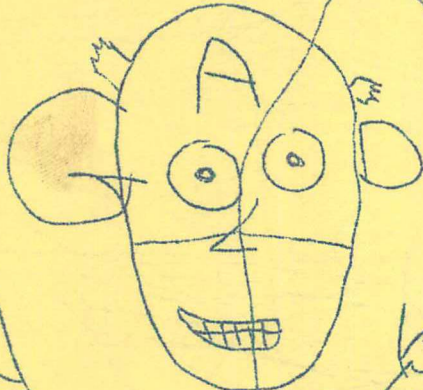


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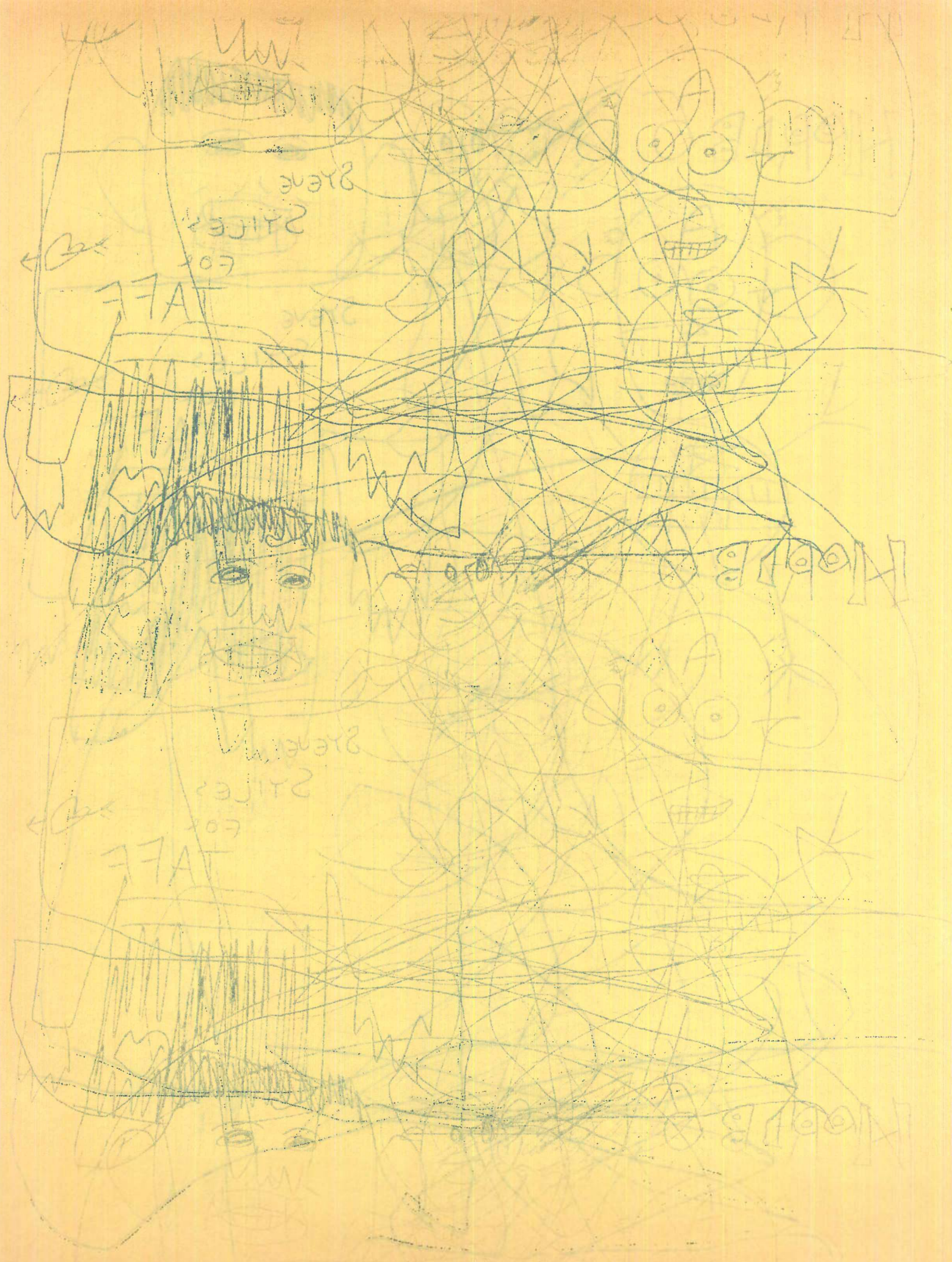


