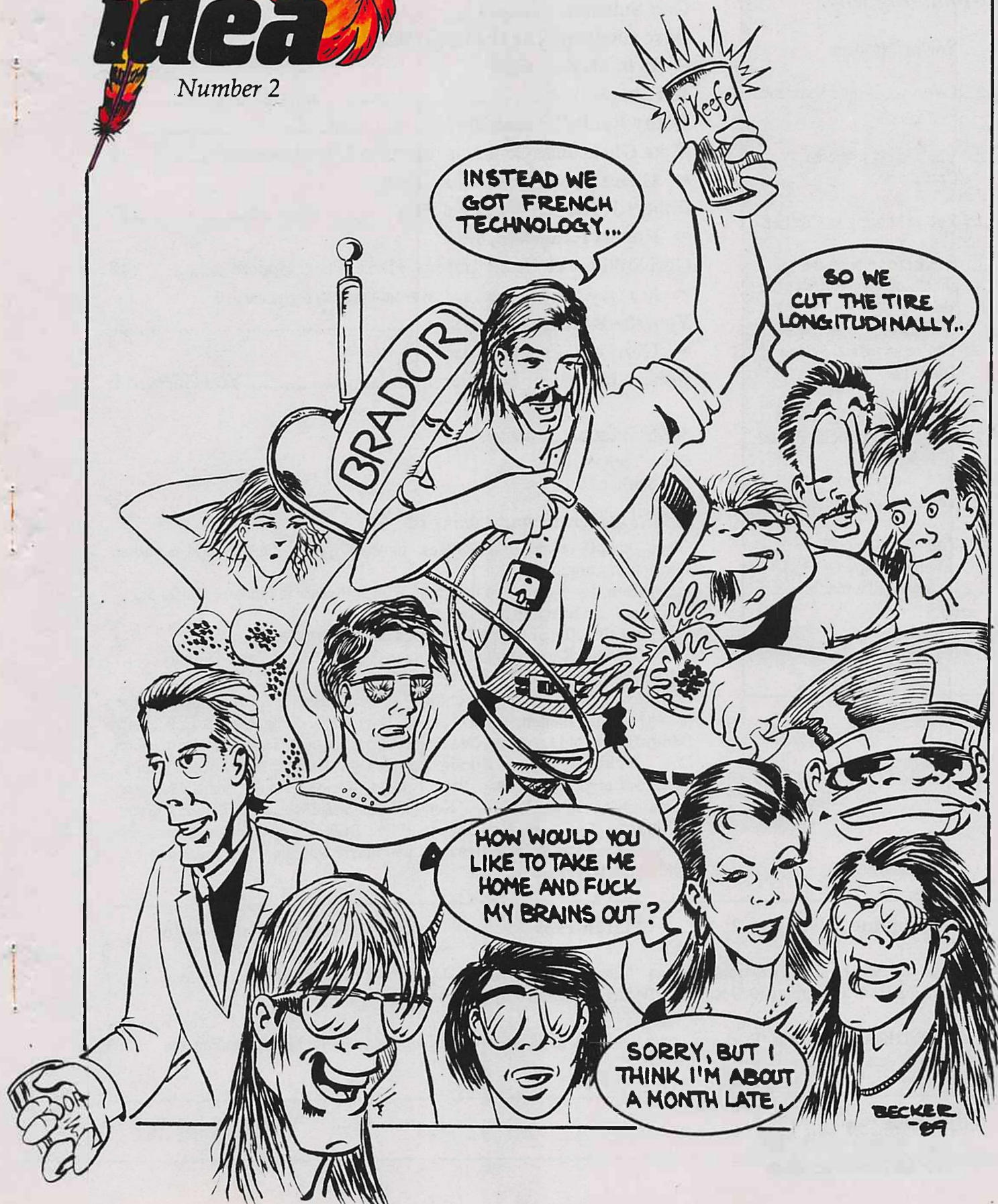


Number 2





# The Credit Belongs To:

## Wondering why?

- You're Canadian
- I wish you would show me yours
- You helped to create Corflu 5.5
- You're coming to Corflu 6
- It must have been the bheer...or maybe it was the roses
- You're an official Friend of Toad Hall
- Quite soon you'll most likely be an Official Friend of Toad Hall
- You loc locs — repeatedly
- You're on the bus
- It seemed like the thing to do
- It's Spring

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## Additional credit and thanks to...

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**Idea Volume 2, Number 2**

**March 1989**

**Geri Sullivan, Editor**

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# Editorial

Never mind that I have yet to receive the statement of interest paid in 1988 from my mortgage company. I sat down with the rest of my tax information and found out I am indeed due the substantial refund I was hoping for. Oh happy day. Oh frabulous joy. The cloud of debt darkening the horizon of my daily life shows signs of breaking up. The sky is far from clear, in fact, you know those towering cumulonimbus clouds? Yea, verily, I say unto thee, the name Geri Sullivan shall be inscribed on those mountainous peaks. They form interesting shapes: that one over there looks like a giant Visa card. And that one further north looks suspiciously like the now-defunct electronic ignition system on the all-too-recently purchased boiler system. (Not so recently purchased as to still be under warranty, of course. But recently enough to still be showing up in the form of monthly payments on the gas bill.) What's that cloud that speeds about the sky? It looks like a car, traveling south and east, then north and west, with stops along the way for regular maintenance, repairs, and monthly loan payments. Oh, and a set of four new tires three days before Wiscon.

Yes, the clouds are still there. But they no longer look to be on the verge of dumping forth an sanity-shattering storm. And I am relieved.

Why, with the tax refund I'll even be able to buy that futon, thus

turning the bed frame that was once my great-great-grandparent's into a second guest bed in time for Corflu visits from Chuck and Sue Harris and Avedon Carol and Rob Hansen.

In my excitement at this heady prospect, I look fondly once more at the bed frame. I slept in that bed through the turbulent years of high school. And then there was the strangeness of returning home after marriage, casually saying goodnight and going off to my old bedroom and bed — with a man — and with my parents at home no less. Very odd. New roles. Old rules no longer apply. But the setting, and the bed, were the same.

Gazing at the wooden bed frame, I notice again its darkness, the heavily-checked finish coat — varnish, shellac, whatever was slathered on some hundred or so years ago. I'm under the impression that the bed dates from the 1860s or 1880s. The wood has been that color, and felt that rough, since before I first slept in it some 20 years ago. But with my recently re-discovered refinishing "expertise" I knew it deserved a better fate.

I trek down to the basement to locate the leftover Wood Doctor refinisher. With nary a second thought for the still unfinished window frames and unpainted walls in the spare room (ref: "Geri Sullivan: Girl Homeowner" *Idea* #1), or for the "simple coat of varnish"

my dining room table needed some hundred hours of character-building trials and tribulations ago, I began yet another home-improvement project. An hour or so later, and 90% of the finish has been turned to sludge and removed from one of the sideboards for the bed. The change is certainly phenomenal, but I'm dubious. I cross my fingers and tell you I'm "90%" done (on one relatively small piece) in hope of avoiding the curse known as the rule of 80/20. (You know, 80% of the work requires 20% of the labor and vice versa.) So far, it's easy. Messy, yes. Smelly, yes. But easy. When I stop to think about the intricate fruit and nut carvings on the head and foot boards, however, I realize that once again I may have bitten off more than I intended to swallow.

I guess this is all my way of saying that it's life as usual at Toad Hall. Rob and Avedon (and other visitors), if the bed I direct you to a few months from now looks a little odd, as if someone did a spectacular job of replacing one or two of the boards, matching the design exactly but with a different wood, well, don't worry about it. The frame's appearance bears no relation to the structural soundness of this particular bed. Besides, it wouldn't do to have a perfectly finished bed set up in an unpainted room, now would it?

—February, 1989

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# The Humdrum Life of Dave Fan

by Dave Clement

Hi. How is life and all that goes with it? "Well" I hope you will say. As for me, the world continues to spin at its usual slow uneventful boring pace. Nothing much ever happens to break the monotony of my day to day existence. What have I been not busy doing of late? Hmmm . . . let's see . . .

*. . . So, there I was, . . .*

## Minicon 21

I guess I should start back at Minicon. Don Bindas and I arrived Thursday evening and wandered about just talking to folk. I did not know Minicon held a "pre-con party". It was a little slow getting started but things got rolling later on. The music was good and I seem to recall the sunrise Friday morning.

I don't recall much of Saturday's programming but I certainly remember the shoddy programming I did for Cheryl's 18th birthday party that evening. I had planned to go to that French place across the road but after talking with most of the crew, it seemed this was a highly unpopular choice. So I opted for the place just across the parking lot, not the all night place but the one with loud music and flashing lights. I asked if I could get a group of twenty in at 6:30 and they said, "yes, we will likely be able to handle it, but we don't take reservations".

I should have suspected trouble. When we arrived, there was a line-up out the door and across the lot. The person I had talked to earlier was nowhere to be found. "At least an hour and a half wait" they said. What to do? Crawl under the nearest rock of course, my standard solution to such problems. After some confusion and much sweet talking we ended up in the back room of the hotel restaurant. From there on, Cheryl's party went

well. Instead of a total disaster it was just a moderate shambles.

Saturday night's music was enjoyable but I had to pack it in early. Sunday? Was there a Sunday in that weekend? Ah yes, I remember now. I actually got to a panel. Then we played musical suitcases as all of those who were on the Winnipeg bus moved their belongings into our room. A small jam started with Nate Bucklin, John Speelman, and Graham Leathers. This was the musical treat of the weekend. In no time it was time for the bus to depart. And then, there was the dead dog.

Some time Monday Don and I headed back north, another great weekend behind us and another week of post-convention blues ahead.

*. . . just sitting in the kitchen . . .*

## Keycon 5

Winter slowly melted into spring and before I knew it, Keycon was in full bloom. Curious how getting actively involved with a con puts an entirely different perspective on it. I was talked into putting on a filk music concert and I volunteered to help Fran Skene, the fan GOH, with a children's panel. Somehow, I also ended up sitting on a panel on "decadence in fandom".

For the filk concert, I enlisted Cheryl, Graham Leathers, John Speelman, and Peter Rempel. We whiled away the weekends between Minicon and Keycon working on material Graham had written and songs I had painfully gleaned from my filk tape collection. All this because I had casually mentioned to Don Bindas, co-chair of the con, just in passing you understand, that the terms "filk" and "music" ought not be mutually exclusive. Whether or

not I proved my point I'm not sure but we had a good audience and they applauded heartily.

The panel with Fran Skene was "interesting." She does a children's "story time" hour complete with hand puppets and songs. The music was where I lent a hand, well, two hands and a guitar. Cheryl got involved in the stories as well as the songs, acting out some of the roles.

We met Fran for the first time Thursday night in the con suite, and spent a couple of hours planning and practicing. Our Friday night rehearsal was both late and short. My fault. I lost track of the time. I was showing Kara Dalkey the many record and cider stores in downtown Winnipeg and . . .

Fran's panel went over well although the audience was very small. I got a great kick out of it, especially once I got into the true spirit of it all. It was fun and I would definitely do it again. Surprised me all to hell.

*. . . with my feet up against the chimney, . . .*

Saturday night saw the second annual Clement Ukrainian supper. Some of those I invited brought friends and we ended up feeding thirty. There was lots of food and seating got cozy. I enjoyed just sitting and talking with folk. Usually, I over indulge in the music circle and thus don't get in much straight visiting. I threatened to leave my guitar at home for 4th Street so I could rectify this bad habit of mine and Don threatened to leave me in Winnipeg. Ah, well, life's like that.

