "The Body In Question" for instance - Rob settles for the old-fashioned string of anecdotes in roughly chronological order. But EPSILON is perfectly satisfactory within its limitations. To suggest Rob's attitude is some sort of criminal negligence ignores the fact that Rob's stuff is of interest to the people who read it and not intended for anyone to whom it is not.

Pedestrian as it may be, Rob's writing loses nothing by comparison with Alan Dorey's. When it comes to writing Alan displays as much sense of style as he does in his dress. But he takes the best prose he can manage and makes it work for him. GROSS ENCOUNTERS 11 is similar in structure to EPSILON. More harsh words, in this case on the need for every fan to do his goddam best; some witty satire in "Blood on the Rooftops", and more fanzine reviews, pointing up the editorial in more detail. Alan has always been able to get to the heart of the problem, pinpointing exactly what is right or wrong with any particular fanzine, and gleaning some lesson from this for all to take notice of. I once took a summer job in the maintenance department of my Dad's works. One of the old hands explained that the best maintenance crews spent all their time sat on arses. If they did have to work all the time they weren't doing their jobs as well as they should. As long as editors continue to make the basic errors Alan points out there is a need for someone to get up and make it known that this is not good enough.

As a final example, we have PREVERT 7. John is a better writer than Rob or Alan, but this is because he has a better idea of economy of expression. We are treated to four sides of John and four of letters. Within this space he makes all the points he wants to make with little waste of words or effort. If there is nothing profound, and one is left somewhat dissatisfied, neither is there any attempt to achieve the illusion of profundity by stretching things out. PREVERT is not boring. Nor for that matter, are EPSILON or GROSS ENCOUNTERS, for the most part.



None of them could claim the position of best fanzine available. They are useful second-division zines. In the healthy fannish atmosphere there would be plenty of such fanzines, entertaining, disposable, but keeping interest alive and the waters stirred, providing the background, the substance of the 'web of personalities and cross-references'. The triple-decker shit-hot high-flyers cannot exist without the basis of the EPSILONs and PREVERTs.

To suggest they should be better is like the sort of criticism which was common a few years ago with respect to Dave Langford, which implied that since he was such a good writer he should produce awesomely brilliant TDs every other week and - it's a bird, it's a plane - save fandom single handed.

The context of fandom, the small, intimate audience, the personal contact, all the unique circumstances which both allow fannish writing to exist and determine the form it takes, is like a camera. It enables the production of particularly vivid writing otherwise impossible. Photography requires certain abilities like pointing the camera in the right direction, pressing the right buttons, not shaking the bloody thing or putting your fingers over the lens. By this process decent snapshots can be produced, and all the old aunties will oooh and aah over little Timmy and his sandcastle. With a certain amount of intelligence and artistic vision one can go on to produce something of real aesthetic attractiveness. However, it is not uncommon that a fanwriter will sit on his arse, press the right buttons and think no more about it. This is the fanzine equivalent of a snapshot. We have to hand Kev Smith's DOT 15 and Jim Barker's HELPMABOAB 1.

The last thing I saw from Jim was ONE DEAD HEDGEHOG, a couple of years ago now. An unpretentious and generally very good fanzine devoted to experiences with back-firing pranks and the law. In common with other oddments of Jim's writing I've seen, it was written in an unremarkable but personable and witty style. HELPMABOAB has the same style, but, unlike the other stuff, is deficient in any real feeling. It is simply a recounting of what JB has been up to recently. It never seems to cross his mind whether this really matters.

The latest DOT is not so surprising, since most of what Kev has been putting out recently has been similarly lacklustre. Kev is still one of the better writers in fandom, he simply makes no use of his talents other than to produce seamless but unexciting prose he can do in his sleep. DOT 15 tells us in disinterested tones how Kev came to change his job. Again, there is no indication in his easy complacency that he ever stopped to wonder whether it mattered to anybody.

Of course, these things do matter. One sends one's fanzine to people considered to be friends, and it is usual to be interested in one's friends. On the level of extended letters both fanzines are exemplary. But there is nothing to recommend them over the letter from your maiden aunt in Welwyn Garden City that arrived in the same post. At least you can choose your friends.....

Pressing the right buttons is not good enough. The great advantage of the fannish context is that the smallness of the fannish audience allows an immediacy of communication unavailable elsewhere. Obviously, this is bought at the cost of irrelevance to almost the entire human race, but this is not such a bad thing. It is superbly suited to the communication of personality, and entirely unsuited to the communication of abstract ideas. A simple rundown of recent events does not constitute a personality, it only provides a framework for the expression of it. Chris Priest pointed out that the personalities to be found in fanwriting are distorted versions of the writer's own self. Fanwriting is a form of dramatic monologue in which the persona assumed is intimately related to the guy actually putting the words on the paper and, even more importantly, represents, to the reader, not just the main character in a minor drama, but a personal friend.

Such a persona can be easily faked by any well known fan simply by writing a few comments on what he's been up to in an informal, chatty style. I object to this because it is a lazy, shoddy and all too common attempt to pass off work into which no significant effort has been put, feeble, insubstantial, marshmallow fanwriting, in the expectation that the fannish connection will carry it.

Dave Bridges once did a fanzine called ONE OFF. There were eight of these, at which point it metamorphosed into A COOL HEAD. This is the same old Bridges we know and love, still the closest thing in fannish writing to a 'natural'. The latest issue comes in the form of Vol II, Vol III Pt. 1, and Vol III Pt. 2. It rambles on about futile phone calls, being absent minded, bad tempers, a funeral, having long hair, stuff like that. Without warning he sidetracks onto whatever comes into his head. Sometimes he looks like the one and only stream-of-consciousness fannish writer. He sustains this for something like 80 pages, and never gets boring.

Bridges' 'naivet  ' has been commented on elsewhere. Everything seems so matter of fact, and yet there is a wealth of detail built up from the most insignificant beginnings. He presents a childlike view of life, picking up on any little distraction with a true sense of wonder, instead of looking for something 'important' to write about. Because there is no attempt to exaggerate, there is no feeling of being sold a dummy, no anticlimax. You get the feeling that this is what it's really like.

At one point Dave talks about all these people who think he must lead a really exciting life, when in actual fact he leads such a boring life he has to find something interesting to say about it for the purposes of his fanzine.

"Even a dull life can have its moments if you but look hard enough."

It has often been suggested that fanzine writing should attempt to tackle the problems of real life and not shy away from genuine feeling, hiding it under mounds of wit and anecdote. One of the objections is that real life is not an interesting subject, unless you're lucky enough to have your house burn down, in which case you rush to the nearest typewriter and whack out your NOVA winning opus. To which I say, go read some bloody Bridges. Go look hard enough. If anything in life is really important, it is the minor human details, not the burning issues of our times. We don't need this fascist groove thing. Life is full of richness. Tell me about this. I want to know about other people, just like me. I don't need ideas, I need someone to codify my own ideas.

To say that the only subject of interest to fans is fandom is a materialistic preoccupation with objects and events over people and experiences. Fannish writing is marvellously well suited to communication of the latter. I object violently to the waste of opportunity that is most fanwriting.

The most successful and satisfying writing to be found in any fanzine is this sort of stuff. Read Bridges, or Chris Atkinson, or Simon Ounsley, or Chris Evans, or THE CHOCOLATES OF LUST. Done properly, it denies the temptation to press the fannish buttons and save yourself the effort. You have to exploit the strengths of the fannish medium to the full. The fannish fanzine could almost have been designed for it.

--- Steve Higgins

(Reprinted from STOMACH PUMP 4 1983)





Ages ago, it seems, I began a column for Marty for which there's never been a second installment. In part this was because I didn't want to do it, but laying the blame where it belongs isn't quite that simple. After months and some issues of HTT had gone by, I stirred myself after all. I even put aside a Very Important Project to dash off what I regarded as an irritating fannish obligation. I rolled a page into the typer, and pounded out "Cover Charge II". Half an hour or so later I rolled another page in. Then a third. And a fourth. Fifth. Sixth. Seventh. When I'd run the manuscript up to page 15 or so, three days later, I realised that I'd entered myself into the sweepstakes with D. West and Ted White for The Most Interminable Fanarticle Ever on the Pong Poll. And all I'd imagined I'd done was start a brief outline of the history of fan art.

At present I have a manuscript which in second draft ought to run 35 or 40 pages. This is not including examples of art I've discussed, you understand. There might be several pages of that. At first I accepted the idea that the history'd have to be broken down into decades, and run in several installments. But my ambitions expanded with the growing length of the manuscript. I might still have to make do with the installment plan. Perhaps Marty will agree to do an issue of HTT back to back like an Ace Double. My aim is nothing less than a zine all to myself though, tentatively called "The Illustrated Fan". All I know for sure though is that I can't publish it. Time will let us all, me included, know what arrangements can be made.

In the meantime, I discarded a postscript I wrote for the fan art history. Although relevant to other remarks I've made about the present day, the viewpoint is too personal and doesn't belong. (It's the difference between Les Nesman reading the news and Levi Strauss.) Nevertheless, I think my opinions are of Great Public Interest. At the very least Marty once thought they were of interest, and they may cause Great Public Commotion. Also, I never like to throw a thing away once written. Here then is Cover Charge 1½.

STEPPING BACK FOR A PERSPECTIVE

The position of the fanartist, with notable exceptions, has actually never been very good if you think about it. There are the bulk of zines -- clubzines, newsletters, personalzines, and apazines -- which are poorly done and not very satisfying places for an artist to make a habit of appearing in. Then there are the 50 or so zines that give the artist worthy company to be in, and can be expected to be kept by someone other than Gary Farber or Bruce Pelz. Perhaps they'll have an average of three issues a year, generated a possible maximum of 150 potential covers. In fact, this is too large an estimate. A random stack of 100 fanzines that I sorted out proved to have only 50 covers between them. This suggests that there are about 75 covers wanting to be done every year for the top 50 zines.

This is further reduced when zines are discounted that are illustrated by their editors. I think this might account for 15 covers, easily, but lest I be accused

of splitting hairs for some statistical sleight-of-hand, let's just forget about that. So there are about 75 covers a year.

Now, how many artists are there in fanzine fandom? Obviously quite a few. Only a handful are well known or very active, but they account for most of the 75 covers we're interested in. The lumpenproletariat of fanartists are largely found published in the lumpenproletariat of fanzines. A handful, however, is an awfully imprecise figure. Let's guess that at most 15 artists are likely to do the 75 covers in question next year. I count myself, Rob Hansen, D. West, ATom, Dan Steffan, Stu Shiffman, Charles Williams, Steven Fox, Brad Foster, Wade Gilbreath, Marc Shirmeister, Steve Stiles, Joan Hanke-Woods, Jerry Collins, and Harry Bell as the most likely candidates. There are a few other possibilities who may appear on a cover or may not. But it's also likely that one or two of the artists on my list won't make an appearance. Let's be conservative, then, and keep our count at 15.

So there are approximately 15 artists vying for 75 covers.

Before you do any arithmetic on your own, consider that some artists do more covers than others. Dan Steffan, apart from his own zines, did several last year. Steve Stiles did only one that I can recall. It's likely that only 5 artists account for half of the 75. So although the simple average number of covers our 15 most active fanartists will be able to do is 5, the number is actually lower for most of the 15.

Possibly I'm atypical, but I do about 35 full page works of art a year.....

Personally, I think I've inflated the number of available covers. My 50% figure for coverless zines is arguable, but then I think I've been extremely liberal in figuring that there are 50 first rate fanzines. (Perhaps you can give Marty material for the next HTT by listing 50 zines better than, say, Q36, in your next LoC.) There're also the self-illustrated zines that I left out of the calculation, which would reduce the number of covers that can be done by other artists by another large increment. Finally, if the franchise is extended to more than 15 artists I named off the top of my head, the average falls to a radically lower figure.

Suppose I figure on 20 artists doing 60 covers? Or 15 doing 50? Reasonable changes in my calculations only result in a lower average than stated.

Why is this a bad deal for fanartists? For one thing, I've spoken as if interior illustrations don't count, as if only covers do. In part, I counted only covers because it was quicker and easier. Covers are, however, something of a place of honour. The cover is supposed to characterise the zine, and the editor must think highly enough of the art to let it play that role. Furthermore, covers are more prominent than spot illos buried on page umpteen. Not that fanartists as a group fret about small details of publication. They have a wide range of attitudes that extend well beyond arrogance at one extreme, and self-effacement at the other. Apart from salving the ego, though, working at cover size gives the artist greater scope. Not just more space to fill, but the opportunity to develop a more ambitious idea.

For some cartoonists, of course, size is irrelevant. An 8½ by 11 Gilliland is pretty much the same as a 3 by 4 Gilliland. But a full-page Fletcher is quite another thing from a corner-of-the-page Fletcher. In the case of serious artists, the question about covers is hardly worth the asking. I can think of only a couple who did their best work on a small scale. For the majority of serious fan artists covers are really the only place they can show their stuff.

Which makes one final remark even more telling. Of the 75 covers done every year, more than half as I recall were humorous. An average already low becomes that much lower for the serious artist. It is apparent that fan art, as art for Art's sake, is a vanishing species.

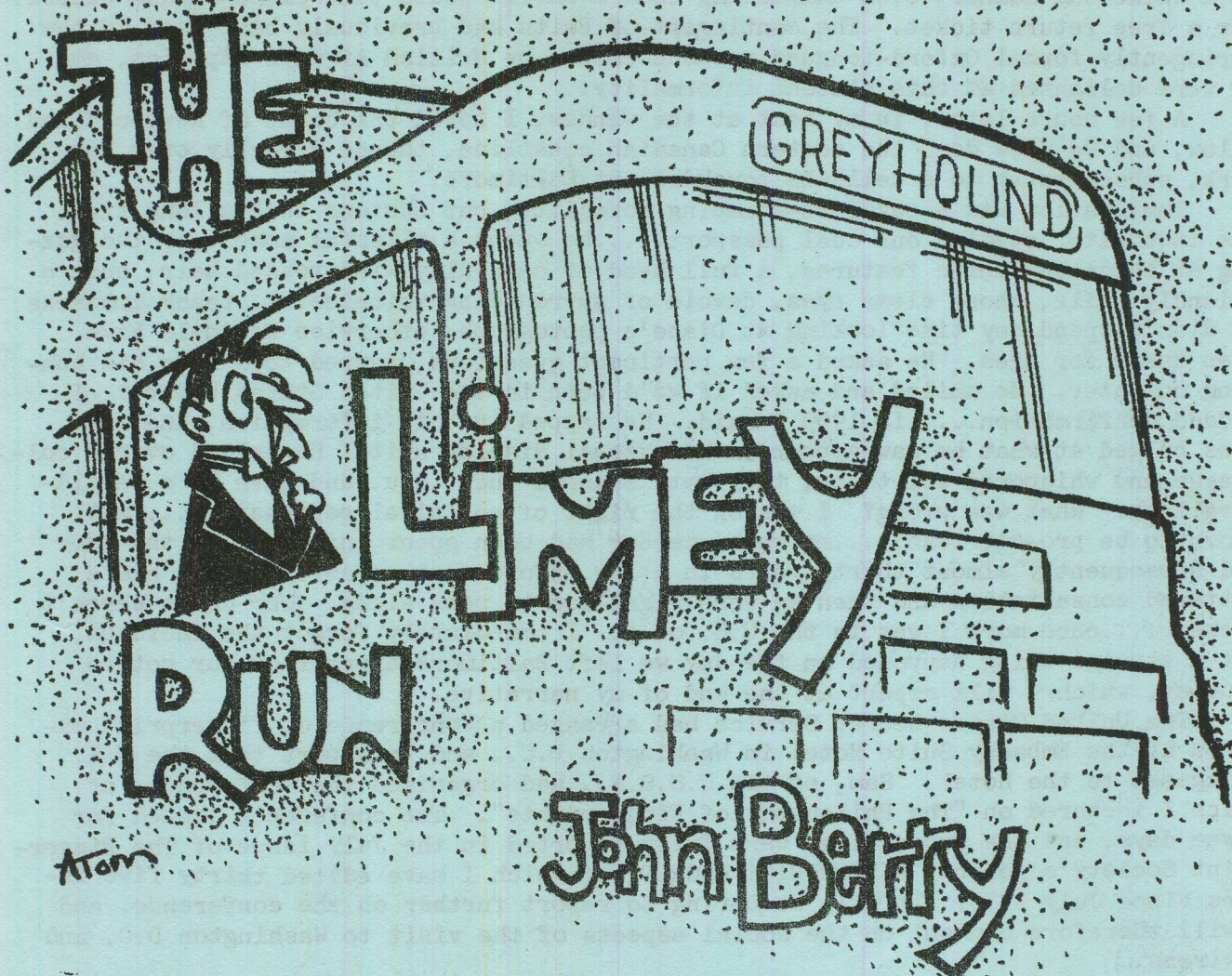
The grotesqueness of the situation may not be readily appreciated by the normal, word-oriented fan, who believes that the written portion of a fanzine is all that really matters. Certain British fans have even said, quite forcibly, that art in a fanzine is at best a distraction, and highly probably a waste of space that could be taken up by more words. Imagine the shoe on the other foot though. Supposing we artists held the same opinions about words? That isn't vivid enough? Suppose then that the best Chris Atkinson or Dave Langford were permitted to write

were *five pages a year*. (And a couple of dozen epigrams.) And then imagine that some more reactionary artist complained that the space were better taken up with more illustration.

Get the picture?

--- Taral





The Satellite robot transport from the general concourse at Gatwick Airport to the international lounge opened on the day of our departure from the airport at the end of April 1983, and after travelling the three hundred yards on the silent railed carriage we duly received our commemorative ballpoint pens.

My wife Diane and I, and several colleagues of The Fingerprint Society, joined the World Airways DC-10 flight at 1:00 p.m., destination Baltimore International Airport, U.S.A. Diane was naturally somewhat perturbed about the choice of aircraft. Several DC-10s had been involved in extremely serious accidents. On one occasion, several years previously, a door had opened just after take-off and over three hundred passengers had been killed. Subsequently, other deaths had occurred in DC-10 accidents. One friend of mine who had flown a long flight on a DC-10 averred that spontaneous hymn singing had commenced prior to take-off, and prayer beads could be heard clicking through the flight. My friend Steve, of sober and economically-minded disposition, had organised our flight, and he had prudently selected World Airlines because they had offered the lowest trans-Atlantic ticket of £329.00 return, considerably cheaper than rival concerns such as British Airways and Pan American. Steve had booked our flights in the autumn of 1982, and subsequently, competing airlines also reduced their return fares to £329.00. I assuaged Diane by stressing a fairly obvious factor....that because of the many DC-10 accidents, preventive measures must surely indicate the craft must be the safest jet in service.

Our flight was serene in every respect.

We were pleasantly surprised at the friendly dialogue offered by the captain

just after take-off, "Hi, folks, this is Jim here." He gave us the required data in a whimsical manner, even announcing that a raffle would take place in due course for a free return ticket. The contingent of Brits had previously been used to the stringently formal Oxford-tongued pronouncements by British Airways captains, and we were delighted at this blatant informality.

A few hours later, in my seat at the window, I noted the coast of Newfoundland below, and we flew down the eastern Canadian coastline, thence directly over New York, subsequently to a delicate touchdown at Baltimore.

Immigration was a passport-stamping formality, but Customs took a long time. The inquisitor studied our dual passport....he spent a blissful moment or two gazing at those aesthetic features, a full head of carefully wind-tossed hair, such a friendly smile, those clear eyes, devoid of surrounding wrinkles....thank goodness he didn't spend any time looking at Diane's photograph, otherwise we would have been there for ages. He asked a few pertinent questions, tapped them into his humming computer. He smiled and asked if we'd been in the United States before? I nodded confirmation....in 1959 I said. He tapped in this information, and his eyes bulged at what he saw appear on his visual display unit. He called over a colleague and whispered something, they both scanned the v.d.u. and gave me a bewildered look. What was wrong? I was on the right of political persuasion....well known to be pro-American....my whole career had been spent initially in the army and subsequently almost thirty years in a law enforcement capacity. They had a muttered consultation and then we were signalled to pass along. Our cases weren't opened....once more I was in the U.S. of A. I immediately forgot the incident, but a strange thing happened on the day we left Baltimore airport on our return journey, which I will report at the end of my narrative.

The United States Secret Service had arranged a conference of fingerprint experts at the Embassy Suite Hotel in Washington D.C., and transport took the U.K. delegates to the hotel. Sam, of the U.S.S.S., had organised the conference, at which I lectured on "The Philosophy of Fingerprints". The conference lasted for three days, and the proceedings were fully reported in the July issue of The Fingerprint Society's journal FINGERPRINT WHORLD, of which I have edited thirty five issues since July 1975. It will be boring to report further on the conference, and I will therefore comment on the social aspects of the visit to Washington D.C. and environs.

Steve, Diane and myself stayed at Sam's house in Stafford County, Virginia, some forty miles from the capitol. On the first night we arrived at midnight. Sam's attractive wife Margaret had waited up to meet us, but after coffee and a conventional chat we retired, Diane and I having a room in the basement where we slept soundly.

Up early in the morning -- we had to leave at 6:30 a.m. --and whilst attempting my ablutions I discovered the bewildering difference between the seemingly unimportant physical aspects of domestic husbandry in Great Britain and the U.S.A.

I hereby make the following admissions only because a conference visitor from Canada, a police officer of senior rank, also confided to making similar contretemps.

I could not manipulate the water taps or the shower in Sam's house.

I mean to say, in Britain, not only are the hot and cold water taps plainly differentiated by colour -- hot is red and cold is blue -- but blatant "H" and "C" capitals are also rampant on the tap tops. The requirement of hot or cold water in desirable quantities is readily available merely by turning the taps in a clockwise direction to one's personal choice.

In Sam's washroom it seemed to me that an Einsteinian logic was necessary to fill the sink with hot water. Quite frankly, even switching on the light in the washroom required a concentration hard to find and maintain at such an unearthly hour....the blasted light switches were upside-down.

But how to fill the sink with warm shaving water? I twisted rimmed screws and thumped pipes with my fists.

"I shall just have to faucet," I smiled to myself, unable to share with anyone else this one magnificent moment in a morning of frustration.

The shower really was a puzzle. I stood naked and frustrated in the bath but could not get the jet of water to blast from the pepper-pot head extruding six

inches from the wall. I managed a luke-warm dribble, but a searing jet of H₂O, which my body required, remained an unfulfilled dream -- I ran my fingers all round the bath.....after all, this was a Secret Serviceman's house, and sophistication was to be expected. I jerked the towel rail in a second of unadulterated pique, but I was unsuccessful. Of course, I was now a mass of perspiration after my efforts, and, ignoring an unknown person hammering the door for entrance, I bathed myself by scooping water from the sink.

I brooded to myself as I dressed in the basement.

Sam was in his automobile at the front of his house, waving us urgently to join him for the run to the conference hotel in Washington.

Diane and Steve were behind me as I attempted to open the front door, and I turned the handle but nothing happened. I could see Sam smiling triumphantly in the driver's seat as I thumbed the various snibs associated with egress. Steve eventually opened it -- his polished toecaps will never be the same again.

As we climbed into the automobile, Sam admitted he had had difficulties with our domestic acoutrements when he had visited the U.K. a year previously. He said it was sweet to obtain revenge.

That night, after the last session of the conference, we met en masse in a downtown restaurant, and then 'walked' the metropolis until after midnight. I found the streets and sidewalks to be clean and white, and I readily worked out the system of finding one's way around Washington by street numbers.

We drove into Virginia, and Sam and Margaret suggested that we have breakfast. Though exhausted, a swift look at my watch showed that it was 2:00 a.m.

Breakfast?

Ours not to reason why. When in Rome, etc. Sam drove to an all-night restaurant, and Diane and I ordered a light breakfast. We reached Sam's at 3:30 a.m.

"We leave at 7:00 a.m.," he said, and suddenly I saw the exquisite logic -- I added my mite to the scenario by shaving and doing my press ups before retiring for the night.--it is a particular boon for those amongst us who are testy and moody during the post-awakening period when the mind is trying to keep up with the body.

Sam and Margaret have two young children, a girl of six, Heather, and a boy of ten, Jason, both of whom were supposedly very good soccer players. Soccer is never played by young girls in Britain, and I was anxious to talk to Heather about this unusual recreation. We only met briefly during the morning safari to and from the bathroom, but Sam promised that on the following afternoon I would have an opportunity to play soccer with them on ground at the back of his house.

Once more the frenzied drive to Washington. A strange traffic rule -- if a vehicle held four people it was permissible to drive in the fast centre lane, whereas the other lanes going in the same direction were crammed with slow-moving traffic holding less than the quartet.

That evening, after the conference we drove to a landing stage for the scheduled trip down the Potomac River by boat. Delegates boarded the vessel, which was supposed to display a Dixieland Band and copious quantities of food and drink during the three hour journey. Food seemed to run out very quickly, but the availability of wine and beer and the hypnotic fervour of the musical ensemble sated everyone, causing a singing, laughing mass of humanity to eventually be ejected from the vessel.

I gave my lecture on Sunday morning and at the conclusion of the agony I was presented with a large stetson with a frondy blue feather tucked into the side of it, then I was quickly rushed to be interviewed by a reporter from the WASHINGTON POST. Steve was also jointly interviewed by Sarah Booth Conroy. Steve and I were photographed outside the hotel tavern, right thumbs rampant, and found that being interviewed by a reporter of the calibre of Miss Conroy was a pleasurable experience.

The conference concluded; delegates shook hands and said how wonderful it had been, then rushed homewards.

Before returning home, we met Margaret and the two children, and Sam took us for a drive around Washington to permit me to view prominent Washington landmarks.

Whilst driving through the capital, I saw Einstein sitting on steps in a little park. Sam, knowing of my hero worship of this genius, kindly stopped the automobile and I photographed Albert. The statue was about twelve feet high and featured Einstein holding the $E=MC^2$ document proudly in his left hand. I was delighted to be photographed leaning against his right arm. I am currently reading his Relativity Theory for the thirty-seventh time, and hope in due course to be able to appreciate the more obvious pointers of his reasoning. We duly returned to Stafford County.

Sam's house is large, set in lovely countryside, with green hills and fields and trees everywhere. The house has stone and wood walls and wide windows. On the pseudo football pitch at the back Heather and Jason and a friend were impatiently kicking the soccer ball to each other, and I joined them, boasting about my prowess as a footballer when I was in my physical prime.....but now, being fifty-six years old, I had slowed down. We put their protesting friend in goal, between two slender trees, and they commenced to show me how to play soccer. I was particularly amazed at the girl's natural prowess, shooting from all angles and passing the ball with incredible accuracy. On one special occasion Heather dribbled the ball forward and tangled with the two boys. I believe they felt that a younger girl shouldn't have the ability to stop them from getting the ball from her, and they used forceful means to attempt to dispossess her.

"I'm ready, dear," I shouted, and she pirouetted over the ball, avoiding high tackles, and with a sideways glance of sheer perception she side-footed the ball to my toes and I blasted a trail of twigs in an arc through the wood.

After twenty minutes ("Don't exert yourself too much, Mr. Berry") I straddled myself round a tree trunk to keep myself upright and admitted I was close to exhaustion. I let the cool breeze play around my body to try and eradicate the stench of perspiration. Diane was available to work the shower for me, and I was declared hors de combat for the rest of the day.

Goodbye to Margaret and the children, and once more to Washington, dear friends, through the leafy Virginia countryside astride the quartet motorway, beaming at the slowly moving cars on each side of us.

Outside the hotel Diane removed our suitcases and replaced them in the boot of Peter's car. Peter was a crime investigator from Toronto, and had offered to take us to his house to stay for a couple of days. Handshakes with the remaining delegates and to my office colleague Steve, and we drove northwards on Route 270 for about fifty miles until we hit Route 15, which Peter said we would travel on until we reached Rochester the following afternoon. Meantime, he said, it was such a warm sunny day it would be ideal to spend the remainder of the day at Gettysburg, which he promised we would really enjoy.

Gettysburg is thirty miles along Route 15 and we arrived at lunch time. Peter booked the services of a guide to show us around the battlefields, and we lunched.

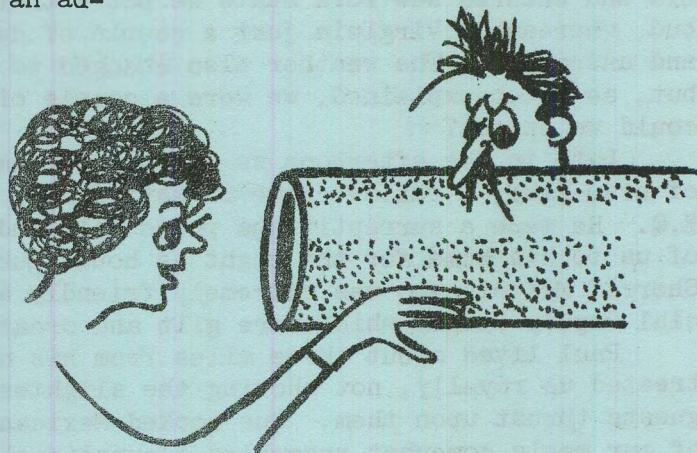
Exactly at 2:00 p.m. a personable young man introduced himself as Jim, enquired as to our christian names, which he did not forget, and he took over the wheel of Peter's car.....Peter was somewhat shaken, as he had expected to drive.

For the benefit of the uninitiated I should merely state that Confederate Robert E. Lee circumnavigated Union troops via the Blue Ridge Mountains in June 1863. One month later, on 1st July, the Confederate forces attacked the Union army at Gettysburg, and after a couple of days of committed skirmishing the final battle took place when Confederate George E. Pickett advanced across an open field with 12,000 troops and only around 4,000 returned after the retreat.

Jim drove the car slowly around the battlefields via adjacent roads and entertained us with dramatic prose regarding particular circumstances, stopping here and there at vantage points and inviting us to get out of the vehicle to tread the actual battle areas. Wheeled artillery pieces proliferated, hundreds of them lined up exactly as they were during the events of July '63. It was a pleasant afternoon, quite warm still, but with a cooling breeze, and the location of Gettysburg was shown to be a beautiful rural area, looking like typical English countryside except for the cannon balls in the barn walls.

Besides the massed artillery, there were hundreds of memorials scattered over

the area commemorating the presence of different military units. Many of the memorials featured statues of soldiers surmounting descriptive marbled plaques. One particular soldier on a 72nd Pennsylvania Infantry memorial depicted an advancing trooper holding his rifle menacingly by the end of the barrel. A Minnesota memorial showed a peak-capped soldier running with fixed bayonet. My favourite was a small lone memorial in a field, and atop a marble plinth was a kneeling trooper, rifle across his body, moustached face looking particularly apprehensive, wondering, as most soldiers always have, what the hell he was doing there, and would he survive? Diane posed for photographs at my prompting, usually artistically framed with budding branches overhead, one of her hands fondling the ends of gun barrels. Peter is studying psychiatry, and he said he was rather worried at this propensity.



Jim returned us to the car park, collected his fee and wished us a safe journey.

Peter drove us to the Econo Lodge Motor Hotel in Harrisburg, some thirty-five miles north of Gettysburg.

We waited at the reception desk until an elderly lady allocated our rooms. She gave me a long glance, reached into a recess and produced a form which she asked me to sign, and whilst I did so she completed a small card. I did a rapid double-take when I read the card she smilingly proffered to me. The utter complete nerve of the woman! She had the cool temerity to classify me as a senior citizen -- there it was on the card in heavy black print -- SENIOR CITIZEN.

Quite frankly, on this trip, I felt tremendously fit and strong.....I was attired in cream trousers, a brown English-cut blazer, brown hair combed back into a glorious sweep (the admiration and envy of many of my younger associates), and my moustache, though large, was carefully trimmed. I thought I had displayed all the requirements of a suave Englishman almost in full possession of his faculties.

"I say, madam," I breathed through my nostrils, "I'll have you know that I am definitely not a senior citizen. A perusal of my date of birth on my passport will indicate the depth of your most embarrassing error."

I swept the passport from an inner pocket with a flourish and dropped the relevant information under her nose.

"No need to look at that, sir," she said, "it is quite obvious that you are over fifty-five years of age and are therefore permitted a ten percent discount on your room and meals."

I thanked her sincerely for the card which I placed in an inner recess of my wallet where it wouldn't get lost. My wife thought it was tremendously humorous that she had not yet rendered her senility, and I muttered darkly to Peter that in England the 'senior citizen' stage is not reached by a man until he is sixty-five years old.

Our room, next to Peter's, was exceptionally comfortable and dinner was plentiful and inexpensive.

I definitely recommend Econo Lodge Hotels.

At 7:30 a.m. next morning I had a hearty breakfast, a dramatic change from my normal coffee and dry toast. Diane had ordered three pancakes with maple syrup, expecting the pancakes to be English-sized. The comestibles were about one foot in diameter and half an inch thick, but she still wolfed them down.

Peter continued along the trusty Route 15, not a wide road and mostly rurally sited, and for some thirty miles or so it followed the western bank of the Susquehanna River, also breaching the northern edge of the Appalachian Mountains. Motor

Motor traffic wasn't particularly heavy on this stretch of road enabling us to view and appreciate the scenery as we headed directly northwards. As we left Pennsylvania and entered New York State we noted that the deciduous trees were scarcely in bud, whereas in Virginia just a couple of days previously leaves were freshly green and unwrapped. The weather also changed to a dull leaden sky, and it was colder, but, as Peter explained, we were a couple of hundred miles further north, what else could we expect?

Late in the afternoon we reached Rochester. Peter wanted to meet a colleague of his, Paul, a fellow crime investigator. We were shown to Paul's office at police H.Q. He made a surreptitious phone call and announced that he was taking the three of us to his home for the night as house guests. He took us to meet his chief, Sheriff Meloni, who was extremely friendly and presented Peter and myself with Special Deputy badges which were gilt and ornate and individually numbered.