STEVE
STILES
FOR
TAFE



STEVE
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TAFE





Your Faithful Correspondent can report a similar pattern. Over a span now approaching twenty years I have earned bucks with my typewriter; for nearly half that time it has provided daily sustenance for myself, my wife, and an increasing number of dependent children and animals. I have written newspaper copy, radio scripts, magazine articles, marketing newsletters, computer manuals, glossy industrial recruiting brochures, speeches, displays and advertisements, editorials, introductions, book jackets, miscellaneous business-type bulletins and memoranda, military training manuals, one book largely about science fiction, and, recently, a motion picture.

If you're suitably impressed by that list of achievements, positively grovelling in stunned admiration, let me say that over all that period of time I have never, never, NEVER been able to rid myself of the old neofannish itch to Write a Professional Science Fiction Story. No substitute was accepted. I even tried writing stf...an average of one story every three to five years, all short stories, and all unsuccessful. I did think I had a salable little fantasy called "Boom!" in 1960 (my last attempt) but it was aimed exclusively at F&SF and the then-editor Robert P. Mills disagreed with me and there was noplacel else to send the thing so that was the end of that.

Well somewhere along around the fall of 1965 or spring of '66 (peg this to a Phillyconf or a Lunacon, I don't remember which) I was kidding Terry Carr about the lurid titles his company likes to stick on its books. "If I give you the ultimate Ace Books title," I asked Terry, "will you guaranty to buy it from me? I'll write a book to go along with it."

Terry said, sure.

I offered "War of the Doom Zombies."

Waal, much laughing and joking about Doom Zombies -- Jack Gaughan has even drawn some of the poor things -- but out of the joke grew an idea for a plot that got seriouser and seriouser until it had nothing to do with any Doom Zombies and not really with a war (one teensy-weensy battle is all that's left of that theme). It took until last August to get the thing worked out enough to write the traditional thirty-page sample. I told Terry I'd written a sample. He said I'd have to write an outline of the rest of the book before the submission could be considered. I grumbled and banged off a four-and-a-half-page outline and sent the thing in.

A few days later I phoned Terry and asked his reaction to the submission. "It's good," he said, astonishment filling his voice. I was pleased at the words, albeit somewhat abacktaken at the fact that its being good surprised him. Terry said that he was passing the ms along to his boss Don Wollheim with a favorable recommendation.

Followed a couple of weeks of suspense which ended when Pat and I got home from the Tricon. The manuscript was waiting in the mailbox with Don's rejection slip enclosed. When I read the slip I was, to understate, disappointed; at the same time it seemed rather obvious that I had pushed a couple of Don's "reject" buttons by accident, rather than that the sample was just hopelessly rotten; also, Terry Carr's already expressed favorable opinion of the thing buoyed me substantially.

So I called another editor of my acquaintance, Larry T. Shaw at Lancer Books. I told him the situation, including the chief reason expressed in Don Wollheim's rejection slip, to wit, the fact that the central character of the book was a Negro and that, with a sole exception who gets killed off in the first chapter anyhow, all the characters in the book are, if not Negroes per se, at least non-white.

[A further digression from my digression: I do not mean to imply that Don Wollheim is a racist. I am convinced that his motivation in the case was strictly commercial. I.e., that the mass of Ace readers would not identify with my hero or any other character in the book (except maybe the fellow who gets killed in chapter 1) and that the book was therefore a bad commercial proposition for Ace.]