There was, of course, folk music both Friday and Saturday nights. Representing the Minneapolis end of the "Minneapolis/Canadian



Connection" were Steven Brust, Beth Friedman, Kara Dalkey, and Emma Bull. From the Winnipeg end there were John, Graham, Cheryl, Peter, and myself. Have I mentioned yet the De Lints? Charles De Lint was the Canadian writer GOH. I predict that in two years he will be Canada's best known SF/F author. He is also no mean musician and singer. He played in an Irish band, "Wickentree," for many years and then put his music down to write full time. He has a great voice, plays guitar, fiddle, penny whistle, mandolin, bouzoukki, boron, and so on. His wife, MaryAnn, also sings and plays mandolin, although she is very shy about it.

*... a bowl of bar-b-q peanuts  
on my lap, ...*

Sunday was "sleep in day" and the third of my panels, the one on decadence. One interesting observation about Winnipeg fandom, they don't attend serious programming. The masquerade and dance were well attended not to mention the many parties but most panels, including this one, had small audiences. I found this disappointing as Dave Simmonds and Dave Brough had worked damned hard to produce the best Keycon programming to date. But, enough soap boxing.

My co-hosts for the decadence panel were Michael Skeet from Toronto and Randy Reikhart from Edmonton. Randy gave us a brief history of "Decadent Winnipeg Fandom," a legendary if not mythical Winnipeg fan group from the early 60s. I found it fascinating, fen in the city back in the days when I was just starting to read SF&F. We also reviewed the "most decadent fan" questionnaire and awarded the prizes for same.

Sunday night was the highlight of this year's Keycon for me. Charles De Lint and I found an outdoor patio and swapped tunes till 4:00 a.m. The dead dog went on

around us and I barely even noticed the late night swimmers. And that polished off the con, and me. I rate this year's Keycon as the best one so far. Now, if I could just figure out why they put me on that decadence panel.

*... an ice cold Coke  
on the table beside me, ...*

#### Family Trip # 1

The weekend after Keycon saw Betty and I busing north to Betty's home town, Flin Flon. It is located about 550 miles north west of Winnipeg, on the Manitoba/Saskatchewan border. Betty's mom, an energetic white haired lady of 78, was to become a "Lady of the Order," the highest honour in the Rebecca Lodge I believe. Having family there was important to her so we jumped on the Friday night bus and arrived twelve hours later.

The ceremony was interesting, a formal ritual meant to be full of pomp, pageantry, and mystery. However, as most of those taking part were elderly and their numbers reduced by time, I found it sad. I hate to see traditions die. When Trudeau unified the Canadian army, navy, and air force and made them all wear those crumby green uniforms, I was ticked off. When Ottawa took away the Mounties' red coats I was down right mad. When they changed the words to our national anthem, "Oh Canada", I was so pissed off I have to this day refused to learn the new words. So, perhaps you can see why I felt a bit sad at the sight of another set of traditions dying out.

I cheered up somewhat at the Lodge's pot luck supper that followed. There was enough food to sate even my not inconsiderable appetite. Being "pot luck" there were many different and delicious dishes available. I certainly could not bring myself to insult any of the ladies who had worked so diligently to provide such fine provender, now

could I?

Sunday morning we were on the south bound bus with Winnipeg a scant half day away. By the way, you might be interested to know that Flin Flon was named after a science fiction character. If not the only city in North America to be thus distinguished, it is probably the oldest.

*... listening to a  
"Spirit of the West" tape, ...*

#### AdAstra 9

So, there I was, two weeks later, sitting in the Winnipeg Airport waiting for my flight to Toronto, listening to Stan Rogers tunes on my Walkman. "fli\*#\$ \$@& to Toronto @%#\$ \*%& late." Late? No problem. What's another half hour or so, right? Wrong! "fl\*#@^ 791 @% Tor(#^# is cance##@&." Cancelled? Cancelled! The plane was "goosed" while landing and the engine was screwed. Oh, well, inconvenient but no sweat, just switch flights.

Simple you say? Guess again. The Winnipeg Airport had recently been completely remodelled and I got lost. After bumping into a few sets of those all glass doors, some kind soul showed me the secret way out of the transparent maze. By then, a long, long line had formed at the ticket counter. Three hours later I finally flew out, courtesy of Ward Air who were "happy to assist those left stranded by Canadian Air."

*... and petting our black cat,  
Tim ...*

My sister, Diane, her husband, her best friend Barb, and Barb's niece all met me at the airport. Turned out we were all "sharing" my room." Of course, registration wasn't open at 1:00 a.m. but my guitar and I were drawn to the music room anyway. There we found Steve Brust, Beth Friedman, the De Lints, Pamela and David Dyer-Bennet, and others, all of whom were willing to



vouch for me.

I was able to offer Beth crash space for the weekend and I think this bothered my sister a touch. You see, she was not familiar with the traditional fan practice of "crashing" and this was the second year I had invited a lady to share my room. I explained how important it is to keep such innocent traditions alive but . . . Oh well, she'll survive. She survived that time when we were little kids and I ran one of those hand cranked mixers into her foot-long hair. I forget what she had done to deserve this fate, probably scoffed at some tradition I held dear. But I digress. Back to AdAstra.

Saturday I actually attended a few panels. You should see Steve handle a reading when next door, Star Trek Toronto is running a play, complete with full volume sound track and PA system. The reading won out. Later, I spent several enjoyable hours in the bar with Charles and MaryAnn. Then we went looking for a music room.

Eventually we found a spot and set up shop. I learned later that we were directly across from the official filking room. I hope we did not disturb them too much what with Charles' fiddle, my recorders, Steve's drum, MaryAnne's mandolin, and several guitars. It wasn't done on purpose, honest.

Sunday I slept till check out time and then headed off for the home town with my sister. Actually, I was up for the first nine hours of Sunday playing music but I don't count that as part of Sunday. The sun wasn't up yet so it was still Saturday. All in all, a most enjoyable AdAstra for both Diane and me.

*. . . when, totally out of the blue . . .*

#### Family Trip #2

Diane and I drove to Port Dover, a small town on the shore of Lake Erie. We ran off somewhat quickly from AdAstra in a vain attempt to forestall the traditional lectures on



"wasting time at silly conventions instead of spending more time at home" and "when are you moving back to Ontario?"

My family, on both sides, are the most argumentative and non-forgiving bunch I've ever met. As the "long lost sheep" I visit everyone I can, crossing all the battle lines in relative safety. In conjunction with my family tree project, I hope to write a book that describes all the relatives and their disputes as seen from the different sides. That'll be a hum dinger.

What with visiting everyone I could, the time went very quickly indeed. Then it was back on a plane for Winnipeg Thursday night to link up with Don Friday morning and drive to 4th Street. Well, if you thought taking off one weekend to go to AdAstra sparked some comments from my Dad, leaving early to attend another con lit a small bonfire. Talk about feeling guilty! But a feller's gotta do what a feller's gotta do, right?

*. . . Cheryl came in from work . . .*

#### 4th Street #3

Our weekend started with a very nice 1.5 hour visit with the U.S. Customs folk. I don't know if it was Robert Pasternak's muscle shirt, long hair, and head shop jewelry or Don's comments about the cider and kolbassa in the trunk or Cheryl scrunching down in the back seat in her short shorts and halter top, but our number came up. They went

through the car quite thoroughly and got excited over Robert's art portfolio and the eight 6-packs of cider. We got to fill in various forms and turn out our pockets. Robert was asked to take off his shoes and socks as well. Then he got invited over to the other building. Rubber glove time we figured, but he claims "no" — just a frisking and more examination of his toes. This zero tolerance is serious stuff. Once released we made our way south to Minneapolis for the 4th Street Fantasy Convention.

Music started Friday night. Nate Bucklin, Kate Worley, and Reed Waller joined us after playing a late night gig. I met and strummed a few chords with David Hartwell that night. As is usual for me, I found out the next day who he was.

*. . . and asked me if I was sitting down . . .*

Now, let me see, did I get to any programming at this con? Damned right, almost all of it. 4th Street is the one convention at which I give priority to programming over music. After all, if I ever get off my butt and start writing instead of foolin' around with all this folk and filk music, the ideas and advice gleaned from these panels will be invaluable. Thus, no music Saturday night so I'd be rested and alert Sunday. (If you believe that, I've got this bridge . . .) The Saturday night music was pretty hot but the rooms were not very conducive to listening.

Sunday, I only made it to half the panels, something about needing sleep. But I recovered in time for the Dead Dog, the best I've yet attended. The music was fun and the conversations engaging. I vaguely recall leaning on a wall propping myself up with my guitar so I could stay awake and talk. Had I sat down it would have been lights out and I didn't want to miss any of it. Discussions were so stimulating that Dave Simmonds, Ruth Anderson, and



Sherrie Portigal stayed up all night, climbed into Dave's van around 4:00 a.m. and then drove non-stop back to Winnipeg.

At times like this I feel like a greedy little kid again, saying "more, more, more" and not knowing when to quit. It must be something in fandom that makes people lose all sense of proportion. Great ain't it?

There was a price to pay though. Leaving the next day was very hard and there was that sad eight hour drive home to endure. For Don and I the price for this year's 4th Street was well worth it.

*... (which, of course, I was) ...*

### Baggiecon #1

The 2nd weekend in July brought the Winnipeg Folk Festival and Baggiecon #1. This convention is the formalization of a long standing tradition that I will explain another time. Baggiecon #0 in 1987 boasted only four members, Elise Krugger, Chris Li, Don Bindas, and myself — a doubling of the informal membership. Preparations for this year's con filled the idle hours between 4th Street and the Folk Festival. There was the "baggie" to construct, the fluorescent stakes to paint, the pink balloons to string, and the various con suite supplies to gather. No sense in just lazing about doing nothing, eh?

We met up with Emma Bull and Will Shetterly Thursday night and Elise Krueger and friends on Friday. Music, music, music! How I love it! We did end up bending a string or two in the campground Friday and Saturday nights. We couldn't help it, so much music coursing through the blood, it just had to get out.

Sunday evening's six hour wrap-up panel was the highlight of the con. We had twenty nine members "on the bag" and everyone enjoyed the toboggan seating arrangements. A warm and loving ten minute group hug was the perfect ending for this year's Baggiecon. I

hope those who were there are talking it up so next year's con can be even bigger and better. After all, we go to a lot of effort to provide all that excellent programming just for your enjoyment.

*... because she had some important news to tell me ...*

### Family Trip #3

A week and a half later it was back on the bus for Flin Flon, this

*... and she wanted me sitting when she told me ...*

### Nolacon

And then came Nolacon, my first world con, and definitely not my last. We drove to Grand Forks and caught the Amtrak "Empire Builder" to Chicago. We boarded around midnight and settled in, nine hardy Winnipeg fen bound for New Orleans. There was a lounge car, just



time for a week of rest at the cabin Betty owns with her sister and brother. It was built by her Dad in 1953 on a large lake-front lot. It would make the perfect holiday spot if I could just get rid of the mosquitos, sand flies, black flies, deer flies, horse flies — I detest things that bite.

One week off is just not enough for proper R&R. In the past three years I've had at most two consecutive weeks holiday from the office. The "office"? Ah yes, that strange fantasy world I occasionally inhabit between cons.

made for music, so we sang and played our way to Chicago. Well, not all the way. The train folk evicted us to show a movie. Imagine, choosing "Three Men and a Baby" when you could have prime time live Canadian folk musicians. Now, I ask you, is that a sign of the degeneration of today's society or what?