Paul lived about three miles from his office. Sue, his wife, and his two boys treated us royally, not showing the slightest chagrin at suddenly having three guests thrust upon them. Sue cooked Mexican style, and the individual preparation of our meals somewhat resembled occupational therapy, but although new to Diane and myself, the food was tasteful. We chatted enthusiastically until after midnight, drinking beer and coffee, until clicking eyelids forced a retreat.

Cheerio to Paul and Sue and their boys, who had so swiftly drifted in and out of our lives, and thence due west towards the Canadian border and Niagara Falls, some seventy miles away.

We approached the Falls from the north, following the post-Falls river upstream on the American side. The Niagara River was wide and swirling in a deep gorge, and at one place, just north of a gigantic whirlpool, a small red carriage under an arched metal frame was suspended from wires and crossed regularly between the two countries. Not many passengers were apparent when we stopped to see it crossing.

Peter, taking advantage of his extra-curriculum psychiatric training, cleverly introduced us to the wonder of the Falls in easy stages -- we stopped on the American side up-Falls and stood on the rocks actually on the edge of the swirling river -- then we crossed into Canada. Our passports were duly stamped with the minimum of regulated bureaucracy, and Peter parked the car and proudly walked across a lawn to a small restaurant, and there was the magnificent vista spread before us.

Diane and I leaned against a stone parapet in awe.....frankly I believe I expected it to be higher and wider, but nevertheless it was breathtaking.

Peter advised us to travel on a ship, "Maid of the Mist"....he didn't seem embarrassed as Diane asked him to hold her handbag. We both travelled down a red and orange painted miniature funicular railway to the landing stage, paid our small fee and boarded. Piles of black shiny ankle-length waterproof coats were readily stacked, and eagle-eyed crewmen made rapid size estimations and handed over garments to the passengers accordingly. We all put them on.....the waterproofs were wet from recent usage and they were hot and sweaty when donned. With a blast from its siren the "Maid of the Mist" slowly headed directly towards the Falls.....closer and gradually closer. The idiots amongst us who had not buttoned up to the neck and put on the close-fitting cowl-like head covers immediately rectified their prior miscalculation as the sheets of fine spray descende upon us. Yet we went closer still, and at the very last moment the ship turned to the left and travelled southwards parallel to the thundering water, and we automatically flinched at the tremendous creshendo of pure white frothy H₂O and we half closed our eyelashes to deflect the spray even though the utter magnificence of the moment decreed our eyes should be wide open in astonishment and awe. "Maid of the Mist" veered as it reached the end of the Falls on the American side and it bucked and rode the heaving blue water to the landing stage.

Peter met us, Diane's handbag on his elbow at a rakish angle. We walked towards the Falls until we reached a vantage point overlooking the gargantuan cascade.....the sun fingered from behind a high white cloud and half a rainbow appeared for a few seconds, arched across the spray, disappearing at the sun's command.

One more experience awaited us....for a fee Diane and I entered a large room where yellow waterproof coats were hung in rows by size. We removed our shoes and were given rugged rubber boots, then appropriate waterproofs. We waggled our way clumsily to the elavators, down to the depths, along a white cement corridor to the edge of the Falls. Water nodules hit our waterproofs like fleas on a drumskin, and we witnessed the tremendous power of the overflow hitting the surging frothing water, making a noise like an artillery barrage. Back down the corridor, a left turn and another quite long traipse to a unique sight -- this corridor ended half way along the Falls actually *behind* the overflow -- we were just a very few barrier-protected feet from the massive white sheet of vertical overspill. We stood for several moments in studied bewilderment until other inquisitive tourists arrived and broke the spell of our intimate contact with the brute force of Nature.

We regained our shoes and for the second time in an hour divested ourselves of dripping waterproof clothing.

Peter drove along Queen Elizabeth Way; the wide motorway followed the west bank of Lake Ontario for thirty five miles to Hamilton, then swung east towards Toronto. It was hazy to the east, and suddenly Peter pointed to a thin needle on the horizon, and stated that it was the CN Tower, at least twenty five miles away which seemed quite incredible. It remained visible but didn't increase in size because Peter swung northwards to Brampton, the suburb of Toronto where he lived.

We reached his house, met his wife and two daughters, and retired quite early.

On the following day I visited crime laboratories in Toronto whilst Diane shopped at Eaton's. The next day, 5th of May, Peter drove me to Boyd's house. Boyd served with me in the police of Belfast, and he had emigrated to Canada a decade ago. Now he was a police photographer with the Peel County Police on the outskirts of Toronto. This H.Q. was an extremely modern building, where technology dictated movement....even an visit to the toilet could turn up on a computer print-out a year later. This sophistication, I felt, was a year too early,..."or, well, so it seems," I quipped to Boyd. After talking with crime investigators, Boyd drove us to Peter's house to pick up Diane, back to Boyd's house to collect his wife, Dorothy, and we drove into Toronto to visit the CN Tower -- '1,815 feet high, the world's largest free-standing structure - opened in the Spring of 1976'.

Boyd parked his car whilst Diane, Dorothy and I walked slowly along a wide passage leading to the base of the tower. This passage was roofed but wide windows ran along its length.

Diane suddenly stopped.

"I'm definitely not going up the tower in that contraption," she said firmly, hands on hips, lower lip buttoning the upper lip.

I have got to admit that with the advent of Queen Elizabeth and Mrs. Thatcher becoming dominant '80's figures in Britain, Diane has, after thirty four years of married life, belatedly asserted her femininity. She finds solace in the principles of Women's Lib. She didn't actually burn her bra -- being of a thrifty disposition we suspended her bra in the pantry to keep cantaloupes. But whenever she makes a firm declaration it is incumbent upon myself to carefully assess her statements, albeit still maintaining my male dignity.

"What's wrong, dearheart," I muttered.

She pointed upwards through a window. A workman was seated in the transparent miniscule capsule of a crane. From her position she could only see the capsule in close proximity to the side of the tower; she could not see the metal stanchion of the huge crane.

"Nunno, Blossom," I soothed, and we followed our stunned Canadian hosts to the entrance of the tower where we met our guide. Boyd had arranged the visit via his contacts; we were special guests, and were shown a film of the construction of the building.

The film was superb, gradually taking the viewer, with speed-up shots, above the rotating restaurant to the supper section. White employees were industriously doing their construction work, leaning backwards to manipulate bolts in the structure, but they were carefully braced with safety harnesses. But some men were non-chalantly swaggering along the thin metal girders as if strolling down a country

lane, sans harness. Some shots in this film, taken just above these fearless workers, showed their Superman-like disdain; one man scratched his nose, and way below was a white ribbon threading across the scenario -- a passenger train. Our guide, in answer to our probing questions, stated that the unharnessed workers were Mohawk Indians. For some obscure reason they had no fear of extreme height.

We left the studio and entered a lift. Through a wide gap in the structure it was possible to see a strip of Toronto city centre grow smaller beneath us. We stopped at the rotating restaurant. Well, at that height it wasn't really too bad, although I felt impelled to pussyfoot carefully.

"Up we go," said Boyd, and we remained silent en route to this next section.

I had attempted to ingratiate myself with Boyd and Dorothy with boastful comments regarding my ascents of the Eiffel Tower and the Empire State Building in New York, and they did, with some deference, permit me to be the first in our group to step into the upper viewing section.

Now this was frightening -- I forced back a tremor of nausea with a grip of will-power -- but I noted that Diane leaned over the barrier and viewed downtown Toronto and environs through the thick transparent. She expected me to do the same.

"Wonderful view," I commented, attempting to force my lips into a superior sneer.

They agreed with me; Dorothy, a very nice girl, being particularly enthusiastic. Boyd chatted to Diane and I excused myself. I sauntered round a corner, shoulders swaying with the depth of my enforced composure, but as soon as I was out of sight there was a thwack as I plastered my body against the inner wall encasing the elevator. I turned round, cold sweat dribbling down my vertebrae like a waterfall.

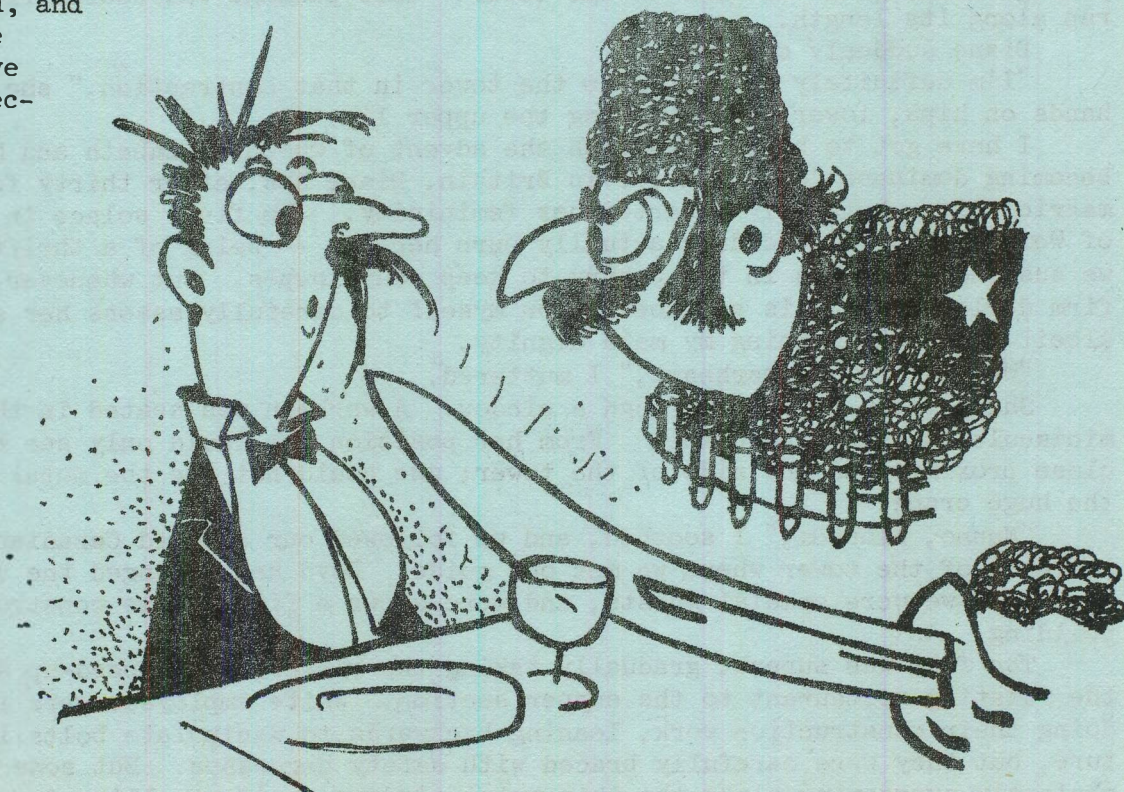
Gawd!

With my back to the wall, eyes closed, my heels touching the bottom of it, my arms outstretched, palms sweatily pressed inwards, I attempted to circumnavigate the wall back to the group. My fingers touched something.....soft, hot and wet... fingers...I opened my eyes...Dorothy's fingers. She was doing the limpet act, too, but in the opposite direction.

We had a quick, furtive conciliatory conversation, fingertips to fingertips, our bodies plastered against the wall.

"I think you're nearer to Diane and Boyd," I panted, and we moved to the left, and, as we noted our respective partners, we regretfully prised ourselves from the wall and approached them, waving confidently "superb view from the other side."

We whizzed down the elevator, and walked away from the tower, the afternoon heat



haze evaporating my perspiration.

Boyd took us on a short conducted tour of Toronto's major scenic delights and then announced that he and Dorothy were treating us to a meal and subsequent entertainment at a Cossack restaurant.

We drove some distance, Boyd parked, we ruffled our feathers, preened ourselves, and entered the portals of the Ukrainian Caravan.

A well-built waitress with blonde hair flourished the menu, and we elected to have the full Ukrainian fare. We were seated next to a small raised stage, and, as we foraged through the courses, two male musicians in fur hats, blouses and billowing trousers seated themselves at the rear of the stage and tested their instruments -- a piano accordion and a violin. In due course, Cossack dancers ran energetically through the restaurant and gamboled onto the remaining segment of the stage -- three handsome men and two girls -- the men in Cossack garb, the girls in embroidered blouses and skirts. I shall never know how they managed to retain their positions on the stage. Their dancing was of a robust character, maintaining our interest until the men leapt off the stage, almost vaulting tables in their excitement. They speedily returned whirling long curved-bladed swords around themselves. People in close proximity to the stage hastily edged their chairs away from the flashing steel as the Cossacks performed a ritual which included clashing their blades together and then alternately leaping, knees tucked in, family jewels well-protected with leather boots, as the blades were scythed in a wide horizontal arc at waist height.

This was entertainment.

Saturday, early in the morning, Peter's wife made breakfast and he took us to the Greyhound Station in the centre of busy Toronto for us to commence the Limey Run. Back in England, we had purchased two Greyhound tickets for \$129.00 which permitted us ten days of unlimited travel anywhere in Canada and the U.S.A. Accordingly, we had planned three long journeys, of such duration that Peter had stated quite bluntly that we were mad. Only Englishmen, he said, would undertake such ridiculously protracted journeys.

Frankly, I couldn't see what all the fuss was about. I don't own a car and haven't driven for thirty five years. Diane and I are inveterate coach travellers. We presumed that our Greyhound travels, though covering a lot of territory, would not afford us any undue inconvenience or discomfort.

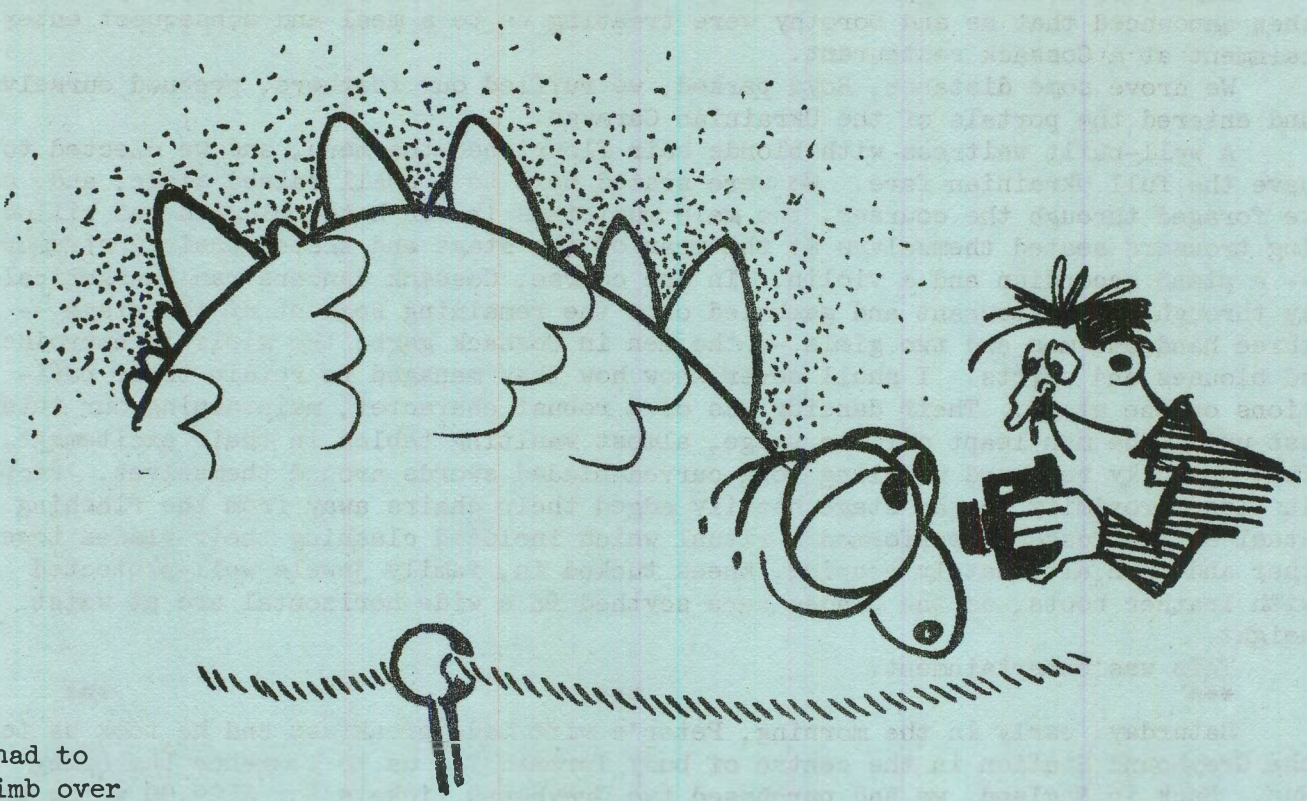
We thanked Peter for his many kindnesses, and carried our luggage into the coach station, ready to catch the 7:30 a.m. coach to Peoria, Illinois, a mere six hundred miles. We were due to stay with Frank, a Deputy Sheriff, and we had promised to arrive at Sunday lunchtime. We discussed the timetable with a patient and considerate clerk who worked out that if we caught the 8:00 p.m. coach, and travelled overnight, we would exactly make our schedule.

Tremendous.

This meant we could spend twelve hours in Toronto -- we accepted this plan with alacrity -- and another bonus, the clerk stated that as we were starting so late in the day, he would not clip our ticket until the 'Sunday' reference, thus giving us one extra day's travel.

Flushed with delight, we parked our suitcases in the 'Left Luggage' section and sallied forth into the heart of the metropolis of Toronto.

After a large breakfast we walked to the Royal Ontario Museum and I specifically sought the fossil remains of dinosaurs. Art students were draped everywhere, sketching the skeleton of a stegosaurus. Some of the artistes drew what they saw, with rows of semi-triangular plates on their backs, others demonstrated an unfortunate use of colours and design in idiotic graphic representations. Whilst admiring the handiwork of a French-speaking girl, sans bra but excited, I noted she had drawn lined detail on the stegosaurus plates. With beating heart and a glazed expression, I warily trod over the recumbent forms, avoiding motley Leonardos and I saw with delight that the girl had indeed captured an exact representation..... the plates had fingerprint-type detail on them, and for the first time I hereby report this phenomenon. (It will accordingly be included in the 1984 edition of my esoteric publication RIDGE DETAIL IN NATURE.) In order to confirm the discovery,



I had to climb over the wooden barrier, put on my spectacles and carefully peruse the plates, and a chorus of disapproval greeted my personal idiosyncratic verification of a unique wonder of evolution.

The centre of Toronto is clean with grassy areas, the tower always dominant, usually visible between the skyscrapers. We spent the whole afternoon in Eaton's department store, together with about half the population of Toronto. Besides being a functional commercial concern, fountains and flower gardens were everywhere, with fine restaurants and quick-food cafes available for the gourmet or the glutton, and the high glass roof was vaulted like a cathedral.

On our way back to the coach centre we passed through the Chinese quarter of Toronto. In the windows of dingy cafes we saw long narrow aquariums with green water holding black lobsters, piled on top of each other, moving restlessly and uncomfortably, as if some extra-perceptual radar had warned them that a muttered 'number 24' would mean rapid immersion in a bubbling vat.

A queue had formed at the section for the Chicago coach. We handed over our luggage, and seated ourselves halfway along the coach so as to be in a position of observation when the luggage panels were opened during stops, in case anyone nicked our possessions. (I recall that Walt and Madeleine Willis suffered the indignity of having their luggage stolen whilst Greyhounding.) I must add that although we travelled a couple of thousand miles via Greyhound in the next ten days, this was the only time we felt, in our ignorance and inexperience, that luggage-watching was essential, and our luggage always turned up on cue.

Just as we left Toronto, travelling westwards, it grew darker and also the threatening rain had its selfish way. The seats reclined at a touch and we settled down as the coach and driver became one entity in the blackness. It is exactly two hundred and forty four miles from Toronto to Detroit and time seemed to pass quickly. The bright lights of Windsor woke us up -- a short pause at U.S. Customs, whose only priority questions concerned liquor. We didn't have any, and the bored woman official believed us as we passed through the far exit without search or hindrance.

Back in the U.S.A.

The new driver was a black man of considerable build. He introduced himself to the passengers, giving a short resume of his responsibilities in a resonant voice,

threatening to throw us off if he caught us smoking cannabis. We drove westwards at midnight at the commencement of the two hundred and seventy one miles from Detroit to Chicago.

He drove onwards in the darkness like an automaton, impeccably manipulating the steering wheel, and the lights of approaching traffic sought out our eyes in vulgar flashes, until we found sanctuary in sleep, Diane's head lolling gently on my shoulder in time with the rhythm of the road.

The driver switched on the interior lights and we blinked as he drove into the forecourt of a restaurant, and gave us half an hour to get a meal, at which juncture my predilection for faux pas on a large scale, dormant for some time, eased menacingly into top gear.

Due to a combination of initiative and sheer hunger and thirst, we were first in the queue and obtained a healthy meal. Against my wife's advice (and some authorities credit women with powers of forethought) I queued up again for another cup of coffee. A second coach had deposited a load of midnight travellers. In front of me was a beautiful young woman of Pacific descent, probably from Hawaii, behind me was her plump mother, eyelids still rusty from sudden awakening. I poured my own coffee, and attempted to press on a plastic cover. It would not clip into place, and I do admit that I probably used more force than was necessary, and just at that second several things happened at once. Pressure on the cap made the coffee-filled container adopt an elongated shape, causing jets of hot liquid to be precipitated in opposite directions from the suddenly-formed spouts. It is common for coach travellers to ease off their tight footwear on a long journey, and the young lady in front of me had opened her sandals, leaving the straps outstretched on the floor. Being young and obviously possessing excellent reflexes, she leapt out of the way as the horizontal brown jet approached her like a laser beam. Unfortunately, I was standing on the strap of her sandal, a delicate item of footwear of pink colouring, looking expensive, but not having the strap firmly stitched to it, as was evident. Adroitly she avoided the fingering jet, and it landed with sickening accuracy over a legend on the rear of a white singlet proclaiming "Kung Fu Reigns". The owner of the singlet turned round. He was a black man, and his physique is what I have always presumed Big John to have -- you know, the man in the ballad who held up a collapsing mine whilst everyone else crawled out safely. But it was his eyes that held me in sheer gibbering fear.

Many years ago, I was on a camping expedition with my son, and whilst teaching him the rudimentary aspects of map reading, we had to cross a field, and looking at us, daring us to enter his domain, was a large bull with a ring in its nose. My son wished to go around the field to avoid a confrontation, but, because we were lost, I was keeping a positional fix on the sun, and I dared not deviate from my course.

"With animals," I explained, "it is necessary to show no fear -- be it an angry Alsatian dog or even a wild raging bull. Show them who is the master and they will always back down."

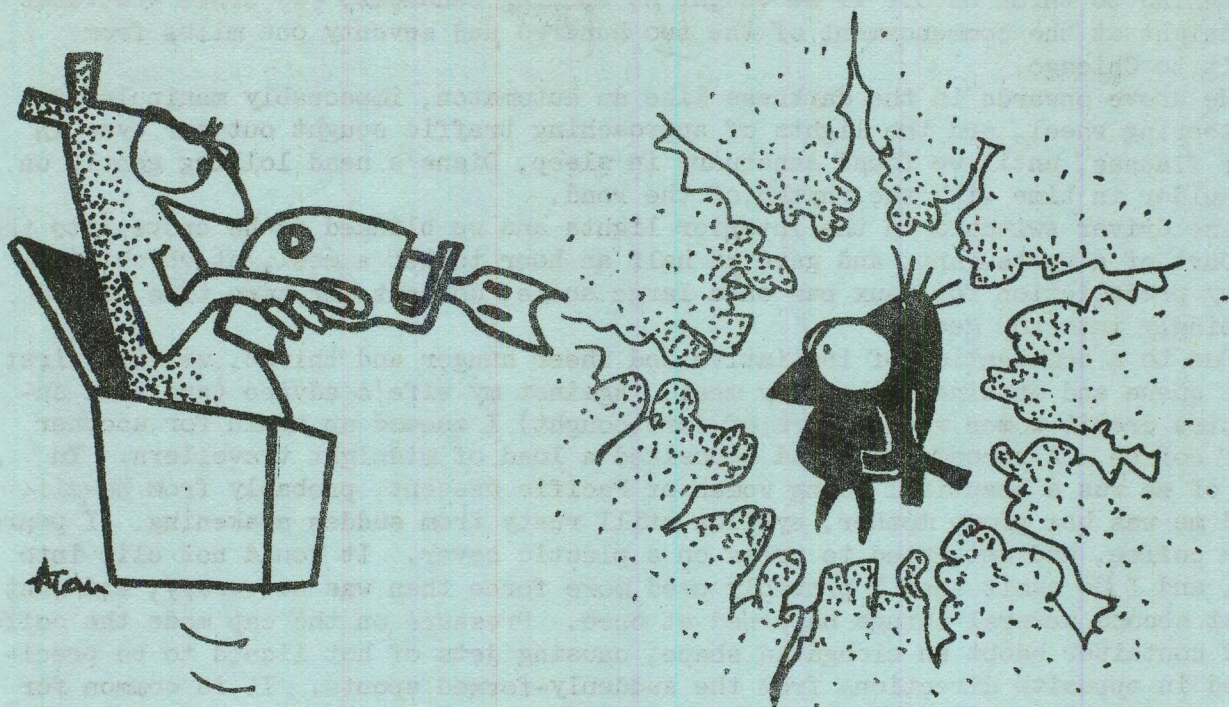
So saying, I climbed the gate and strode purposefully towards the bull. Just before it charged, its eyes suddenly turned towards each other, like dipped headlights on a car, and they seemed to grow larger and suddenly extremely bloodshot. The black man's eyes were just like this. As he bunched his enormous fists, a scream behind me enabled me to ascertain that the other stream of hot coffee had made contact. So help me, did it make contact! It splattered the mother in a place that prohibited me offering to clean it off. Coupled with my wide-eyed genuflexion was a devout verbal explanation.

"I say, I'm awfully sorry, but it was an accident, honestly."

The warmth of my apology, and the energetic efforts of my wife to remove me from the debacle eased the situation. A blatant stage whisper followed me to the door....."that explains everything, he's English."

We settled back in the coach, easing the seats almost to the prone position. I was sweating as the coach wheeled away from the restaurant and the blackness enveloped us once again.

--- John Berry (to conclude in HTT 20)



THE PIED TYPER

BY MIKE GLYER

1. SOUND AND FURY, SIGNIFYING NOTHING

What is the latest controversial atrocity set before the world court of fanzine fan opinion? What blunder keeps the ratchet-jaws clattering? What is the pea at the bottom of twenty mattresses that denies these princes and princesses their nightly respite?

Returning from Disclave, Craig Miller told me their latest concern was the nomination of THE PHILK FEE-NOM-EE-NON for Best Fanzine on this year's Hugo ballot.

That zine's nomination is certainly the kind of event that makes you sit up and take notice. I myself was surprised to find a zine nominated that I had never heard of before -- a surprise redoubled when I was told the zine had been published in LA for the past couple of years. (Nor did my surprise lessen when I actually saw an issue for the first time.) Evidently there was plenty of the element of surprise to go around, because fanzine fans at Disclave were *not* hastening up to Craig Miller to pump his hand enthusiastically with congratulations over an opportunity to discover a great zine previously little-known to the world outside Los Angeles. Rather, they besieged him with complaints about the obvious block-voting responsible for THE PHILK FEE-NOM-EE-NON's nomination -- in their opinion the only possible explanation of this event to any clear-thinking mind.

Having maneuvered and caucused for years to purge the likes of LOCUS and SFR from the Best Fanzine category, some of these fans are understandably frustrated to see even the possibility that some new voting constituency has rushed into the breach, catapulting its own zine to stardom. After all, if you work yourself into the right (hysterical) frame of mind, you realize just how many filksingers exist,

even though we have relegated them to the more soundproofed corners of the conventions, and there's no telling what scheme they may have concocted back there in the catacombs to deprive True Fanz of their long-awaited chance at a Hugo. "Gosh, Mr. Rico, there's *millions* of 'em!"

Rather than rabble-rouse even more, I'd like to raise my voice again to address the tired-old (but seldom sufficiently regarded) probability that the fanzines favoured by the most active editors and contributors risk defeat in yet another Hugo race *not* because of what the advocates of LOCUS, SCIENCE FICTION REVIEW, or even THE PHILK FEE-NOM-EE-NON *are doing*, but because of what the True Fanz *are not doing*: nominating and voting. Rather than bitch and moan, and try to shame fans of other titles into refraining from supporting *their* favourite publications, True Fanz should get off their own asses, and enter the selection process by taking positive action to nominate and support their own approved fanzines. For I have no doubt that the so-called "block voting" by supporters of PHILK FEE-NOM-EE-NON represents no more than a few dozen voters, if that many. When the largest circulation zines were spun off into Best Semiprozine, you don't suppose that the participation in the Best Fanzine category went *up*, do you? It must have gone down. No, I don't have private access to the L.A.Con II Hugo statistics, but I think my guesses have a basis in history, when used to interpret the small amount of data Alan Frisbie did make known about this year's race.

	1978	1981	1984
TOTAL HUGO NOMINATING BALLOTS CAST	540	456	513
TOTAL ALL FMZ TITLES NOMINATED	?	142	176* (Best Fanzine only)
RANGE: FMZ WITH HIGHEST NOMINATIONS	53	80	?
RANGE: FMZ WITH LOWEST NOMINATIONS	15	34	?

In the first two columns we have the results in years when fanzines with circulations in the thousands were in contention, and eliciting a piddling number of nominating votes. Why would a thinking person suppose that a category now confined to fanzines with circulations in their hundreds would generate any higher totals? An idealist could hope that in a category where low-circulation zines now have a fighting chance, the bitches and moaners would have hopped off the fence and made an honest effort to boost the zines they consider to be of the highest quality. The list of finalists doesn't make it obvious that any such thing took place. ANSIBLE, FILE 770, HOLIER THAN THOU, IZZARD, THE PHILK FEE-NOM-EE-NON. Only one "zippy lil zine" (and not all that lil) on the final slate? If they weren't the flower of fandom, then what about BOONFARK? MICROWAVE? Whatever Malcolm Edwards was publishing last year? ~~WHAT ABOUT SCIENTIFRICTION?~~

To restate my main objection to dividing the Fanzine Hugo category in the first place, I don't feel that the level of participation in Hugo voting by fanzine fans merited a second Hugo. No redefinition of the Hugo is an effective substitute for turning out the vote when your goal is the selection of a specific type of zine for a popularly-voted award. Booting out LOCUS, SFR, and SFC did not address the problem. Unless the consciousness of fanzine fans is raised to where they will do the work of sending in ballots commensurate with their numbers in fandom, even the truncated Best Fanzine category will be subject to domination by whatever constituency of fans *is* willing to send in their votes, be it filksingers, readers of a large clubzine (INSTANT MESSAGE could easily have made the ballot), or some Trekkie's relatives.

2. INADEQUATE CREDIT

Not that long ago in these pages I urged somebody to resume publishing a major fannish letterzine. Marty Cantor quickly pointed out the volume of letters in HOLIER THAN THOU, and its frequency. Just recently none other than MYTHOLOGIES resumed publishing: D'Ammassa's zine having been my choice as the prototype letterzine. But in between I overlooked Clifford Wind's RHETORICAL DEVICE, generated from Sea-ttle, which has been getting a reputation as a forum for discussing emotions, poli-

tics, and everything else in the spectrum of fannish interests.

For letterzines I have a very simple litmus test to determine good and bad. RHETORICAL DEVICE readily passes the test. I open to the first page of letters, I read, and I become so infuriated that I promptly want to write a reply that will set the author on his ear. In RD#3 Martyn Taylor, writing from the Isle of Man, reasonably, humbly, merely seeking an understanding, writes to ask citizens of the United States just how do they reconcile their avowed belief in democratic self-determination with the actions of their government's leaders? Who can disagree with anything so diplomatically stated as:

"I do not seek to instruct anyone in the way they ought to act, or think, but to elicit a response from you about the way you *do* think that has not been filtered through the hierarchical imperatives of our respective mass media. If I know the way you feel I shall be better able to order the way I behave. /Next paragraph/ I cannot escape the horrible suspicion that if I and my fellows chose for ourselves a government of which your government did not approve then those many thousands of US troops currently stationed on British soil would issue forth from their barracks to 'restore order' (or at least try to...)"

Taylor's letter was written in the aftermath of Grenada and the dispatching of American Marines to Lebanon, and just raises a bumper crop of questions surrounding the way our professed ideals seem to be mere counterpoint to the reality of our nation's actions. Whether you agreed or disagreed, you'd be halfway across the room to your typewriter, too, before finishing the third page. No letterzine editor could be better blessed than to have a letter like that to start his issue. Were I Clifford Wind, I would regularly inquire to make sure that Martyn Taylor is getting enough sleep and taking all his vitamins, and do whatever else was necessary to keep his locs rolling in.

Presumably next issue will be glutted with replies to Taylor. The letters in the rest of RHETORICAL DEVICE #3, however, are devoted to two topics carried over from previous issues: religion, and the benefits/hazards of overtly expressing one's emotions. In the realm of religion, I find almost every one of the letters disagree with my point of view, and some insult the point of view I share. Great stuff, from the point of view of the letterzine editor. Of course, it renders the section on self-expression a bit anticlimactic, since by the time you get to the end of the zine, you hardly expect to see the same infuriating letterhacks advocating that someone do anything other than vent their spleen anytime the need strikes.