Happily, Larry saw no particular problem here. The book might be packaged in such a fashion that the racial aspect is ignored, or, more likely, that side of it could be made into an asset by a little judicious blurbwriting. So I sent him the portion-and-outline. His reaction was favorable but he was unwilling to commit himself until we had talked things over somewhat, i.e., he had certain reservations about the submission.

So the last Friday in September, 1966 -- ah yes, I remember it well -- I went to have lunch with Larry Shaw. There were a number of specific points he wanted to discuss and we ironed them out, some by his accepting my reason for doing a certain thing a certain way, others by my agreeing that his objection was sound and promising to make a change. But mainly he was concerned that the plot, as outlined, looked much too thin to make a book. And Lancer is not in the market for short stories or novelettes.

In all honesty I shared Larry's concern, but I managed to talk both of us into believing that I could make sixty thousand words out of it. Or at least fifty. "All right," Larry announced, "I'll buy it."

My contract was to come in two-to-four weeks. I waited patiently for two weeks, impatiently for an additional two, then called Larry and asked if anything had gone wrong. He said no, it would just take a little longer to get the contract. I said okay, but I have not resumed work on the book and swore not to until I had a contract. Superstition, perhaps, or perhaps something else, but I was going to work no more on the book without that precious piece of paper.

I will not bore you with each agonizing detail of delay in the months that followed (the recollection is too painful even for me) but let it suffice that a contract was finally tendered, reaching my mailbox (I thought it an omen) on Friday the 13th of January, 1967.

On Saturday the 14th of January I took my existing 31 pages -- just over 10,000 words -- reread what I'd written, and began writing more. I must digress again, now, to thank my wife Pat for performing prodigies of child care, housekeeping, and generally keeping all things and persons out of my hair over the following weeks. Since I have a full-time job I could work on "War of the Doom Zombies" only nights and weekends, and keeping those hours clear must have been pretty tough on her, but she did it.

She also read each night's output before going to bed, praised good stuff, offered consolation when the going was rough, spotted typos and other mental lapses, and generally helped out.

On Friday, March 24th, I arranged to have lunch once again with Larry, and handed in the manuscript. Actually I had finished it the day before, Thursday, at 1:00 a.m. It runs 375 pages, or approximately 122,000 words. When I whip out my pocket lightning calculator and realize that I wrote 112,000 words of fiction in nine weeks in my spare time I am left... wordless.

I will be very proud if the book is out before Labor Day, which Larry tells me is somewhat likely. Jack Gaughan, my new near-neighbor (well, he hasn't moved his family in yet, but they have bought a house near Merry hell) is to paint the cover illustration, and there is a chance that Pat will model for him, just to keep things cozy. The title is likely to be "A Million Centuries."

Meanwhile I've got another novel 1/3 worked out. By that I refer to my personal theory of fiction writing, at least SF & fantasy writing, which is that a story is made up of three elements:

- ° characters
- ° setting
- ° plot

I don't suppose that those items will surprise anyone in particular, but based on the very limited experience of one novel, that done very much by feeling my way along, I think that a story is concocted very much like a soup of those three ingredients. As for which is most important, I will have to switch my simile to that famous three-legged stool and say that each is vital. In my own opinion "A Million Centuries" is pretty strong on characters, not too bad on setting but pretty weak on plot.

For the next book I've got my setting pretty well worked out, and I think it should be a good one, with plenty of color and fun in it. I have only the vaguest picture of my hero, though, and even less of the plot. I'll have to stew with this one for a while before I start writing. But not the months and months that I stewed "A Million Centuries," I hope. The tentative title of the new book is "War of the Doom Zombies."

There is also a novel to be written in collaboration with George Locke, working title "The Disunited States of America." Fapans know all about that one. And two short stories to be written with Dave Van Arnham, "The Restaurant Ghost" and "Help! I Am Dr. Morris Absorbine, Sr."