*... that I will soon be a grandfather.*

The Chicago train station is an experience everyone should have, once. Our arrival was announced by



a loud abrupt male voice shouting "Chaaacaaagaaa!" into the train. just that one word. Off we scrambled into pitch darkness, horrendous noise, and the stench of partially burned diesel fuel. We walked and walked and walked down a narrow platform between two thundering trains, not sure if we were headed toward or away from the station. Eventually, a bare light bulb suspended from a cord came into sight and we gave a collective sigh of relief, civilization at last.

Did I say "civilization"? Well, maybe, compared to the black of the pit we had just left. But we merely traded one form of chaos for another. There were hordes of people stampeding in every direction. How they knew which direction was which is still a mystery to me. I didn't see a single sign anywhere and what's worse, nor did the others. Eventually we found something euphemistically

called the Amtrack Passenger Lounge. Here we took refuge until our connecting train was ready to board. The noise level was a few decibels lower but the smell was worse. Ah, the joys of train travel.

*To say that I was surprised  
would be . . .*

The next train, the famed "City of New Orleans," was quite a come-down from the Empire Builder. The cars were old and the seats were hard, the food was uneatable and the bar car had booths. I now understand what motivated Steve Goodman to write the song. It's tough to play music sitting in a booth but if you sit on the table . . .

While thus engaged I met Mary Ellen Wessels, a stroke of luck for me. Mary Ellen is a "real filker," that is, she is a good musician and fine singer who also does filk. She

can be heard on many of the better filk tapes. We had a great time singing our way to New Orleans. She's an avid Stan Rogers fan (as were many of the people I met at the World Con) so we hit it off right away.

*. . . to put it mildly and, . . .*

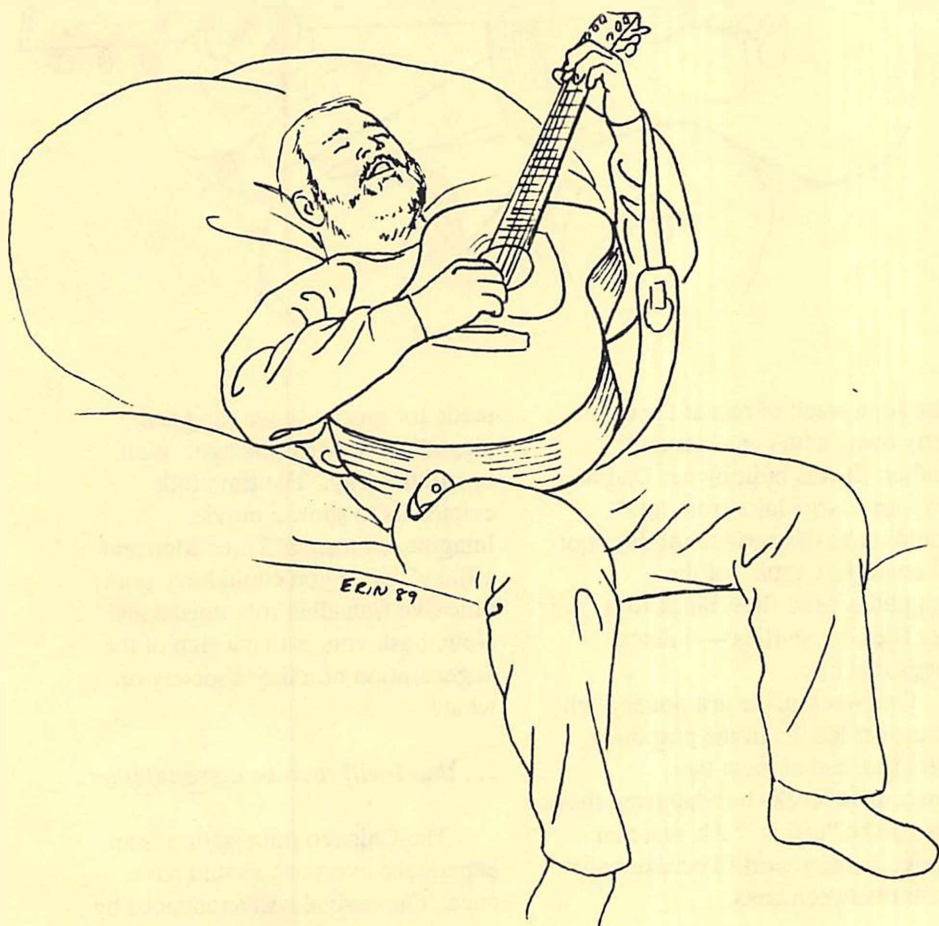
Once in New Orleans, we headed for registration. No problems other than that I had left my cane on the train (and kept bumping into attractive ladies all weekend) and the hotel had lost our reservations.

Thursday night I wandered around and eventually found the filk room. World Con filking is certainly an "experience". I sat in for an hour or more, got to sing one song, and left. Back in the hallway I found several others who had made the same choice. A convenient corner was quickly located and we settled in. Mary Ellen introduced me to a hundred or so folk in about ten minutes. I met Bill and Brenda Sutton, Kathy Mar, and Bill Roper, all nice folk. You can probably guess the general trend of my con from there.

Friday night I again gave up on the general filk circle and went roaming. My guitar and I eventually ended up in the ASFA suite. I did not know that so many artists are also old folkies. They had a great time listening to and singing along with tunes from the sixties. Theresa someone and Scott Merit joined me and we sang the night away. Great fun for all.

Sunday night I stuck it out at the filk circle. I felt that my first World Con would not be complete without this experience. Most of the filking was, er, different, but there were some things I found interesting. In retrospect, I am probably a better person for it.

Monday night I arranged a "closed music party" for a few of the more musically inclined filkers I had met. The Winnipeg/94 Committee





kindly offered the use of their suite. I thought an evening of good folk music a great way to end the Con and cement new friendships. Live and learn. When I arrived the suite was full and none of those I invited were there yet.

I tried, honestly I did. The first few songs went well with lots of great harmony. My hopes rose. But the circle kept growing and all too soon it got round to those fifty-eight verse solo dirges, "more ose" I think it is called. After an hour of this, I left the circle for a minute to bid farewell to the ones I had originally invited. Somehow, I found myself forty floors down, sitting under an escalator with a bottle of bourbon, swapping songs and tales, and the sun was rising. I fear I still have much to learn about hosting parties.

*... while I sat formulating  
my response, ...*

Now, I wouldn't want you to think that all I did at the World Con was music, not at all. There were lots of other things ... now let's see ... there were other things weren't there? Ah yes! The dealers room. I spent a small fortune there but they ought not let marks like me in with plastic. Then too, there was the art show. It wasn't exactly my thing but Don and Dave and the credit card companies enjoyed it thoroughly.

And let's not forget the colourful restaurants and unique food of New Orleans. Mind you, there were a few stick-in-the-muds who only wanted pizza or chocolate ice cream, but we didn't let them dull our appetites. The French Quarter was interesting, but Bourbon Street was a disappointment. It is fully commercialized: strip joints, tourist traps, con games, beer stores, and very few music spots.

Tuesday saw us back on the "City of New Orleans" heading north to Chicago. I crashed and burned. Fourteen hours of sleep on a totally uncomfortable train and I didn't

notice a thing. Can't imagine what got into me!

In Chicago, we met Jack Targonski who took us for lunch and a walk around the downtown area. It was good to see Jack again. He rescued us from the train station and brightened up our homeward journey.

Back on the Empire Builder again. Now well rested and well fed, I found that nice lounge car and played a tune or two. Before I knew it we were in Minneapolis, running from the bar car to the station to meet and greet "some red-headed lady looking for Canadians on the train." But this is another story for another time.

Off the train at 5:00 a.m. and into the cars. Back to Winnipeg with no border problems. We just made it home before collapsing. As exhaustion claimed me I thought, "so that's a World Con, eh?"

*... she went on with her news*



*and ...*

#### Valleycon #12.5

This year's Valleycon was both a disappointment and a pleasure. The disappointment came when many good Minneapolis friends could not attend. The pleasure came with those who could. There is nothing like Jamaican Blue Mountain coffee and Decadent chocolate chip cookies for breakfast, and red wine with shaved dark chocolate for a late night snack to bring together kindred spirits in this madly spinning world.

As for the con, I can only speak about the Art Auction (standard

excuse #31 — it's the only thing I attended.) Robert Asprin served as auctioneer and did a damned fine job, especially as he was up almost as late as I the night before. Actually, I was pleasantly surprised by Robert. For months I had heard stories about a totally obnoxious person and thus came expecting a crude, rude, and arrogant individual. After meeting him I realized his character had suffered from slight over exaggeration. He was completely professional in his official activities, those I saw anyway. That he is not the best of musicians nor singers did not bother me either. After all, I have survived one entire night at Nolacon filking. What's more, I felt he made a concerted effort at the Saturday night music session to get people involved and to entertain. What's a few slightly sodden slurs towards the others in the circle? One must make some allowances when meeting new people mustn't one?

*... informed me that she  
would be moving out ...*

#### Winnipeg Folk Connection

The day after getting home from Fargo I attended the first annual meeting of a small organization called the "Winnipeg Folk Connection." This group is trying to keep folk music alive and growing in Winnipeg. I wasn't overly keen on attending yet another "general meeting" of a "volunteer organization" having been involved in depth with five others in the past, but I was feeling totally down after the high of the weekend. I had to do something and they promised there would be a jam after the meeting. I should have known better.

Yours truly sat there, quiet as a mouse as usual, for about one hour. Then, I began putting in a few comments and suggestions. Before I knew it I was elected a "director." Some day I must learn how to say "no." The promised jam did materialize — four fiddles, three



mandolins, three banjos, two flutes, one set of Northumbrian bagpipes, and one guitar (mine). At the third W.F.C. concert, they let me on stage for a couple of tunes. They didn't throw any tomatoes so I think I'll try it another time. It felt good to be in front of an audience again after all these years.

... and,  
(here was the real blow) ...

#### WestEnd Cultural Centre

The bi-weekly concerts run by the W.F.C. are held at the WestEnd Cultural Centre. This is an old church bought by Mitch Podoluk, founder of the Winnipeg Folk Festival. He has been working hard to make it a centre for all kinds of cultural activities, including folk music.

Needing something to keep up my spirits until Consensus I took in the James Keeleghan and Connie Calder concerts. In my estimation, Keeleghan is really Stan Rogers in his next re-incarnation. The concert he and his group put on brought me right out of the doldrums and left me wired again. Seeing him should go on your "can't afford to miss" list. Between the WestEnd and W.F.C. concerts, I am slowly getting to know some of the local performers on the Winnipeg scene. It's my intention to become one of them over the winter.

There you have it. Not much happening in the every day, ordinary, humdrum life of Dave Fan, is there?

... she was retiring from her musical career.

Now what's a Dad to do, I ask you?

*Editor's Note:* Jesse Brian Jonathan Miki Clement was born February 24, 1989. Dave would love to receive fanzines on disk so he can read them. His computer reads WordPerfect and ASCII files aloud. (360K, 5 1/4" floppies)

### A More Modern Monday's Child

by Jon Singer

*Monday's child must save his face  
Tuesday's child is stuck in place  
Wednesday's child has ceased to grow  
Thursday's has no place to go  
Friday's child, more taking than giving  
Saturday's child won't work for a living  
And a child that's born on Sabbath Day  
is smug & prim & overly self-righteous.*

## And Yet...

by Kathy Routliffe  
Staff Writer

When Geri suggested I write something about my thoughts on both the American and Canadian elections, my expectations about the results of both, she unknowingly helped me discover two things.