The heart of RHETORICAL DEVICE, the letters, are spectacularly good, and ought to bring in an even larger harvest of interesting comments next issue. This could only come about if Clifford Wind's method of letter-editing was effective, so I will concede that it is. I am certainly satisfied with Wind's manner of joining discussions with editorial comments in a way that does not interrupt his letterhack's train of thought. He never inserts a reply before the letterhack's point is made. Many editors (Marty & Robbie Cantor, and Ted White) do not share my feeling that such a practice is essential, but I contend that what you can get away with in a vocal conversation -- jumping in and out -- does not work when thoughts are organised in written form.

The only eccentricity of Wind's that detracts from the letters is his habit of inserting thematic quotations from GBS, or a Nobel Prize Winner, etc., between letters. I felt that this stuff was just coming in from left field, and since it didn't generally represent a point of view that had been overlooked by the writers, squandered space that could have been filled up with another WAHF'd letter.

Possibly Wind resorts to quotes and clippings because he does not feel confident about cooking up his own opinionated essays to generate discussion as D'Ammassa always has. His first-page editorial material deals with nothing more imaginative than a discussion of the hardware he's used to reproduce the zine. Don't we get enough of that in SCIENCE FICTION CHRONICLE? We don't get enough of Wind's personal point of view, whatever it is. His coy leavetaking, "Oh, by the way, there was another reason for the delay in this issue. A personal one. The result is, well, I'm

getting married," is unforgivable, really. A letterzine depends on a lot of fans expressing their personal feelings, beliefs, and thoughts, or at least taking a stand on some event. How can the editor fail to reciprocate? Come on, Cliff, go for it. The rest of your zine is already terrific.

3. AN EXAMPLE OF GOING FOR IT

Harry Andruschak is not anyone you'd call shy, and he's never hesitated to write to any zine in the world to express himself. Despite that, there was something none of us observed about Harry (which is odd, since we've observed it about enough other people). Only after Harry did something about it, and returned to visit LASFS, did it become clear. As he says in INTERMEDIATE VECTOR BOSONS #4, "I had to admit the fact that I was an alcoholic. And had been for 20 years."

INTERMEDIATE VECTOR BOSONS #4 is best synopsized in Harry's own words, "What follows is the story of how I returned to reality, as I see it. It is not intended as a medical guide. All opinions are my own. All blame for errors are mine." In the course of six pages Harry outlines with frankness and simplicity some personal insights that one must understand were only wrung out of some trying experiences lasting months or years. There is a tone of unsparing honesty about his alcoholism, combined with fascinating information about his treatment, that elevates this issue of his fanzine to a once-in-a-lifetime statement.

For several reasons this level of achievement in a fanzine isn't likely to be repeated by Harry. The source of his feelings was unique. He doesn't even expect to publish again, and cautions some people, "You are known as a Loccer. But you are not requested to LOC this zine. I lost all the locs to IVB 3. I doubt if I'll ever be able to get an issue published in another year or two. But you have a right to know why I gafiated from fandom, almost permanently." This is hardly the place to offer my usual encouragement to an editor to persevere in his good efforts -- only to encourage Andruschak to persist in his sobriety. Is this issue generally available? Possibly not, but you can inquire, and accept Andruschak's offer to reply to any questions about alcoholism or the alcoholic that they think he might be able to answer, by writing to the address shown at the end of the column.

4 FANNO BIZZARO

AIRWAVES, a RAMPANT NUN PRODUCTION, has turned out its fourth and final issue. (Hey, Glycer, what the hell use is a fanzine reviewer who only publicizes the *last* issue of a fanzine?) Alan White, living in the heart of Hollywood, had he only published more frequently, would have probably succeeded in popularizing a unique and little-acknowledged section of LA fandom. Odd, though, to think that this "little-acknowledged section" has a fan population probably twice as large as the entire South...

I'm talking about that segment of LA fandom that joins *all* of the following: Dr. Donald Reed's ACADEMY, the San Diego Comicon, Westercon, and CostumeCon -- but hardly ever LASFS. Many of these people publically admit liking the 3 Stooges and Forry Ackerman. They embrace unexclusively but not uncritically practically everything Hollywood produces. And whatever they're



into, it's because they like it, not because somebody says they have to take an interest in it to achieve some level of fanconsciousness.

Alan White's AIRWAVES brought out of this background some sharp, amusing writing about offbeat topics, combined it with fine fannish illustrations (including some of his own) and bizarre arty photos. He designed a highly professional package to present it all in the best format: typeset text, offset magazine layout, clean and easily-followed page design. Dumb as it sounds, I think the earlier issues of AIRWAVES were just too advanced for me to recognize that they *were* fanzines (and not just another slickly-designed pop-culture handout whose great-granddaddy was THE FREE PRESS). By the time White got to his fourth issue he was featuring material of unmistakably fannish interest: a hatchet-job con report on a lousy LA semipro convention; a WESTERCHRON report; a blurb on the California Space Initiative; Dr. Donald Reed's lawyerly proposal to outlaw war in space; Bob Lee's column analyzing Smurfs. Such items were sandwiched into other material representing a mosaic of interests, greatly varied, but no wider in range than that of many LA fans.

Whether AIRWAVES represents a brand new approach to fanac, or an energy-charged, stylish presentation of typical fanzine fare, I think it would have achieved quite a following had White been able to produce it several times a year. All it lacked was a lettercolumn: which sounds like my chance to ease on out of this column with that old Joycean technique of leaving the same way I came in, referring to fanzine lettercolumns.

Because hardly anyone in that LASFS-centered cadre of fans in contact with the outside world has the kind of innocent enthusiasm for, say, Dr. Reed's ACADEMY even though they join it for the opportunity of seeing many sf/fantasy movies for free, or for the local semipro conventions, even though they often attend them, an entire legion of LA-based fans has been interpreted to the rest of fandom as semiliterate media freaks. AIRWAVES could have been the basis for disproving both the appellation "semiliterate" and "freak", because it is a very classy fanzine drawing on that cross-section of interests for witty essays and comments, and powerful graphics. It's not too late to see what you missed.

---Mike Glyer

RHETORICAL DEVICE: Clifford Wind, 308 Summit E. #206, Seattle, WA 98102, USA.
"Available for discourse and by editorial whim alone. Filthy lucre washed and returned."

INTERMEDIATE VECTOR BOSONS: Harry Andruschak, PO Box 606, La Canada-Flintridge, CA 91011, USA. Availability not certain.

AIRWAVES: Rampant Nun Productions, 1025 N. Serrano Ave. #208, Hollywood, CA 90029, USA. Availability not stated, but you might try sending an inquiry with a buck and an SASE in case he wants to send the buck back. (Otherwise, the buck would cover postage with a bit left over.)

Joseph Nicholas is one of the few people in the world who can make me sympathetic to Robert Heinlein. There is no such thing as a really original plot, and it is meaningless to fault Heinlein for doing what every other author has to do, steal, imitate, and rut-run. ---Don D'Amassa loc in QUODLIBET 22.

I don't think you can maintain that thesis, for several reasons. First, I made no such statement. ---Bill Patterson, QUODLIBET 22.

Lucy also accused me of being "groovey". Christ, and all this time I thought I was Ethnic. I mean, what else do you *do* when you're an Armenian? All over America, people ask me, "Are you from New York?" Ethnic. God, that Huntzinger, she's such a *white person*. Groovey! ---Avedon Carol in The Amnesia Report.

.....
"Marty's Holier Than Thou is a great second-string fanzine worthy of praise for doing what he does, but Marty gets abuse instead. Because he's not publishing a *fannish* fanzine as determined by Ted and Dan and Patrick and Bergeron, etc."

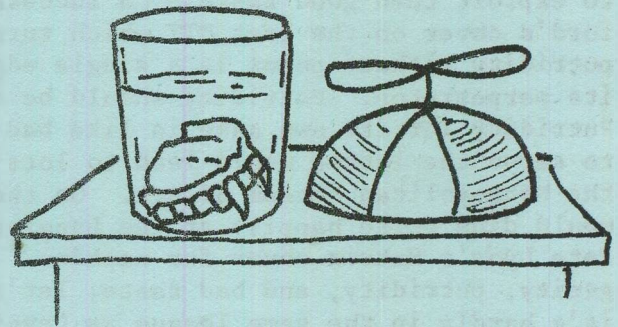
--Brian Earl Brown in Sticky Quarters #1, July, 1982

"This minor bit of maliciousness that 'Ted and Dan and Patrick and Bergeron, etc.' are heaping abuse on Cantor because he's not publishing a fannish fanzine as determined by us shouldn't be allowed to pass lest Cantor get the idea I'm writing stuff about him behind his back. Cantor and I have a very amicable relationship and, in point of fact, I think he's publishing a *very* fannish fanzine. In Pong 33/34 I singled his fanzine out as an example of what I consider the point of good fannishness to be -- the expression of editorial personality reflected in a fan's fanzine -- 'the great fun about being out there on the leading edge of the lunatic fringe (like me and Cantor) is that the successes are individual'. Cantor seems instinctively aware of this -- his failures are in areas of taste and other editorial lapses; *not* in fannishness. But, of course, Brown needed a cheap shot and isn't above trying to muddy the waters between us and Cantor. For shame, Brian. For shame."

--Bergeron in a letter to Dan, Ted, Patrick, Marty, & Brian. 29 Aug 1982
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FANZOOM

A COLUMN BY
richard bergeron



I find myself writing a column for a fanzine I was once accused of denigrating -- a situation not without aspects of perverted justice. Actually, my *unexplained* feelings about Holier Than Thou have always been ambivalent and compounded of about equal parts fascination and horror. And now terror. Here I am working for editors who give every indication of *enjoying* the distinction of having made a concerted bid to live in memory for publishing a fanzine to be recalled with revulsion.

What can the point of such behavior be? Would the Cantors run a chicken farm by including a rotten egg in each dozen shipped so their customers could find their produce by sense of smell? What sort of person would want to be remembered for being disgusting? All sorts of interesting contradictions arise: wouldn't *you* prefer to forget a fanzine that appeals to your sense of nausea...and would you want to write for one the readers of which would rather be thinking about something more pleasant?

Can't make any sense of this by examining the underlying implications of their attitude. Best not to look a gift horse in the mouth too closely (if we can move from the coop to the stable) -- especially not when most of its teeth seem to be in place and it shows plenty of evidence of being able to give this column a free ride, excellent reproduction, and a responsive group of readers. Not many fanzines you can say *that* about and it's *there* (an accusation few publications merit in these swinging 80's). All undeniable pluses; though as one who has (generally) devoted himself to the Good Taste Racket for 30-some years I'm slightly bemused to find

myself part of a magazine whose editorial stance strikes me as counter-productive. Of course, coming from the Cantors, it's *almost* forgivable: they're so genial about it all that it's not unlike a favorite cat beaming with pride as it brings for your enjoyment the mangled body of a goldfinch.

How to deal with this subject without taking a good bite out of the hands publishing me? In the last few days I came across an interesting slant on this whole quandary. Diana Vreeland is on the verge of publishing her memoirs. Ms. Vreeland (who titles her book simply "D.V." -- the reverse of the initials of Venereal Disease) is not someone whose name I've mentioned before, though I've been more admiring of her work at Condé Nast than I was of John Campbell's. She has also been remarkable as the director of the costume department of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. With credentials like these who could better rationalize the HTT viewpoint? Donning her Cantor suit (doubtless stitched up by YSL) she writes on the concept of bad taste:

"Vulgarity is a very important ingredient in life. I'm a great believer in vulgarity -- it's got vitality. A little bad taste is like a nice splash of paprika. We all need a splash of bad taste -- it's hearty, it's healthy, it's physical. I think we could use *more* of it. What's called 'good taste' is a drug on the market. *No* taste is what I'm against."

I guess it's all a matter of how it's carried off and to what point. But if a joke is moronic and lacks style it's going to have a hard time being entertaining no matter how putrid it may be. Bad taste *can* be memorable for shock value but if someone wants to be remembered for being a bad taste then I would think they haven't set very high levels of attainment for themselves. Bad taste is even more difficult to exploit than good taste -- a successful example of the former would be Jon Langford's cover on the last HTT which turns revulsion against uncleanness. However, putridity without point is a single edged sword whose edge only cuts the throat of its perpetrator. Putridity should be the *calculated* exploitation of bad taste. Putridity for its own sake is like bad cooking for its own sake and an inclination to serve the latter would lead to lots of cancelled dinner invitations -- even at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. On the other hand, I suspect that Ms. Vreeland would dine quite happily at the Langford table with Jon's cover for placemats and Pete Lyon's Matrix cover for napkins. Yes, as long as we're mucking about in vulgarity, putridity, and bad taste, let's drag that in -- though as an example of wit it's hardly in the same league as Langford's cover. For those of you who have missed it, Lyon's drawing on the cover of Matrix depicts a barbarian urinating -- though there are warring factions on *that* point -- on a scantily clad woman as she ecstatically appears to be masturbating with an apa mailing. Whether this cover, which was executed for Matrix's editor editor Simon Polley*, has an arguable political point has been lost in a sea of controversy which even involved Leni Riefen-

*A figure largely unknown to US fandom who took my vote for best fanwriter of 1983 in the Pong Poll entirely on the strength of an article he wrote for Simon Ounsley's Still It Moves #4 about his job as the manager of a medical reference book store. As he told it in SIM, Polly's day (before he wakes) begins like this:

"Depravity steps forth.

"The tight, blood-smeared leather holds down His growing passion, strains against the savage march of calf and thigh.

"He progresses.

"Beneath His brow, two rheumy pits, gnawed by the Worm and heaved into decay by neglect and vile practice.

"He surveys His kingdom.

"Close to his glistening hand, maggoty and open to the bone though it be, squirms a naked figure. Male or female? Androgyne. Crusted iron spikes pin its wrists to the rock behind. Its nerves are drawn from their natural conduits and stretched over the rock face. It moves in a divine parody of orgasm.

"He is aroused.

"This one will suffice. The Lord has many burdens of the flesh to release, many strange fluids to purge from His arousal. He leans forward and..."

That will give you some idea. I don't know why he isn't writing a column for HTT.

stahl (and how to spell her name) and "The Triumph of the Will". In retrospect it all seems much ado about very little and will probably only be remembered as an object lesson in how to push the right buttons for those interested in getting attention in this manner. Anne Laurie Logan wrote me a letter on the subject which says a lot about the type of mentality which uses this kind of attack:

"I don't get Matrix, but Joyce Scrivner sent me a beautifully-reproduced copy, along with the intimation that this was supposed to be Mr. Lyon's protest at the women only membership of The Women's Periodical. At first sight it took me right back to the days when I was in high school, and the two of my four younger brothers nearest my age were in junior high: I could hear with utmost clarity as they howled, 'You think you're so smaaaaart!' and I replied, 'Well I'm smarter than yooooou, anyway!'. Michael & Kevin spent a great deal of time and energy between the point when they discovered puberty playing something called 'Gross Out The Big Sister,' with me as the primary target. They were convinced that, through the sheer unfairness of birth order, I had access to knowledge they couldn't share; they were aware that, barring accident, I was going to get a clear two years' or more head start on them in every desirable mystery of adulthood -- and me a giiiiirl! Their revenge, for this cruelty of chronology, consisted of trying to tease, harass, or revolt me into shrieking obscenities at them or threatening to clip them one or even aiming upside their pointed little heads. Since I was mysteriously immune to such traditional 'pimps as tampax jokes and the insertion of frogs, mice, or snakes into my personal possessions, they spent many months following me about with information I didn't want on 'neat ways' to torture small animals, or trying to insult me to the point of violence by speculating on the unlikelihood of my ever achieving a normal and satisfactory sex life, or stealing especially choice items from my comic-book collection, or breaking my small ornaments and jewelry 'accidentally'. For some reason, Lyon's little sketch reminded me a great deal of those lost and unlamented days of my youth."

The bad taste, vulgarity, and putridity of the immature and those who don't understand how to use the form is usually, at worst, aggravating and, at best, boring. Every year the Trinidad community of Brooklyn, New York, holds its carnival. Last year the Dimanche Gras festival was presented on the grounds of the Brooklyn Museum. Sally Banes, in the Village Voice of September 20th, described the competition for the best performance:

"Men were dressed as pregnant women, women as men with pants stuffed to represent giant genitalia; a trickster figure fondled both indiscriminately. Hand-painted signs proclaimed all sorts of insults: So-and-so is an old witch. So-and-so licks So-and-so's ass. So-and-so shovels shit. And the statements were graphically mimed, complete with funky, homemade costumes and props. ...most of the subjects of all this 'aberrant' behavior were probably sitting in the audience or even at the judge's table, remaining dignified pillars of the community in the face of outrageous irreverence -- enough to make even the most impudent Dadaists appear bourgeois."

"Best performance" in this context seemed to have devolved to a decision as to who put who down in the most disgusting fashion. Sometimes it seems that way in fandom, too. Take D. West, for example, who, we find in this quote from a fanzine review which appeared in True Rat 8 in 1976, yields putridity with all the surgical precision of a Quasimodo:

"There's such a horrid fascination in the obscenely naked spectacle of /this person/ squeezing the last unctuous dribblings of weak venom from flaccid reasoning and boneless logic that one feels slightly embarrassed about interrupting. It's like a capsized, half-squashed dung beetle, wallowing in its own noxious emissions as it tries to find a footing: the thing can do one no harm -- perhaps only follows the dictates of its residual dirt-picking instincts -- and although its continued existence seems a blot on the face of the earth the thought of the stench and the messiness its destruction would release is so distasteful that it seems best to pretend it hasn't been seen."

Loathing, disgust, and horror have long been respected literary tools and like

the art of putridity have a distinguished pedigree. "We only want a nice quiet place to finish working while God eats our brains," says Bruce Sterling (Vincent Omniaveritas?) in Interzone #7 while elsewhere in that issue Michael Blumlein keeps us riveted to the brink of regurgitation with a clinical and fascinatingly written massive surgical procedure conducted sans anesthesia -- the better to remove in prime condition various vital human organs for use in roofing, medications, storage jugs, patties, filets, and ground round in what must be the logical response to a totally unmanageable population explosion. Thus is putridity worked on the classiest (and most challenging) side of the science fiction street: while back in fandom Cantor, confronted by a history of fanzines number in the (by now) 10's of thousands of titles, carves out a niche in our collective consciousness by picking his nose and eating what he finds -- by utilizing what West calls "juvenile...attention-grabbers". Others shoot pistols at the Pope.

The last gasp of debauch before the fall of civilizations needs a Bosch or a Fellini to record the epic before the slate is wiped clean and we're ready to reinvent the wheel. Dizzy before the assault of times which overwhelm we can only protest in some bizarre metaphoric fashion that we do yet live. Some of us ventilate at science fiction conventions storming about the halls of hotels in various combat gear or arising as new versions of the walking dead. Not terribly unique either. Sally Banes describes the carrying on at that Dimanche Gras festival mentioned earlier:

"The climax of the evening is the display of selected costumes in the competition for the King and Queen of the Bands. ...By now one's consciousness has entered a dream-like state. The small human encased in each costume dances it into being, until it seems magically to come alive, a beautiful monster several times human scale. There was a creature that seemed part spaceship, part crustacean, with curved translucent wings/claws, and 14 golden, cone-shaped antennae surrounding its red and green bodice like a quivering halo. Another was an enormous brown furry spider. A red long-necked mythological bird whirled in circles, its dancer creating the illusion, with a pair of fake legs, that he was riding it bareback. Another dancer animated an entire cartoon landscape on which a lizard chased a fly. But most magnificent -- and the winner for King this year -- as the Midnight Demon made by the Beauty and the Beast Band, a shimmery silver man's body topped by a white-as-death, rictus grin mask and framed by gauzy, sparkling black wings, 10 feet tall, that seemed a cross between a gothic arch and a bat's wings. As each contestant turns and steps and manipulates his or her extended body around the stage, all the members of the dancer's band crowd onto the stage, yelling directions, making gestures both of pathways and encouragement, and generally egging the dance on. They're like a contrasting background -- humanity multiplied and collectivized -- to the lone, superhuman figure they've worked on so long and hard to create for a brief but glorious moment."

Everyone wants attention but our voices are often drowned out among the other actors on stage. In a paper world where you don't exist unless you *create* something the volume is *already* all the way up and some of us mistakenly conclude that it will take an outrageous spectacle to get our playacting noticed against the background noise. But in fandom we have a unique opportunity. In a fanzine we can create a *self* enclosed universe with something equally as rare: an interested audience with an inclination to participate in our strangeness.

What we make of this opportunity determines whether or not our turn will be remembered and how. It may take some kind of show but something tells me it takes more than the corpse of a mangled goldfinch or a Matrix cover.

Or the pathetic exaggerations of Brian Earl Brown.

NAKED EGOBOO

"Anyone who would offer his body as a white sacrifice to D. West can't be all bad," I thought to myself as I noticed Tom Webber's column in the seventh issue of Linda Blanchard's fanzine -- the title of which I forebear listing since it will pro-

bably be obsolete by the time this appears. No, I'm not going to explain that rumination -- there are mysteries best left unexplained, but I suspect Linda's way with a fanzine title and Tom's casting as the Lorelei of Fandom will haunt them for the duration of their tenures in fandom.

Anyway, aside from that -- and finding myself with a brief space to fill -- I'd like to take a moment to say that Tom's column isn't all bad, either. In fact, I'd have no hesitation in declaring it the best thing in all those 44 pages of ensmallled type if it weren't for a few sly and characteristically finely tooled paragraphs by rich brown and a witty piece by Steven Bryan (Copyright 1984 by Steven Bryan Bieler) Bieler, who more and more impresses me as being in Spring training to become a nationally syndicated columnist on the order of Bill Safire or Russell Baker. Certainly he's funnier than either of them.

And Tom Webber seems the most promising new fan writer in some time.

Let'er rip, Tom.

CONVENTIONAL FANS

Is this development of a convention for fanzine fans really necessary? (A rhetorical question -- I already know the answer.) If a convention fulfills what people want from fandom shouldn't they be calling themselves fans of something other than fanzines...like, possibly, fans of conventions? Jeanne Gomoll speculates in Wing Window #7 that "a con like Corflu might be wildly successful and spawn dozens of fannish copies". Oh, great. I see it now; between the proliferation of apas and *fannish* conventions the likelihood of the appearance of major fanzines seems slim. Why publish a fanzine when you can go to a convention and tell everyone what you were going to publish if you were able to afford it?

An example who springs conspicuously to mind is Ted White. I don't mean to berate Ted in this matter but he seems to have been to several conventions while Gambit hasn't appeared since August of 1982 and the contributions which were assembled for that issue have become history. Everyone would like to see Gambit #57, but the one person who has to generate the enthusiasm to get it out prefers doing other things. I find this sad because Ted has a keen awareness based on both practice and observation of what makes a fanzine great whereas a vocal theoretician like D. West, who has only recently noticed that the wheel might be round, produces about equal amounts of gloom and light and little in the way of examples. Likewise, Malcolm Edwards devotes more thought to long range planning for worldcons than to Tappen. White does publish, yes, but Egoscan is a far cry from the beautifully crafted Pong and one of E's themes is the high cost of mailing an issue and the postal penalties of returned copies. By my reckoning, though, Ted has spent hundreds of dollars attending conventions as far away as Corflu without the slightest pang at what must be staggering transportation costs. And if one wants to look at it in another light, the aggregate costs of getting there and lodging (I won't count food -- presumably people eat at home, too) for the attendees of Corflu could have financed an entire renaissance of fanzines or, at least, twenty year's worth of monthly issues of a fanzine on the order of, say, A Cool Head. *If anyone but had the interest to do it.* Judging from the avalanche of fanzines which have been inspired by 'The Fanzine Fan's Convention' it's going to be the precursor of more conventions rather than a spur to publishing. Or was the latter the point of it, anyway?

Publishing a fanzine can be an expensive proposition -- though *not* as expensive as many fans apparently think it *has* to be -- and that works to keep new fans from jumping into the fray: one needs a healthy cashflow to make a commitment and survive long enough to experiment. It doesn't help that even such seemingly slight publications as *Wiz* point in a lavish direction when the true meaning of the form (*the communication of editorial personality and the creation of a frequent continuity between readers and editor and contributors which embraces both fandom and the fanzine itself*) can be perfected in the barest no-frills format -- straight down the page typing and getting the damn thing out. (Essentially, that's what *Wiz* is, but the silk screen decorations contradict the understatement.) Many contemporary examples are misleading forgettable extravaganzas which over-reach in all the wrong directions and lead

the new fan to abandon the whole idea of a fanzine because he or she can't afford off-set or the \$1000 for color separations for the cover. However, it's my impression that conventions are *more* expensive than fanzines -- or, at least, the fanzine I think best exploit the unique potentials of the hobby, fanzines like Wing Window, Still It Moves, Stomach Pump, A Cool Head, Quandry, Stop Breaking Down. People like Ted White, Lee Hoffman, Greg Pickersgill, and John D. Berry have spent far more on conventions than on fanzines in recent years and the needs they once satisfied by creating magazines are sublimated at conventions. This complaint is only wistful at best (and hopeless at worst). Everyone does what they want and if their energy and ambition aren't inspired by the thought of creating a fanzine the result of an attempt to do so will be lackluster or better left till the day they *need* to. Many fanzines are filled with pedestrian accounts of the last convention the editor attended and lists of future conventions where you can meet him or her. These fanzines aren't much more than written conversations you might have had with the editor at this or that convention and make little attempt to develop the medium as a unique self-enclosed world with its own inter-reacting audience. These are fanzines by convention fans -- *not* fans of words. A look at the apazines of Redd Boggs, Wing Window, and Izzard reveals a meaningful difference.

When are you people going to stop having fun and start publishing fanzines?

FAWNING OVER D. WEST

The first publication in the history of fandom which goes up in price in \$5 increments while you make up your mind whether or not you want to buy a copy. That's an incentive? I presume the theory behind this marketing strategy is that with a print run limited to 150 copies as sales come in the remaining copies dwindle and therefore become a scarce commodity. Mindboggling: a fanzine that becomes rarer, more valuable, and harder to obtain *before it's even published*. That's what I like about D. West: he challenges your last resources of comprehension: you practically have to be a genius to figure out what he's up to (and when you do it comes with such a blinding burst of compassion that one is almost moved to drop him a note and let him know what he's doing).

For *your* information, what he's doing is publishing a collection of his writing on fandom and fanzines for our amusement and his profit -- he got the idea from me but with typical fannish seriousness I had envisioned something guaranteed to lose money. It's planned to run to 180 pages so it might contain a nugget or two or argumentation which will be worth the several hundred dollars it could cost by the time you make up your mind. West's motto seems to be "A fool and his money are soon parted" but I'll run his address in case you want to inquire how much you should currently send: 48 Norman St., Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 4JT, England.

"Fanzines In Theory And In Practice" (or maybe "Fanzines In Theory And Practice" according to his letter in Wing Window #7 -- wish he'd make up his mind) is the snappy title West has inflicted on his anthology. Doesn't it flow salubriously down around one's ears with all the seductive grace of tapioca pudding? Must be a devious plot to embarrass me for having praised him as an adequate stylist. Even my suggested "Western Thought" (which was to have emblazoned the Bergeron edition) is better than that. I suppose he was too proud to grovel at my feet and request permission to use it. I should be happy he stole *only* my idea. D. *really* should keep in closer touch: I've come up with another possible title which is sheer genius and will let him use it if the royalties are sufficiently attractive.

I found it in "Performance" (a 36 page West epic of angst which will be included in the selection). It evolves from this stunning paragraph in which D. contentedly nibbles on his (own) toes:

"Bergeron's idea of reprinting my old fanzine pieces is certainly weird, but even weirder is the fact that he has defeated his own object *simply by making the suggestion*. Once I've been given the *idea* that someone thinks such a project is worthwhile I don't really need anything else, since I know very well that the deed itself would be simply an anti-climax."

In the face of such beguiling modesty I can only hesitatingly venture that the

perfect title would be "The Great Anti-Climax".

(Here, while we're about it, *have* an anti-climax: I wonder when the devious and manipulative West is finally going to realize that *simply by making the suggestion*, and "coughing up" ten bucks, *I* have saved a lot of work, expense, and effort in assembling such a collection myself. Pretty slick, huh?)

The trouble with West's prose is not that it's first draft writing -- it's first draft thinking.

IN ONE REALITY AND OUT THE OTHER

A bubble of spit dangling from my lower lip turns blood red -- a result of internal injuries inflicted by a comment in HTT #18. "What would be more delightful than hearing that Jerry Falwell had come down with AIDS?" asked Lee Hoffman last issue. What sort of belly laugh from the nether reaches of horror was offered up for out-jaded amusement in #17, I wondered and spent at least an hour combing through the issue in search of an item which might have inspired that remark. I'm pretty bummed out on the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome these days. I've shared grief with the mother, wife, and daughter of a good friend who we saw turn from a vibrant human being into someone who looked like an inmate of Auschwitz before he died -- his skeletal remains wracked with pain from multiple biopsies. And I knew one of the designers of Studio 54 who, after the confirming diagnosis that he *also* had Pneumocystic carinii pneumonia, went off to Mexico to sit in the sun and drift to realms of higher consciousness with the help of local plant life before they shipped his body back to the States in a sack. So I could use the comic relief.

I didn't find it.

However, I came across a distraction in Ted White's letter in #17. Ted is always making significant references to the past and since I was often there with him I usually know what he's talking about. I was around in 1952, too, lurking on the covers of Science Fiction Newsletter and producing fanzines which the Spectator Amateur Press Society still hasn't live down (though Art Rapp recently opened his arms and asked me to come home so perhaps the surviving members are sufficiently on in senile brain damage that it's safe to return). I always find Ted's writing fascinating -- even when he's arguing from premises I find as obvious as the rising of the sun but which, for some odd reason, many of you find novel and enlightening. This time, though, I wondered if we *had* been in the same fandom, after all. "I was a minor neofan during most of Willis's heyday, which climaxed in 1952," Ted wrote.

If you're terrified that Ted, me, and Harry Warner are going to get down to some serious haggling over this arcane point, perhaps the rest of you might more profitably spend your time doodling suitably offensive cartoons for next issue. Watch you don't wake Walt as you leave.

1952 was the year Walt Willis went from fanning 24 hours a day to something more sensible like a mere 8. But one could argue that the Willis who found himself in a window seat with Lee Hoffman and Max Keasler at dawn in the Hotel Morrison in 1952 was at the *beginning* of his fannish career rather than having reached the climax of it. In Wrhn 29 John Bangsund, in commenting on the previous issue, virtually does: "From the moment he left the convention and went looking for America, the legendary Willis who lives in my head started emerging on paper."

And who *is* this Willis we remember so well? The bibliography in Wrhn 28 shows that all the major works on which his reputation rests didn't come into existence until after the culminative events of 1952 (the successful Willis fund and ChiCon II). Only two of the 36 issues (1030 pgs!) of Hyphen were published prior to 1953. 32 of the 44 installments of the Harp appeared *after* 1953. "The Enchanted Duplicator" (easily the most acclaimed piece of fan writing) was published in 1954 and "The Harp Stateside" didn't achieve its final form until 1957. The only major Willis works before 1952 were Slant (Nov. 1948 -- Winter, 1952) which is satirized in "The Enchanted Duplicator" for being unTrufannish (but, then, I've never agreed with all of that allegory, myself) and "Willis Discovers America" which may have been almost as instrumental in getting Walt across the Atlantic as was Shelby Vick but which was largely forgotten until I included it in Wrhn 28. Almost 3/4s of the articles

listed in the Wash bibliography were printed after 1952. Walt didn't begin writing expansively until March 1951 when he started sending some left over words to Quandry and the last Harp in those pages was in the June 1952 issue. Perhaps as much as 90% of Walt's major work (including the creation of TAFF) occurred after 1952.

Based on visual evidence, it didn't seem as though Walt's heyday was climaxing. There's a photograph of Walt (taken by Gregg Calkins at the convention) on page 144 of Wrhn 28 which looks precisely as I recall him. He was still wearing that confederate hat (though I trust he has since removed it) and a mildly bemused and distant expression when Max Keasler introduced us at ChiCon II. By then I'd seen a couple Slants, the first issue of Hyphen, and the final half dozen Harps which appeared in Quandry. Those bits of fan activity and the news item which ran in The National Fantasy Fan that Walt was going to give a speech were the reason why I got on a bus at the age of 17 and saw, for the first time, a city with a population larger than 2500 people. I had come to the convention hoping to glimpse (and never entertaining the thought that I might meet) a person who -- though it seems unlikely -- may have been almost as introverted as myself. Knowing Walt, whose aversion to giving speeches verges on a physical ailment, I imagine he will read these words with a sense of guilt and feel badly that anyone would have travelled a thousand miles in the expectation of hearing him give a speech. I came away from the meeting with the realization that even though I found someone's writing enormously entertaining that didn't mean that either of us would necessarily have anything very interesting to say to each other if we met in person. I long ago discovered I am not at my best in 'arranged' encounters and most of the people I know socially have been friends of mine for years. The quiet (exhausted?) Walt was probably remembering that I'd fulfilled my subscription to Slant (a fanzine handset in type with multi-color woodblock print illustrations which remain unrivaled in the history of fanart) by sending him copies of Amazing Stories. In 1952 there was an air of expectation about Willis. I believe those expectations are still being fulfilled, but am getting mildly upset that Slant #7 has been so delayed.

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How odd to be living on the enchanted island of Puerto Rico randomly free-associating such passages as the above. Or maybe not. A careless search through HTT could result in a lot worse, I suppose, and these musings strike me as more pleasant than might have been an encounter with the subject of Lee Hoffman's annoyance.

The world of more immediate reality beckons. I'm awakened on this Easter Sunday by a loud knocking at the door and have to dash to the next house and rescue Senor Colon my magnificent striped tabby who apparently was caught on a piece of tin and has ripped the last two inches from a tail which was one of the glories of Old San Juan. A bloody Sunday.