All of which raises the question, if I plan to keep my mundane job (which I do plan to do, indefinitely), and I'm going to write stories nights & weekends, what time is left for fanac? I wish I could get along without sleep, I'll tell you that. My immediate plan is to take a break from fiction right now and clean up several fannish tasks. Horib, and an article I've owed Terry Carr for about a year, and an article I've owed Arnie Katz for even longer. Meanwhile "War of the Doom Zombies" can stew.

MAILING COMMENTS ON THE 118th FAPA MAILING

PUCKLE PITS Forced, unfunny, unpleasant. Just for the record, the culprits were Lee Hoffman, Jack Gaughan and myself. Exonerate Pat from the thing: she refused to have anything to do with a one-shot. Clever girl!

SUPERSCRIPT 2 (Caughran) Perhaps the "hard-core" theory isn't totally and literally true [I'm surprised to hear that it was yours originally -- I thought it was Larry Shaw's] but it is true as a sort of overstatement of the case. As the wait gets longer memberships become more precious, members become increasingly reluctant to relinquish them and the wait gets longer still. I have seen many proposed solutions to this problem, but none that did not contain inherent drawbacks more severe than the problem they purport to solve.

GODOT 3 (Deckinger) But, Mike...Roger Zelazny is a long-time fan (although never a BNF or even particularly widely known)...while Alexei Panshin, I believe, was not a sfan until after he had become a pro (in 1960, by selling a short story to, swelpme, Seventeen)! ((That sale was not sf, in fairness. Nevertheless, the point is that Panshin's background is not that of the fan-turned-pro, Zelazny's is..))

SYNAPSE (Speer) As I recall, Steve's putting an apostrophe into "Sci-Fi at it's Finest" was a simple goof. When I read it, though, it seemed to fit in with the general schlocky quality of the strip so I did not excise it. /// Hmm, several people commented on the use of quotation marks to produce what passes for an umlaut. Let me try it: coöperate! Bigolly, it works! Thank you, Jack Speer. Thank you, one and all! Gōsh! /// I lucked out on the movie version of "Outward Bound" by missing the first few minutes, so if the "secret" was telegraphed, I missed it. /// Terry Carr can't drive a car. /// Computer naming story time: the Univac 1101. First of all, do you remember that Univac itself is an acronym for UNIVersal Automatic Computer? Okay. Some years ago there was a firm in St. Paul called Electronic Research Associates. ERA got a navy contract for a special computer which, because of a project numbering scheme, was designated #13. The project engineer was a superstitious cuss, however, and rather than call the thing #13 converted the number to binary, or one-one-oh-one. He then deliberately misread the binary 13 as if it were decimal, or eleven-oh-one. Successive machines in the series, which should, by binary numbering, have been the 1110 (14), 1111 (15), 10000 (16), 10001 (17), 10010 (18), 10011 (19), 10100 (20), were instead designated the 1102, 1103, 1104, 1105, 1106, 1107, 1108. Next issue, another Computer naming story from Uncle Dicky.

NOW I FIND, embarrassingly, that that's all I have to say, "mailing-comment-wise," on the 118th mailing. Yet I look back through the bundle and find numerous praiseworthy things there, most notably HABAKKUK, of course, but also numerous smaller and simpler zines.

I guess I'm just tired, except that I don't feel "old and tired" in the classic fannish sense. Pat says she has a comment of her own to make, to Elinor ~~Wigby~~ Busby, and then Parcudniak and Farnsworth have promised faithfully to have some more Professor Thintwhistle ready for this issue (maybe). Oh, we'll fill up a couple more pages somehow. Maybe even get around to the Xero Fun & Games Book yet. Real soon now.