I headed to the library to review its available cache of news on the Canadian election, prodded by my sometimes erratic reportorial instinct to get the facts about Canada's ordeal at the ballot box.

I discovered an embarrassment of riches from the only Canadiana they had — good old *MacLeans Magazine*. (I grew up with *MacLeans*, and relearned in the library how good Canadian news writing is, and how different it is from what often passes for decent writing in American newsmagazines.)

I was five hours in that library, mesmerized by the magazines. Shortly I will make your eyes glaze over with a (mercifully) brief recitation of some things I

discovered.

But more important, I discovered that, in the eight years I have lived in the United States, I have forgotten what it is to be a Canadian.

Well, not exactly forgotten. My American friends know that I rail religiously against the almost pathological ignorance of Americans about the country they live cheek by jowl with. (Oops, a dangling participle. . . ah, well, no one ever accused reporters of knowing how to write good. . .)

I have been, in fact, somewhat of a tireless (and tiresome) apologist for Canada. I have never given up my citizenship because I believe one should not do so without deciding that one loves one's new country more than one loves one's birth country. Much as I love America, and think she is a unique force for good in this world, I trust you will forgive me the blood ties to my own land.

When all that is said and done,



however, I admit that eight years of cultural osmosis have left me neither fish nor fowl.

I have absorbed some American impatience, which I apply to all parts of my life: emotional, intellectual, spiritual, political.

Politically, especially, I have become more radical, much more so than I ever would have suspected upon my arrival (although, as a good bourgeois type I confess to being an armchair radical. I prefer to think of it as the Canadian attitude that one can be radical within the system. More of that later.)

Being in a country that deigned to notice Canada only when it decided to oppose some American policy, or when its top hockey star emigrated to LA, or when its top runner was tripped up by steroids (oh, the pain of Ben Johnson), I simply didn't have access to the day-to-day river of Canadian events. I should have been reading *MacLeans*.

But now I know a lot about why Canadians went to the polls. I think I know why they voted as they did, and I have the wise words of Canadian pundits to mask any uncertainty I have.

But I promised I'd talk about the American election, too. As an outsider, perhaps it will be easier for me to do it all in one figurative breath. It certainly took American commentators a fuck of a lot longer than one breath to get the whole sorry mess described and done with.

Fact — On November 8, George Bush, Republican, won and Michael Dukakis, Democrat, did not. Bush will provide the 9th through 12th year of constant GOP executive branch in this country. And — surprise, all you children of the late 60s and early 70s who got tricked into thinking this was a big-D Democratic country — he will continue a more or less constant tradition of executive branch GOpism and Congressional Democrat control.

It should be a messy term,

although Bush may be slightly different than the asshole who preceded him.

Uhhmm. . . analysis?

Bush won because he fought dirty and correctly say that America's hunger for things simple and brutal has not been sated by eight years of that senile old fascist Reagan.

Dukakis lost because he was an honorable, stubborn man who ran by the book and was surrounded by ineptitude.

More heartbreaking however, was that he was beaten even more by those things so simple and brutal. To wit, all talk of taxes, government wrongdoing, Iran-Contra, or policy foreign and domestic aside, Americans still don't trust a politician who says 'We must be good and honorable. We must not hate women or blacks, calling them broads and n-----. We must not hate the poor or helpless, homeless or ill, calling them deadbeat and crazy. We must not be only a nation of white, homophobic, and misogynistic Anglo Saxon men. We can't pretend to be that because we never were, and if we insist on doing it our country will wither and die.' Nobody likes the truth.

I weep when I say this because I DO believe Americans and America have the potential of being supremely, transcendently good.

But, as with all people whose culture embraces extreme good, embraces the concept of extremism (and BOY, does America fit the bill), your people can equally embrace the dark side of — oops — hate, fear, and xenophobia.

In a country of 246 million (as in any crowd) the tendency toward fear and hunger for simplicity simply overcame the mass of American voters.

So, as I said, Bush won. It isn't the end of the world, although I confess that window ledges looked really good to me for about 24 hours after the election.

Bush is probably not the fascist Reagan was, after all. But what bothers me is that he will be more efficient than was Reagan. If he has any streak of totalitarian sympathy, no matter what good-hearted justification he uses in its defense, he will be more efficient at implementing it.

Having heard Bush's first address to Congress, I must admit he has made some stabs at being decent. For example, he has said he will introduce legislation to enforce and restrict goal and gas emissions that cause acid rain, which devastates Canada even as you read this. It's something Reagan successfully fought for eight years, the smiling arteriosclerotic bastard.

Still, I can't forget what agency Bush ran for a while.

Next: Canada's election, held on November 21, maintained the Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney. Mulroney lost his overwhelming lead in Parliament, dropping from 211 of 281 seats to 169 of 295 seats, a bare majority.

The reason he won is that his opponent was the Liberal party, lead by John Turner. Turner's middle name is ineptitude (shades of Dukakis) and so the Liberals lost. Canadians suspected he'd be a godawful leader because they had him for a few months before Mulroney first came to power. They are also a cautious lot, after all.

But Turner, warts and all, almost won the election. He opposed Mulroney's project, something the latter had worked on single-mindedly since 1985, the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States.

This monster is 1,407 pages long and I will not make your eyes glaze over THAT much. Suffice to say it provides for a 10-year schedule of cutting out all tariffs on Canadian goods to America and vice versa. It will allow real free trade, with all the troubles, trials, and possible rewards



that represents for people on both sides of the border, for the first time in Canada's history.

Turner had been losing the election when, on October 25 and 26 in national debates watched by almost everyone in Canada, he accused Mulroney of selling Canada out to the United States with the FTA. The effect was electrifying. Turner, a big businessman, former chair of Bechtel Corporation's Canadian division, who in 1983 supported free trade, rocketed to the top of the political charts by saying the FTA would make Canadians the lapdogs of the continent.

And Mulroney, who fought free trade in 1983, went to the wall to support his agreement, worked out over three years of haggling with dat ol' smoothy Jim Baker.

(By the way, mention of the debates brings up a crucial difference between Americans and Canadians. How many people do you know who watched Bush and Dukakis? In Canada 45 percent of people polled said the debates helped them make up their minds on whom to vote for.)

More important, 46 percent of voters said they decided based on Turner and Mulroney's stands, and 60 percent said they decided based on the leader's stand on the FTA.

And 57 percent of the popular vote went against Mulroney's Progressive Conservatives (another hint: only in Canada would you find those two words in the same title, and

only in Canada would you find a conservative party more socialist than most American Democrats.)

In areas of Canada that are poor, isolated, and saddled with a history of being ignored even by central Canada, Turner's message hit home. In all but one western province, the PCs lost seats. They lost even more in my own home province of Nova Scotia and other eastern Canadian provinces. That says a lot because eastern Canadians have mostly voted PC since they stood upright.

However, Mulroney's party (and remember, in Canada, you vote for a member of parliament, and the party with the most MPs wins. You don't vote for the party leader) won overwhelmingly in Quebec, Alberta, and Ontario, the most populous and industrialized provinces. Those are the provinces where people stood to gain the most by the FTA.

The FTA galvanized the election. Before the debates, the campaigns had focused on tax reform, a constitutional milestone called the Meech Lake accord, and each of three national party's proposals for a national day care policy. The third party by the way is the New Democratic Party, or NDP. It's my personal favorite when I can vote, but would probably cause Americans to froth at the mouth in anti-communist frenzy. . .

All were still considered important, but were overshadowed by the Free Trade Agreement.

(Can you imagine even the Democrats proposing a national child care policy? Even now proposed legislation in Washington will probably fail. Your liberalism differs from ours not only in quantity but quality — but that is a story for another day.)

The struggle pro- and anti-FTA embroiled Canada's considerable intellectual community too: Farley Mowat and Margaret Atwood against it, Mordechai Richler and W.P. Kinsella for it.

The agreement itself does contain some very troubling items. It allows, to my mind, too much potential for American takeovers in Canada by lifting rules that had allowed Ottawa to screen every takeover worth more than \$5 million. The ceiling is now \$150 million.

Energy provisions also bother me, since they take away the right of Canadian power providers to sell power to the U.S. for more than they do to Canadians, even in an emergency.

More troublesome still is the idea that Canada can no longer unilaterally nationalize any form of health care, as it did in the 1960s to provide universal medical care. If it wants to create, say, universal dental care, it must reimburse the American insurance companies who will be put out of business. And that will effectively chill any nationalization efforts.

Materially, those things bother me, as do other clauses that will force Canada quite possibly to lower her standards on some items, such as lumber.

In the realm of the metaphysical there is also some worry. No, the FTA specifically keeps out of the cultural arena, something Mulroney went to fevered lengths to emphasize. But it is logical to realize that one's economics WILL eventually, somehow, affect one's culture. If American goods flood us, will American values?

I am thus tempted to stand with

*Canadian fans, talking about America's \$1 trillion annual budget:*

Don Bindas: "Think of the con they could throw."

Dave Clement: "Think of the con they are throwing."

1/29/89



Atwood and acerbic Canadian columnist Allan Fotheringham:

*"Our national animal is the beaver, noted for its industry and cooperative spirit. In medieval bestiaries it is also noted for its habit, when frightened, of biting off its own testicles and offering them to its pursuer. I hope we are not succumbing to some form of that impulse."* (Atwood)

*"The reason the battle over free trade has turned around so drastically is because enough Canadians realized life is about more than tariffs and controlling duties."* (Fotheringham)

And yet. And yet.

Only Japan has as regulated and protectionist an economy as Canada. Despite that dubious title, 80 percent of Canadian goods passed into the U.S. without tariffs, and 65 percent of American goods came into Canada duty-free, all BEFORE the trade agreement was signed this January. So it's not as if we've been happily off in our own little isolated world thus far, is it? We're certainly not the hewers of wood and drawers of water we once were, since two-thirds of our exports are manufactured, not raw, goods.

(American real-estate moguls will certainly agree, since Canadians right now seem to be out Donald Trumping Donald Trump. We Canadians own a great amount of American real estate.)

In Fortune's International 500, 35 are Canadian business entities, so our businesses don't necessarily need protection.

Our east coast fisheries, dear to my own heart, are protected. More important, the FTA has a six-month cancellation clause if we get cold feet. (A similar trade agreement between Australia and New Zealand has worked well for tiny New Zealand. Maybe that's cause for hope, too.)

And our protectionist sentiments haven't always helped us. Despite the rules, we've felt we had to battle

for our identity. And the ferocity of our battle — Canadian content rules, much as I love them in music and culture, the whole works — makes me wonder.

Former Canadian Prime Minister Lester Pearson once wrote "there are people in Canada who believe that Canadians are not able enough to drive effective bargains with the Americans, so they exploit their insecurities by transposing their insecurities onto the nation by yelling 'sellout' and '51st state'."

That might be right.

Peter C. Newman, a Canadian journalist whom I respect, wrote that the Canadian culture is still like putty, yeasty yet penetrable. Although he worries greatly about the material drawbacks of the FTA, he believes that Canada did one very important metaphysical deed when it narrowly — oh, so narrowly — voted for Mulroney, the PCs, and the agreement.

It may have grown up. It may have said, collectively, that we as Canadians finally believe in ourselves and our ability to survive in the world as a First World Nation, that we can throw away the protectionist blanket. That we no longer see ourselves as inferior to Americans, and so don't need to hide from them.