A delivery car comes around and I hear the plop of a heavy wad of newspaper tossed on my stoop. I go down to collect the New York Times. On the front page is an announcement from the Federal Center for Disease Control in Atlanta that there is a strong possibility the cause of AIDS has been discovered. I'm back in the real world now...but, then, I'm never very far from it here in Puerto Rico. You know, don't you, that we (the United States) have sent logically decipherable clues across the cosmos via a radio broadcasting telescope which is actually an entire valley which has been transformed into a radio disk nestled in the mountains of Arecibo not far from here? This transmission contains precise data on how to locate our solar system and planet if anyone feels like dropping in from hyper-space. Doubtless my house address is included on the invitation. Why not? In 1952 I alone in a small town in the hills of Vermont beamed mental energy to Captain Future across stellar reaches and had fought myself to exhaustion on the Battlestar Galactica long before Star Wars broke out in the consciousness of every theatre in the world. I'm used to being on the avant-garde of the avant-garde. The star fleets from far Arcturus will sense their way along a radio beam and be met by a fan of Sixth Fandom Fandom. It makes perfect sense. Reality and fantasy intermingle relentlessly here.

I muse on a piece of tin dripping red and sigh for my truncated Tom. My thoughts turn to another Sunday some months ago. Cesar Ignacio Ramos and I had taken ourselves off to a small beach in front of the capitol just outside the Old City where local

families enjoy the water virtually on the steps of their houses. Convenient to broken bottles, too. We find a place on the sand not far from an ancient small fort which the water is taking centuries to dissolve into red dust...in its shade a man and a woman and a group of children laugh and play. The sea is exquisite, the sand warm, the wine cool. It's a day of full color rotogravure sham. This is the same beach I mentioned in "Reefer Madness" in a long ago Pong when I wrote of paranoid grass induced fantasies which Judith Hanna was so taken with because "it dealt with realities so close to all of us". People who believe their paranoid fantasies tend to be survivors. Sometimes one forgets. It helps to have a toke to wake you up.

I put my glasses on. "Keep an eye on your pants," I say to Cesar half jokingly. Three young men are coming down the beach not wearing bathing attire; a potentially meaningless detail because most of the people splashing in the water a hundred feet from us are fully dressed, too. A few minutes later they calmly approach us with the jagged necks of beer bottles discreetly palmed and ask for our money. I get up and calmly walk into the water. The people in the water beat a hasty retreat. The young men are methodical and conduct the transaction in low Spanish conversational tones which I do not understand. I am an eternity away on the surface of Mars with the dust of eons blowing in my mind. I watch my body standing knee deep in water witnessing a matter-of-fact-event which has the potential to turn into a headline on the front page of The San Juan Star at any instant. Cesar is taken for the balance of a week's salary -- about \$60 -- and they find the \$30 in my pockets. They insist I must have some jewelry that I'd buried in the sand not knowing I never wear watches or gold. It's my word against their's, but I have an honest face (which is more than I can say for them). They neglect to take my keys but take a liking to Cesar's silver mirror sunglasses. They finish their work, throw down the pieces of glass, and walk off with a "*Que tenga un buen dia!*" called back to us. One must watch out for reality. It sneaks up on you when you least expect it.

We used to have a concentration camp here in Puerto Rico. Perhaps it was really a sort of grandiose petri dish. You may recall a couple years ago several boat loads of Haitians in flight from their country were prevented from entering Florida. These Haitians were placed in a compound called Fort Allen here in Puerto Rico. Allen must have contained as many as 600 people with limited sanitary facilities in a space barely adequate for half that number. For a ghastly year and a half these people steamed in Fort Allen through one of the hottest summers in memory. It was not so far away, in Fort Allen, that the first two cases of AIDS were diagnosed in Puerto Rico. The victims were two Haitian women.

The trail of the search for the beginnings of AIDS leads through the mountains of Haiti and to Zaire where the syndrome is equally distributed among men and women... and much more widespread among the population. AIDS researchers express "strong suspicions that the disease affects tens of thousands of people who...cannot be diagnosed for lack of a specific diagnostic test."

I'm in a hospital room in Charleston, North Carolina, wearing a sterilized mask, gown, and plastic gloves. I hold a hand that is little more than bones. The patient's mother looks at me with eyes of raw courage. She lives in Bennettsville and within recent weeks the last ravages of winter have swept tornadoes within a half mile of the small house in which she huddled in mute terror.

No. The mood passes. I cannot yet write this story. I am still too inextricably bound into its tragedy, too full of suppressed and unreleased anger, too empty with questions which have no answers.

Best to go back to Holier Than Thou, for now. Best to laugh with the ghouls rather than face my own social, if not physical, contamination. Best to laugh hollowly in the horror of putridity with the rest of those who do not know.

---Richard Bergeron

.....

I tend to do the lazy thing and put a word in all caps when I want to emphasize it. Underlining it takes backspacing and such, while if I wanted to do a different typeface like I've seen some people do it would take just hours and HOURS of unsoldering and resoldering typer keys. --Thom Digby.

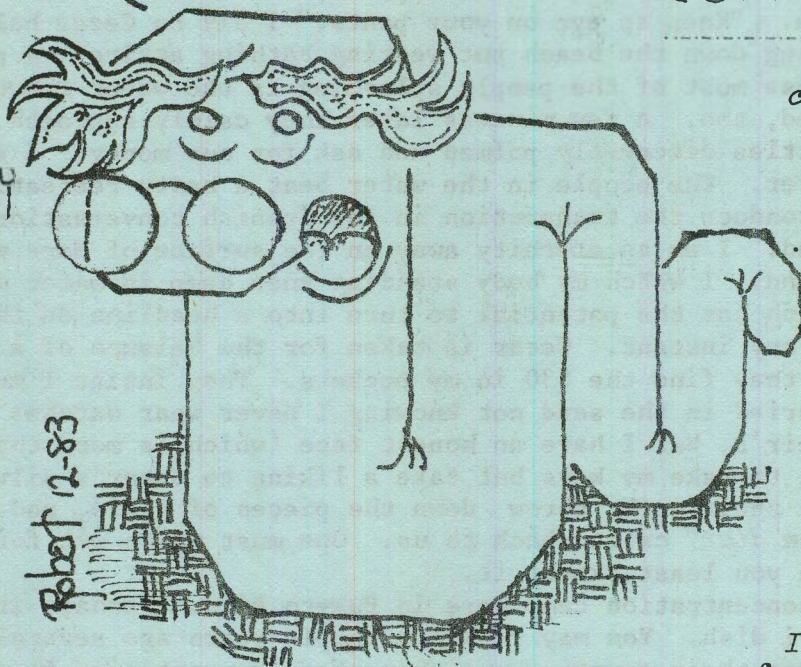
... AND I ASK:
WHERE ARE THE
FANDOMS OF
YESTERYEAR?

ENTROPY REPRINTS

BY

terry carr

AM I
GOING
TO BE
A MEMORY
TOO?



Truthfully, I don't chose the Entropy Reprints primarily because there are things in old fanzines that predicted the present with accuracy. I choose items for this series because they're pieces I remember fondly, things I enjoyed reading when they first appeared or, in the cases of items Before My Time, that I think will stand up for current-day readers.

It's just a coincidence that the piece I selected for the last issue had a curious relevance

for today and so has the item I present this time.

"A Different Aspect to Utopia" was simply one part of Jim Harmon's column "Harmony" when it first appeared in PEON #12, March 1950. It was the central section of that column in its second appearance, and it stands well by itself. More about the column shortly, but I have to say a bit about PEON itself, which was published by Charles Lee Riddle from July 1948 till February 1957, when it folded after its thirty-eighth issue. During all that time, PEON was one of the best fanzines in existence: Riddle published it with justified margins, well-stencilled artwork, and believed that the fanzine would never fold. If Lee himself were to get tired of it, he'd hand the magazine over to his sons. Indeed, I met both Lee and his eldest son Ira at the world convention in St. Louis in 1969, and Ira, then in his early twenties, spoke of his plans to revive the fanzine.

He never did, so PEON remains as it was in the early 50s, a top-rated fanzine that was so regular in schedule and quality of contents that it was taken for granted by the majority of fanzine fans.

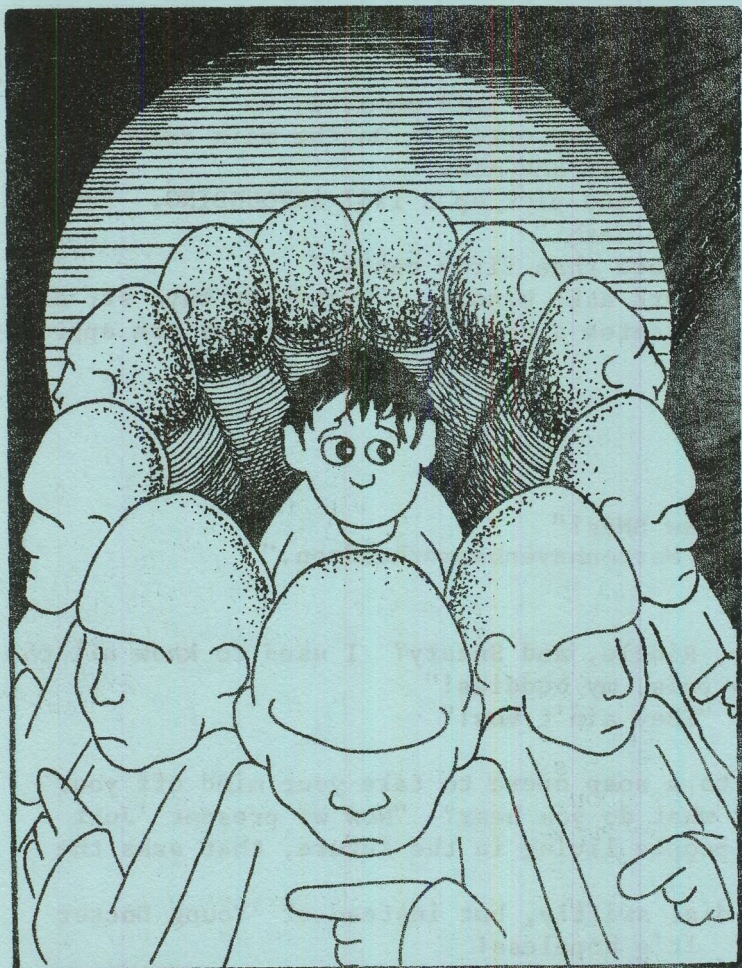
One of its major features was Jim Harmon's column, "Harmony", which began in PEON #10 and continued till the last issue, #38. Harmon entered fandom in 1948, when he was fifteen years old (that used to be a common age for neofans, in the days when young people learned the delights of reading much earlier than they do now); he began writing "Harmony" when he was thirteen, and though PEON is long gone, Harmon is continuing the column today in the pages of RIVERSIDE QUARTERLY. It's probably the longest-running column in fanhistory: to date it's continued for some thirty-five years.

Harmon began writing science fiction professionally in 1954 and sold three dozen stories to magazines ranging from SPACEWAY to F&SF in the following eight years. In the 1960s he left the s.f. field to write such nostalgia books as THE GREAT RADIO

HEROES and THE GREAT RADIO COMEDIANS; recently he has been involved in writing the scripts for a new series on radio about Tom Mix.

But never mind all that. Harmon wrote "A Different Aspect to Utopia" in 1950, when he was sixteen years old. In it, he depicted his vision of a future world when science fiction was immensely popular, and showed wittily why that wouldn't necessarily be a good thing for true fans. His prediction has come to pass in startling detail -- hey, maybe those old-time s.f. writers weren't as myopic as we thought!

--- Terry Carr



EXCLUSION

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A DIFFERENT ASPECT OF UTOPIA

BY

jim harmon

What is Utopia? Why, any fan can give you the answer. That's a place where everybody reads science fiction -- where everybody gets a couple of fan-zines in every mail -- where everybody talks bems, mutants, and ASTOUNDINGS. Let's take a look at that world.

You wake up in this new world. You open your big ugly face. You let it hang that way. Your wonderful collection has been touched. Touched is hardly the word for it. It has been fairly let go at with one hell of a haymaker. You leap out of bed and run over to it. You see small, rather insignificant portions have been torn from the covers. What

could they have on them? Your great mind works fast. Of course -- it's those small, fairly sexless lads, the heroes! Sobbing into your bosom (a neat trick), you go downstairs. Then you give an agonized scream. Those sections of your mutilated covers are pasted around the walls of the kitchen. Is this some mad plan to drive you mad thought up by the other fellow in your latest feud? Then the woman in the house says, "Aren't all those boys in those scientific costumes cute? They make a lovely border!"

"Yes," you stammer, "but why my stf...or, science fiction collection, when you could have cut some pictures out of some Buck Rogers comic strips?"

"Really, dear," she replies. "After all, comparing *stf* with, agh, Buck Rogers!"

"Stf? STF? What -- what about -- it?" you ask in astonishment.

"Stf is significant!" is the reply.

You collapse into a nearby chair. "Is it?" you ask, weakly.

"Of course," she answers, "and, dear, since you're the oldest fan I know, I've arranged for you to give a talk before the girls."

"The girls?" you mutter. "Those old...all right, all right. I'm going out for a walk."

Once outside, you prepare to relax. Then you see IT! You give a horrified scream, and clutch the coat sleeve of a passerby. "Dear God," you whisper, "what's happening to that woman's head?"

"Huh?" he asks. "That's a Lensman hat, of course. It coils and uncoils and changes color."

"Oh...." you say as you look at the man's newspaper. "THE CHICAGO FANTASY NEWS TRIBUNE...a combination of the TRIBUNE and FN?"

"Of course," is the answer. "Nobody reads the TRIB anymore, so..."

You stagger away from the stranger, and head uptown. On the main drag, you see one sign glaring from everywhere -- FANTASY BARGAINS!

You wander into one of the bookstores, and pick up a 1947 ASTOUNDING. You ask the price, only to hear, "That's \$10.50, in cash."

"But," you say, "this used to be no more than fifty cents."

"You nuts or something, pal?" the clerk asks kindly. "Everybody buys *stf* now. The prices are way up. Anyway: -- he indicates a sign -- "those prices are approved by Jasper T. Honeyfinger."

"Who's he?"

"Why, the Number One Fan, of course."

"What happened to Ackerman?"

"Who's he?"

"Tell me," you gasp, "who are the new BNFs?"

"Well, there's Fritzdingeleovich and Mortonhavenhammerheadson."

"Mortonhavenhammerheadson?"

"Yeah, good ole Mort."

"But what about Ackerman, Kennedy, Riddle, and Sneary? I used to know all the big name fen personally. They were my pals, my buddies!"

"Haw-haw," he laughs fiendishly. "They ain't now!"

"No," you sob, as you leave.

Once home, you turn on the radio to a soap opera to take your mind off your troubles and onto someone else's. But what do you hear? "Now we present 'Just Plain Oona and Jik', the story of two people living in the future, that asks the question..."

You stifle a scream and turn the dial swiftly, but instead of 'Young Doctor Malone,' you get 'Old Doc Methuselah.' It's hopeless!

A movie, you think desperately, of course. Moments later, you are talking to a girl in the ticket booth as the signs are being changed. You ask, "Is there a good murder mystery on?"

She stares at you. "Aren't you a fan?"

"A murder mystery fan."

She laughs. "You read detective stories? You must be nuts!"

"What?"

"Well, don't you know everyone reads science fiction?" she begins, but you aren't listening. You are looking at the sign they've just put up, which reads: "Samuel Goldwyn presents 'The Grey Lensman' starring Errol Flynn, Greer Garson, Montgomery Clift, Susan Hayward, Rita Hayworth, Ann Sheridan, Lionel Barrymore, Vincent Price, and 2000 Beautiful Dancing Girls in Technicolor."

This is too much! You slide silently to the sidewalk.

After a while, you hear a voice from far away, saying, "My, he's certainly taking a long Null-A pause."

When you wake, it is late night and all is quiet. You sit on the curb and silently reflect on the situation. It is no longer exclusive to be a fan -- every-

body is. It takes the kick out of it for everyone to be a fan. No one thinks you're crazy anymore. You don't know all the fans and you couldn't possibly get all of the thousands of fanzines published. Prices on fantasy are way out of your reach. Science fiction is being perverted in all forms. It has become the thing to do to become a stf fan. Somehow you feel very lonely.

But relax! It isn't really happening; it's pure flight of fancy. But did you ever stop to think that science fiction is becoming more popular every day and someday this picture may come true?

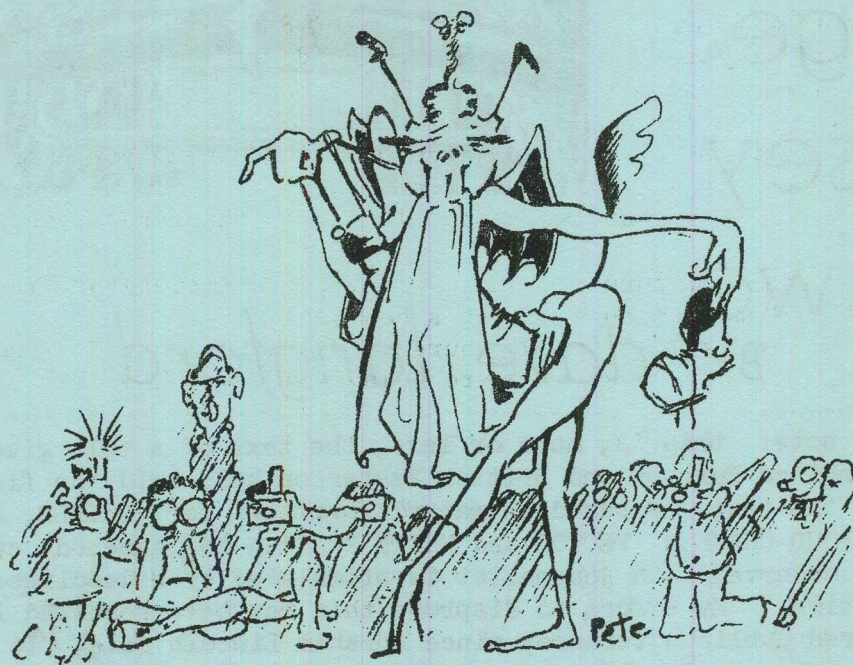
---Jim Harmon

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Interspecies fertility between chimpanzees and Homo Sap? Don't be silly. In the first place a chimp could never make it up the side of the Empire State Building carrying Fay Wray, and even if he could he'd be too pooped to do anything after he got there. ---Art Rapp in DYNATRON 80.

I guess I'm not what you'd call "perceptive". So I was born that way. Take your complaints to the manufacturer. ---Pascal Thomas, RHETORICAL DEVICE #3.

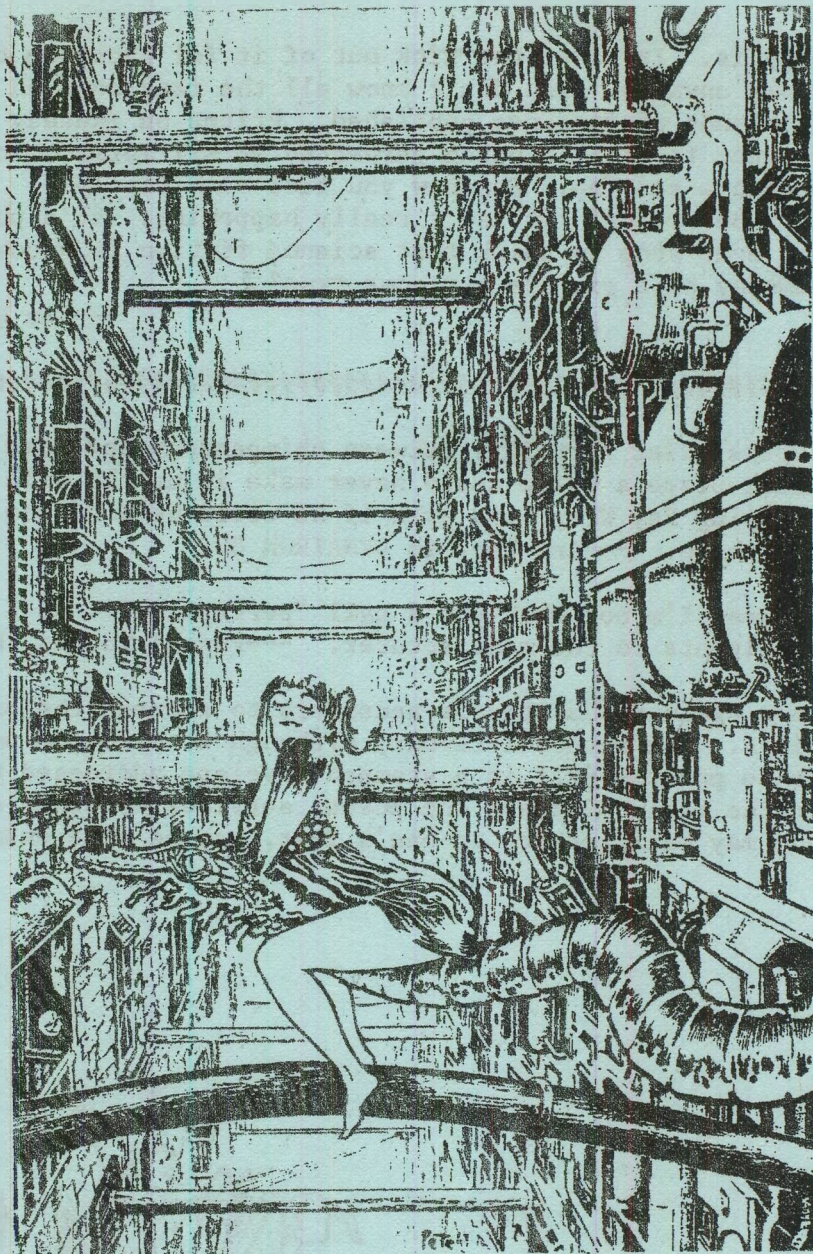
Once again it has become necessary to address the problem of getting a cat to take pills. The method I favour, although it seems to not be available in this area, is to put the pill in a stamped envelope addressed to "Inside the Cat" and drop it in the mail. Perhaps the postal services of other countries, where, for example, one may mail letters to one's feet, may be more enlightened. ---Thom Digby.



the
dragon-
hiker's
guide to
battle-
field
covenant
at dune's
edge:
odyssey

two

BY dave langford



A preliminary note: this is, more or less, the text of a talk given by me at Seacon '84, the combined European and British Eastercon held amid the fleshpots of Brighton. Bits of the text are based on material written for ANSIBLE, BRITISH FANTASY NEWSLETTER, CLOUD CHAMBER, VECTOR and WHITE DWARF. Now somebody ever so famous, I forget who, once observed: "A journalist is stimulated by a deadline: he writes worse when he has time." My effort to disprove this may have resulted in one of the most hastily prepared public utterances since Abraham Lincoln said, "It was a lousy play anyway." For reasons of self-esteem I didn't tell the lucky audience that I'd travelled down to the convention two days before the talk was scheduled, armed with nothing but a title, a blank pad of paper, a lot of notes and a copy of a certain 819-page book. And for reasons of tact I even neglected to mention the quite true fact that, while checking references in that same book mere hours before speaking, I'd suffered a spontaneous and violent nosebleed. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc* or not, that revelation would have been an Unfair Blow. Other seeming unfair blows in what

follows can be ascribed to my natural bad taste and, in common with ever so many reviewers, difficulty in separating personal grouches from ineluctable cosmic truths. Also I have this undemocratic liking for good s.f. The reader is warned.

In the past, when I've given talks at cons they've been on humorous subjects, like fandom, or the royalties I get for my books, or the destruction of human civilization as we know it. I've avoided the horrible realities of our present-day world, such as science fiction.

All this changed in 1983 when I sold out to the big magazine tycoons and started writing an s.f. review column for WHITE DWARF, the magazine of fantasy games and Harlan Ellison. Each month I got a handsome two-figure sum -- I'm not saying where the decimal point goes -- and was privileged to gobble enough monthly reading matter to be recycled into the New Forest. After the first half year I felt a new insight into the WHITE DWARF -- my brain had collapsed to a tiny fraction of its former size, and looked ready to go out like a light. All that kept me going was the invigorating shower of hate mail from the 14½-year-old Dungeons and Dragons fans who were the magazine's main audience, and who regarded the works of Stephen R. Donaldson as sacred texts to be spoken of with awestruck reverence and kept far apart from commonplace books (a point with which I actually agreed).

Speaking of Donaldson, I've just been looking into his thriller book published under the impenetrable pseudonym Reed Stephens, THE MAN WHO KILLED HIS BROTHER, now a major remainder! The private-eye hero has Donaldson's own version of those snappy names like James Bond or Mike Hammer; he's called Axbrewder, Mick Axbrewder, and he's bowed down with a massive weight of remorse and guilt, and instead of being a leper he's an alcoholic. Instead of thinking *leper outcast unclean* in italics on every third page, he thinks to himself, in italics, *you need a drink you need a drink you need a drink*. This must be the effect of S.R.D.'s discovery of s.f. conventions.

Fortunately, I didn't have to review THE MAN WHO KILLED HIS BROTHER, but over the last year or two there've been plenty of other review books which, after about five pages, set me muttering (in italics, natch), *you need a drink you need a drink you need a drink*. I swear that each new piece of really ropey s.f. leaves a new scar on the forebrain. If, late at night, you see me mumbling and falling over, it's not what you think, just the sea air causing twinges in my old Piers Anthony wound. (Did you know that in British fan circles the phrase "as thick as two short planks" is being replaced by "as thick as a Piers Anthony trilogy" or, in extreme cases, "as thick as a Piers Anthony protagonist"?)

Anyway, because I can't forget the real cesspits from my years of s.f. reviewing, I don't see why you shouldn't have to suffer too. As a select committee of one, I'm going to announce and annotate my shortlist for the newly created S.F. Superglue Awards -- for the books that stick in your mind although you wish they wouldn't. Lots of awards for the best of this and the best of that are going to be presented this weekend, but we should remember Sturgeon's Law and give due honour to that 90% comprising the silent majority. This is known as democracy.

My first award comes in the hard-fought category of Forgetability, and the trophy is a lavish thousand dollars' worth of interstellar vacuum imported at colossal expense and sealed in an old peanut packet. (I forget where I've put the trophy just now.) The book which most sticks in my memory for being specially unmemorable is Isaac Asimov's FOUNDATION'S EDGE. It goes on for hundreds of thousands of words which contain less actual plot than one of those little 40-page segments in volume one of the trilogy. Vast wordage is expended in a self-indulgent effort to tie all Asimov's novels into a single Future History, despite the fact that the Foundation set isn't really compatible with the robot books -- mating them together is like trying to cross a prize bloodhound with Gibbon's DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE. Oceans of guff about robot separatism can't account for the total lack of even the crudest domestic robots by the time of the galactic empire.

When I finally woke up at the far end of EDGE, I found the essential message went further, and was that Seldon's Plan was all wet, so the entire preceding was therefore a complete waste of time. Having taken two hundred thousand words to say

this, Asimov appears to be keeping the *next* revelations for a sequel in case readers are overwhelmed and overexcited by this headlong pace. In my review column I ended up quoting Kenneth Tynan's famous line: "The trouble with reviewing commodities like this is that you know in advance that, for all the effect it will have, you might as well fill your column with a relief map of Death Valley."

It's only fair to admit that the next Asimov, *THE ROBOTS OF DAWN*, was quite a bit better. "Here," I remember saying, "is a writer who shows promise and may one day make a name for himself." *DAWN* is specially recommended for setting a new record in s.f. for the number of meticulously described scenes in which the hero visits the toilet. I mean, Kim Kinnison never went at all, and I shudder to think what happened to lensfans who tried to imitate *all* their hero's little idiosyncrasies.

Our second award category covers the traditional literary qualities of Style, Imagery and Diction. Since the Seacon '84 progress reports are disqualified as amateur publications, there is absolutely no contest and the winner has to be Stephen R. Donaldson for *WHITE GOLD WIELDER*. This book concludes a trilogy with an almost memorable plot, which goes roughly like this: lovable leper Thomas Covenant wishes to remove a blight from the fantasy Land but is told by evil Lord Foul that in attempting to serve the ends of the Land he will in fact be serving the diabolical ends of Lord Foul, which is why Covenant goes about actively not serving the ends of the Land -- on the theory that this will therefore cause him not to serve the ends of Lord Foul, little realizing that (further complicated by the efforts of cuddly Linden Avery to serve none of the ends of Covenant, Foul or Linden Avery) this attempt to serve the ends of the Land will in fact, *et cetera, et cetera*. All this gets so complicated, the book should have been called *TINKER, TAILOR, LEPER, SPY*. No wonder even the author and Lord Foul are hopelessly confused by the end of the book, with Donaldson having to cover his tracks by inventing and invoking the useful Rule 42, which says that if the omniscient Lord Foul and his all-potent forces of cosmic evil should win, they automatically lose.

However, I'm giving Donaldson his laurels on the grounds of style. He uses these triffic metaphors. Covenant passes the time "sucking the wounded places of his heart," which I'm told makes you go blind, and certainly our hero soon develops that interesting symptom, "a gelid knot in his chest."

Donaldson is still pillaging the same bizarre dictionary used for five previous fat books. Something isn't just hurled but "hurled like a jerid"; a person doesn't just ramble on but is "anile as the dead", which doesn't mean what you think. Best new words of the book are "preterite" and "argute", as in "he made his preterite way" somewhere, while "her preterite self-contradictions held her back." Likewise Covenant's face -- his "gaunt, compulsory visage" as S.R.D. calls it, in striking contrast to those of us whose faces are optional -- tends to be "argute with concentration." Sometimes the whole damn situation gets "so argute that it was almost physical."

After you've cut your teeth on these elementary puzzlers, you'll be ready to try to decipher the meaning of my two favourites -- "beneficent mansuetude" and "analystic refulgence". Only advanced students of Donaldsonese should tackle the inscrutable lines exhumed from *THE WOUNDED LAND* by Joseph (for it is he!) Nicholas:

"They were featureless and telic, like lambent gangrene. They looked horribly like children."

I don't object to increasing my word power: Gene Wolfe in *THE BOOK OF THE NEW SUN* and, to some extent, Brian Aldiss in his *Helliconia* things sneak in a number of exotic words, but with the context arranged to make it clear what's meant. Donaldson, conversely, has the knack of defusing his big, tense scenes -- distracting your attention by sandbagging you with his dictionary -- so that rather than being caught and enthralled the sensitive, cultured reader is apt to remark, "What the fuck's he on about?"

This was the sentiment inspiring my favourite *ANSIBLE* colophon, which went (in condensed form): "*ANSIBLE* 32 is argute with analystic refulgence and beneficent mansuetude; it makes its preterite way to you, hurled like a jerid from the gaunt, compulsory visage of Dave Langford, whose unambergrised malison may be aneled by

rushing gelid pound notes... Shining like cynosures for their aid are ((various helpers)). There are no prizes for guessing which doorstep fantasy blockbuster your editor has recently quaffed like a sapid draught of clinquant roborant whose fulvous surquedry and caducity make knurrs come from the vocabulary out..."

For his achievement Mr. Donaldson receives a Collins Pocket Gem Dictionary, on the strict understanding that he gets rid of the one he's using now.

Award number three is presented to the book with the most diabolical plot. The trophy takes the form of a dragon exquisitely sculptured from saccharine. Er, yes, you're already ahead of me. Let me just say that once upon a time I rather liked DRAGONFLIGHT and its sequel. The melodrama creaked a bit, maybe, but the swashes were tidily buckled and the guaranteed boilerplate tear-jerker situations (Mills & Boon, prop.) performed to specification. It was a guilty pleasure to be enjoyed far from the austere eyes of Joe Nicholas, John Clute and other shock-troops of the higher Lit Crit.

But the years went by, Anne McCaffrey became ever more gooey about her created world (like Dorothy Sayers with Lord Peter Wimsey, who by the final books is so damned noble, sensitive, caring, encyclopaedically erudite and generally wonderful that one expected the canonization to follow any second). The Dragonbooks and their titles grew inexorably longer. Six hundred thousand words later, it says in the foreword, we have MORETA: DRAGONLADY OF PERN, which I tried to like but failed.

One problem is that Pern and its dragons have been worn pretty smooth. We know all about the dragonweyrs, a sort of cross between Heathrow Airport and Gormenghast from which flying beasties rise to polish off unpleasant falling spores (Thread) with their fiery halitosis. We know that dragonriders and civilians will each be unchangingly competent, staunch, cowardly, noble, wrongheaded or wry, depending on the cut of their cardboard. We know the gimmicks of human/dragon telepathy, dragon teleportation, time-travel via dragon, excessive dragon cuteness, and the rest. We know with a deadly certainty that there's no escape from McCaffrey's recurrent ooh-aah scene in which boy or girl meets dragon via "Impression", combining the emotions of first sex, first communion and the dread initiation rite of the Secret Fourth Form Gang all in one hygienic package.

In a brave attempt at freshness, MORETA is set 900 years prior to DRAGONFLIGHT, filling us with excitement at the truly remarkable lack of change in Pern society over this period. The main difference appears to be that in ye olden days people have *even sillier* names, leading to lots of paragraphs like this:

"Sharth, Melath, Odioth," B'Lerion closed a finger into his palm with each name. "Nabeth, as you suspected. Ponteth and Bidorth. That makes seven, and if my memory serves me, N'Mool, Bidorth's rider, comes from Telgar Upper Plains. Of course T'Grel's not the only rider who's dissatisfied with M'Tani's leadership. I told you, didn't I, Falga, that once those Telgar riders had had a taste of *real* leadership, there'd be trouble." He smiled winningly at Moreta. "I actually defer to Sh'Gall's abilities..."