ALL NOISY ON THE NYCON FRONT

Pat and I got to attend one of our too-infrequent Fanoclast meetings a few weeks ago and, in addition to the usual pleasures of the evening, were treated to the spectacle of the Nycon committee's "Pong" proposal being defended with great vigor and vehemence. The arguments came so fast and facile that I was really quite astonished until we got home and found a copy of John Trimble's new "Hugo Report #1" in the mail. Many of the same arguments appear there, in virtually identical words to those used at the meeting. So.

Both as delivered orally to the Fanoclasts assembled, and as presented in baby blue mimeography for the generality of fandom, these arguments arrange themselves nicely under three headings:

1. Ad hominem's
2. Tu quoque's
3. "Everybody's doing it"

The first, a discouragingly familiar tactic in fannish disputes, categorizes objections to the concom's fiat and those who make these objections in the neat phrase "petty acrimony from a few embittered with sour grapes."

The second is apparently directed at me personally. (I had hoped to avoid personalities and discuss an issue here, but that seems to have been a forlorn hope.) I find myself identified, although not named, as "My critic, the one who feels we [Nyconcom] ignored the proper channels...[but who has himself] ignored the mandate of the PacifiCon business meeting, and has stated privately that he has every intention of continuing to do so."

And the third, from early in the piece, "There has been hardly a year in which the awards have remained in the same categories, and some years there have been very few." And much later: "Nothing decided at one convention has any binding effect upon the next. This is a matter of cold historical fact. We have not innovated in this regard."

Now the crucial trouble with these arguments is that they are -- all of them! -- irrelevant to the question at hand. Whether they are valid themselves (and a great deal might be said about each) is not to the point. The point is that the Nycon committee has chosen to place itself above the established procedures of fandom, procedures that have been developed over a period of many years and at the cost of considerable work and wrangling. The committee have chosen to abolish democracy in favor of dictatorship. They have chosen to effect their will by virtue of the simple fact that they hold, for this year, the reins of power.

One does not argue with an obvious fact. But one can protest an abuse, which is what we presently witness.

Now another fact is that 1967 is not a necessarily crucial year for fandom. If the Nyconcom saw fit not to submit their proposal to the Tricon business session in 1966 (to take effect in 1967), they could still award one last fanzine Hugo and submit the proposed change to their own convention's

business session, to take effect in 1968. Something holds them back. Vanity, impatience, arrogance: the common marks of dictatorship. But it is more efficient than democracy, one must concede.

Oh, there are many ways out of the bind the committee has placed itself in. I wish they would avail themselves of one. Even an ex post facto resolution legitimizing what has been done, proposed at their own business session, would be fairly certain of passage, and would at least paper over the stain if it did not quite wash it away. The existing constitution and by-laws under which Hugos are awarded requires that category changes be voted on one year, to take effect the following year. So there might be some quasi-legalistic howls at such a move -- and not without justification. But it would do some good.

But the Nycon committee has decided to do away with the business session, too!

"Business sessions are an absolute farce and a total waste of time."

"Proposals [are] bandied about for several hours, then referred to a committee."

Business sessions can be "tempestuous and lengthy."

And indeed they can; if well managed, as John Trimble points out, they don't have to be. But they can be, and sometimes they are. That's the trouble with democracy. It's inefficient, slow-moving, things get referred to committees, there are tempestuous and lengthy business sessions. Oh, democracy can be a troublesome thing. Still, I guess you either believe in it, and try to practice it, and do your best to make it work. Or, if you happen to be in position to do so, you just sweep it aside and issue edicts.

O Impatience!

O Arrogance!

An additional note on progress reports. Last mailing I said a few words about the Nycon's Progress Report #1, its extreme tardiness and the poor piece of buckpassing that was done in that regard. Also included in the first PR, you will remember, was a commitment to mail PR#2 "on March 1st." Maybe it's just inefficient postal service but as of today -- March 31 -- the second report has not arrived in this village, 75 miles from New York.

Personally I regard progress reports as a minor bit of trim on conventions and would have ignored the publication dates of these except for the emphasis placed on that matter by the committee. But taking the performance in getting progress reports to convention members as an omen of the way the convention itself will be run.... Well, frankly it gives me the shivers!