"Free trades' greatest benefits have already been achieved. In the process of

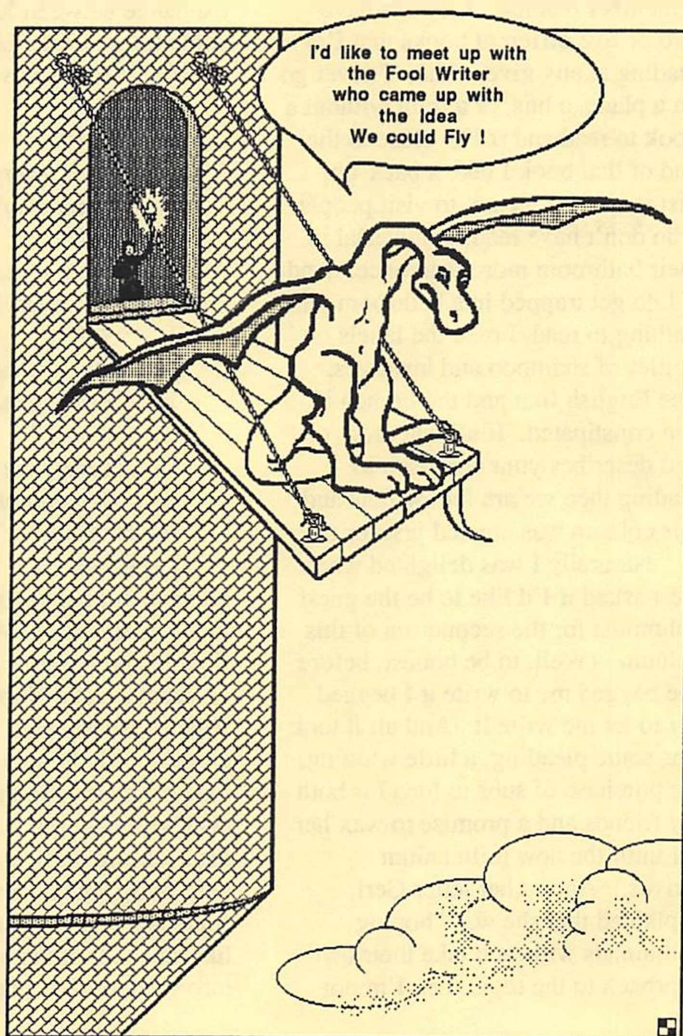
debating what we might have to surrender, Canadians have discovered what we already have," Newman said.

It is an intriguing thought. And, like Newman, I don't think I'll fear for my country. My gut says we shouldn't have done it, my mind, reluctantly, says Go For It.

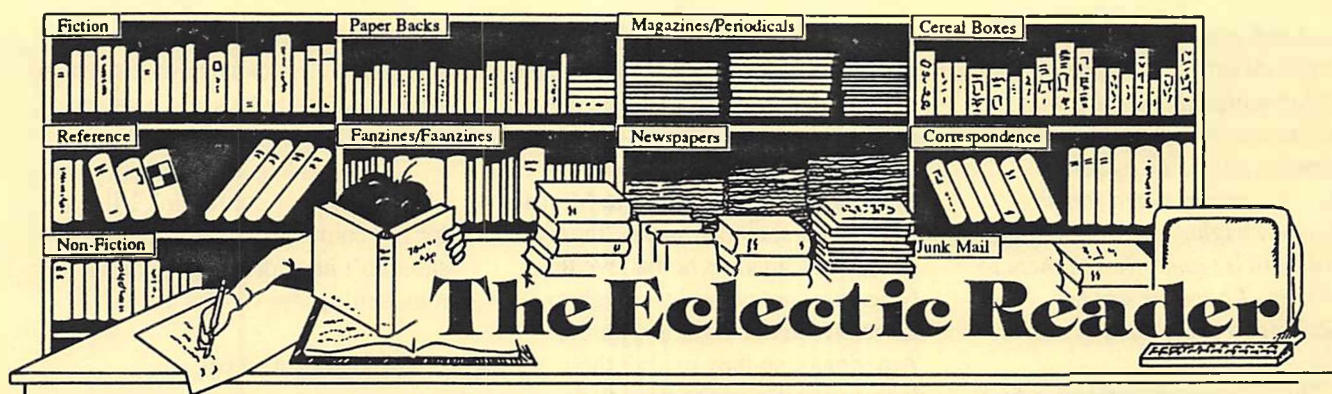
And yet. And yet.

After the election, 55 percent of those Canadians who only days before had hated the FTA said they thought free trade was a good idea, at least in general. In the same breath, 55 percent said they thought there should be a referendum on it before anything was signed. (Fat lot of good that sentiment did them.)

My heart, in good Canadian fashion, wavers just as much.







by Mike Glicksohn

I like to think that I'm a typical fan when it comes to reading. (This is easily accomplished by defining "fan" as someone who reads as I do: all others are media morons, costume clowns, poker perverts, filk freaks, or other fringe non-fans.) I can't remember learning to read, I only remember reading. I always have two or five different books that I'm reading at any given time. I never go on a plane, a bus, or a train without a book to read and if I'm close to the end of that book I take a back-up, just in case. I try not to visit people who don't have reading material in their bathroom more than once. And if I do get trapped in a bathroom with nothing to read, I read the labels on bottles of shampoo and laxatives. The English first and the French if I'm constipated. If all that more or less describes your approach to reading then we are fellow fans and this column was created just for us.

Naturally I was delighted when Geri asked if I'd like to be the guest columnist for the second run of this column. (Well, to be honest, before she begged me to write it I begged her to let me write it. And all it took was some pleading, a little whining, the purchase of subs to Idea for both my friends and a promise to wax her car until the new millennium arrives.) And in her letter Geri explained that she was "hoping columnists will each take their own approach to the topic, i.e., I'm not

looking to print list after list of recommended reading ala Jon Singer." Well, too bad. I liked Jon's approach and intend to repeat it in this column. Let the third contributor boldly go where neither Jon nor I have gone before.

(I do, however, envision an exchange between Jon and Geri at some future CORFLU:

G: "Jon, you've created a monster."

J. "So?"

G. "Well, everyone wants to do the column your way."

J. "So?"

G. "I was anticipating some creative variety."

J. "So?"

G. "Oh, you're infuriating!"

J. "But dependable."

G. "What?"

J. "Surely you've heard them say, 'Dependable as a Singer so- ing machine'?"

Let us take it as a given that we all have our personal favorites when it comes to writers of fantasy, science fiction, and possibly horror. (If one of yours is John Norman or Robert Adams, please wait: a Reader will be along shortly to help you with the longer words.) So this column will deal with material outside the genre itself. More particularly, it will deal with books and authors I think someone who reads as I do would like since all of them delighted, informed, or moved me. (Sometimes

simultaneously.) If any are new to you and you decide to track them down, I do hope you'll find an opportunity to let me know your reactions.

The *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* may not be as complete as one might like (it lacks, for example, entries for "marijuana" and "endomorph") but as a historical and etymological dictionary it is among the best available. It also serves a vital extra function for the budding fan-writer: when you reach the stage where either volume is too heavy to be held in one hand as you type with the other or the print is too small to be seen even with the magnifying glass that comes with the set then you know you're too tired or too drunk to continue and should go to bed.

*Mrs. Byrne's Dictionary (of Unusual, Obscure, and Preposterous Words)* by Josefa Heifetz Byrne, published by Citadel Press, is the perfect companion to the OED. It contains listings for words that used to be in the dictionary but are no longer in favour. It's a delightful bathroom book and a volume that any wordsmith would revel in. Also one of the best sources of fanzine titles I've ever encountered (all three of my own fanzines are there but I got the book long after I named the fanzines). If you need any one of several dozen methods of telling the future (via onions, stones, or boiling



dead babies) or have the delusion you've become a cat and want to put a name to it, this book is for you.

The *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* belongs in the library of every fanzine fan who lacks a photographic memory. It adds an air of erudition to any article or loc and can usually be depended on to provide the perfect title for a fanzine contribution. And as you hunt through it for just the right reference to cap your argument, you'll be delighted with the serendipitous discoveries you make.

If you care about the English language and if you enjoy witty and articulate writing on the subject then any of the books by New York Times columnist William Safire will be a source of enjoyment for you. I have Avon paperbacks of *On Language*, *What's the Good Word*, and *I Stand Corrected* and I can't recommend them highly enough. Safire cares passionately about language and his host of avid readers provides fascinating insights into the development of English as we use it today. Each book consists of a couple of hundred one-to-two page columns so these are also perfect bathroom books.

Less didactic and more entertaining are the books of Willard R. Espy who writes about the oddball and amusing aspects of language. I tend to find his material less consistently interesting than Safire's, but there's certainly enough in any one of *An Almanac of Words at Play*, *Another A. of W. at P.*, *The Game of Words* or any of his other titles to keep most language lovers flipping pages. If you'd like to know that a man named E. V. Wright once wrote a fifty-thousand word novel, *Gadsby*, without using the letter "e" (presumably he wrote it under a pseudonym) then you can't go wrong with Espy.

One occasionally reads that fanzines are the last bastion of the personal humorous essay made famous by the likes of Robert

Benchley, James Thurber, and H. Allen Smith (authors I recommend without reservation, by the way), but this is clearly wishful thinking. Newspapers still feature the occasional columnist who can stand toe to toe with Willis, Shaw, or Locke and banter wordplay in a way that would bring a smile to the ghost of Alexander Woollcott. My vote for the funniest writer extant goes to Britain's Alan Coren, editor of the world-famous *Punch*. In Britain his numerous volumes of *Punch* columns (among them *Golfing for Cats*, *The Lady from Stalingrad Mansions*, *The Dog it was that Died*, and *All Except for the Bastard*) are published in hardcover by Robson and in paperback by Coronet. They may not be available in the U.S. (yet another reason for not moving there,

as if we needed more) so you may have to settle for the books of Dave Berry, nationally syndicated columnist and author of *Bad Habits* (via Doubleday) and other collections. Berry can be as funny as Coren on occasion and that's praise indeed for a mere American. But be warned: exposure to either of them may make most fanzines seem decidedly dull!

Speaking of dull fanzines, one can't help but think of tedious book reviews. And yet such writing does not have to be ephemerally boring (Leland Sapiro to the contrary). One of the finest exponents of the lively, incisive, and memorable book review was Dorothy Parker. Her infamous *New Yorker* columns (bylined "Constant Reader" and as fannish as it's possible to be) were collected in





a wondrous volume entitled *A Month of Sundays*. Unfortunately, it's a British hardcover from MacMillan and I've no idea if there's a U.S. edition, but it's worth investigating. No-one can claim to be a true fan who has not read, in context, her immortal "And it is that word 'hummy,' my darlings, that marks the first place in *The House at Pooh Corner* at which Tonstant Weader Fwowed up." (And if you can't find a collection of her book review columns by all means pick up Viking's *The Portable Dorothy Parker*, which contains all of the reviews along with hundreds of additional pages of essays, poems, and short stories. Her trenchant verses "Comment" and "Resume" are favorites of mine but I always was a dreadful cynic.)