It's not so much the ugliness of these bloody apostrophes spraying all over the page, or the difficulty of having tragic heroine Moreta sound tragically heroic when stuck with lines like "Orlith says we've done a good job, A'Dan... You were marvellous assistants, M'Barak, D'Ltan, B'Greal!" What's wrong is that, hopelessly in love with her gift for thinking up silly names, and convinced that clotted detail is what the fans want, McCaffrey is wasting time dishing out names and (what passes for) characterization to an immense horde of walk-ons and spear-carriers who, in the leaner prose of DRAGONFLIGHT, would rightly have been "a dragonrider", "a boy", "a drudge", "a telephone sanitizer", or whatever. The "Dragondex" -- yuck -- at the end of this book lists 145 characters' names. Too many.

Ignore the next bit if you'd rather not know the plot. Hide under your chairs, stop your ears, roll on the ground in convulsions (just as I did when I read the book) -- here it comes! The foreordained conclusion is that Moreta snuffs it on her famous Ride as chronicled in story and song as early as 1968. Following contact with Pern's forgotten South Continent, an influenza pandemic rages, leaving one to wonder why another doesn't rage 900 years later when similar contact is made in DRAGONFLIGHT. About halfway through the book, a plague-surviving Masterhealer dimly

recollects that back at Healer school he was taught the now-forgotten secrets of vaccination. Duly he gives blood (drawn into a carefully sterilized syringe through an interestingly unsterilized hollow thorn), has it centrifuged ("Desdra...began to swing the jar around her head" -- no, no, I'm not making this up), and uses the resulting vaccine on all and sundry. I was looking forward to the scene in which the Healers then find a mouldering *ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA* amid their archives and read the piece on serum hepatitis: "transmitted usually by injection as in blood transfusions...a common hazard." No such luck.

OK. Everyone is vaccinated. But the dreaded 'flu will strike again unless everyone is revaccinated in short order! And there's a hollow thorn shortage! And for unexplained reasons a hollow thorn can be used only once! Haven't met such edge-of-the-seat drama since *TRACTATUS LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS*. Luckily dragons can time-travel, so Moreta and entourage instantly nip forward to the next hollow-thorn harvest. This apparently pointless plot turn serves two purposes. First, it restores the beloved dragons to their usual position at stage centre, which was in danger of being usurped by Pernese paramedics. (Nobody even *considers* trying to make hypodermic needles using the extensive metalworking and glassblowing facilities.) Second, it poses the fascinating question of how this extremely useful time-travel ability, which in these olden days is reasonably widely known and which young dragonriders are apt to stumble on by accident, should be completely forgotten over the next few centuries, ready for dramatic rediscovery in *DRAGONFLIGHT*. No credible answer ever emerges.

(By the way, McCaffrey cocks up another back-reference to *DRAGONFLIGHT*. As you'll remember, you dedicated skiffy readers, you, that book had some stuff about olden-day lady dragonriders with flamethrowers, and 900 years after *MORETA* it's suggested for the first time in Pernese history that "agenothree" spray is better than flame. In *MORETA* the flamethrower's fuel tanks are now said to be filled with agenothree, i.e. HNO_3 , i.e. nitric acid. Not the most likely of flammable fuels.)

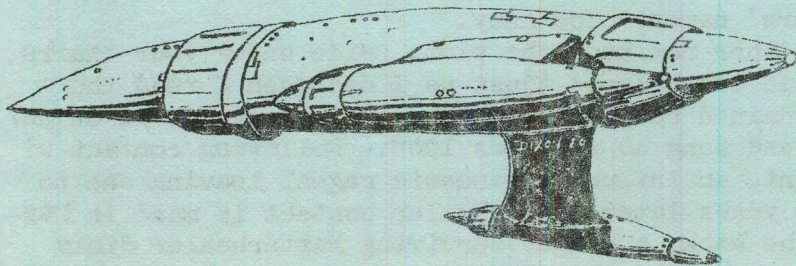
Moreta now has to be set up for her Ride. For reasons which are not very clear, the great revaccination has to happen to everybody on the same day, necessitating huge logistical efforts by vaccine-carrying dragonriders. For reasons which are wholly opaque, one boss dragonrider refuses to do his bit (he's the latest in a long list of McCaffrey characters whose motivations are utterly mysterious because the author needs a baddie but can't *imagine* why anyone should be nasty to her favourite people). And for reasons of plot, only heroic Moreta and a chum can perform that last desperate vaccine run, in which she over-fatigues herself and -- well, yes, quite. I felt sorry for poor Moreta, not because of her heroic self-sacrifice (the silly woman could have paused at any time for a good ten hours' sleep and time-jumped to carry on refreshed from the same instant) but because of the vast auctorial thumb pushing her so crudely to her doom. It's something of an achievement, when you stop and think about it -- to shuffle an entire continent full of teleporting, time-travelling dragonfolk out of the way, leaving our doomed heroine as The Only Possible Person to complete a task requiring approximately the same skills as a milk round.

(Another glitch. Great play is made in *DRAGONFLIGHT* with the famous 'Ballad of Moreta's Ride', whose throbbingly significant chorus is all about black dust and freezing air, something to do with Thread falling to black dust when it's cold enough. In *MORETA*, not only is there no re-

ference whatever to black dust, but the celebrated ride appears to take place after sowing time in a mild Spring.

"Never mind the facts," I imagine the Masterharper saying. "The public always likes a catchy chorus about black dust..."

Luckily Moreta's tragedy is not allowed to leave every-



one depressed. Within five pages, the entire supporting cast is saying spontaneous things like, "I must think of the beginnings of this day. Not of the endings!" and cooing over the sugary delight of that unescapable Hatching and Impression. I could hear the distant strains of violin music; I could feel myself wafted on a tide of saccharine to the nearest toilet, into which I stared for quite some while, meditating on timeless questions like, "They banned cyclamates but not this?"

Onward! It's time to encourage new talent with an award for a new young author who has -- in several senses -- brought fresh blood to the stuffy old scene of British s.f. with his novel HABITATION ONE. If I remember the hype correctly, Frederick Dunstan wrote this when he was only eight, but I assure you the literary style is worthy of an eleven-year-old. An eleven-year-old who's borrowed a volume or so of Stephen Donaldson's dictionary. His award comes in the category of Good Taste, and the shape of the coveted trophy is -- in the immortal words of James Branch Cabell -- not convenient to describe.

The book is an everyday tale of post-holocaust folk going mad and mutilating each other aboard Habitation One, a future environment so wondrous that auctorial efforts to describe it collapse in adjectival gibbering. "Enormous---incredible---incomprehensible," gasps Dunstan, overcome by his command of big words. "Superb, colossal, brilliant," he continues. "Amazing, astounding, analog..." well, I do exaggerate just a teensy bit but not much. After pages of this stuff the only thing clear about Habitation One was that it had "filamentary stanchions." Your guess is as good as mine.

When not engaged in mayhem, the everyday cardboard folk make speeches telling each other things they already know, a plot device known in the 30s as "filling in the background" and more recently as "filling in the background very ineptly". This, though, is not a book to be read for its literary excellence, which is just as well. The joy lies in savouring the rich psychopathology of the author's imagination. Let me, by way of example, tell you about the booby-trap.

Character A, a lady, walks into this booby-trap. The trap was set by character B in hope of catching character C, merely because C has driven B mad by threatening to shoot arrows into his goolies. C did this by way of tactful reproof because B, his advances having been rebuffed by another young lady D, was so coarse as to present D with exploding shoes which blew her feet off. Is that clear? There's a lot more of this, so let's get back to the woman A, who walks through a door and gets hit by a massive falling axe-blade which slices off chunks of her: a wisp of hair, a scatter of toes, a slice of hip and most of a breast. (When I told Bob Shaw about this he was bemused to realize that he'd never before spotted the pun contained in the word "booby-trap".)

Rallying after a short stay in hospital, A flips her lid and wanders round shooting people, preferably pregnant women who can gorily miscarry, nursing women so the same bullet can kill the mother and the child at her breast, etc. After a bit A breaks a leg and lingers for some while in hideous agony from multiple fractures, being saved just in time to be publically executed -- dumped in the evocatively named Looney Bin whence no victim ever returns. A returns, though, posthumously, the author being in need of a female corpse for the big necrophilia scene in which C fails to notice that he's screwing his own dead wife. That is, he does not realize she's dead. Afterwards, another typical, meaning totally demented, character (it's our old friend B again) starts humping...sorry! starts lugging the body around for reasons even *he* doesn't understand. Little does he know that he's but a puppet in the hands of the author, who fancies a nice smelly body for next chapter's big cannibalism scene...

I was also struck by the boy-meets-girl vignette in which true love dawns as C helps D try on her first wooden leg; the martial-arts thrill of B's giant spiked yo-yo with which someone's chest is "minced off"; and the hilarious torture sequence featuring someone else's foot-long moustache being ripped out with hydraulic jacks. This no longer moustachioed chap -- call him E -- gets his moment of glory at the book's climax, when for completely obscure reasons an evil looney (as opposed to the ordinary common- or garden-loonies who people the rest of the plot) is suspended by a rope high up in the air, grinning wickedly, laughing ha-ha, and clutching a small

nuclear device with which he plans to destroy the entire plot. What a dilemma!

Luckily there is this *other* tasteful public execution gadget, consisting of a gigantic steam-powered catapult which bashes people into the air with such violence as to pulverize them from the waist down, disposing of the results by pitching the body over the edge of the world. Rather like a primitive, one-way version of TAFF. E, our man of the torn-off moustache, goes in for glorious self-immolation by having this catapult hurl him skyward. Converted from the waist down to bolognese sauce, he just happens to retain consciousness. And faster than a speeding Concorde, he hurtles towards the bomb-wielding looney who dangles on high, and fires an arrow at him, and hits him. Naturally the evil-doer then drops his small nuclear weapon; E fields it neatly and takes it with him, on to his big-bang finale somewhere over the edge of the world.

This may sound silly to you. It seemed even sillier to me in the book, which has added attractions like grotesquely bad writing. In fact it even seems silly to the author, who adds a really cringingly sententious epilogue in which one of the nicer characters (C) *explains* that the events of the last chapter vary between highly implausible, completely unbelievable and downright bloody impossible. *Therefore* the inscrutable hand of God must have been at work and we should all get down on our knees! This is the first book I've read which tries to pass the buck for bad plotting to God.

Comparison with God's previously published work suggests very strongly that on the contrary this frightful effort is entirely the responsibility of Frederick Dunstan. In the words of famous BSFA reviewer Sue Thomason, "Please do not buy this book, even to read on trains."

The final Worst in S.F. award is the biggie, for Scientific Plausibility, and it takes the form of a rusty Möbius strip riveted to a polypropylene urn containing the ashes of a complete run of ANALOG. In fact our winner could have made a good showing in any of the previous categories. In a single virtuoso performance the author achieves more padding than FOUNDATION'S EDGE, mangles the English language as thoroughly as Stephen R. Donaldson, beats Anne McCaffrey hands down for remorseless use of clichés thought slightly stale by Mary Shelley, and even approaches HABITATION ONE in the difficult arena of Good Taste. Let's hear a big friendly round of applause for our all-star winner, an 819-page opusculum which does for s.f. what the Rev. Jim Jones did for soft drinks, BATTLEFIELD EARTH by L. Ron Hubbard!

Now BATTLEFIELD EARTH is a book with something for everyone, all the way across the cultural scale from people who need doorstops to people who want to start bonfires. For example, Scots will be delighted to discover that in the year 3000 all Scots are heavily into kilts, tartans, clans and claymores, and all speak in the parodic stage-Scots accent which raised such titters in 19th-century issues of PUNCH. Likewise, the Chinese are inscrutable, and very subtle and cunning and diplomatic, and flowery in speech, and fond of rich Oriental robes. One gathers that in this world, Chinese communism never happened. Neither did feminism -- the most prominent of the few female characters achieves absolutely nothing beyond occasionally bursting into tears, etc. ("It was as though he had taken a board from an irrigation trough; the tears went down her cheeks."), and she spends most of the book locked up in a cage being gloated over by a fiendish alien baddie.

You get the idea. In 3000 A.D., by some mysterious alchemy, every aspect of life, character, dialogue, action and you-name-it conforms in exact detail to the worst clichés of the 1930s pulps, the stuff that makes Doc Smith look like Tolstoy. Take that alien baddie's subtle characterization: "He went to sleep gloating over how clever he was." (The characterization of the aforementioned female consists of the two details "black eyes" and "cornsilk hair", repeated again and again without mercy in the apparent hope that sooner or later they'll evoke something.) Savour the richly realized future slang: "You're as crazy as a nebula of crap." "How the crap nebula would I know?" etc. And one of my favourite lines for general style and panache -- after Terl the deviously clever Psychlo baddie has spent several minutes watching the Earthling hero turn blue in alien Psychlo atmosphere, we have: "He suddenly got it. The man-thing couldn't breathe breathe-gas."

There is really no time for a guided tour round the major stylistic awfulnesses

of BATTLEFIELD EARTH. I'll just mention that that sentence about the man-thing and the breathe-gas figures in the anthology of specially good bits selected and circulated by the book's own publicity agents. The whole farrago has been written, or thrown together, using all the devices of short words, short sentences, short paragraphs, repetition and general flatulence from the days when pulp writers were paid by the line, and indeed any thrifty pulp editor would have trimmed the book by about three-quarters without sacrificing anything important. (Personally I could trim 100% or more without sacrificing anything important, but that's just one fan's opinion.) I only managed to finish it by borrowing a spare office at my publishers' and leaving myself trapped with nothing else to do for a whole wet London afternoon -- and even then I kept wanting to rush out and bite the pigeons, or scour the gutters for an improving cigarette-packet to read.

We'll stick to the scientific bits, since L.R.H. is particularly proud of them. In the introduction he explains how he always wrote real s.f., featuring real science and real people -- adding that John W. Campbell couldn't get the good stuff any more when L.R.H. stopped writing for him. Campbell had to publish hack serials with no characters in them, DUNE and things like that. Anyway, according to this same introduction, BATTLEFIELD EARTH is real s.f. None of your implausible fantasy nonsense. So I've picked out a few specially good items of plausible skiffy/science which the publicity crew might care to include in their *next* Best of BE selection. (In fact I've just noticed to my surprise that at least four of them are visible or implicit in the existing publicity pack...)

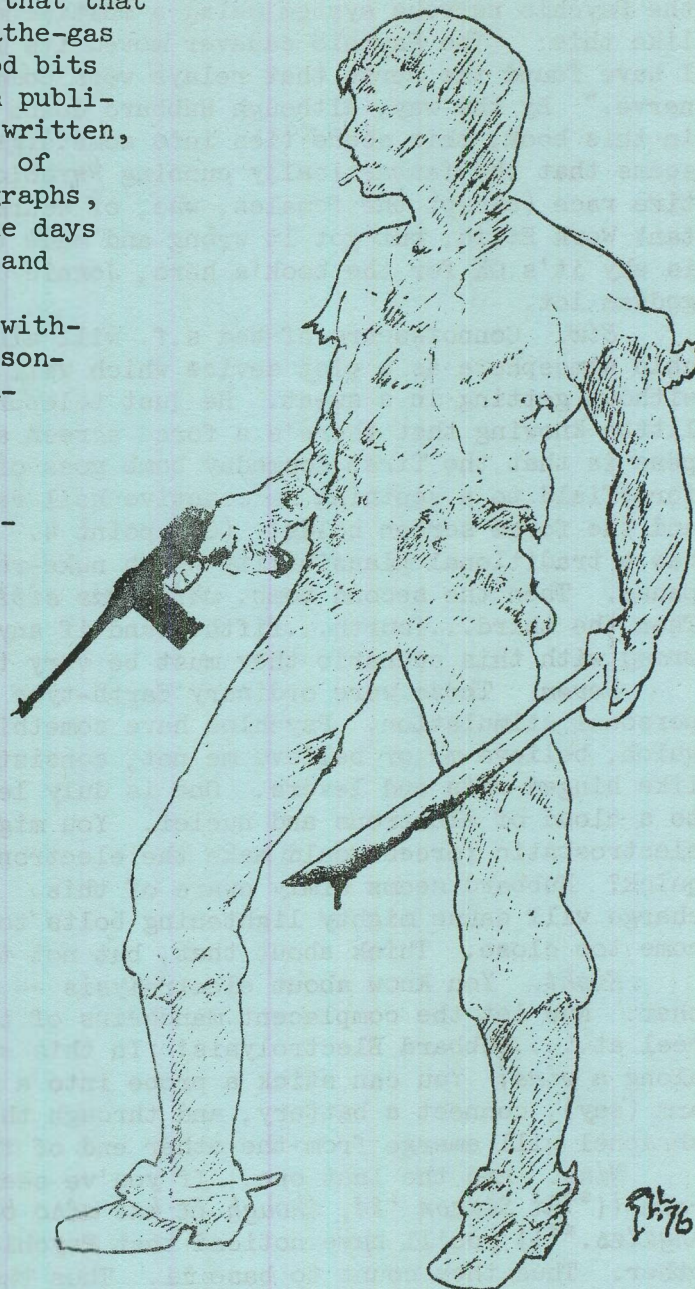
One. Savour this, physics fans: the alien Psychlos have a different periodic table.

Two. Their world's entire atmosphere explodes into radioactive gas at the merest touch of uranium. I now offer a small prize to anyone who can devise a plausible chemical composition for this atmosphere, and who can also explain how Psychlos who breathe this muck can walk around on Earth wearing only facemasks.

Three. It just happens that their "instantaneous conceptual knowledge transmitter", designed by yet another alien race solely for use with the wholly alien Psychlo brain, also happens to work on people.

Four. Psychlos build good, tough armour-plate. "Here was a mark where an atomic bomb had hit it."

Five. There's a great scene in which someone dissects a Psychlo and looks at the bits through an old-fashioned optical microscope. "Their structure isn't cellular," he cries at once. "Viral! Yes. Viral!" In the course of the next few paragraphs this chap, though limited to primitive technology, has completely mapped



the Psychlo nervous system using a multimeter and a couple of test prods. It works like this: "The Psychlo cadaver moved its left foot. 'Good,' said McKendrick, '... I have found the nerve that relays work commands.' He put a little tag on the nerve." By the way, although Hubbard doesn't preach his personal religion anywhere in this book, this scene ties into some digs at his old hate -- psychiatrists. It seems that the fantastically cunning Psychlo psychs rewired the brains of the entire race (except the females, who, of course, don't matter) to instil the Protestant Work Ethic, but got it wrong and made them all vicious sadists instead. Which is why it's OK for the book's hero, Jonnie Goodboy Tyler, to wipe out the whole goddam lot.

Six. Connoisseurs of bad s.f. will already have recognized the exploding Psychlo atmosphere as a plot device which will allow Jonnie to snuff an entire planet without getting in a sweat. He just teleports a heap of nuclear weapons to Psychlo, little knowing that there's a force screen around the receiving bay! So what happens is that the first doomsday bomb goes off, converting everything within that forcefield to a seething radioactive hell resembling a Worldcon bidding party -- and the force screen holds! (Cf. point 4. As legitimate pseudoscience, the screen has a traditional plausibility which nuke-resistant armour-plate lacks.) Dramatic pause. Then the second bomb, *which was sitting right next to the first*, goes off. Then the third...fourth...fifth...and if anyone hasn't spotted something slightly *wrong* with this scenario they must be very thick, or L. Ron Hubbard, or both.

Seven. Those were ordinary Earth-type nukes, the sort Mrs. Thatcher uses for personal stimulation. Psychlos have something much jollier, the Ultimate Bomb, which, believe me or believe me not, consists of a little box containing things like hinged rods and levers. One is duly let off, reducing an entire moon gently to a cloud of electrons and nuclei. You might think that after this, whopping electrostatic forces would make the electrons and nuclei join up again pretty damn quick? Hubbard seems dimly aware of this. What he says is that the huge electric charge will cause mighty lightening bolts to shoot out and zap spacecraft which come too close. Think about that, but not too hard.

Eight. You know about electrolysis -- ions flowing through solutions and all that. Now let the complacent mandarins of the fuddy-duddy scientific Establishment reel at....Hubbard Electrolysis! In this stunning new development, *molecules* flow along a *wire*. You can stick a probe into a piece of shrapnel lodged in someone's arm (say), connect a battery, and through the magic of Hubbard Electrolysis the shrapnel will emerge from the other end of the wire.

Nine. And the last one. If you've seen the inflatable Psychlo in the dealers' room (***At Seacon '84, though it has also been visible in and around downtown Los Angeles.***) you'll have noticed that Psychlos have 5 talons on one hand, six on the other. Thus they count to base 11. Thus their mathematics is, we learn, very, very difficult for non-Psychlos to follow. According to Hubbard, no matter how many fingers you have, the decimal system is the easiest for everyone in the universe. "Whenever they discover ((the decimal system)) on some planet they engrave the discoverer's name among the heroes." Lucky Earthfolk, having ten fingers all along!

"Aha," you say, although I hope you don't, "this is mere nitpicking of a jolly good traditional s.f. adventure." No. BATTLEFIELD EARTH is crass through and through, bad and shoddy in every joint, hinge and detail. To find these specially amusing howlers I had to wade through 819 pages of the worst s.f. writing to be found since R. Lionel Fanthorpe got religion and packed it in. These, I maintain, were the good bits, and you can do yourself a favour by avoiding the rest. And this dross -- this literary coprolite -- is being hyped as I write, on prime-time British T.V. At this climactic point I intended to bang the table, shout lots of libellous things and ritually set fire to my review copy of BATTLEFIELD EARTH, but the hotel manager says I can't. Of the the twenty pages of fiery epithets I had all prepared, the only one to pass the Seacon '84 censors is: "Not as good as FOUNDATION'S EDGE."

This would normally be the time for questions from the floor, but the con committee has kindly allowed me, instead, to use the next five minutes for a head start

on the bands of thugs shortly to be hired by outraged authors. I shall be spending the rest of this convention hiding on the Continent, impenetrably disguised in a false beard (slightly too small for me -- it was borrowed from John Brunner) and a false beer-gut (rather too large -- borrowed from Martin Hoare). The "Dave Langford" you see in the bars this weekend will be a simulacrum programmed to drink inhuman quantities of Bass and to pretend total ignorance of any hideous insults in the past hour. Meanwhile, as Marty Feldman used approximately to say: if anyone out there happens to be called Asimov, Donaldson, McCaffrey, Dunstan or Hubbard, well, ha, ha, I was only joking, of course. If not -- I meant every word.

--- Dave Langford

Books edge sex in recent poll

NEW YORK (UPI) — American middle class women would rather read than make love.

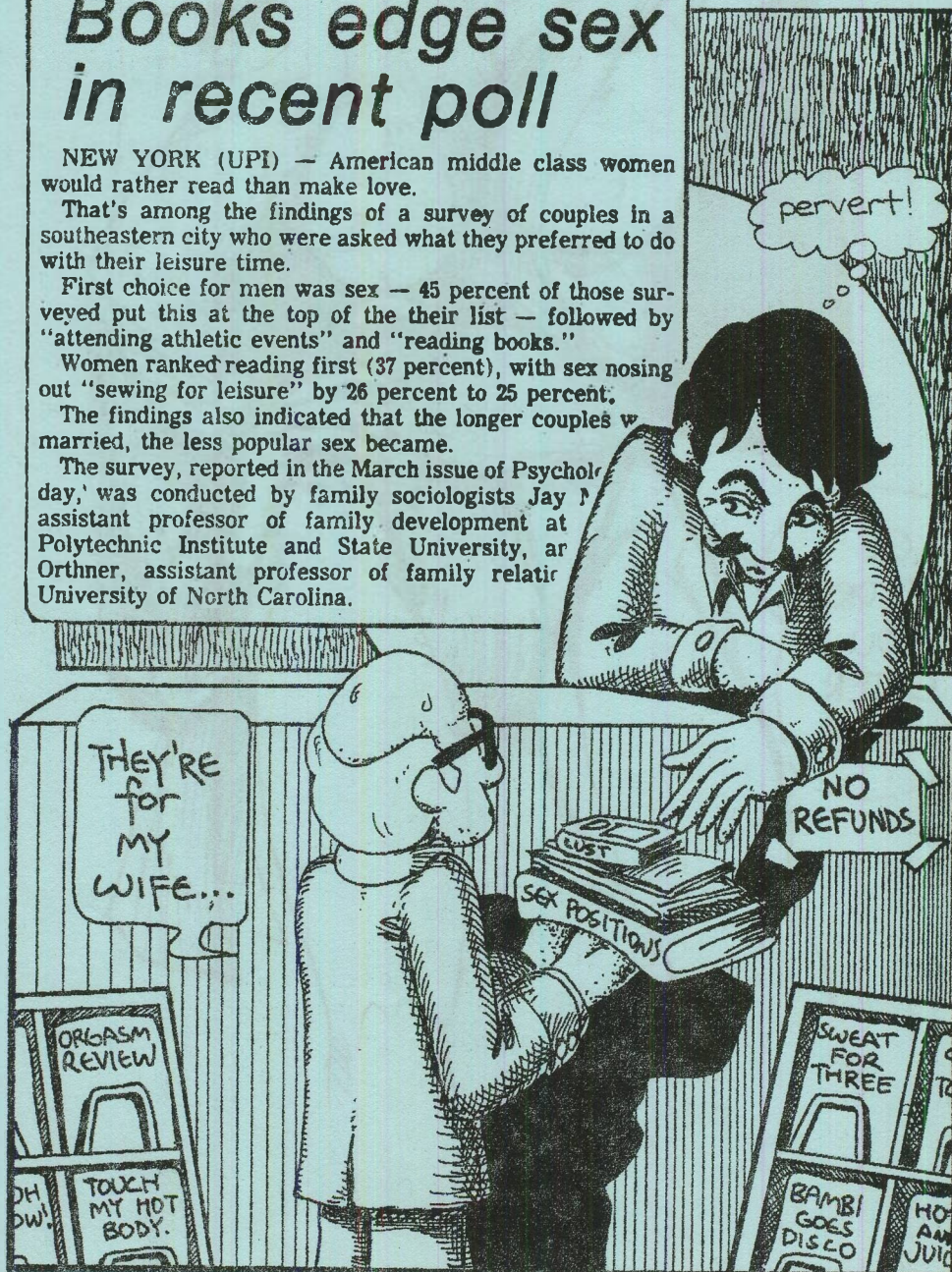
That's among the findings of a survey of couples in a southeastern city who were asked what they preferred to do with their leisure time.

First choice for men was sex — 45 percent of those surveyed put this at the top of their list — followed by "attending athletic events" and "reading books."

Women ranked reading first (37 percent), with sex nosing out "sewing for leisure" by 26 percent to 25 percent.

The findings also indicated that the longer couples were married, the less popular sex became.

The survey, reported in the March issue of *Psychology Today*, was conducted by family sociologists Jay M. Orthner, assistant professor of family development at Polytechnic Institute and State University, and Orthner, assistant professor of family relations at the University of North Carolina.



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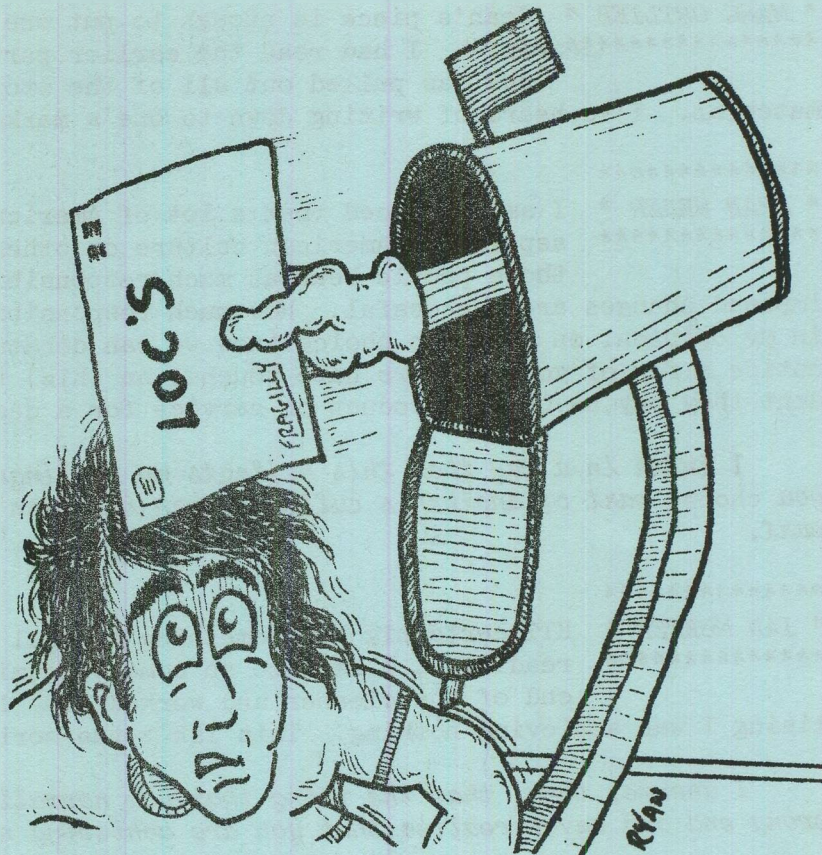
MASSAGES FROM THE



THE LOC NESS MONSTER

/*/Nessie has been put on a stringent diet for this issue - and I still expect that this issue will be our largest ever. LoCs have been cut more severely than ever - in the late LoC section especially good letters from Pascal Thomas and Ian McKeer had to be severely truncated. I hope, though, that Nessie can survive such drastic measures.

As per usual I will be replying to LoCs in this Light Italic typeface and Robbie will be responding in this Script typeface. Noting that we will begin the late LoCs./*



* PASCAL THOMAS * You know how it is: sometimes large fanzines push you to inertia because you think you can't comment on the whole of them. Sometimes small fanzines leave you locless because you find nothing at all to comment on. Sometimes middle-of-the-road fanzines leave you speechless because you don't know how to pidgeonhole them. But never, never, never does a fan run out of excuses for not writing.

I usually do not use excuses - I write However, since I began my work on the L.A.CON II concom...

I think almost everybody must be getting tired of this US imperialism over Canada discussion. Given size and proximity, an overwhelming US influence in Canada is not surprising at all, and maybe it's surprising it did not go any farther. All the same, I think Charlebois summed it well with his "Vivre en ce pays, c'est comme vivre aux Etats-Unis". We're splitting hairs, but there's one question I'd like to ask Robbie: how come that we slip into English when we, both native French-speakers, are having a conversation in French? It's happened to us several times on the phone. I get the feeling Robbie was the one who made the switch in languages (I mean, *she* speaks fluent accentless English, not me), but I never checked with her.

Actually, it seems to me that you are the one who constantly drops back into English. I suspect it's probably 50-50 with both of us dropping into English at various times.

* MARC ORTLIEB * Jean's piece is enough to put one off of picking one's nose for
***** life. I had read the earlier part in APPLESAUCE, but, for HTT,
she has pulled out all of the stops, plus assorted other noxious
material. I've heard of writing down to one's market, but this is ridiculous.

* JEAN WEBER * I am convinced that a lot of Americans deliberately try to impose
***** aspects of American culture on other peoples. But in most cases
those people bear as much responsibility as the Americans if the
imposed changes are successful. How much responsibility rests with whom depends,
in my opinion, on how much choice (now we can debate the subject of "choice" - I
notice a few of your readers have touched on this) the people have, and how dependen-
tent they may be on the product or service for a decent life.

*I think in a way that this reflects my feelings on the subject of "ACI" - if
you choose part of another's culture, than it doesn't reflect imperialism on their
part.*

* IAN McKEER * HTT certainly has something unusual about it though because after
***** reading it I went to so some vacuuming and put the hose in the wrong
end of the cleaner and worked away for several minutes before rea-
lising I was achieving nothing. This isn't the sort of thing I normally do.

*I assume, then, that the thing that you normally do is putting the hose in the
wrong end and never realise that you are achieving nothing.*

I was pleased to see that Robbie agrees that we may as well disagree and stand
little chance of "converting" one another to the other's viewpoint and that there-
fore there is little point in having a print war. War's not my cup of tea either,
more a, now what's that wonderful phrase beloved of diplomats everywhere - a frank
and meaningful exchange of views, yes that's it. Actually I'm not sure we'd even
have a shouting match if we ever met; I don't remember the last time I ever had a
no holds barred row with anybody, my temperament doesn't tend in that direction.
As regards Robbie's belief that my comments were implying that her experience of
life in Canada should be discounted in preference to mine, that certainly wasn't
the case I was trying to make, rather that we had both seen aspects of Canada and
met various Canadians upon which we base our opinions. Indeed it's probably true
that we have developed our opinions from at least some of the same material, and
look at the differences in our opinions! No doubt we can both marshal facts and
observations ad nauseam to support our case and I'll cite two examples for Marty
in particular to show you what I mean. Pascal Thomas mentions the BBC World Ser-
vice and Marty (facetiously I hope) remarks that somebody (e.g. me?) could say the
U.S. had subverted the BBC. There's no need for that at all of course, because I
can argue that the BBC is a facet of British culture and like all of it has suffered
from A.C.I. - no need for a specific conspiracy you see! Actually I thought the
BBC World Service broadcast typically British material as well as news and infor-
mation rather than American music etc. which would be more the line of the American
operation in Europe run by the CIA as far as I remember. A second example would
be Marshall Plan Aid after WWII. I can say surely the U.S. didn't pump all that
money into Europe simply to stop it being overrun by the Russians or for purely
altruistic reasons. Oh no - they were clearly ensuring that they'd have a market
created for their goods. To which you say most of the U.S. economy is domestic
based and U.S. firms can/could manage perfectly well within that economy and didn't
need European markets. And on we go, in ever decreasing circles.