-- Dick Lupoff
March 31, 1967

THIS AND THAT FROM PAT: Yes, Elinor Busby, I read Ardyth Kennelly's book, GOOD MORNING YOUNG LADY, both when it first appeared in 1953 and again about three years ago. I loved it both times. It is one of the few books that I enjoyed even more on the second reading. I've read all of her other books, too, except THE SPUR. What happened to her? She hasn't been heard of, as far as I know, in about fourteen years, and I think that she wrote very well. Her characters are great. And she always has a little bit of the macabre in each of her three books, such as the man who buried his wife in his back yard in, I think, THE PEACABLE KINGDOM, and the overly possessive mother who suffers a stroke when she fears that her daughter is about to be married, and is herself turned back into a baby with her daughter about to assume the role of mother in GOOD MORNING YOUNG LADY.

I keep hoping to see more of her but I guess after all these years it is a rather forlorn hope. I especially loved her character in (I think it was) THE PEACABLE KINGDOM again, who was so busy reading novels that she was the scandal of the neighborhood because her house was always a mess and sometimes she even forgot to feed her husband dinner. I'm not that bad but I certainly did identify with her.

No, I haven't gotten a grey collie yet. We have a female cat now whom we breed, and our house is usually either full of kittens or expecting. But I certainly haven't forgotten about the grey collie. The next time we drive past that particular kennel I'll be sure to have our check-book with me and even our son, Ken, who is a very good persuader.

TALKING ABOUT CATS: Our calico cat, whose mother was a calico and whose father was a Siamese, was mated most recently with a chocolate point Siamese. She had her kittens Friday morning (April 21). All the talk about how much cats like privacy! She had slept on my pillow all the previous night and at seven o'clock (AM) crawled right under the covers and settled herself quite contentedly on my stomach. She started purring loudly, then gave one sharp meow. Whereupon I picked her up (and she bit me), took her to her maternity box, and five minutes later she had had a black kitten. The she had a black-and-white kitten, and then an almost-white kitten which looks as if it may appear as a Siamese. Then another black one. According to our vet and to articles in cat books, when a Siamese and a non-Siamese mate all they will produce is black kittens. But Kitty's mother has had orange and calico kittens (she always mates with a Siamese) and Kitty's kittens in this litter are 3/4 Siamese. So we will keep the almost-white kitten and see how it turns out. We have a vacancy now: our big orange-and-white cat died a few weeks ago, of yellow jaundice. We were all quite broken up about it.