Is it inconsistent for someone who skips past poetry in fanzines to recommend poetry in a fanzine? Perhaps, but we all know what Emerson had to say about that. (And if we don't, we should, and the aforementioned *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* will fill in such an unpardonable gap in what ought to be Everyfan's knowledge. Page 200, citation 40.) So while I'm on the subject let me suggest that no fan, poetry hater notwithstanding, can be a trufan unless he or she is familiar with the tales of "archy and mehitabel." (Harlan Ellison has made the same point but this is something I care not to think about.) My own familiarity comes from the 1946 Doubleday hardcover *The Best of Don Marquis* but I doubt you'll find that too easily nowadays. If Marquis is currently out of print, keep your eyes open in used book stores and grab anything with his name on it. While deservedly famous for the "archy and mehitabel" poems, he was no slouch at short stories either and I doubt you'll go wrong with anything that carries his byline.

In a similar vein, I don't believe any fanzine fan can or should be

unfamiliar with the short fiction of Damon Runyon. Some years back TAFF winner Kev Smith produced a brilliant pastiche of Runyon in his fanzine DOT and within the last four days I've read a Zelazny story in the memorial collection for Terry Carr that is an obvious (if bizarre) melding of Runyon and Cyberpunk. I favour the 1958 Modern Library hardcover *A Treasury of Damon Runyon* (which won't set you back too many potatoes) but anything you find will be a treat. I'd hate to find out that Runyon wasn't currently in print but it may well be that you'll have to try and find him in the same used book stores that carry Don Marquis. Such is the legacy of our post-video, non-literate world.

There are many more, of course. Writers whose work excited and delighted me when I first encountered it. Writers such as the aforementioned Benchley, Thurber, and Smith to which one might add Ring Lardner, E.B. White, Ronald Dahl, and John Collier. And from the modern pantheon one might include William Kinsella, Harry Crews, George Chesbro, P.D. James, and Robert Parker. There is, after all, only so much time for reading and so many talents, both in and out of the genre, who should be read. That's what I see as the function of this column: to make us aware of those we might consider reading. (And is it really possible that neither Jon nor I has yet mentioned Hofstadter's awesome *Godel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid*? Naa, must have skimmed past it.) If anyone reading this article finds a book or an author they can make their own then I'll be content.

But Geri didn't want just a list of suggested reading so let me finish with a tale about the perils of being a reader in the first place.

Almost twenty years ago there was a convention here in Toronto. Asimov and McCaffrey were the pro guests and the fan guest was a well-known fan-turned-pro whose name

has since faded from the tapestry of the SF community. Since I was the only local who actually knew Alexei Panshin I was asked, at the start of the con, to introduce him at the banquet on Saturday. I thought it would be politic to chat with Alex to prepare some introductory material and somehow the topic of public recognition of sf authors came up. And Alex provided me with my first convention banquet introduction.

(As I recall it) Alex was deeply engrossed in a Heinlein novel while heading towards the New York subway and home. So engrossed was he that he somehow managed to pass the turnstile without paying his token. Whereupon he was immediately arrested by the Transit Police. Despite his protestations that he was not a crook (a little ahead of his time, I guess) and merely an SF reader with all that entails, he was hauled away, processed, and deposited in the famous New York Tombs. Where he read his Heinlein book.

Eventually he was bailed out and an officer came along yelling, "Alexei Panshin...Alexei Panshin" at which point one of his fellow detainees cried, "Are you the Alexei Panshin who wrote *The Thurb Revolution*? I love your stuff!" And so did Alex meet his first fan, in the subterranean jails of New York City.

So be careful. Reading may be hazardous. On the other hand, not reading must be detrimental to your mental health and if you didn't agree with that you wouldn't have started or finished this article in the first place. I hope some of my suggestions bring new reading pleasure to at least some of you.

And please let me know about writers I haven't yet had the opportunity to enjoy!



# Taking a Hint

by Robert J. Berlien

Locked gazes mutual lasers  
plugged in dead on; they'd see each  
other's eyes in a black box.

Fingers touch fingers, raised  
ridges fit grooves slide feel the slight  
sweat of (nerves?) (anticipation?) on  
her palm lower; wrist flesh her pulse?  
yours? Wrist or finger? Lower then  
tendons then rise of muscle skin so  
soft and yet only a hint.

Lasers close in burn holes in  
pupils in brains in hearts dead on;  
they'd see each other's hearts in a  
black velvet bag.

Mouths open; sighs accompany  
tongues sliding twixt teeth touching  
wetly, tasting tasting can't wait 'til  
lips lay together, soft/hard tracing  
tasting teeth hungry lips (so hungry)  
tasting teeth (click!) tasting pearls  
and wet satin and  
wet velvet. Lips  
pressed 'til hurting,  
hands clasp wrists  
'til aching mouths  
(so hungry) lips  
bitten blood swelled  
desperate hungry  
honey so sweet and  
yet only a soft/hard  
hint.

Lasers reflect  
and register scan-  
ning topography  
skin hair there &  
there & there dead  
on; they'd see each  
other's bodies in a  
black hole.

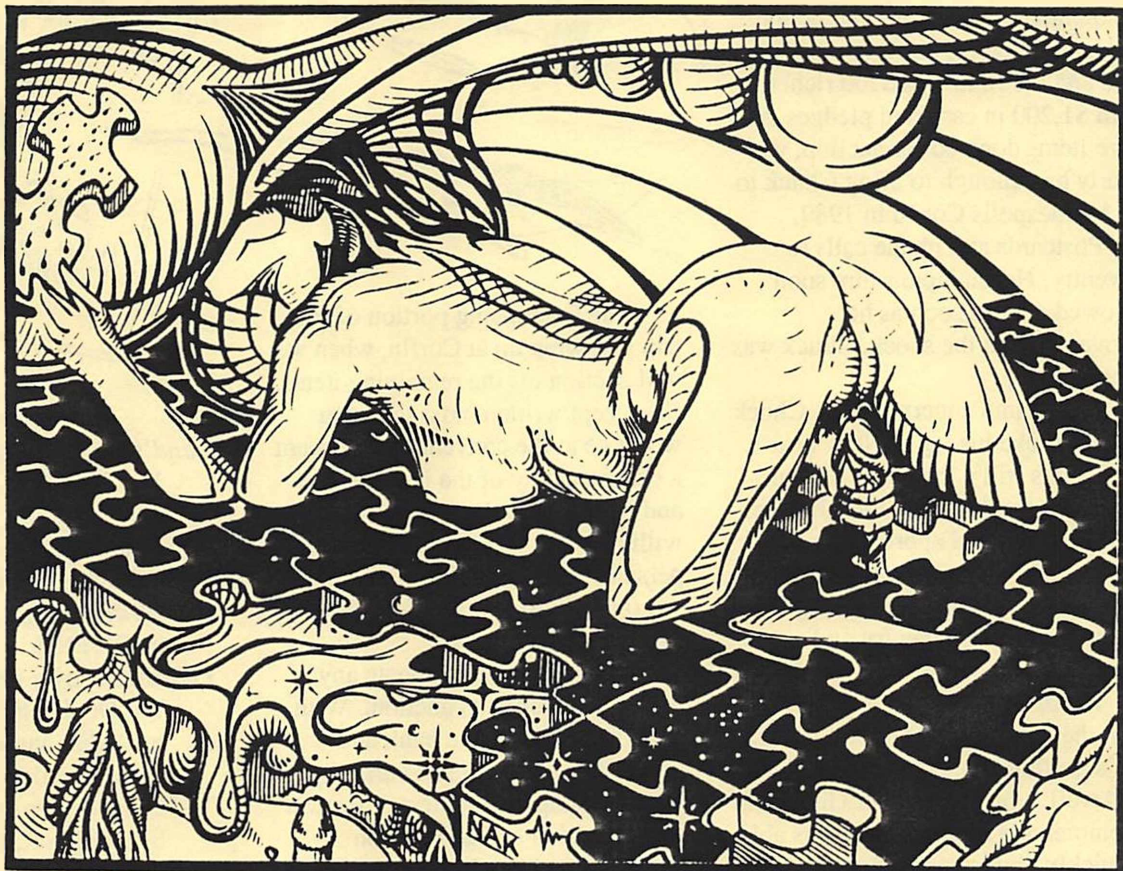
Nipple rises to  
meet mouth wet  
sand & pearl &  
pimento kiss lips  
nipple teeth clench  
stiffen tongue flicks  
button bites lightly  
now drawing now  
pulling now edges

of teeth cut (how does she take it?)  
harder ("harder ...") hot breath on  
blood swelled nipple so soft/hard yet  
only a sweet hint.

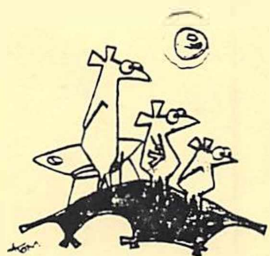
Lasers photo rosebud in flesh  
river delta permanent record dead on;  
you'd see this flower in a black  
cloud.

Fingers feel flower, pet petals  
dew drips slide up spreading lips  
(more lips!) more lips body quivers  
fragile rosebud in the wind wet satin  
roselips twixt hips touching so light  
soft/hard clit (twitch!) sigh quiver  
hand & body watch pulse in belly  
flicking more & more & more 'til  
(oh) pulse (oh) pulse (oh) pulse (oh)  
pulse (oh) pulse (oh) waves begin &  
fingers other hand join slide in secret  
hole (holes) pull out push in grip

caress search feel each other through  
thin wet satin honey drips out flower  
glistening 'til (oh) pulse/push (oh)  
pulse/pull (oh) pulse/push (oh) pulse/  
pull (oh) pulse/push (oh) pulse/pull  
(oh) waves rise & fall harder  
("harder ...") lips take place of finger  
tips (more lips!) more lips soft/hard  
tongue soft/hard clit lips grip lips  
grip clit tongue flicks fingers push/  
pull tongue flicks rosebud now  
pulling now harder now edges of  
teeth cut (how does she take it?)  
harder ("harder!") (oh) (oh) (oh)  
waves all crests now hands press  
head down 'til lips hurt keep going  
keep going keep going  
("HARDER!") keep going keep  
going plugged in soft/hard burning  
lasers dead on ...







# Then came the avalanche...

by Geri Sullivan

Hyphen . . . Slant 7 . . . Hand-colored ATom illustrations . . . *Through Darkest Ireland with Knife, Fork, and Spoon* by Chuck Harris . . . Original artwork for *The Incomplete Terry Carr* by Steve Stiles . . . two issues of *Quandry* . . . stunning fancies from Oblique House . . . FIVE ISSUES OF *Novae Terrae*!

STOP! Catch your breath. Give your eyeballs time to once again find their usual resting place in their sockets.

That's what I had to do, time and time again, during the past several months, as these treasures fell into my hands for a brief time before going to auction for the Chuck Harris fund.

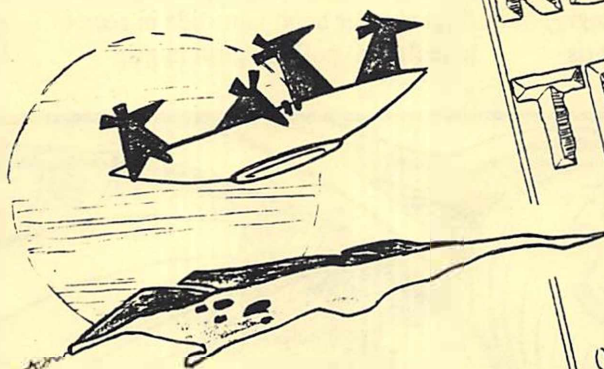
At Tropicon, the avalanche of fannish treasures quickly became an avalanche of greenbacks. Auctioneer Joe Siclari smoothly urged bidders higher and higher, until we were in a daze and the fund was \$700 richer. With \$1,200 in cash and pledges, and more items donated for auction, we clearly had enough to bring Chuck to the Minneapolis Corflu in 1989.