*I guess that it is really difficult for those of cultural backgrounds differ-
ent from that of America to understand that there is a basic core of altruism in*

America - it is deeply ingrained. It comes, mostly, from our frontier experience which is closer to us than it is in most other countries. The neighbour helping neighbour tradition still shows itself in an outpouring of help when disaster strikes somewhere. Well, the European countries were our allies in WWII (and that included the captive peoples) so it was natural for us to want to help them afterwards. As our pocketbooks were not bottomless the aid was designed to help them get on their economic feet as early as possible. As for the charge that we would have a market for our goods, it is to laugh. Prior to WWII the US was one of the most isolationist countries on the face of the Earth and we had almost no established markets in other countries. At the end of the war we were concerned with changing over from a wartime economy to a peacetime economy and were not concerned with overseas markets. Poot - we now have the most horrendous balance of payments deficit of any nation, and a goodly part of that is because, except for the multinationals, most of the companies in the USA are totally unconcerned with selling in other countries. Our government has resorted to placing ads to try to lure companies into foreign trade - and it is not working because we remain (too many of us) an insular people.

Mind you it does provide an interesting insight into the nature of argument and debate, do you look for facts to bolster your case, or make your case upon the facts you gather before making up your mind. This is quite a fascinating subject for somebody who does research as I do, bearing upon the nature of both the scientific hypothesis and theory and once you past the "official line" and start seeing the way reasearch is actually done you get a rude awakening because the history of science has a good number of examples of people who found the data that fitted the theory and discounted what didn't (not to mention the ones who invented the data in the first place). So we then arrive at the point where we question what the facts are and how we interpret them and end up loosing sight of the woods for the trees.

There's a certain irony in all this, isn't there? Here you are receiving correspondence and replying to a fair number of people in Britain and other parts of Europe as well as Australia and New Zealand, which I'd judge makes you more outward looking than many American citizens and yet you receive a load of flack for it from people like me and Joseph. Do you ever feel you can't win?

Not in this fanzine, no.

Turning to your remarks about ethical practices in clubzines, Marty, your opinion that what I did with NEOLOGY was unethical was indeed shared by people in Edmonton though I believed that I related what I was saying both to SF and to the state of affairs in the Edmonton club thereby rendering it relevant to the zine and its readers. I've discussed this at some length in NEOLOGY and won't go over it all again here except to say that in one way it tied in with some of Robbie's earlier remarks about apathetic Canadians because I found it hard to credit the fact that they couldn't find somebody more local to edit NEOLOGY. It's also interesting to note, as does Mike Glicksohn, that the Canadian element has been very quiet in this debate, barring Robbie of course. Do you think this is (a) due to apathy or (b) because anybody who thinks the way I do realised long ago that arguing the point was like banging your head against a brick wall or (c) they agree with Robbie and are letting her speak for them. Don't tell me - you both vote for (c)!

I do not have enough facts for an opinion on this, so I do not vote on any of your choices. As I type this Robbie is in Quebec and I am not going to call her to find out her opinion. But I will say that anybody who thinks that they are banging their head on a brick wall in here is mistaken - we may have the final say on everything but we do give our opponents their full say. We may not change our minds but our conception of fairness makes us give the other side a fair shake. Were not this such a crowded issue I would be printing larger sections of the LoCs and be giving fuller replies. Accuse us of many things, but, please, not unfairness (not that I was accusing you, Ian, of making that charge).

WE ALSO HEARD FROM: *Sheldon Teitelbaum* sent a late LoC in which he mentioned reading HTT whilst stationed along the Awali River which leads me to thoughts of HTT being some sort of secret weapon (get your enemy to read HTT and then shoot them whilst they are regurgitating -- nah, that is too cruel). Joseph Nicholas also late-LoCced - amongst other things in the letter he wondered why I was not responding about the various clippings and such which he had sent me: Joseph, herein my public apology - the closer I get to Worldcon the more constricted becomes time for doing ANYTHING other than Worldcon stuff.

* HARRY ANDRUSCHAK * The front cover. Is this for real or just an elaborate hoax?
***** I would like to believe hoax. However, it does have just that faint aura of something that a Socialist Government would actually publish. Whatever, it is certainly an unusual way to start off a fanzine.

Now that we have moved into LoCs on HTT #18 (which I forgot to mention before I typed Andy's LoC) let us get right down to some serious business; namely, just why does he consider HTT a Socialist Government? After all, we DID publish that cover (a copy of a really truly poster put out by the British Government).

* LUCY HUNTZINGER * Really liked the cover - it was perfectly disgusting and gets more so each time I look at it. Good job!

Thank you, Lucy - another discerning reader!

* PETE LYON * I found it odd to see a standard Government Issue health education Council poster, as exhibited in Doctors' surgeries and Health Centres throughout the land being put forward as dynamic fan art. You should see some of our other posters and TV ads for health and safety, really gross-out maaan. Perhaps some kindly Britfan will send you the smoking and pregnancy ad or the seatbelt campaign's publicity and earn themselves a Hugo nomination....

Nah - preparing that poster for publication (cutting it into pieces for reduction, putting the smaller pieces back together, and then darkening the contrast) was just too much work. It was Robbie who did the work and I do not think that she wants to go through that again anytime soon.

I LOVE YOUR COVER.
GREAT SENSUOUS DETAIL!

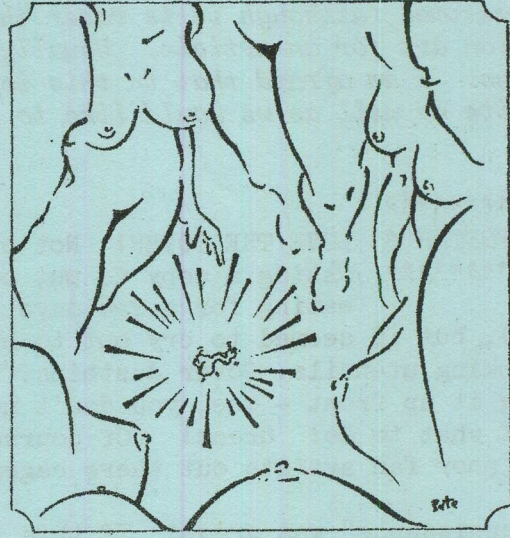
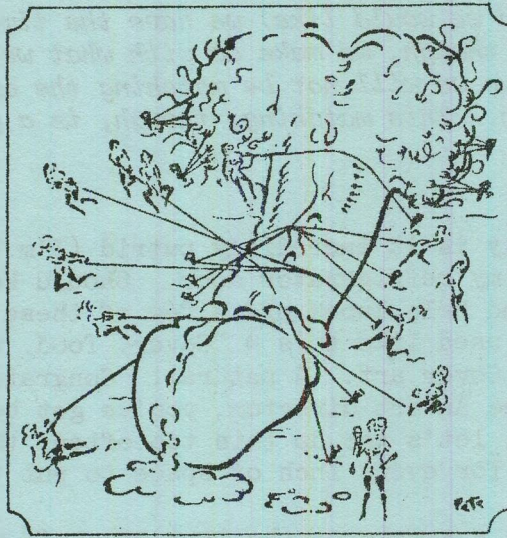


Moving swiftly on to the rest of the 'art' Definitely liked Buzz Dixon's stuff, same goes for the unique Brad Foster and Bob Lee's well rendered nude. Alan White's line is very natural, I like that and I appreciate the delicacy of Elisheva Barsabe's face; the sort of technically detailed 'academic' work I sometimes go in for, based I suspect on an old movie still (the 'it' girl?) ... Speaking of old

flicks I thought Stu Shiffman's piece in the previous ish was truly BRILL. As for Mary Bohdanowicz, Linda Leach, Ray Capella, and Sakura Allison, well mayhaps I do them a disservice but they look

Goodiverse Travails

The Willihersons & The Bookdignagions



like mediafen outpourings to me (don't you have trash cans at your new place... note the USicanism a la Hansen) these illos were unadulterated crap.

Ooooh - the things some artists say about each other!

* **VICKI ROSENZWEIG** * I like Randy Clark's illo on page 7, it seems very right.
 ***** And very well-drawn. Dixon's capitalist adn communist robots
 ***** are also quite good, and amusing.

* **RICHARD BRANDT** * Ya know, after the last issue of HTT, which was...well, rela-
 ***** tively tasteful, anyhow, I was hardly prepared for the cover
 ***** you selected for #18. A return to putridity, eh? Well, thank
 god. Just what is one to think? I think I might accuse you of fraudulent adver-
 tising, since the contents are nowhere near as putrid as the cover would seem to
 indicate. (What is it, after all, upon which one usually discovers flies?)

And, for further contrast, this issue has a fine art cover. The fact that there is often surprises with HTT is the way that we like it.

Thank Ghu for Don D'Ammassa; I was afraid we'd go through an issue of HTT without a LoC from Joseph Nicholas. This fits the bill nicely.

Not really.

We shouldn't have been surprised by Reagan's perseverance in his pro-handgun stance. He's so set in his ways that we shouldn't expect him to be changed by a little nudge, like that of a bullet plowing into one of his lungs. (In fact, as you'll recall, he didn't even notice when he was shot. I intend to vote for a

national leader who still has a central nervous system.

The art this issue ranges as usual from somewhat crude to rather glorious. However, I *am* impressed by how often you find art that illustrates the articles perfectly, such as Buzz Dixon's cartoons for Ed Rom's imperialism piece. (Also, I think Darrell's cartoon on p. 49 has a perverse brilliance about it.)

Sometimes (although it is rarer than we would like) we have the time to commission art for an article. Usually, though, we make do with what we have in our files. I am afraid that in this issue we will not be matching the art and the text quite as well as we would like to do. This matching, though, is a goal of ours.

* BRAD FOSTER * LOVE THE COVER! Not only is it incredibly putrid (I'm thinking of making a copy to put on my refrigerator door. Should keep me from eating for a few days and help knock off a few of these extra pounds!), but it seemed to cry out to be used like this - "Cover. food. Cover eating and drinking utensils. Cover dustbins." Cover art. A natural. Congratulations on using it up front - see, you don't need an art director, you've got beautiful sense of what to do! Great! (Of course, let's not do this too often, think of all the poor fan artists out there eager for every inch of space to put their work on!)

"Renaissance" was great! If this is a sample of the type of stuff we can look forward to getting through Carr's "Entropy", by all means hope you run a new (old) one every issue!

So do we. We hope that Terry's workload is light enough so that he can prepare an "Entropy" column for each issue of HTT. As you can see, he has done so for this issue.

Of course that was me on the cover of 16, that was a true-to-life portrait of me in my normal relaxed pose at home. Doesn't everybody have a chair like that?

As far as comments on any of the LoCs, all must be ignored to let the one *big* question stand alone - how come Bob Lee gets to check out the school girls *first*!? Unfair, unfair! No wonder they always shriek and run when I tell 'em I'm an artist, after being exposed to Bob's incredibly bizarre tastes! (I refer to his toon on page 52 as proof of the torment he puts them through!)

* MIKE GLICKSOHN * Loved the cover, of course, which seems to epitomise HTT's sense of good taste. I assume that the poster is a real one, and not something lettered up to amuse your readers? I shall definitely use this particular issue of HTT to dismiss the arguments of those who claim that fanzines are not educational!

Yep, as I have written earlier, this cover was real. I have printed many of the responses to the cover because I have been astickled by them as I was when I first saw the poster and knew that it would make a perfect cover for HTT.

Congratulations on making the Hugo ballot although there was little doubt that you would. I'm wondering what the hell I'll do if a fucking filkzine wins the award Marty and I and others worked so hard to get established. (I'm assuming that's what "The Filk Phe-Nom-En-On" or whatever the hell it's called is: I've certainly never seen or heard of it before FILE 770 ran the Hugo nominees.) Well, I told Ted White that if the new category didn't work the way we were hoping it would I'd be the first to back a motion to drop the fan Hugos altogether. But I'm hoping it won't come to that: how many filk fans are there who vote on Hugos anyway? I guess you'll find out over Labour Day weekend...

The Herman piece was mildly amusing (it's difficult to sustain that sort of

parody of scientific articles for more than a couple of paragraphs unless one has hew ground to cover and Jack unfortunately didn't) and while it isn't to be taken at all seriously (well, maybe a teeny bit seriously but I'd guess Jack was more interested in form than in content) one still can't let incorrect evidence be presented. I refer to Jack's contention that BNFs are obese. This tends not to be true. The average fan is indeed overweight and a great many fans are vastly overweight but on the whole, those fans who are BNFs or even those who are WKFs tend to be of quite normal size. Think of Ted White, Harry Warner, Alexis Gilliland, Richard Geis, Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden, Joseph Nicholas, me, you, Gary Farber, Bill Rotsler, and many others: all of about normal proportions, wouldn't you say? (Of course, there's an occasional biggie among the Big Name Fans but that doesn't appear to be the norm. Almost as if all that work and fanac keeps most BNFs slim. Look at Tucker, D'Amassa, Bowers, Langford...hell, all of them together barely make up one Mike Glycer.)

Not any more as Glycer is down quite a bit in weight. (Please note how I have cleverly kept myself from saying that he was almost down to human size. Oops.)

I welcome the return of Terry Carr and his "entropy Reprint" column. I ran one part of its first incarnation in my long defunct fanzine and it's been far too long since Terry did his thing on a regular basis. The Thorne piece was creative and well-written but even more delightful to me was the fact that it originally appeared after I'd gotten into fanzine fandom. I didn't see it the first time, mind you, but I was reading a few fanzines at the time it was published. When Terry finally reprints something I remember reading then I'll know that I've made it as a fan.

While I don't disagree with Marty's basic attitude towards mediafen, I do think his continued tirades against them are overdone and essentially futile. "...out-of-place ignorami who are polluting the sf scene with their unwanted presence" is flowery rhetoric but what purpose does it serve? Denigrating mediafen in a fannish fanzine is a waste of time: either we run cons that deliberately exclude mediafen and wait for them to leave us alone or we continue to enjoy our own cons and ignore the mediafen, along with the seventy five percent of sf congoers that fanzine fandom has nothing to do with anyway. Then all that time spent putting down the drobes could be used for reading fannish reprints, cataloging fanzines or drinking twelve year old single malt scotch, right?

One of the advantages to dropping somewhat out of fanzine fanac is that one can enjoy sitting on the sidelines watching the likes of Glycer, Carmody et al, sniping at each other without the risk of getting in the way of any of the barbs. While this sort of material has no lasting value whatsoever it most certainly rates as highly entertaining and can more than fill the void before a hockey playoff game begins and gives us all something truly exciting and enjoyable to do.

What's the price going to be on FANCY III? As I may have mentioned to you, I won't be at the worldcon this year (for the first time since 1970, sigh) but I don't want to miss out on this fannish milestone because of that. If I can't find someone from Toronto who can pick me up a copy, could you grab me one if I sent you the cash and then get it to me after the con somehow?

Worldcon will not be the same without you, Mike - I hope that we all survive!

** Anyway, work on FANCY III continues, but not as fast as we would like it to. There is the possibility that it will not be finished in time; if so, when it is finished we will let people know.*

* TED WHITE * I blame myself for having provoked Darrell on this occasion. It was
***** unkind of me to call him a "jerk-fan," although that is indeed the way he has always presented himself to me (hectoring by mail, obsequious in person while I held an editorial position, and backbiting in his criticisms elsewhere). And what I have provoked is this diatribe on "a major scandal at the time," albeit not one major enough to get much press from anyone but Schweitzer:

The Terrible Way I Treated Authors.

I think that the "truth" of the matter will depend on which author you speak to, but I freely acknowledge that I never caught up on my correspondence when I was editor of AMAZING and FANTASTIC. I wish I'd had access to a WATS line; I envied the editors at GALAXY who could just call up an author to announce a sale of request changes. Hell, I wish I'd had a budget that would allow me to hire a bunch of full-time assistants -- instead, I had to make do with volunteers (who were on the whole excellent but among whom the burnout factor was high, since there was little reward until I instituted the Reading Fees and hardly more thereafter). I read in a recent AMAZING a description of "the Zoo" which assists Scithers. It sounds ideal. I had a far less ideal situation with which to work. I had a great many things to do for the magazines and correspondence was low on the list of priorities. Factor in the fact that the magazines did not pay me a living wage and that from the beginning of 1974 I was a single parent with custody of a young child, and I think you get a better picture. In any case, while I apologize to any authors who feel they were unfairly treated, I will not apologize for what I did with AMAZING and FANTASTIC. Darrell Schweitzer's ongoing efforts to denigrate me as an editor demean him just as his gloating dismissal of Barry Malzberg demeans him.

In simple fact, despite the extent to which I was encumbered by other work, I tried always to treat all contributors and would-be contributors fairly. (I even tried to make up Egoboo Expresses for published authors in 1969, but it was too much work, since I had no copying machine.) Despite this, I am well aware that in some cases I failed. It is my misfortune that several of these failures involved loudmouths like Darrell and Scott Edelstein -- but it was precisely their hectoring nature in combination with material that was borderline-acceptable that caused the situation. I sat on material with the intention of writing a letter about it. When the badgering letters (or postcards) came in, their tone so put me off that I simply ignored the material it referred to. Foolish of me, I admit, since it only exacerbated the situation. Frankly, I hoped they'd just take the hint and go away. In Darrell's case, though, he outwaited me. And the interviews were good enough to tip the scales in his favour.

I find it amusing that Darrell thinks so highly of Elinor Mavor. Of course, she bought his stuff. I didn't read it, but my impression is that overall Elinor published the worst issues of AMAZING that have ever appeared -- using a good deal of substandard slushpile material and having no awareness of how poor it was. I think her real talents were in the graphics. She didn't always succeed but she put a lot more graphic pizzazz into the magazines, and I think they looked better by the end of her regime than they have since.

I can understand how you can get an impression of a magazine's graphics by galcing through it; what bothers me, though, is how you were able to tell that AMAZING's written material during Elinor's tenure was as bad as you say without reading it.

Perhaps Darrell should talk to the people who dealt with me at HEAVY METAL. I suspect he'd get a far different picture. The difference of course that a) I wasn't overworked (I had assistants), and b) I had a lovely budget. When I exiled fiction from the magazine, we paid handsome kill fees. It's a damn shame that I couldn't have enjoyed an analogous situation the ten years I edited AMAZING and FANTASTIC, but there it is: that's how it was.

These days I am retired, and able to putter about with my hobbies.

One of my hobbies is taking the time to check out the facts when people make sweeping statements, to see if the facts buttress or rebut those statements.

Darrell in his letter claims to have checked the circulation figures published in AMAZING and says, "The circulation dropped from about 47,000 copies (on the average in a given year) to a low of 22,000 in 1976 and it rose back to 25,000 in 1978. So Ted only lost about half the readership."

Wrong again. Shit, all it takes is checking the issues with the Statements of Ownership and Circulation. I checked fifteen. It would've been sixteen, but as

nearly as I can tell none was published in AMAZING for 1982, probably due to the changeover in publishers right about when the Statement is sworn (October first).

I went back to the March, 1969 issue, which published the Statement sworn on October 1, 1968 and covering the period since October 1, 1967. That was the last year of the magazine *before* my tenure. Darrell to the contrary notwithstanding, the average total paid circulation for that year was 38,551 -- or almost 10,000 less than the "about 47,000" Darrell cites.

But there's a lot more to it than just the bald figures of total copies sold. There's the question of *percentage*. If you print, say, 100,000 copies and you sell 10,000, you've sold only 10% and that's a *disaster*. But if you printed only 15,000 and sold 10,000, you've sold 66% and that's usually a profitable percentage.

In 1968 an average of 97,282 copies were printed, so the magazine sold approximately 40%. (And it should be also noted that in 1968 the magazine sold for 50¢ a copy.)

By 1972 (as reported in the March, 1973 issue), an average of only 69,452 copies were being printed. That's 30,000 -- or 30% -- less. Which means that almost one-third less copies were going out onto the stands. The practical effect of this was far spottier distribution -- stores would get copies of one issue but none of the next -- which broke down the buying habits of many newsstand purchasers. Sales, however, averaged 27,402 -- or still just about 40%. (The price, however, had gone up to 60¢ a copy.)

By 1978 AMAZING was quarterly. I protested this to the publisher. I felt it would further erode the buying habits of our remaining readers. But he had both a heart condition and diabetes and felt he could not handle the strain of publishing more than eight issues a year (at that time FANTASTIC still existed, also quarterly). Remember that between us Sol Cohen and I did virtually *everything* necessary to put the magazines out. And the magazines were losing money by 1978 to the tune of \$5,000 annually -- small change, but it came *out* of Cohen's pocket.

The May, 1979 issue has the figures for 1978, a period during which the cover price went from \$1.00 to \$1.25. An average of 66,083 copies were printed, of which an average of 22,784 were sold. That means that sales had, by my last year, with quarterly publication and erratic distribution, fallen to about 35%.

It gets worse once you get to Elinor Mavor's issues, but I'm not convinced of the accuracy of the figures because I noticed an odd pattern in them. You see, the figures are given in two columns. The first, from which I've been quoting, is the *average* for the full year's issues. The second is for the issue itself nearest filing date. This is a more concrete and specific figure, but it's less reliable as well. The reason is that final sales figures are never in on the issue nearest the filing date. So often you get rounded-off figures in that column, and sales figures always show *less* sales than the preliminary figures indicate, reflecting the final returns on the issue.

So what's fishy about the figures from the period when Arthur Bernhard was publisher? Well, I first noticed it in the report in the May, 1980 issue, which showed an average newsstand sale of 20,935, an average of 1,397 subscribers, and total average sales of 22, 332. What is odd is that these *exact* figures were the figures for the issue nearest filing date the year before. It's as if Bernhard took those earlier figures and *made* them his averages for the following year. But the March, 1981 issue used different figures (although not by much) in its Statement, avoiding the pattern. However, the June, 1982 issue in *its* Statement presents as average figures the figures which had been those of the issue nearest filing date in the previous year's Statement -- a return to the earlier pattern.

By now the figures were pitiful indeed. Supposedly the average number of copies being printed was 52,233 -- but the issue nearest filing date had a print-run of only 47,584, a more likely true figure for the year. They were down to 750 subscribers (713 by the issue nearest filing date), from my high of 2,024 in 1975. Total average sales were claimed to be 17,784, but the issue nearest filing date had sold only 14,505 -- 13,792 of those on newsstands. By this point -- if these figures can be believed -- AMAZING was selling less than 30%, and distributing only *half* the copies we were printing at the beginning of my associating with AMAZING.

What of the new, improved, Scithers-edited issues?

We have no figures at all for the final year under Mavor -- no Statement for 1982. (I believe that is a violation of Federal law.) But in the September, 1983 issue, Scithers stated editorially that total sales were "about 15,000," with "less than 1,500" subscribers. According to the Statement in the May, 1984 issue, Scithers' assessment was over-optimistic.

TSR is printing only an average of 35,000 copies -- a stunningly low number -- of which an average of 10,050 are selling on the newsstands, while an average of 1,236 subscribers bring the total sales average up to 11,286. (I note there are 1,834 subscribers by the issue closest to filing date, an encouraging sign of pay-offs from promotion in ANALOG and IASFM.) Thus, despite the low sales total, the low print-run has helped bring the percentage of sales back almost to 35% -- and that's at \$1.75 a copy.

I realise that these figures don't sparkle like a Burbee anecdote, but they nonetheless tell some fascinating stories, only a few of which I've covered here. I like the punchline best:

So, between them Elinor and George only lost about half my readership.

Run that one through your word-processor, Darrell.

* DARRELL SCHWEITZER * This is an anthropological note, really, as I want to tell
***** you about the illiterate Trekkie I met.

At a recent Philadelphia SF Society meeting, a young black man in his early twenties showed up and asked, "Is this where the sci fi society meets?" I referred him to the one resident Trekkie in the organisation, but he was back to me in a few minutes.

He talked some more. I tried to sell him a book. He wasn't interested. Gradually he began to volunteer some very interesting information. Now this was a quite articulate fellow, who impressed me as being of at least average intelligence, but he admitted to me that he *could not read*. He came from North Philadelphia, which is where the ghetto is, and he had grown up in an environment where people did not read. He was convinced that you had to be conditioned to read early in life or else it was too late. He had missed his chance, and therefore would never learn.

I told him it's never too late. There are adult education classes and the like. But no, he insisted, you have to be conditioned early, and he wasn't.

The most pathetic thing about all this was that he wanted to be a writer. He asked me how much professional typists charge. I explained to him, you really have to learn how to do it yourself. When it became clear that he actually was illiterate, it was obvious that he was never going to be a writer. This was, after all, someone who said that even if he could read a book, "I wouldn't understand what was in it."

Now there are a lot of factors at work here. My impression was of a perfectly intelligent person who wanted to do something but not badly enough that he wasn't actually willing to go through any trouble or real effort. This problem knows no bounds of race or economic class or place. I had heard of cultural illiteracy before, particularly among ethnics. I once knew a teacher who taught in a Puerto Rican school where all the kids were like that. Nobody in his 10th grade class could read or write (or count very high) because the idea of literacy had not yet penetrated their culture. They had never known anyone who could read, or who needed reading to get such jobs as people in their society got, so they put no value on reading. This black person was describing the same phenomenon to me. This is a tangled sociological matter, as is the relationship between particular groups and illiteracy. The guy was illiterate because he grew up in a place where people do not learn to read.

What is relevant here is that he was attracted to fandom. He was a big fan of *Star Trek*, *Star Wars*. But he had never read science fiction. Or anything. He was given rather a cold shoulder by a lot of people, not because of his race (the club is integrated) or even because his manner and speech marked him as a ghetto

black. He just didn't have anything in common with the other club members.

He left during the (notably boring) business meeting. I doubt if he will be back. But if he had discovered a convention, particularly one with a heavy media interest, I'm sure he would have blended in. Yet he had nothing at all in common with what you or I would call fandom.

Look closely and you see an individual, but at a glance he was a walking stereotype. There really are illiterate mediafen.

This is what people are complaining about. Yes, it is very intolerant of them, but they are complaining that conventions are being filled with people who have nothing at all in common with "our" fandom and little or no desire or ability to develop something in common.

I, too, know some "illiterate" fen. One grew up in a gang (Irish Catholic) part of Ottawa. He is a media fan. His first contact with fandom (of any sort) were "Doctor Who" club meetings. But, in spite of his difficulties with reading he did learn how to - in order to more fully enjoy his media fandom. He wanted to read all the available info on "Star Trek", "Star Wars" and "Doctor Who" so he improved his reading skills. Through the "Who" group he made contact with the local sf club. At first, he was not accepted. Just another media, military freak according to some. So he expanded his reading to take in all sorts of sf. He is now President of the local sf club and editor of its clubzine. His spelling (and typing) is still atrocious, but others proofread his work for him and the results are perfectly readable and adequate to the club's needs.

The problem which many of us fanzine fans are having with the media fans is neither the type of fan described by Darrell (after all, this person went away and probably will not return) nor the type of fan mentioned by Robbie (as fanzine fans welcome those who share our interests or learn to share our interests) but with the "fan" who infests our environment without evincing any common interests. I am writing about the be-costumed twits who show up at the same con year after year still wearing the same ratty media impersonation. That is the person with whom fanzine fans have nothing in common.

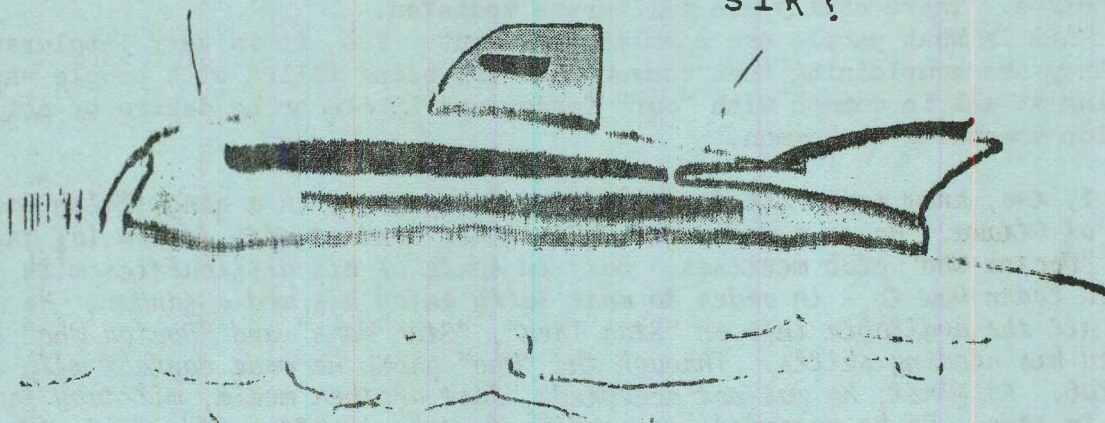
D.W. Howard's letter is wonderfully charming and naive. I got news for him: in the "legitimate" rare book and fine edition business, the *minimum* mark-up is 100%. It is usually more like 400%. I am sufficiently involved with serious collectors and dealers of all sorts (and not just SF) to know. Howard is right on one point though" there's nothing wrong with it. It's normal. That's just how the business works. That is how it always works. That is how I do it. My own strategy has always been, rather than to make large investments, buy very low and sell at a moderate price. Thus, if I find a first edition of *The Stand* (worth about \$150) in a flea market for a dime, I will sell it at substantially below the going rate, like, say, \$100. To the hard-up collector, this is the lowest price he has seen in years, a wonderful bargain. My rule is that after you've made several thousand percent profit, there's no sense getting greedy.

* SALLY SYRJALA * On top of this, you have to attack mediafen in the latest HTT!
***** Marty, that is just too much. Mediafen are the type to participate, not who just come to look and "see" at conventions. The mediacon I went to which was for mostly actifen had as its greatest draw the fact you could get together and meet with people with whom you had previously only met in print. It was a time to exchange ideas and socialise with each other. How is this different from a SF con?

Not in context, just in subject matter. I still maintain that the subject matter is different 'twixt the two types of people and that they should socialise with others of like interests, going to their own cons (with those with interests in both areas going to both kinds of cons.

DIVE, DIVE!!

WILL THAT BE
A GAINER, JACK-
KNIFE, OR SWAN,
SIR?



Mediafen write, they produce letterzines, fanzines, they illustrate for said zines, they create constructive material by using their imaginations.

People in mediadom DO join in discussions and read books other than those concerning a specific media theme. Perhaps the reason SF fen seem to think otherwise is that they have never really looked at mediafen with an unbiased attitude. Even you, Marty, have to admit to really understand a mediafan is to love them.

Right on, Sally! Give it to 'em with both barrels!

My wife the mediafan? No - Robbie is a fan whose interests include (but are not limited to) media. Anyway, media fen have no imaginations to speak of, else they would be inhabiting universes of their own creation rather than reliving those created by others. There is nothing very creative in the following: 15 Princess Leia's watching a con filk programme.

* BRIAN EARL BROWN * Don D'Amassa's article "How to write a Joseph Nicholas letter" is an example of running a tired subject into the ground.

When Kev Smith wrote "How to Write Like Joseph Nicholas" it was funny because no one had done it before and because he caught the prolixic style of Joseph's letters and articles. Since then numerous people have taken potshots at Joseph's writing style. This has all become very old particularly since, in case you hadn't noticed, Joseph is not locking as much as he used to and is much more restrained in his locs when he does. Don't you think it's time to put away the Joseph Nicholas punching bag?

There is no Joseph Nicholas punching bag in HTT. I printed both Kev's and Don's articles because they were both humorous. I have printed written abuse of Joseph when things which he has written seemed to deserve that treatment - and I will print the same about anybody. I will print cheap shots when I deem them funny; but, for the most part, I edit out parts of locs which are just egregiously nasty without any redeeming humour. Of course, when there is a feud raging, I allow more leeway. I will say, though, that Joseph has gotten much more abuse than he deserves; mostly, though, in zines other than HTT. Personally, I think that Joseph is an asset to fandom - we will all be the poorer if he gafiates.

Creath Thorne's article was everything Terry Carr said it would be. No wonder there's all that revived fanac in one city (Falls Church) just a stone's throw (o.k. - a rocket-assisted stone's throw) from the Pentagon - Fandom is a military--industrial plot.

In November of last year Denice and I attended a friend's wedding. He was part of the Wayne Third gang, president of that SF club during the years he was a student at Wayne State. He is also a Whoie and publisher of GALLIFREY CHRONICLES. Steve's also a computer programmer and met his wife while studying at WSU. So at the reception after the wedding there were four groups of people: 1)"The relatives", 2)her friends, 3)Steve's Who friends, and 4)Steve's SF friends.

We arrived late and ended up at a table that was half #3 and half #4. Some of the 3s had shown up at a W3rd meeting or two some years before but had drifted away into Whodom. Listening to the conversation it struck me that these people have as full and rich a social life as we fans. It seems that more happenstance determines what fandom one discovers first and that tends to imprint oneself as a fanzine fan, a Whoie, or whatever. People enter a fandom because it stimulates them - intellectually *and* socially, and leave when it fails to stimulate them. SF fans may find it hard to believe that Dr. Who can intellectually stimulate someone but I think that clearly it does.

Thank you. I agree quite totally.

Robbie, I'd be interested in seeing a scruffy fanzine-type Whozine. Could you put me on your list?