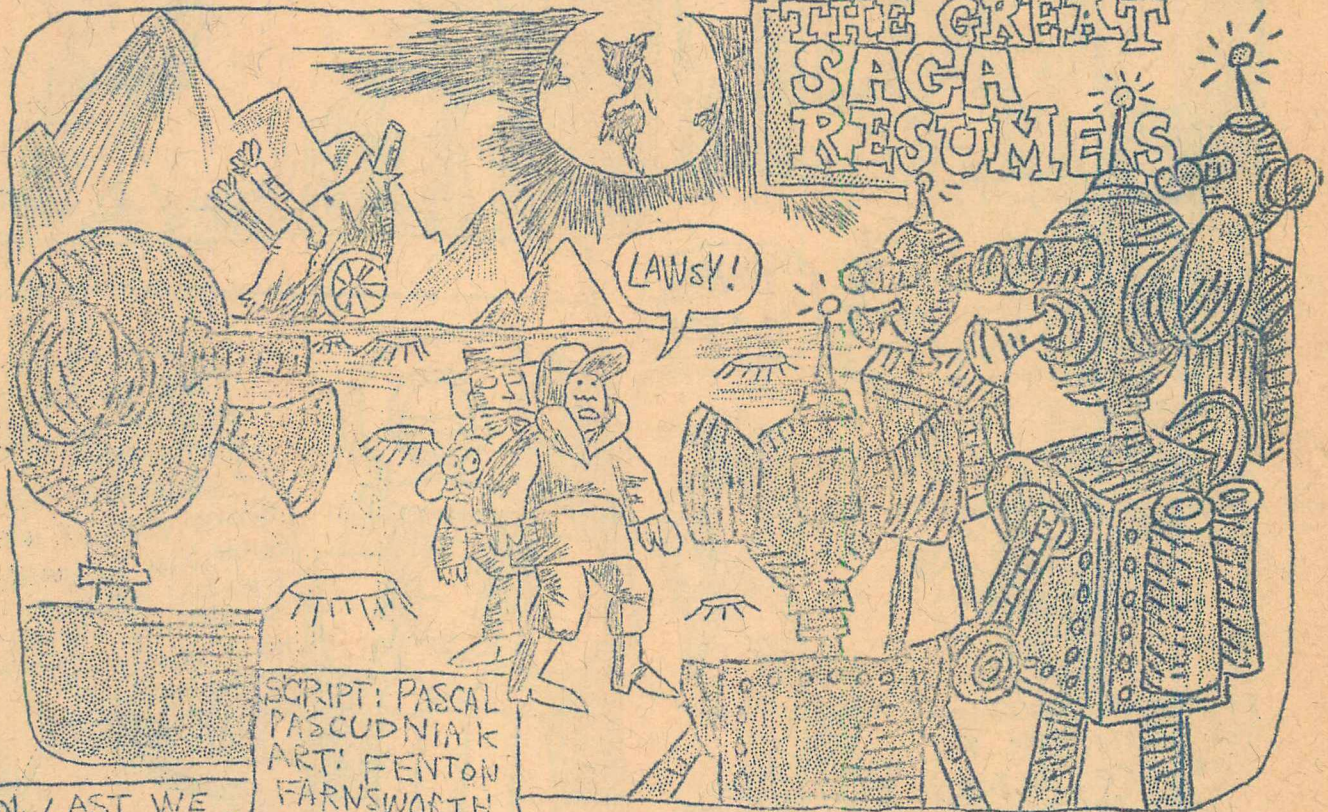
That's about all that is new in these parts. Our grass and weeds are growing at a great pace which makes me quite convinced that a sheep would be much more economical during the spring and summer, and certainly much more fun than a power lawn mower. Snoopy (our black spaniel) has got his spring haircut now and looks like a slightly pudgy black lamb. Last year Ken was convinced that he was a new dog. This year he knew that he wasn't. Kathy wasn't quite sure and Kitty growled and hissed at him for two whole days.

-PEL

CREDIT WHERE IT IS DUE DEPARTMENT: Cover this issue by Kenneth Lupoff. Comics by by Pascudniak and Farnsworth. And the Nycon III Progress Report #2 arrived April 21. Aside from the obvious put-up job with Harlan, not a bad PR; it should be a good convention ...the third week in October?????

-RAL

THE THRILLING EXPLOITS OF PROFESSOR THINTWHISTLE AND HIS INCREDIBLE ETHERFLYER



SCRIPT: PASCAL
PASCUDNIAK
ART: FENTON
FARNSWORTH

© WHEN LAST WE LEFT PROFESSOR THEOBALD THINTWHISTLE and his YOUTHFUL ADMIRER, HERKIMER, THE PROFESSOR HAD SENT HIS NOBIAN BATMAN JEFFERSON JACKSON CLAY FOR A TRAY OF TEA. THE EARNEST YOUTH HERKIMER TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE MOMENT OF PRIVACY TO PLEAD WITH HIS MENTOR.

IS SHE FULLY MAN-
-NED, SIR?
HAVE YOU
ROOM FOR
YOUR FAITH-
FUL HERKIMER?

I swear it, Herkimer, by all that Man holds Holy--I shall take you and Jefferson with me --and we shall

ASTOUND THE WORLD!