Postcards and phone calls to Daventry, Northamptonshire soon followed and, as soon as he recovered from the shock, Chuck was jumping for joy.

Then came uncertainty — Chuck fell and broke his leg at New Year's. Corflu was still a long way off, but would the good doctor, John Justice, find Chuck fit and approve the trip? Letters continued flying back and forth, crossing the ocean and each other en route to Daventry and Minneapolis.

The doctor's verdict was just what the fans wanted to hear. Next, Sue's golfing connections served the fund well; a member at her Golf Club recommended an agent who was able to quickly obtain roundtrip tickets.

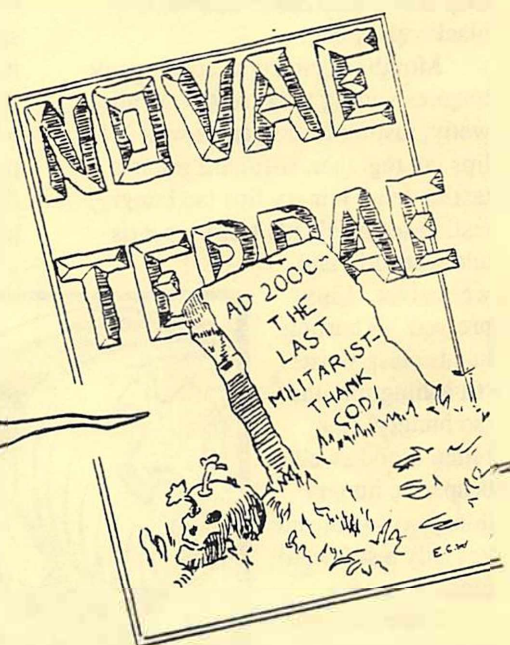
Chuck and Sue Harris arrive in Minneapolis on Thursday, April 27! They will be in the states for two weeks after the convention and are now investigating other cities to visit. It's fast becoming so very real.



The fundraising portion of the trip will wrap up at Corflu, when we will auction off the remaining items. I'll accept written bids, so if you won't be at the convention, but want a chance at any of the items, write and let me know how high you're willing to go. Write a particularly persuasive letter, full of passion and wit (and a bid) and I may well sell you the item directly.

Please, DO NOT donate any more items for us to auction. With what is already in the bank and proceeds from the items currently on hand, we hope to comfortably cover transportation and convention expenses for both Chuck and Sue.

So, what's left, you ask? Hold on to your eyeballs, here's the list: *The Little Magazine*, last issue. (Volume 15, #3/4) Editors include: Kathryn Cramer, Samuel R. Delany, David Hartwell, Patrick and Teresa Nielsen Hayden, & Tom Weber. *Swordpoint*, by Ellen Kushner. Hardbound first edition. *Cirque*, by Terry Carr. Hardcover, first Doubleday edition.



*Land's End*, by Frederik Pohl and Jack Williamson. Bound galley. *The Forge of God*, by Greg Bear. Bound galley. Study Guide for Welty's *One Writer's Beginnings*, prepared by P&TNH.

Paperback cover color proof sets for: Tor Double #2, *The Saliva Tree* by Aldiss and *Born with the Dead* by Silverberg; *Artifact* by Gregory Benford, and *Spacepaw* by Gordon R. Dickson

— Donated by P&TNH



*Hyphen* #22, March 1959  
*Hyphen* #25, November 1960 Homes  
 and Gardens issue  
*Hyphen* #26, January 1961  
*Hyphen* #33, June 1963  
 — Donated by Walt Willis

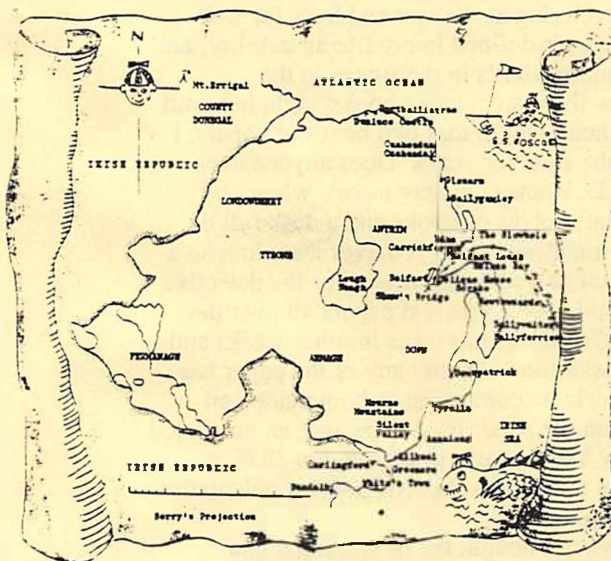
*Hyphen* #26, January 1961  
 Oblique House Christmas Cards:  
 1954, 1956, 1957, 1960.  
 — Donated by Chuck Harris

ATom originals: six hand-colored  
 illustrations. 4x5" and 5x6"  
 — Donated by Arthur Thomson

Original art: cover of the *Incomplete*  
*Terry Carr*. Interior illos for *The*  
*Portable Carl Brandon*  
 — Donated by Steve Stiles

# THROUGH DARKEST IRELAND

WITH KNIFE FORK & SPOON

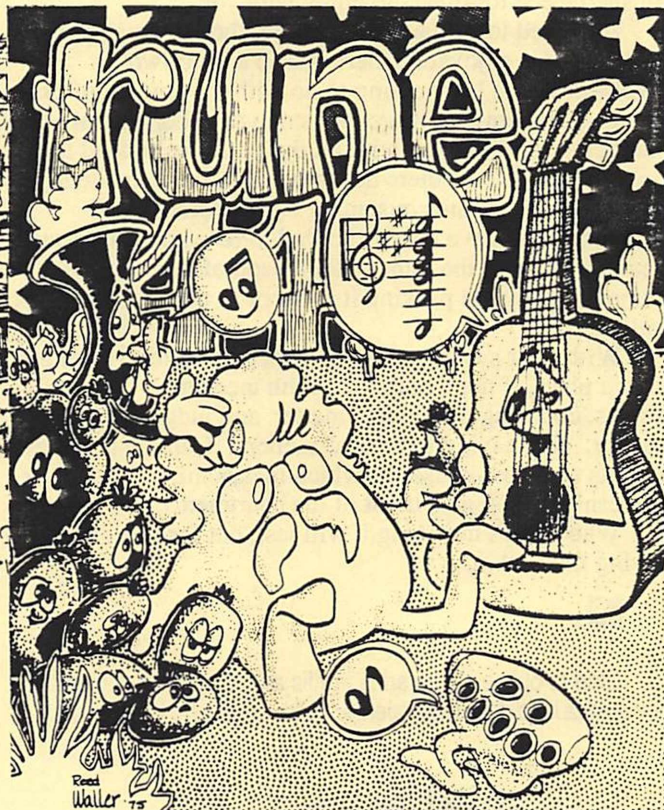
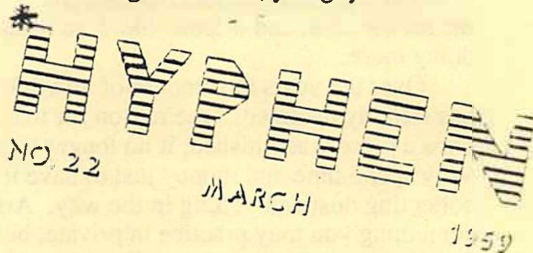


*Quandry* #24. Edited by Lee  
 Hoffman. 1952. Arthur C.  
 Clarke's copy.  
*Novae Terrae* Vol 2, #6, #9; Vol 3,  
 #2, #4, #5. Britain's first  
 fanzine. Edited by Maurice K.  
 Hanson. Associate editors:  
 Edward J. Carnell, Arthur C.  
 Clarke, and William F. Temple.  
 1937, 1938.  
 — Donated by Vincent Clarke

*Fecal Pint* #1 (Parody of Focal Point)  
 ~1965  
*Focal Point* #18, 2 pages. 1966  
*Granfalloon*, Vol. 1, #2. Edited by  
 Linda Eyster (Bushyager) and  
 Suzanne Tompkins. 1968  
*Hoop* #1, #2, and #4. Edited by Jim  
 Young. 1967-68  
*Love* Vol. 3, #1. Edited by Fred  
 Haskell. 1969  
*Mainstream* #11. Edited by Suzanne  
 Tompkins and Jerry Kaufman.  
 1986  
*Mota* #3. Edited by Terry Hughes.  
 1971  
*No* #10, #15, and #16. Edited by  
 Ruth Berman  
*Outworlds* #31. Edited by Bill  
 Bowers. 13th Annish, 1983  
*Quinapalus* #2, #5, and #6. Edited  
 by M.K. Digre 1978—1982  
*Ruin* (Rune parody) 1980  
*Rune*, #31, #33, #35, and #37.  
 Various editors. 1973—1974  
*WOOF* #7 (Chicon IV issue)  
 — Donated by Joyce Scrivner

I'll close with hats off . . . three  
 cheers . . . great exclamations of joy  
 . . . and an oh so casual and sincere  
 "thank you" to Patrick and Teresa  
 Nielsen Hayden, Moshe Feder,  
 Walter Willis, and all the fans in the  
 U.S., Britain, and Canada who are so  
 generously supporting the Chuch  
 Harris Fund. From Linda Bushyager  
 who, after parting with \$200 for a  
 stunning ATom illo that once hung in  
 the fan attic at Oblique House, sent  
 color laser prints to Walter and those  
 who had bid against her, so that we  
 all might enjoy the art, to Aussie fan  
 Irwin Hirsch, who wrote saying how  
 pleased he was to see that fans are  
 bringing Chuck to America, to  
 Vincent Clarke, whose spirit  
 gladdens my heart — everyone is  
 making this fund a sheer pleasure to  
 coordinate.

Congratulations, you guys!





Glenn Tenhoff

5645 Green Circle Drive #209  
Minnetonka, MN 55343

28 September 88

To the Editor and Contributors of *Idea*;

Congratulations! Your first issue, and it looks great.

Jim Young's article on the early days of Minn-Stf,

"Logic Has No Bones" was very interesting as well as informative. And highlighting the article with old Minn-Stf art was a great idea.

Well, I could go on with extravagantly favorable criticism about *Idea* being the greatest first issue ever published; but, having a certain amount of bias, coupled with no previous experience with fanzines, further opinion would only be frivolous praise. You don't need that. Keep up the good work, and keep pubbing that ish; for that monkey isn't gone, he just had a good fix.



Well Geri, so much for the official LoC, here's the unofficial:

Congratulations!!! It looks grrrrr-eat! Loved the Cover.

Now for something between Official and silly.

I'd like to Thank You for giving me the opportunity to explore yet another facet of fandom. I enjoyed doing the art for *Idea*, and it looks like I've been fired up for doing more.

Over the years the amount of artwork I've completed has steadily declined. One reason for that decline was that once a piece was finished, it no longer had a purpose. Why spend time and money just to have it sit around collecting dust and getting in the way. Art, like music, is something you may practice in private, but you create the finished piece for others to enjoy with you.

As I tried to explain once before, though creating a piece of art is enjoyable, there is also a lot of work involved, which has nothing to do with the amount of time spent. There are also more than enough good/great artists producing to supply me with all the art I'll ever need to cover my walls. So there has to be a reason to create my own. Now I lack the consuming need to create, and financial gains have always proved to be a poor incentive. Leaving me with the rather silly reason of purpose. Something beyond packing it away or to put it on my walls.