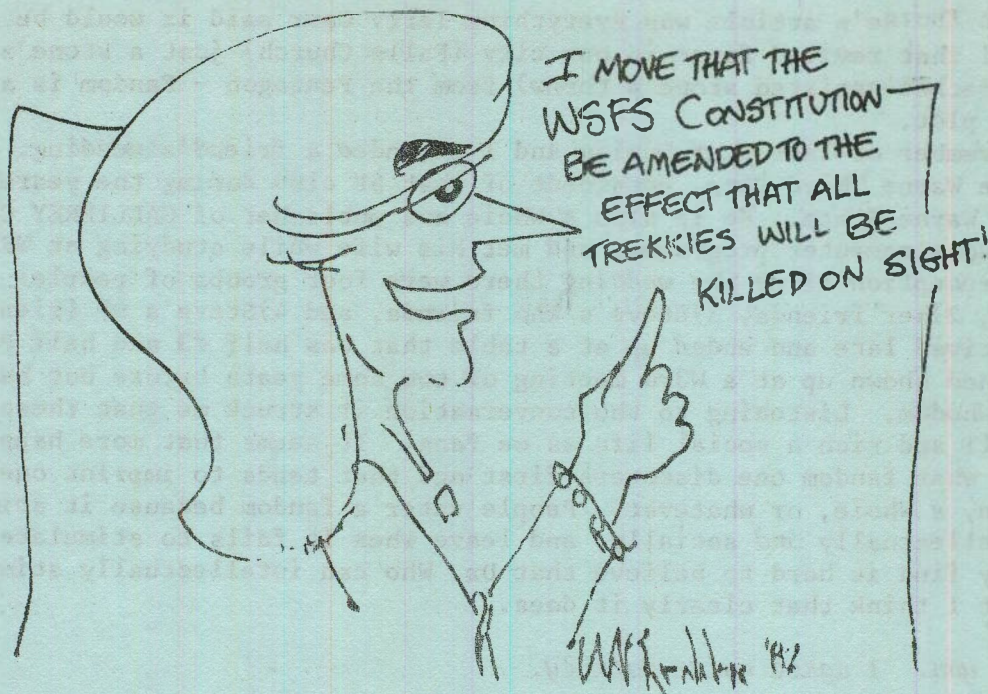
Okay. June or July, probably.

At the rate things are getting done this summer, do not hold your breath - I just hope that we can get HTT #19 out before Worldcon.

* MIKE HALL * Don's essay on writing a Joseph Nicholas letter sounds familiar--
***** like I've heard it all before--but it's still great. And Nicholas will probably see the humour in it too. I have this feeling that, while all of us have been taking Joseph seriously all this time, he's been having a good laugh at our expense. He's probably John Cleese in disguise, or something. At least you know that you've made it, though, when you get your first piss-taking Nicholas hate letter. I've never been so fortunate. *sigh*

I, also, hope that Joseph saw the humour in the "letter". Remember, too, that Don did have a few good words for Joseph - it was not all negative.

My agreement with Marty on the "mediafen" debate is outlined most clearly on page 54, in Ed Rom's letter. Rom observes that most of the mediafen that he has observed are passive observers. TV is an *extremely* passive medium. Robbie, you consider yourself typical of mediafen, but Ed and Marty disagree. So tell me, how many other mediafen can you count in the fannish fanzines that you receive in trade for HTT? By the amount of fanac that you are obviously putting into HTT, you are no longer a "mediafan", by definition. Every single one of the media-type "zines" that I have seen that stay around for more than a few issues fall into the pro category, with paid contributors, offset, the whole works. They don't trade for mere mimeo fanzines like yours and mine, nor do they send "free" copies to people merely in return for a loc. Now, you may cite this example or that example, zines that I have never seen, but if you look at the vast majority of the zines in both fields, I think that you will agree with me. I have never met a comics collector, for instance, over the age of 20, who was in it *only* because he or she loves comics. They start off that way, but in the end, they are in it for the money. When it comes to pulps (and I may be opening a can of worms here), most of the collectors that I've met who do not deal, love reading what they collect.



Uh, how many other mediafen can I count in the fannish fanzines? Do you mean as contributors? Loccers? What? If contributors/loccers, there's Jean Lamb, Mandy Slater, Sally Syrjala, and Barbara Tennison for starters right here in HTT. There are very probably lots of others. But, let's face it, in a fannish fanzine a fan who has media interests is unlikely to discuss them. It's not the right forum for that.

I'm no longer a media fan! Sez who? Marty says I am not and so do you, but... I am still an ardent "Doctor Who" fan, I wouldn't miss an episode unless forced to even if I've seen 'em all 10 times before. I will sit and watch "Star Trek" and SF movies anytime opportunity presents itself. The only thing which I make more effort to do is to watch anything with Charles Boyer in it. I edit a media zine (issue 4 hopefully out this spring), I collect media-related books and, when possible, magazines. I used to have an impressive display of posters and photos in Canada. There's no place for posters here (Marty would take flaming fits in any case) but I still have the photos.

Damn right I take flaming fits when one puts prints on a wall - any prints - wall space is for putting bookshelves filled with books.

Okay, so I also do fannish things. This does not make me less of a media fan, just more of an all-around fan - involved in many different sub-groups of SF fandom.

Yes, I could name you media zines which don't pay their contributors, which aren't offset printed, etc. But since you consider it wasted effort, I won't bother.

Geez! Alberta fandom is really strange! Ottawa has hordes of comics fen who collect for enjoyment not for the money. In fact, I know of only 3 or 4 comics fans who were in it for the money - and I worked at one of the two main comics stores in Ottawa.

And I have met pulp collectors who do it purely for the money - never even bothering to read what they buy. Hell, I know people who buy 1st edition SF books purely for the investment value and never read them! But, big deal, not all buyers of pulps or 1st edition SF books do it for the money. I have sense enough to see past a few prominent examples.

One of the issues raised on page 52 is whether mediafen are just neos, unable to pierce the wall fanzine fandom has allegedly thrown up around itself, or are they involved for entirely different reasons than Marty and I? I agree that fanzine fandom welcomes with open arms people who "look like they could grow up and become part of our group" (p. 53) because that's how I became involved, and to some extent, I'm sure that you, Marty, got into fanzine fandom that way. Now, you, Robbie, are becoming "part of" fanzine fandom, through HTT, aided by Marty. This is the way the system works!

"Part of" fanzine fandom!? In spite of the fact that prior to ever meeting Marty I had already put out (with another fellow) a fanzine? A media oriented zine to be sure, but a zine nonetheless. I am getting very annoyed by people who assume that simply because I am now co-editing HTT I'm giving up or growing out of media fandom. I am first and always a media fan because that's how I "found" fandom. It's my first fanac and my favourite. But I won't stop reading just to suit your view of media fandom. I might just quit fanzine fandom to avoid being annoyed by supercilious twits, though.

Well, I do not think that Mike is supercilious - the problem here is a lack of clarity in the definitions of the various words being used. Not my fault, though - I have made it quite clear my meanings.

My entry into fanzine fandom was a bit different than most insofar as I was already a "mature" person when I discovered fanzines. I found LASFS just before my 40th birthday, and soon moved into the APAs - in a few years I was producing HTT. Also, I never had a "media" phase - I have been a reader-type of person ever since I learned how to read. I discovered SF at age 10; but, somehow, I missed finding fandom for ever so long. More the pity in that insofar as I believe that I was ready, mentally, for fandom in my mid to late teens (early to mid 50's). Which means that I was a boring old phart already before I found fandom.

* DAVID BRATMAN * Thanks for the various dire warnings on what would happen to me
***** if I didn't respond to HTT again pretty soon. Some faneds don't
have the courtesy to let their readers know how often they have
to respond before being silently and suddenly vanished away from the mailing list.

That is why each issue has a Why You Received This section on page 4. Despite the fact that between 15 and 20 fans who have disregarded the marked warnings are dropped each issue we add more than that, consistently. We have just had to up our print-run to 350 - and that is getting to be even more of an expense and work. So we will continue to try to find ways to get down the print-run, so it pays to contact us ("do something") at least once a year as we are mercilous in tossing away the deadwood. But yes, you are correct that we courteously warn you that the axe is heading towards your neck.

That leads me to the discussion in Nessie by Ed Rom, Richard Rostrom, and Leigh Strother-Vien on the passivity and/or imagination of mediafen. I agree with Robbie that they are not all passive, and quite a few seem to know that conventions exist for other reasons than to provide set-piece entertainment for "attendees". What disturbs me a bit is more subtle than that. It's the tendency of some fans of any given movie to consider it the be-all and end-all of creativity. To be specific, I know a fan of TRON (of all things) who cites various deep archetypical resonances in its characters and settings, comparing it to THE LORD OF THE RINGS. And there are some resemblances in the quest theme, but what she doesn't seem to realise is that the resonances are all quick facile borrowings from the shared culture, and none of it is unique to TRON.

Darrell Schweitzer wants to know if there are still neos. Of course there are; in fact, as the movies suck off so many of the general run of neos, the ones who actually get to fanzine fandom tend to be of extremely high quality. (See THE

ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR for an explanation of how this process works; it's always gone on but it's in higher gear these days.) During my three years in Seattle I was in a very good position to watch new fans come from the voodvork out; of these, the best-known are Linda Blanchard. (Interestingly enough, they're both women, as one immediately notices upon meeting them.) And there will be more. The apparent dearth of neos is really only a symptom of the whole relative smallness of present-day trufandom.

Don D'Amassa's instructions on how to write a Joseph Nicholas letter may have been not quite as screamingly funny as Kevin Smith's "How To Write Like Joseph Nicholas", but that's actually its virtue. Don is more specific, more pointed, and probably more accurate. His demonstration of Nicholas' response was a fitting capper. The next step should be pastiches of the replies to *that* by Darrell Schweitzer, Ted White, Marty Cantor, et al, but some of them may do that themselves.

* IAN COVELL * Your kind cover arrived just before I started breakfast. I'm still waiting to start breakfast. (Strange, isn't it, that reaction? It's like when you wash your hands under a running tap.. at the end, there's a feeling the water still in the tap has somehow got dirty..)

I love the 'STRINE SLANG. I grant the sheer egocentric male chauvinist reactionary viciousness of it; I also say it's poetic, evocative, inventive, often downright brilliant. The strange thing is that such artistic endeavours should come from such a source - do you suppose many Aussie men hide a poetic streak just in case?

I am amazed at Mister Schweitzer's output. I don't think I've ever seen a printed letter from him that can have come from less than 3 closely typed A4 pages. I know I average slightly less, but assuming you (and everyone) cuts *some* of Schweitzer's missive (I mean, he repeats himself as is. I can't believe he doesn't include *some* redundancy) the man must spend half of each day writing locs.

I don't like Malzberg's fictions. In fact, I despise them. However, I find I have the same reaction to DS's comments (p. 48) on him as I did to the feminist's point about "How can you hate the views and not the person?" - surely even if BNM's books are a 'pathetic joke' (and more and more I think they were *intended* that way) that *cannot* be applied to the person who wrote them? Even in output, BNM has proved he *isn't* a failed writer in any sense except the aesthetic, and that is applicable to more writers than many fans like me to allude. I think the problem with his *work* has always been a uni-dimensionality of theme and character allied with a deliberately obscure and over-arty style; the ideas in his books were scarce and probably his rate of production ensured that any thesis he held was spun out and refined over many books - whether the final thesis was worth listening to is yet another question. I'd say no, I'd say his whole point about life could be encapsulated in the life story of any (choose one) of his main male characters. But whatever, I did not like and do not agree with DS's personal attack on him. That starts wars.

Media fen are attracted by images, stimulated by images, and involve themselves in the (supposed) on-screen lives of characters. The soap opera syndrome. When they encounter 'real sf' they search for works that stimulate the same *kind* of imagery as what turned them on, but the 'general run of sf' just isn't aimed at that area of perception, the majority of sf that does not follow, imitate or reproduce media sf is philosophical or action-adventure *but set in a different background*; so, either the media fen cannot find similarities to what they desire, or they encounter a reality that doesn't fit the universescape they inhabit. Result: they cling more closely and completely to the media only. Is that simplistic?

Larry Carmody's letter points out a fact I became aware of some years ago: the lines and phrases we recall with pleasure from books we read twenty years ago are never in the books when we reread them.

* TERRY JEEVES * Enjoyed the hefty lettercol and in particular your put-down of that queer sexist Ms. Hibbert. She is another of those with unbalanced viewpoints (i.e., all *my* views are true, correct and unquestionable). Everyone else is totally wrong unless (a) a woman, and (b) agreeing with her.

I have always found it wierd to watch feminists decry sexual stereotyping of women and then promptly turn around and stereotype all men - one of Joy's favourite pasttimes it would appear. And if you dare disagree with her opinions of men then you are either a sexist pig or a misguided naive woman still subservient to her man. *Tchah!*

Ed Rom negated (for me) his views by one sentence: "The main problem is the question of stagnation vs. progress, freedom vs. control". The two are *not* equivalent - nor as he tends to extrapolate, are stagnation and control confined to the right - with freedom and progress belonging to the left.

I think you may have mis-read Ed here as I did not get this exact impression.

Joy Hibbert 'recalls' when pacifists, anti-nuclear people etc. were not subject to abuse, confusion and a go-back-to-Russia attitude. Can she also remember when such groups did not alienate a *majority* by demonstrations, anti-social behaviour (as at Greenham Common), public nuisance, and a general belief that their scruffy behaviour is what the majority wants - or *ought* to want? Jehovahs Witnesses/Mormons etc. have been pushing their messages dor-to-door for ages but do not attract mass abuse because they *do not* antagonise or cause public nuisance.

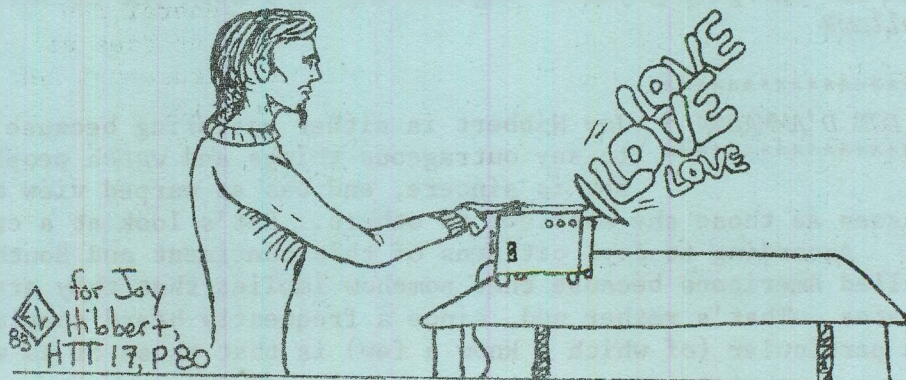
As a historical note, Mormon missionaries (and probably Jehovah's Witnesses, too, for all I know) have been subject to abuse, ranging from stone-throwing to incarceration to death. Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church, was incarcerated and slain by a mob, his followers were driven from their homes by intolerant Missourians.

* BERNARD EARP * A little while ago I got in an argument at a con with another female fan who was, my version, quite blatantly trying to overcharge me £6.00. Joy jumped in on the woman's side immediately. I asked her husband Dave about this afterwards and he said "Joy will *always* take a woman's side in any argument against a man".

A case of My Sex Right or Wrong. Never mind the facts if you are against something a woman has said or alone then in Joy's eyes you are The Enemy.

One gets the impression that Joy is the new 'Joseph Nicholas' target - in her case, though, she seems to be more deserving of being a target. She can defend herself in the pages of HTT.

Just Making Love ...



* EDD VICK * Aha. You've got a Fox for the inside frontcover. Nice, even if five/
***** six years old. I've seen some nice improvement from Steven, but speaking as someone without an artistic style (some would say no style at all) or approach, it's good to see an artist who has a consistent style and subject matter (well, most of the time).

And a Mel White illo is 'oog'ing at me from the contents page. Same to you.

Ah, you'd like to see my article on mascots when I finish same. So would I; I haven't received a single reply on my query. What you may receive is an article detailing why there are actually no mascots in fandom (perhaps the fans themselves are so strange that any mascot they might otherwise have had would look mundane by comparison?).

Still stepping all over poor ol' Joseph Nicholas, are we? Excuse me, 'Joe Nicholas'. No ish would be complete without some mention of him. I think Don caught his style cold. I've avoided being captured in Joe's web for two reasons: 1) I am woefully ignorant of national and international affairs and so refuse to open my mouth about politics (~~I hope that wasn't stopped him~~), and 2) I make a very small target (~~8/4~~). Joe's arguments seem to be mainly with those more of the BNF persuasion.

Terry Carr is doing us a very big favour with his Entropy Reprints. I'm a collector of old fanzines, and I know just how hard it is to find anything interesting or relevant in them. Sturgeon's law holds true here, as everywhere else, but what isn't shit may be timebound. F'r instance, in thirty years people may be as disinterested in Joseph Nicholas as people today are in Francis Towner Laney.

Which ain't too bad, immortalitywise.

Nice Sakura Allison illo on pg. 55 buried among all of the talk about mediafandom. So mediafen call us mundanes, eh? Now what do we call nonfans? Maybe we should define degrees of mundanity; stage one mundanes could be SF fans and stage two mundanes could be nonfans. Stage zero would of course be mediafen.

Bah! The fact that the media airheads call us mundanes just shows that they do not belong at our cons. After all, do we go to cons to hobnob with mundanes?

If I may insert my foot in my mouth for a brief moment, I feel that Joy Hibbert may just be correct in one respect. John D. Owens mentions her comment that most men are nasty and draws the obvious conclusion that at least 26% of the human population are drooling idiots. I've had contact with a helluva lot of mundanes (er...stage two, of course) and most of the men would not have looked out of place in the stone age (of course I'm from Texas, so the cowboy mentality may have something to do with it). The problem is, most of the women seemed to enjoy this treatment (c'mere baby, lemme get a better grip on your hair). Now we're talking at least 52% on the drooling idiot scale. Let's face it, the average mundane is a lot less socially matured than the average fan.

And that is an historic twist of epic proportions. Remember when the average fan was the pimply-faced engineering nerd with the social consciousness of a marsh-mellow?

* DON D'AMMASSA * Joy Hibbert is either posturing because she thinks it is funny
***** to say outrageous things and watch people dance about madly, or she is sincere, and has as warped view of the subjects she discusses as those she ascribes to others. Let's look at a couple of points.

According to Joy, citizens of this continent and South America resent being called Americans because that somehow implies that they are citizens of the United States. That's rather odd, since a frequently heard complaint from South Americans in particular (of which I know a few) is that those of us who live in the United

States are called Americans, but anyone living in either continent is actually an American. I don't know what strange alternate universe Joy inhabits, but she displays an appalling ignorance of what the *real* complaints (whether justified or not) of other Americans are. I would not have the chutzpah to speak for Cornish separatists, because I don't know much about their positions, but such scruples don't seem to stop Joy. One common technique of left and right wing extremists is to pre-empt some "oppressed" minority and decide just what it is that they object to, since obviously they are kept in ignorance by their oppressors and therefore cannot be expected to understand the intricacies of their situation. Frankly I rather think that the typical South American liberal would object to Joy's statements even more vociferously than he or she would object to US policy. After all, US policy is generally so inept that it never ceases to amaze me that some people feel we are a major factor in international politics.

Another point. Joy objects to US military presence in the UK, apparently fearful that we have somehow created a de facto invasion of her country. Well, as it happens, I tend to be a bit of a leftwinger by most people's definitions, and I personally think US forces should be removed from most of the foreign countries they are currently involved with. But once again Joy is far too complimentary. US military forces, no matter where they are stationed, are far too ineffective to stem a theoretical Russian invasion, let alone dominate the country they reside in. The recent events in Lebanon should be ample evidence of this. I supported the peace-keeping force originally because I hoped (1) that it could be used to exert pressure on Gemayel to relinquish Christian domination of the country through peaceful means, and (2) because Syria is one of a handful of countries whose national policy strike me as clearly "evil", if that word has any meaning. (Other contenders, for those who are curious, include Libya, South Africa, possibly Chile, Vietnam, Iran, and Albania.)

But let's look at this situation as objectively as possible. The US is admittedly paranoid on the subject of Communism. This policy of encirclement has become so ingrown that even liberal administrations have been unable to come up with a viable alternate stance. There *is* some justification of such a policy, though I personally think it inadequate to support the programme, but that's an entire other problem. Forget communism for the moment. Look at nationalism. In the absence of nuclear weapons, we would still be faced with a powerful, nationalistic, expansionist Soviet Union dominating Eastern Europe and seeking ways to economically compete with the West. Military and sociopolitical questions to the contrary, this competition is ultimately commercial.

Add to this mix a great deal of paranoia in Russia, a national character trait that is not denied by the Soviet government. After all, for right reasons or wrong, the West strongly opposed the original Communist revolution, including an abortive invasion of the Russian homeland. With rational and irrational reasons for tension, some balance must be reached. I doubt that even Joy believes that if the Western European Nations were suddenly to junk their military, that the Russians would not be dining in Paris and London within a fortnight. If she does doubt it, there's no point in even discussing it further. They would just as certainly as the US would be setting up a "cultural invasion" of Eastern Europe if the Russians were to abdi-

WHAT'S WHITE
AND GREY
AND SLIME-
LIKE
AND FOUND
IN YOUR
NOSE?
...NEVER
MIND MY
INTEREST...



cate. This is a fact of international life that is lamentable, but is nonetheless inevitable.

Given this situation, the best method would of course be to have everyone disarm. Rationally, this is what would happen. People aren't rational, and the Russians, the United States, the United Kingdom, and China are not about to disarm unilaterally or multilaterally. That's a pipedream. I'm truly sorry that it's a pipedream, but that doesn't alter the situation. The next best choice, I submit, would be for each nation to maintain only the minimal amount of military power that is necessary to avoid presenting a tantalising target. Let the Germans and Swiss and Italians emulate the French, to whom I give a lot of credit for throwing US forces our and assuming the responsibility themselves.

Let's look at the specific case of Japan. Japan spends 1% of its budget on military defense, thereby reducing the tax rate and allowing its subsidised industries to export products to the US at prices that have driven many US manufactured products off our own shelves. We spend a significant portion of our defense budget shouldering what would normally be Japanese defense activities. Iran has threatened several times to close the Straits of Hormuz to oil traffic. This would not seriously inconvenience the US, but would affect France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and particularly Japan, which imports 60% of its oil from that region. Why then is the US indicating that it will keep the Straits open? Why not Japanese, British, German, and French forces? Even in his fondest pipedreams, Reagan has never dreamed of seizing the area by armed force; the motive is probably to shore up our "friends" in opposition to possible Communist initiatives if the oil were in fact cut off. So I agree with Joy that probably most or all US forces should be removed from the British Isles. Why should I pay tax dollars to defend people unwilling to defend themselves?

Finally, before we leave Joy's marvelous letter, I refer to her reference to "mythical communist infiltration". Even the leading spokespeople of the various Communist governments admit that they are active in Angola, Grenada, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Guinea, Columbia, Venezuela, Sudan, Chad, Burma, etc. As it happens, in some cases I think the Communist rebels are the good guys, not the bad guys. The problem is that our own national paranoia is that all Communists are directed from the Kremlin and that no Communists have legitimate gripes. I said years ago that what Kennedy should have done was form an alliance with North Vietnam to eventually reunite the country as a counterbalance to China. There was some evidence at the time that Ho Chi Minh was seeking US support actively and I see absolutely no reason why the US should not have Communist allies. There may well be a period in the development of a nation, particularly an underdeveloped nation, where Communism is the most beneficial form of government, withering away just as various aspects of our own society wither away. I don't think any static culture can long endure. I would like to see the US government move to an accommodation with the rebels in most Central American countries. The current regime in Nicaragua is no better than the Somoza regime; they just have different victims who enjoy less press coverage. If the US were to come to some sort of rapprochement with that regime, the outside enemy would disappear, and possibly a less repressive atmosphere would develop.

I enjoyed Glycer's column. Book reviewing suffers the same problem of originality he cites. I have written something on the order of 5000 book reviews. The vast majority of books fall into the category of mediocre to fairly good, conventional variations of familiar plots. How many ways can you say, "This is another one of those books, and it's pretty good."?

I tend to agree with Ed Rom for the most part, with a few minor cavils. To the True Believer, for example, it is not *America* that is always wrong, it is *Authority* that is always wrong. The True Believer would be a rabid Democrat under a Communist regime. Export Joy Hibbert to the Soviet Union and she'd be wearing a Reagan/Thatcher button, until they locked her up.

I don't know what circles Ed travels in, but most of my friends are far to my left, and I'm pretty far left myself, and I never once heard even the slightest hint of approval for anything Khomeini did. Oh, I heard people say that the Shah

was pretty bad, and all evidence is that he was, but the universal opinion I encountered was that Khomeini made him look like Goldilocks.

This is the place where I would place a Joy Hibbert LoC if I had in hand a Joy Hibbert LoC. If I do receive such a thing before I finish typing Nessie I will type it in somewhere near the end; if, that is, she writes something which I feel should be in here.

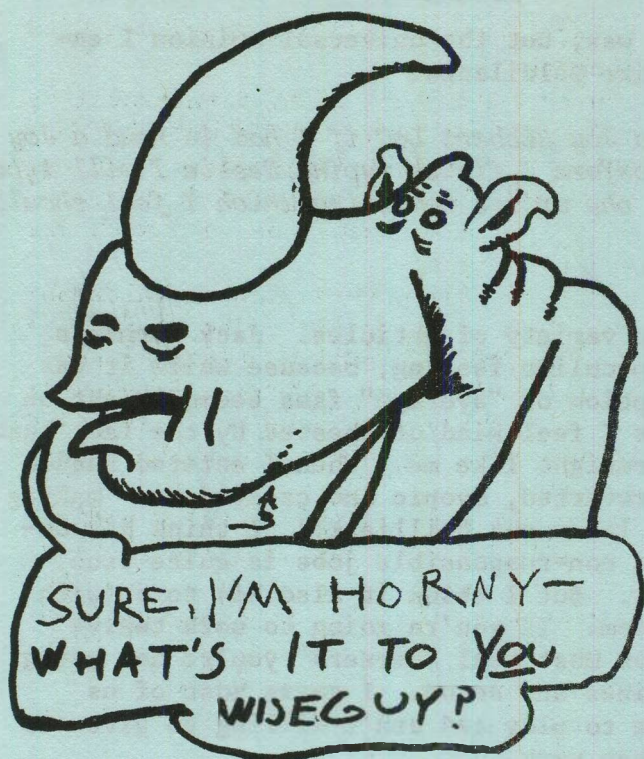
* ERIC MAYER * As usual HTT features a wide variety of articles. Jack Herman's
***** article gave me a bit of a peculiar feeling, because while it was
tongue in cheek, his description of "average" fans seemed right on the mark. I've mentioned before though that I feel kind of cheated by the fact that fans tend to be overweight rather than underweight like me. When I entered Fandom I had the idea that the typical fan was introverted, myopic and cadaverous - making me an ideal example of the species. (Did I leave out brilliant?) I think his observation that fans tend to gravitate toward non-responsible jobs is quite true. Partly I suppose its a matter of personality. But I think it also has to do with the amount of energy many fans put into fandom. If you're going to work twelve hour days and do all the things necessary for most real "careers" you're not going to have time to write locs and publish fanzines and so on. I guess most of us have gotten used to having lots of free time to play and arn't willing to give our play up since its so much more attractive than work.

I knew I wasn't normal, but I didn't know that I was even abnormal by fannish standards! I'm normal weight for my height, can see without glasses (though I do wear them to see distant objects), and I work at a job which takes a lot of my time and energy and requires me to be responsible.

And that makes two of us (except that I do need glasses and that I am a bit underweight for my height). I put in more hours at work per week than does Robbie and have far less vacation and other time off from work than just about anybody in fandom (6 days per week is my workweek, I get off on National Holidays and I get one week per year vacation (although I will get off two weeks next year if we win DUFF)). I am totally responsible for the shop which I run - when I ran my own business I never even took vacations. On top of all of this I believe that I put in more hours of fanac (or, maybe, accomplish more per hour spent) than most fans. I am more abnormal than thou.

Ed Rom makes some good points. The worst fallacy is that since the United States isn't exactly right in some way or other then Russia, for example, must be right. The truth is often that both are wrong, the United States less so. I doubt there's an iota of difference between the leaders of the US and Russia. I suspect the same sort of people tend to rise to political prominence wherever they are. Luckily, in the US we have some protections built into our system. Thus a Richard Nixon can hurt a lot of people, but the system, the courts, laws, traditions, etc. prevent him from being the Stalin he probably would've been had he risen to the top of the Russian system.

Although I enjoyed Mike Glycer's reviews, his introductory statemtns disturbed me a little. It's true, as he says, that fanzine reviewers burn out and probably it's because, as he also says, that they run out of things to say. But he doesn't ask the question - do they run out of things to say because they are only interested in saying the wrong things? Certainly, if you are reviewing, or criticising, in order to impart your own wisdom, to teach, to set forth your own philosophy of fanzine publishing or air your peeves, then, when these things run out, there's nothing left for you to write. But should fanzine criticism be so singlemindedly concerned with such advocacy of personal viewpoints and gripes? Don D'Ammassa points out that Joseph Nicholas, in his letters, often seems more interested in winning a debate than in getting across ideas. He wants to make himself look good,



at the expense of his "opponents". The same often seems true of fanzine reviewers and I think Mike impliedly accepts this approach to fanzine criticism when he talks about "credentials" that will gain the respect of editors being criticised and so forth.

(I hasten to add, Mike's own reviews aren't heavily into that sort of game playing.) Rather than starting with one's own ideas of what fanzines should be and then asking whether a given zine lives up to those ideas, or fits the preconceived mold, why not examine fanzines, as they are. For instance, rather than saying, I think a fanzine ought to have witty material and be tightly edited like the fanzines I got 15 years ago and fanzine X is too serious and too rambling and therefore bad, say instead fanzine X is serious and rambling, why?

What do its readers think about it? Does it reflect something that's going on in fandom today or is it in a minority? What does this tell us,

if anything? I'm sure you've heard this review...."HTT seems to be a very popular zine among some readers - at least a lot of people write locs and long ones. I can't understand why though because its got lousy material." Then the reviewer explains why the material is "lousy" - ie it doesn't meet some preconceived standards of his. But that's a useless criticism really. Why not ask why HTT is popular? With whom. Does the amount or length of locs really reflect popularity? What attracts so many locs? (After all don't most faneds want just that result?) Is the goal of zines to get locs? Why do some zines not get locs? Well, you can see that there are endless questions and subjects beyond those usually asked by critics who tend to stick to recycling their pet peeves over and over. I'm not saying that the critic's own preferences and philosophies are not going to always be there, but they don't have to be the only thing there.

* SKEL * I try not to respond to pieces by others where they say something that might be construed as criticism of some of my fannish writings because, if I don't agree with them, and I generally don't, one is always open to the accusation that one is responding to the fact of the criticism - stung into a response - rather than to the content of it. Also, you tend to start 'arguing' over interpretations, with the end result that you can very easily fall out with someone whose work in general you have always admired. For this reason I didn't take up Mike Glyer's comments on my GALLIMAUFURY piece in HTT #17. However, in maintaining what I considered a diplomatic silence I appear to have been a party to the perpetuation of disinformation. I quote from Tony Alsobrook-Renner's LoC in HTT 18: "I guess what it is is that Mike spends too much time specifying Skel's objections to MICRO-WAVE 5."

The thing is, these objections exist solely in the imagination of Mike Glyer and nowhere else. Mike wrote: "...Skel obviously disapproves..."

If it's that 'obvious', then I must be a hell of a lousy writer because I very much approve of Terry's approach to fanzine publishing, *for Terry*. In fact

I thought I made this pretty plain in my article, where I said: "It seems to me that there is room for a fanzine that takes such an approach."

Mike in fact bases his completely unwarranted assumption of my disapproval upon the fact that I spent so much of my piece trying to look into Terry's motives for publishing MICROWAVE, rather than on how supah or triffic the finished product turned out. His exact words were (and I use the term fairly loosely, knowing just how 'exact' some of my words come out in your fanzine): "Skel seems obsessed with whether it's 'all right' for Hill to run a fannish Reader's Digest."

The thing is, I guess I'm disappointed in Mike's failure to accept my alternative approach to 'talking about fanzines'. What Mike seems to me to be complaining about is that I haven't weighed each piece, tested, it, marked it out of ten and given the fanzine some overall star rating usefull in some general fanzine buyer's guide. In fact he states: "The play is taken completely away from the fanzine's contents, and whether they're intrinsically interesting. Wouldn't that be a more appropriate measure of the editor's technical skills?"

Yes, probably...if that was what I was doing. The thing is, that isn't what I'm doing. Fandom is full of people who can do that sort of thing far better than I could. Why, in that same issue of GALLIMAUFTRY, Jackie Causgrove did a fine job on just that sort of piece. Mike himself usually takes this approach and handles himself most creditably when he does so. The thing is, I don't want to take this approach. Is Mike really saying, "Look, approach fanzines from my own point of view, or stay the hell away from them! Do it my way, or don't do it at all."? Surely not, but that is the only way I can interpret his remarks.

The thing is, or so it seems to me, all you get from the conventional approach is one person's value judgements, which in turn are simply one among many. Obviously one can't avoid value judgements. True, I didn't say, oh, this piece is brilliant, this one's pretty good and that, THAT is a load of dingo's kidneys - and overall the zine is pretty damn good. No, but I did say: "It will be more--than-averagely appreciated by just about everyone."

Value judgement. *In my opinion*, just about everyone will find it above average. So what? What's such a big deal about my opinion? Nothing, that's what. So, I try to do something more, or rather something different. I phrase it this way because I don't want to imply that what I'm trying to do is in any way superior to what Mike usually does. There's a trade-off. I put in less of the sort of things Mike puts in, but try to make up for this by adding some new ingredients.

The fanzine is there, up front. There are quite a few people who can tell you whether or not it's any good. What I want to do is go behind the scenes and try and work out *why* it's the way it is. What is the editor trying to do? How well is he succeeding? Is it worth doing in the first place? How does all this relate to fanzine fandom in general? And why do my balls start to itch when I've been sitting typing for over an hour? Like I said, a *personal* approach. The second installment of the column (which incidentally may never see print because it certainly isn't the sort of material Dave said he was looking for) also uses the editor's motive for publishing, or rather what I consider to be the editor's motives, as an approach to looking beyond the confines of the specific fanzines which prompted the piece. Future installments, if any, may take a completely new tack, but whatever it is it will be one which will permit me to pass comment on fanzines in general whilst using specific fanzines as both examples and launching pads. I hope to get better at it, with practice. However, as Mike points out in his column in HTT 18, even though I am not writing 'reviews', I will probably 'burn out'.

Still on the subject of Tony's letter, I am amazed that he could consider that we might have despised Gerald. I would have thought it obvious that such an article could only be written out of a deep affection. Gerald is one of my closest friends. I would have thought that this would have been obvious from the tone of the piece. Then again, Richard Rostrom referred to it in the following terms: "Skel's skin-peeling profile of Gerald Lawrence was almost clinical."

He also lumped it in with the putrid sections of HTT 17. I am at a loss. Tony, by the way, sent me a 'personal' comment on that piece. It consisted of a clipping from the funnies of a St. Louis paper - a 'Mandrake the Magician' episode

where they are about to be introduced to the ruler of an alien race who will break the record of tasting over ten million different creatures. He didn't send any note with it, just the clipping.

Anyway, I certainly don't have enough contacts with anyone else in British fandom to write any companion pieces, which is bad news for you (so you say) but John Owen will doubtless be as happy as a dog with two dicks.

* *BILL PATTERSON* * It was somewhat tiring to see Bruce Arthurs dumping his mixed
***** bag of fantasies re the Iguanacon staff *yet again*, after six years. It should be noted, though, that BDA was given access to drafts of THE LITTLE FANDOM THAT COULD. His extensive comments on the early sections were incorporated almost wholesale.

Personally, I would be very pleased if BDA were to write his own history of IGGY Summer, as I would then be able to use the "facts" he has been withholding to do a final revise of TLFTC - if I could distinguish them from the mishmosh of uninformed and unverified speculation which comprises his interpretation.

If BDA is interested - which in the past he has told me he is not - I can provide him with a full profile of the developments which led to Rusty's firing. Briefly, Rusty tried some very nasty power plays on both personal and political levels. We (the insidious Garrettees) discussed the matter at some length among ourselves, and each came to "him or me" conclusions. Rusty declined to resign when we put it to him in those terms; we wouldn't allow Tim to fire him summarily; so it came to a full meeting of the steering committee. We tried, briefly, to allow Rusty to "save face" and avoid one of those endless series of recriminatory feuds, but the "public release" version never held up very well. After more discussion, we agreed that the best tactic would be to talk about it not at all and just get on with the work. It was, after all, less than four weeks before the con. Hardly surprising, therefore, that IGUANACON BLUES failed to provoke a time-consuming reaction.

Whether it is BDA himself or Larry Carmody who has falsely interpreted a series of telephone calls Gary Farber made in late July, 1978, I do not know. In point of fact, Rusty had mentioned (in a letter, I believe) a number of people who would be working for him. Some of those people had publically refused to work for Rusty, and Gary did some early calling around to resolve the apparent contradiction. Nothing even remotely mysterious about this.

The question of "vows of silence" is even more absurd. With few exceptions, the members of the Garrett found out years ago that arguing the points is fruitless, but to the best of my knowledge no one has been refused information - ever - except for the perfectly ordinary reason that everyone is damnably tired of talking about it. After 80,000 words of intensely researched history, so am I.

BDA is a special case, though: during the events, I - and others - offered to discuss the matter with him and answer any questions he cared to put. At that time he categorically stated that he would not believe anything we said. Well, there's hardly any point in going on, is there?

Patterson does not "omit material uncomplimentary to his side of events" or fail to "admit instances where it's fairly clear that the 'facts' told to him were a pack of lies". BDA, in fact, has excellent cause to know that those statements are untrue. I have repeatedly begged him to "set me straight" on various points where we disagree. He categorically refuses to do so, preferring to drop dark illusions to his "scenario", bizarre interpretations, and references to his paranoid fantasies in the fan press.

Hasn't this gone on long enough? If BDA has a factual base for his floating speculations, let him put up or shut up. If he can prove any point that runs counter to my interpretation, I will gladly acknowledge it, in print and in the forum of his choice, and I will incorporate it in the final edition of TLFTC.

That's the best I can do with years' worth of frustration. *Verbum sap*: I have no intention of carrying out such an argument in the pages of HTT. I doubt I would even reply to a further loc, beyond reiterating the first two sentences of the

last paragraph.

At this point I feel constrained to say that, unless Bruce Arthurs "puts up" in a loc on this issue, we will drop the subject. By "puts up" I do not mean a rehashing of old arguments - I mean I want his "scenario".

Am I missing something, or is the "mediafan" controversy actually a part of an ongoing argument about why conventions are so dissatisfying these days? At any rate, that's the way I perceive the problem. There is a certain danger to focusing one's attention on a single facet of the problem, in that this tends to polarize one's thinking along irrelevant lines. I've been somewhat disturbed, recently, by evidence of the polarization: the approving con reports which remark on the insular drawing-together of fanzine fans within a larger con.

In my mind, a fan is a multi-range person, participating in all the cornerstones of fanac: local fandom, conventions, collecting, and fanzines. Perhaps I was early and overly influenced by THE ENCHANTED DUPLICATOR, which treats overemphasis on one area of fanac as a heresy. Concentrating on a single aspect of fanac, even one as central as fanzines, seems to me unhealthy.

I can see your point in one way, but I don't see concentrating one's fanac on a single aspect of fandom as unhealthy, merely limiting. There's so much out there to do, to be involved with!

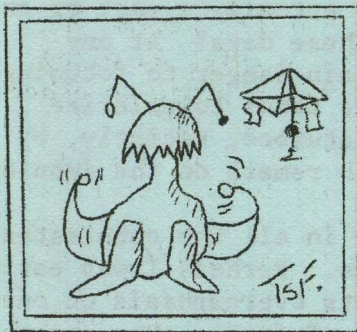
But there is rarely enough time to do it all. Especially for the two of us this summer. Anyway, it is my impression that many fanzine fans spend lots of time on other aspects of fandom even if fanzine fandom is there main area of interest. Then, when we get together at the Fan Room at Worldcon, we are merely getting together with friends of like persuassion. To me this con-within-a-con is merely just another form of fanac. Besides, I am constantly interacting with fans of other persuassions at weekly LASFS meetings, so what is so wrong about wanting to spend some time with other fanzine fans? I am certain that many other fanzine fans feel similarly.

At one time, I understand conventions functioned as a place where all fanac came together. I missed this period as my first conventions were in 1972. Large conventions militate against bringing all of fanac together: the sorting process takes up too much time. As distressing as are the costumed creeps and media nerds, I don't think they are primarily to blame. Rather, the large convention has come to be the gathering place of different fandoms whose areas of mutuality become even smaller. In trying to meet the needs of the many, the large convention fails, progressively, to meet the needs of any.

It is certainly true that the large cons I've been to (Chicon & Constellation, notably) have tended to separate and sort out the various fandoms with the result that many who came originally for the film room never got to the fanzine room, and vice versa.

As a result of this Worldcon has become a great place for like-minded fans to meet, no matter what their sub-interest. The fact that many fans complain that they cannot meet the people whom they wish to meet is, in very many instances, merely a matter of those fans not paying attention to what is going on around them. As a member of the concom of the upcoming Worldcon I know quite well that we are trying to provide things of interest to the various sub-groupings. So, if a fan of any given sub-grouping were to merely go to where their interests are being catered to, they would find like-minded fans. Per example: any fanzine fan who wants to meet other fanzine fans merely has to go to the Fan Room. So, after Worldcon, if any fanzine fan writes a con report saying that he could not find any fanzine fans because of the crush of other fans I have to conclude that this particular fan is an airhead. And the same with any other fan in any other sub-grouping.

Lost: FAMILY PET
Answers to
"Jennifer" Reward



Club mascots, eh? The Phoenix Cosmic Circle had a stuffed penguin as its "Official Organ" for a few years. Does that count?

* MIKE GLYER * I'm not surprised that the thought never crossed Bruce Arthurs' mind I might be acknowledging his candor, or taking any of his statements at face value. But I drew the conclusion from the length and intensity of his polemics about Iguanacon in his zines of the time that he was drawing on everything he knew. His crusade for the "truth" did not suggest that Bruce was the sort of person who, if he knew anything negative to say about participants in Iguanacon, would have forgotten to print it. Therefore when Larry Carmody encouraged Bruce to write a history of Iguanacon (seriously or not, who knows?) I felt that Bruce was being baited into -- once

again -- reliving in detail what is clearly a very emotional subject for him. Bruce can do what he likes, but the ho-hum reception to Bill Patterson's chronicle about Arizona fandom covering the same ground should warn him that the rest of the world does not regard the topic with anything resembling fiery enthusiasm.

Larry Carmody's rebuttal to the rest of my review of NOTHING LEFT TO THE IMAGINATION accomplishes just the reverse of his intention, which is to discredit my opinion of his zine by -- supposedly -- proving the inaccuracy of my description of the issue's contents. Even you, Marty, could not refrain from pointing out to Carmody he just spent half a page verifying that the views I attributed to him were accurately reproduced. After Carmody collapsed his own argument under the weight of the facts, he proceeded with geometric logic (ala Queeg and the frozen strawberries) to prove that, no, Alina Chu had *not* been the source of every third quote in a given article. Indeed, she had only generated 7 out of 65! Perhaps it's Carmody's dedication as a sportswriter, a profession known for its addiction to statistics, that made him count those quotes. Sportswriters are also usually known for their facility with metaphor and exaggeration for humorous effect: I think 99 percent of America's sportswriters would have recognized my statement "every third quote" as serving to emphasize a truth that surpassed simple arithmetic.

Feel free to ask any of the 99 other sportswriters in New York about this, Larry.

But why would any of these other sportswriters be interested in this particular controversy?

* ALLAN BEATTY * This issue was entirely too reasonable. D'Amassa explained Joe Nicholas' locs, Glycer explained fanzine reviewers, Arthurs is on the verge of explaining Iguanacon (if anyone still cares), and everyone explained mediafen. What's left to be defensive or patronizing about? Maybe Ed Rom will spark the next round. A diagram of his discourse would look like the path of a bumper car at the carnival. He touched on the truth many times but never stayed there long.

* ED ROM * By the way, thanks for not calling me a radical conservative. But still, I don't consider myself a conservative at all, and you still insisted on calling me a conservative. I believe in maximum freedom (my freedom to wave my arms around ends in front of your face), and I feel that that is the anti-thesis of conservatism, which seems to me to be primarily concerned with the implementation of restrictions in favour of the status quo.

Speaking of "vast chasms" -- the main difference between the right and the left

is that the right wants to regulate your life in the interest of keeping things the way they are, while the left wants to do the same thing in the name of so-called "social progress". It seems to me that the main differences between liberalism and socialism is that the liberal has the wit to see that the goose that lays the golden eggs shouldn't be killed -- he prefers heavy taxation of industry to nationalisation.

Both liberal and socialist have the good points of being against racism and other forms of bigotry (a taint that many conservatives are badly infected with), though the socialist sometimes exhibits the characteristic of being prone to other forms of bigotry.

In my opinion, the worst characteristic of both socialists and liberals is their blindness to the potential evils of bureaucracy as well as their authoritarian bent. Both types spend a not inconsiderable amount of energy on the advocacy of regulation. The crowning irony of this is that liberals and socialists usually see themselves as being non-authoritarian. I suppose this is because they are against corporate authority -- they don't see that government authority is just as bad, and often worse.

You have just put forth such a mishmash of misconceptions that it would take me pages to properly answer you; and, as you have already imputed that my head is up my nether opening ("usually see themselves as being non-authoritarian"), no matter what I say about how anything but the merest bit of authoritarianism is antithetical to liberalism will probably be dismissed by you (as, indeed, you have already done so) - so why should I bother? I will say this, though: you continue to espouse the conservative party line about liberalism - it is no wonder that I consider you a conservative.

* IAN McKEER * Ed Rom's article is irritating more for what it doesn't say than
***** what it does. He claims that ACI is a non-issue and, believing it has been refuted already, barely mentions it, but plunges into a much broader discussion. To my mind he never relates what he's talking about to the issue at hand. Indeed I'd say there is a very strong connexion between centralisation and imperialism. Historically, the two major European colonial posers, Britain and France, had centralised governments well in advance of other countries. It was the ability that such a method of government provided, to marshal and direct resources which promoted imperialism of the traditional kind, the sort we all agree happened. It's also recognised that one of the most centrally organised governments in the world today is the USSR's, and that the USSR can be described as an imperialistic power, certainly according to a number of your readers. From this premise I can of course argue my own case for economic imperialism, relating once more to the advantages of market size etc. and corporate weight used by large business organisations to influence governments for their own ends. Thus we end up back where we started yet again. On the same issue Arthur Hlavaty has a point about the limitations of economies of scale, but surely if a large business can use its muscle with government to ensure things go the way they want, that's still an advantage of size, albeit not one recognised by conventional economic theory.

Returning to Ed Rom's lines of argument, it's as well you prefaced the piece with your idea that Ed's use of leftwing means extreme left only, Marty, because I wouldn't have credited it otherwise. Rom rightly points out the fallacy of black/white, yes/no thinking (if you're not for me you're against me and all that). Yet he's doing just that in his article by ascribing rabid anti-Americanism to the whole of the left-wing of the political movement. The way I read Ed's political spectrum he sees it as only one dimensional and then admits that, well, yes there are one or two groups which don't quite fit in. From what I've read about political groupings the more generally accepted political spectrum is two dimensional, left-right and statist-anarchist and left wing, non-statist groups are perfectly possible and indeed can be found in Europe. There's an alarming tendency in this article for Marxist and Socialist to be rolled up into one cohesive group and indeed the impli-

cation appears to be that individuals disaffected with Western society immediately embrace Eastern European style statist Marxism. I don't believe it's as clear cut as that by any means. Disaffected individuals try to change society, the disaffected may be the prime movers of social change and in Europe anyway they aren't all Moscow line communists or even left wing. There are many shades of red within Western European socialist and communist movements and it's too sweeping to claim that "the left" is statist, will resist change, dramatically leading to the collapse of civilisation. A democratic, decentralised socialist state that would encourage change is by no means unimaginable, not I'd hope unobtainable.

The kind of simplistic lumping-together of the various kinds of left thinking is all too common amongst rightists in this country - it is obvious that Ed was arguing from a rightist perspective.

Your LoC arrived the day before I typed Ed's LoC, so I put it right after his LoC. I was much impressed by most of the rest of you LoC (which continues to dissect Ed's article); unfortunately, with parts of other LoCs scheduled to be stencilled and with the page total mounting higher and higher, I must regretfully now move to the next LoC.

* MIKE ROGERS * Y'all are perhaps the only editors in all fandom who would have
***** published that front cover. I'm so glad I hadn't set down to
dinner when I saw it.

Am I to presume, then, that you left your dinner for the flies to consume?

Mr. Rom has injected a needed breath of sanity into the discussion of ACI. I don't agree with all of his conclusions, but he makes one point worth amplification. During the Carter administration, the U.S. attempted to conduct a more "moral" foreign policy. The result was that as we tried to be more understanding of Third World governments so that they wouldn't feel quite so angry towards us, many of those same governments continued to denounce us at the same or even higher levels of intensity. We've become the bogey man, The Enemy, and they can't afford to admit that the U.S. might not be after them. In such cases, there is no way we can win. We might as well accept that lots of people aren't going to like us no matter what we do.

This is something that most Americans just do not understand: we have been through a revolution that has given us a society which gives our citizens more freedom than that enjoyed by most people on this planet - so why are we hated so vehemently? Most Americans, when they think about this at all, just do not know why they are not either loved or envied - they just do not understand the hatred. They also do not understand why contemporary revolutionary movements do not follow our model of freedom rather than the oppressive communist model. It just goes to show that there are simple-thinkers everywhere.

One of the consequences of the "Amerika" syndrome is that we are seeing a revival of outright isolationism in some quarters. We have people who would reject the use of American troops in any situation save a direct invasion of our shores. I just can't accept this position. Isolationism made some sense back in the 19th century when we had formidable geographic barriers protecting us from the major powers of the time. I sometimes wonder how anyone can support an isolationist policy when the ultimate weapon can wipe us out in less than an hour. Rejecting isolationism doesn't mean you send in the Marines anytime you feel like it. But it does mean you have to be willing to use force when your vital interests are threatened. Will we have a country to defend 15 or 20 years from now? I wonder.

In this day and age, any nation which tries to "isolate" itself is bound to fail in one way or another. Even the U.S. is not totally self-sufficient. There are many

things it needs to import to keep its economy on an even keel, if nothing else.

As for defence, well, in a world where there can be murders of innocent bystanders and policewomen by "diplomats" it would be naive to believe that nations holding diametrically-opposed views of what world peace means can trust each other to not try something if the opportunity presents.

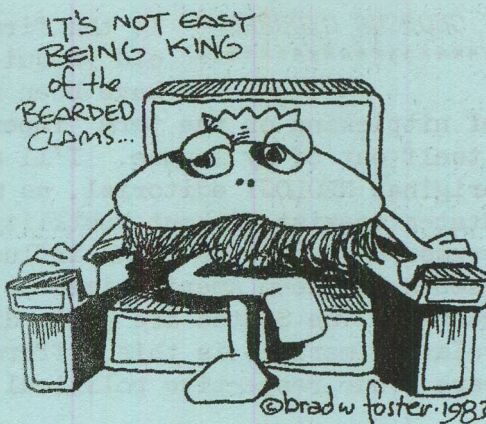
* JIM MEADOWS * The lettercolumn was remarkably unmuddied by the
***** continuin debate over U.S.

Cultural Imperialism, and the remarks of the original debaters were totally absent. Did you do this on purpose, or is this just a reflection of the way the mail went this issue? The debate was getting pretty pointless, so I don't really miss it this issue. As entertaining as the fireworks were, I don't think much light was shed on the issue at hand; but we did get several pages of hurriedly-written, under-researched, often acrimonius carping. But, fun to read.

Generally, what gets into Nessie is what the mail reflects - as guided by the editors. We give more play to those issues which seem to us to still be of interest both to the loccers and to ourselves, downplaying other material which seems to be either petering out or to be too repititous. Except for letters which come in when I am working on Nessie (and Robbie is working on the other material), both editors read and make (or not) comments on all letters. Robbie, though, will look at the later letters after she has finished the other material.

I, too, would like to see a more reasoned argument of your potshot at Philip K. Dick's later fiction. For myself, it was only in the last 20 years of his life that I found Dick's writing to be anything like mature. As sloppy as some of his later fiction might be, it was about people; his earlier work, no doubt a necessary preliminary stage for the latter, was more often about situations. They were interesting situations, they would have made good TWILIGHT ZONE episodes, but they pale when set next to his later work. And, when I come across this sort of growth in a writer, I don't care if he fits somebody's genre category or not.

It is absolutely not a case of whether or not Dick fit my sf "genre category" - it is entirely a case of his disintegration as a story-teller. I am surprised that those of you who have been reading HTT for quite some time (especially since #8, the issue which kicked off the Old Wave/New Wave brouhaha) are not aware of my position on this matter (many not-printed sections of several LoCs will get answered here) even though I made myself more than abundantly clear in issue after issue of the zine. Basically, then: I consider sf to be a story-telling medium; and, on one level, I tend to rate the "goodness" (or quality) of a sf story on whether or not it tells a good story and tells it well. If one tries to read a later Dick story on that level alone it falls into a morass of boredom. I do not mind if a story has literary and other values (in fact, I consider such things as a nice fringe benefit to a good story); however, if it is not a solid story to begin with the rest of the above stuff is just wasted verbiage. I can get my poetry and my philosophy from the appropriate books - when I am reading a story I want it to be a story first and everything else second. Well, as Dick progressed in his career the story values in his fiction declined whilst these other things took up a greater and greater proportion of what he wrote, hence my comments about Dick. So sue me.



* GEORGES GIGUERE * To the first topic, which I see you've not closed: ye hoary
***** old yanqui-imperialism wrangle. I feel a lot of valid points
have been raised on both sides, in spite of the high level
of nitpicking on the term "imperialism". The level of your debate has elevated
itself out of my league. I'll admit I was taken aback more than a little by Ian's
original NEOLOGY editorial, as much by the tone as by the content. Canada and the
States coexist without hostility (other than of the political kind); the American
pressure of numbers is an influence upon Canadian culture, but just one of many.
Quebec may seem Americanised to a Frenchman, but to the rest of Canada it's just
Quebec. The States are plain different. The two views of the situation involve
relative merit - is this difference good or bad? I don't know, and don't really
care - our respective political units are inextricably economically tied.

*I do not know whether or not the level of the debate has been elevated, but
I surely find myself both understanding and agreeing more with what Ian has been
writing lately. Not everything, but certainly more than at the beginning of things.*

Ah, hell, I'm not making any ~~sense~~ headway. Why don't you guys just annex us
so we can carry guns just like you?

*Nah - we already have too much snow within our borders and we do not need any
more of it.*

HTT was prominently displayed on my kitchen table for two days, until my brother's
lady got grossed out. Then I showed it to the engineer for the company I'm
contracting for, who reacted with an inevitable lip-curl. This is without a doubt
one of the most putrid things I've seen on a fanzine cover.

*Two things are surprising here: the slow reaction time of your brother's
lady and the fact that you still have a job.*

Don D'Amassa's crit of purported Joe Nicholas writing style is amusingly put.
I say this because, while I am amused, it seems sad that one person is the brunt
of such silly nitpicking. Joe is probably either beside himself, or cultivating
one hell of a sense of humour.

I'm enjoying the Law and Order Handbook. "Handgun Defence & Lobbying" is
quite interesting; Weinstock's political bias, though evident, is humorously put.
His "laundry List" is almost horrifying, but it all sounds reasonable. ~~Must be
the drugs!~~

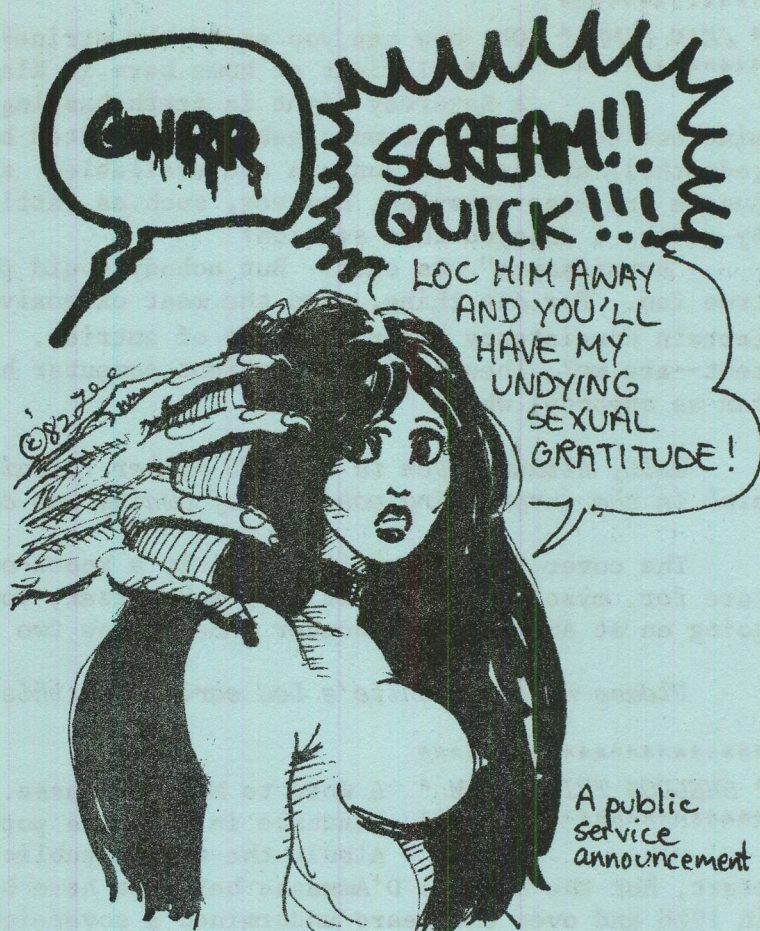
Just by the bye, I thought you'd like to know that my copy of HTT has been
read by over ten people here in Edmonton, and the copy you sent ESFCAS is the
most widely-read zine in the pile. Say about 15-20 people have read it. The
biggest complaint I've heard is that the loccol is hard to understand due to
coming in on the middle of the discussion. Terry Carr's Entropy Reprints seems
to have much the same effect on the readers I've asked. (informal poll) As a
piece of faanish fluff, it's nice light entertainment, though, for me, it's pretty
much out of the ozone.

*This is very good to hear. I have long wondered what really happens to the
copies which we send to clubs. In this case the various ESFCAS club members are
getting full value for the NEOLOGY copies which are sent to us by reading the
zine sent to them in trade and we are getting good value in the zine which we send
in trade as members other than just the zine editor read the zines sent in trade.
I hope that the members of other clubs with which we trade zines also get to see
HTT (and the other zines for which they trade). This, after all, is one way to
get members of local fandoms interested in the rest of fandom*

Fascinating letter from Darrell Schweitzer. The tone of the letter said "I don't accuse him (Ted) of malice" long before he actually said it. He also makes a good point about media fen not necessarily being members of the community. Media fen are a part (like it or not) of the fannish community, somewhat akin to the transients of the Outside World ~~and that's why some are called~~ ~~hatters.~~

Your illos on p50 and 52 are monuments to putridity. What the hell kind of drugs does Bob Lee smoke. ~~I want some I want some I want some!~~

Whoo, Joy Hibbert surely has an inflammatory way with words! "...our government's doglike attitude towards yours..." Ha bleeding ha; and there's something in what she says. Still, she shotts herself down, and you rebut with precision. I find it difficult to see why some people want to have a war of wits when they have no ammunition.



* DIANE THOME * Very interesting. Especially the cover. Which I pulled out of its envelope just as I was cooking dinner. Anyhow, I'm going to xerox it and post it anonymously at work -- an experiment to see how many minutes elapse before somebody gets revolted enough to tear it down.

Liked the cartoons, especially pp. 37, 40, 47, 49 and 62.

I started Skel's article "Through Paris in a Streetcar" -- I was prepared to be bored by the description of a singer I likewise do not care for, but was pleasantly surprised to be reading a very interesting article. I guess the article was meant to work in the same fashion as Marianne Faithfull's music.

Chapter Four of the Law & Order Handbook was far superiour to the latest installment (chapter Five). But, scary thing is, I've met folks who would consider Weinstock's satiric arguments to be valid reasoning.

* JOHN BERRY * Many thanks for your latest issue which is absolutely superb. Re the list of Australian terms published to assist fans visiting Melbourne in '85, I note the omission of the potent 'STUNNED LIKE A MULLET'...I picked it up in Aussieland in '82, and introduced it into the Hertfordshire vernacular, as I did with several terms I brought from Belfast when I moved to Herfordshire in '75. I am rather proud in stating that Northern Irish words such as SPROCKLED, HURPLER, STOTIOUS, etc, are in quite common usage, and a particular I am thrilled that sometimes I overhear conversations in the 'bus when I am going to the office early in the morning, and one of my incorporated words is used.

* JEAN LAMB * Oh, how can you stand the strine? Actually, an Aussie would probably feel right at home here in Klamath Falls - the favourite sport on a Saturday night is teeth-bashing and shotgun-waving at local pubs, mindless television, brown sagebrush inhabited by grotesque creatures (including rednecks), and instant sunburn are available; some amenities unknown to the average Aussie are also provided, however, such as rattlesnakes, plague rats, and algae. By golly, I enjoyed this section!

"Renaissance" was cute. But nobody could programme a computer to write like a true fan. For one thing, even the most extensive computer programme would show a certain consistency after a number of entries. And we know that we aren't consistent--are we? Then again, a sentient computer has just as much right to be an SF fan as anybody, what?

Well, Altair Niven is a LASFS member (a paid up member, too) - which puts the club in the interesting position of owning one of its members.

The cover **this** issue is certainly a knock-out, though not quite of the kind I care for, myself. Thank you, Mr. Schweitzer, for your explanation of what was going on at AMAZING. No wonder I never saw two of my manuscripts again.

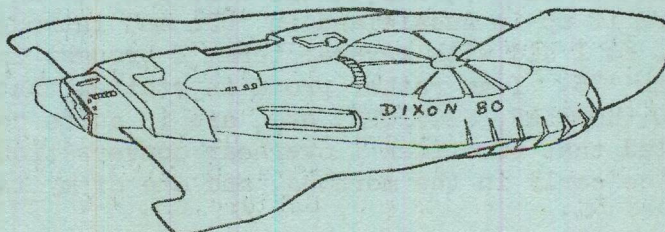
Please note Ted White's LoC earlier in this issue.

* SHELDON TEITELBAUM * A word to Mr. D'Ammassa. The Lebanon which achieved independence in 1943 was populated by a majority of Christians. Albeit the tiny republic was mismanaged right from the start, but the Moslems D'Ammassa believes have been fucked over arrived in Lebanon in 1948 and over the years undermined a sovereign Western oriented government by virtue of demographic developments and guerrilla struggle. Were Cubans to eventually outnumber native Americans in Florida, Mr. D'Ammassa would, it seems, be inclined to argue in favour of thier right to secession.

Mr. D'Ammassa's fondness for neat sounding pavlovian triggers like "the Israeli army of occupation", "minority Christian faction", and others that sprinkle his recap of international events indicate that the man is a political twit. The condition is not terminal, however, and I would urge the fellow to remedy his embarrassing lack of facts by reading the Winter, 1983 issue of POLICY REVIEW which features a position paper called "Misreporting Lebanon". Lest Mr. D'Ammassa dismiss the publication as cheap shot Zionist propaganda, he should be informed that Kingsley Amis and Herman Kahn sit on its editorial board.

* BOB LEE * So, you just *darling* twitty twosome, I suppose you both want to test-- drive the schoolgirls after me, you filthy *editors* (such a *low* blow), and expect to pay clearance sale prices for them, or even used car ones. Well, FORGET IT, MUCHKINS!!! After all I have now re-equipped them with hot accessories like genuine leather seatbelts, candied body paint, convertible tops, 12-speed (not even counting Reverse position) gearshifts, and Uniroyals (they claw). Not to mention penicillin.

burbleburbleburble



WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Arthur Hlavaty wrote, "Cover: This is what happens when Joseph Nicholas lands on your fanzine...." which, as a cheap shot, is perfectly suited to this WAHF column. *David Palter* performed his usual function of providing us with Wayne Brenner's new address - let us just say that Wayne tends to move around a bit. *Jane Beckman* sent us a clipping about a bit of pop art and two letters, all three economically packaged in one envelope, and who wrote, "I think the report on Corflu must be popular in the zines: you have one, I have one, everybody gets Corflu. (Sounds virulent to me!)" *Robert Whitaker*, him of the off-the-wall art which we sometimes pub in HTT, wrote, "Weird cover". *Dave Langford* (whose brother Jon must be a cockney because he has no 'h' in his name) wrote me to correct the spelling of his brother's name and to say, "Interesting to see our very own Joy Hibber assuming the long-coveted mantle of Joseph Nicholas as the person everyone likes to argue with." Like in this issue, for instance. Speaking of Joseph Nicholas, he has been updating me on the anti-nuclear doings of the terrible duo of Denbigh Street. *Sam and Mary Long*, of Illinois, updated us on what was happening in Ontario, Canada. At least *Amy Thomson*, who did not send us anything at all, did not send us a penguin as a souvenir of her visit to Antarctica, but *Paula Lieberman* deemed it necessary to call us from Massachusetts to pass on her wonderings about what would happen if Joseph Nicholas and Darrell Schweitzer both had offspring with said offspring marrying each other. *Mandy Slater* wrote, "My first reaction to HTT 18 is 'why?' The cover was tasteless. (No pun intended.)" She will feel more at home here when she realises that all puns should be intended - we like puns around here. *Jeanne Mealy* reports that she had plastic surgery and is no longer a pinhead - well, better luck next time, Jeanne. *Ben Indick* considered the cover of #18 "instructive". Well, *Dennis D'Asaro* sent us the packaging and the instructions of FLYSHOOTER, The Original BUG GUN! which shoots a plastic dart with a large, flat plate-type thingie on its end - you can splat them across the room. The instruction read like they were written by Jon Langford. *D.W. Howard* "felt rather ashamed, receiving this nice big zine for my piddling little LoC." We changed its diapers. *Laurraine Tutihasi* wrote to tell us that she does not comment much - she also said, "Either you are becoming less putrid or I'm becoming more warped." Her LoC was shaped like a tube. *Leslie David*, stationed in Korea, sent us a cap and a t-shirt - she also wrote, "It seems like the only time I have these days for locking fanzines is when I have duty..." Uncle Sam pays you to write LoCs? *Tom Dunn* sent a poc in which he tells us that the new Ephemeris will be out soon. Lo and behold, this quarterly which comes out every year and a half or so, did eventually arrive. In it Tom mentions HTT and "berates" us for our snide comments about his publishing schedule. *snicker* That is part of what it is all about, Tom. Oh - *Leslie David* also sent a poc. *Nola Frame* handed us a hand-writ LoC on some back-issue of HTT. *Cathy Doyle* says that she is risen from the dead, and *Malcolm Edwards*, also not heard from in these quarters for far too long, also proved that he was not dead by sending a LoC (at the end of a letter about the Britain in '87 bid.

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Well, this is a bit smaller than I thought that it would be before we started typing it - still, 100 pages, not too bad. Anyway. I hope that many of you spend some time in the Fan Room at L.A.CON II - I will be spending most of my time there and I would like to visit with you. And - you are all invited to our gourmet jelly bean party for fanzine fans on Thursday night, main hotel - a Worldcon tradition!