With their system of barter, fanzines seem to offer at least a place, if not a purpose. With me setting the time frames, choosing the subject matter, and judging the quality. No "having to please" a client. Either a fanzine accepts a piece and uses it (which makes me feel good) or it doesn't (which gets it out of the apartment).

Who knows how long it will last, but for now, I'm having fun with it.



Glad to oblige. Your art is terrific and one of my reasons for doing *Idea* is to introduce talented folks to fanzine fandom and

vice versa. GoshWow. Now that I've achieved one of my purposes, can I quit?

While I'll rarely turn my back on frivolous praise, and even less often on silliness, I most liked your comments about creating art. — gfs

Andi Shechter

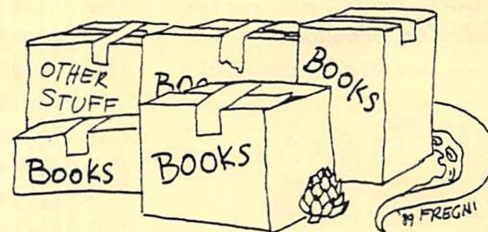
16 Lakehill Avenue  
Arlington, MA 02174

[Note: New Address]

15 October 1988

Thanks for sending the zine — boy, I needed a new *Idea*! I've been running out lately.

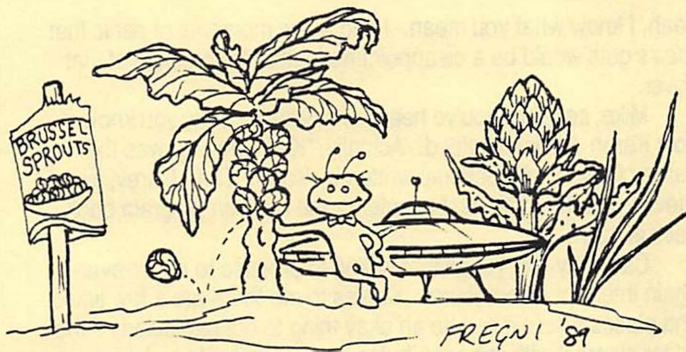
But why, oh, why, was there so much discussion of packing and moving? AAIIIEEE! I've been avoiding it myself, heh, heh. Just because I'm moving soon for the third time in as many years, and just because I moved cross-country in late '85, and just because my mother had to get a separate address book just for me and my sister, and just because I'm moving in with someone with a comic book fixation and too many shirts...



Anyway, Karen David Johnson's article struck close to home. I've been living at the same address for well over a year now (this is defined in my life as stability) and have no idea anymore what's in the Boxes in the Basement. I know there are a lot of books, sigh, but until the small flood when I had to toss two boxes of papers, I hadn't looked at the stuff for years. Does anyone ever read those nice P.D. Hames mystery novels where the victim has two neat shelves of books and a desk full of bills and nothing much else? Do you ever want to read a mystery where it takes weeks and weeks for the detective to go through the piles of books and papers all over the house or apartment? And then it takes him/her weeks and weeks longer to determine whether any of the paper has meaning? (Old business cards used as bookmarks, an article clipped from the paper four years ago, an unlabeled photo from a New Year's party in Oakland in 1978, a phone number and name on a sheet of paper accidentally brought home from work...)

I know that when I bought the dining room chairs back in California and decided I could be handy and little Ms. Fix-It just like anyone, I didn't reckon with a slight perfectionist streak I developed. It's not the goop I minded, or the fact that it took a wire brush to get some of the crud off, or even that it was tiring. It was that I DIDN'T KNOW WHEN TO STOP. I was afraid that when I finally finished, I'd have the nicest pile of sawdust I'd ever seen. You know, like the ivy covered houses that fall apart if you take away the ivy? I never did finish the damn chairs — I left them behind when I moved to Boston. Ha. I'll show them.





Somewhere in California, there is a town (I think it's Castroville) that considers itself the Artichoke Capital of the World (not to be confused with Gilroy, which is the Garlic Capital of the World) and there is a giant artichoke statue in the middle of town. But it's meant to look like an artichoke. I'm still trying to find the Brussel Sprout Capital of the World. (Ever seen those things growing? They are truly from outer space.)

See you at Corflu and if anyone needs to locate a Mr. Stu Shiffman, well, you can use my address (blush, blush) because Stu is (yes, gasp) leaving New York to venture into the Big Bean and we are moving in together. Then he gets saddled with the joyful task of living with a Worldcon Committee member and keeping her sane. We are Having a Wonderful Time — anyone got any spare bookshelves?

Best,

*Andi*

**Mike Glicksohn**  
508 Windermere Avenue  
Toronto, Ontario  
Canada M6S 3L6

30September88

Good grief and holy twiltone, Batfan! I haven't even read the first *Idea* yet and already I want to see three more by the end of December. I just plucked the issue out of the envelope it travelled up to DITTO in and just skimming it to check the visuals is a helluva rush. Stunning cover by Glenn (I don't recall seeing his work before but I look forward to seeing a lot more of it if it matches the quality of this cover) and the personal touch of the hand-coloured quill was delightful. I liked the way the picture on the wall showed the next stage of the action of the cover and I found myself wishing I had a powerful magnifying glass so I could make out what the picture on the wall in the picture on the wall depicted! Damn impressive start: if the rest of the issue matches the cover in conceptions and execution *Idea* will be the freshest more exciting new fanzine I've read in a very long time.

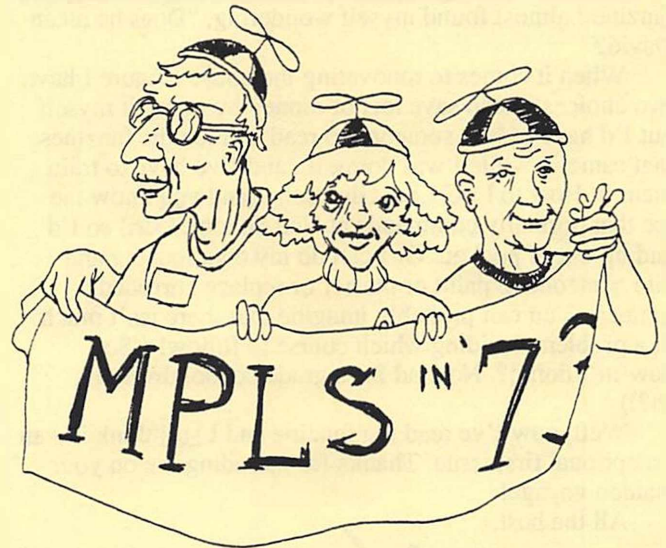
I couldn't help wondering what "Key Line Pie" was? One visualizes little slips of paper with the important lines from great fanzine articles baked in a pie to flutter forth when he pie was opened ~~and set before the Walt~~ but it doesn't sound like a tasteful thing to do.

Oh well, I knew it was too good to last. All over fandom the words "Forgive her, Ghu, she knows not what she does" are being uttered as fans leap to the typer to

inform poor Geri that ONE DOES NOT INTERRUPT A CONTRIBUTOR IN THE MIDDLE OF HER ARTICLE! (In the lettercol, maybe if you don't mind being gauche. But never in the text of an article. Don't they teach anything in Neo School any more?) A small gaffe understandable in an almost-neo fanned so we forgive. (We'll have to shoot Farber, Romm and Cummer, of course, for not stopping this when they proofread but fandom was never for the weak-hearted.)

I enjoyed Elise's article and the artwork Glenn provided was fine (as long as you're not a mermaid freak in which case you'd feel cheated.) Not quite up to the quality of his cover; possible an Eighthoff but still very good. (I'm told there's a big park in San Francisco that has all sorts of oddball statues hidden in places that only one person in a thousand is likely to stumble over and it's been documented that if you can find a way onto the more inaccessible parts of the roof of the old Toronto City Hall you'll find gargoyles doing the most amazing things so apparently St. Paul isn't alone in having employed idiosyncratic designers for public places.)

Jim's brief retrospective on the early days of Minn-Stf was delightful. Not only did it capture some of the wackiness of Jim himself but the various mementos of fan generations gone by were a delight. I can quite easily visualize a young Jim and a disgustingly young-looking Fred telling a report with perfectly straight faces that we refer to each other as "fandoms" and providing quotes that showed that indeed we do. And whereas Jim and Fred are still hanging around the society they helped to shape one can't help but recall that oft-heard lament "Where is Gerald Vizenor when we really need him?" Logic may have no bones but I guess some weird old fans do.



(Many fans may thank Jim and his depleted crew for folding the Minneapolis in '73 bid and thereby starting the incredibly fannish series of Minneapolis in '73 post bidding parties but some of us don't find it all that amusing. Some of us won the worldcon by acclamation because of it. Some of us spent two years of our lives and destroyed friendships and relationships because of that. And some of us encourage Minneapolis in '73 parties so



# LETTERS ❖ OF ❖ COMMENT

we can attend them and eat and drink as much for free as we can to get our own back. But that's only some of us. Most of us just think it's a really neat idea.)

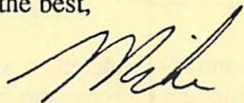
Despite my general lack of interest in and complete practical lack of knowledge of music I read and enjoyed Nate's article. It seems as though he might have made a significant contribution to music scholarship had he pursued his investigations a little further and had them published in some "respectable" journal but music academia's loss is fandom's gain. He'll probably get better egoboo from us anyway. (My own areas of interest tend to be non-specific as far as side is concerned: you can open a beer bottle or tap a beer keg with the right hand as easily as with the left, for example. But I am a bit intrigued to realize that even though I'm right handed I always hold my poker hand in my left hand. I assume this is a throwback to the days when I'd have needed to have my right hand free to draw a gun if I caught an opponent cheating. I read books held in my right hand, I tend to hold drinks in my right hand and eat junk food with my right hand and I can't think of another reason why I'd hold my cards in my left hand. Perhaps there's a scholar out there who can confirm or replace my hypothesis?)

Nothing personal against Mike Anderson (I like the sound of the guy) but some years ago when I held a weekend-long party here in Toronto the flyer I sent out included lines like "We provide special areas for smokers (the porch), children (the freezer) and people who want to talk about computers (Buffalo)." So you see where I'm coming from vis-a-vis technogabble. Still, his tale only marginally dealt with computers so I read and enjoyed it. I was momentarily brought up by the juxtaposition of "consistency" and "(Emerson!)" though. In a Minneapolis fanzine I almost found myself wondering, "Does he mean David?"

When it comes to renovating the house I figure I have two choices. I can save lots of money by doing it myself but I'd have to hire someone to read and loc the fanzines that came in while I was doing it...and I've have to train them in How to LoC Like Glicksohn (and you know the fee that normally commands at Neo School, Geri) so I'd end up out of pocket. Or I can do my own loccing and hire someone to paint or plaster or replace corroded lumber. You can probably imagine that there isn't much of a problem deciding which course to follow! ((So how'm I doing? Not bad for a grade-school drop-off, eh?))

Well, now I've read the fanzine and I still think it's an exceptional first issue. Thanks for including me on your maiden voyage!

All the best,



Holy twiltone, indeed. Thanks, especially, for putting into print your reaction to Glenn's cover. He's new to all this, and

yeah, I know what you mean. I had a few moments of panic that *Idea*'s guts would be a disappointment after the promise of that cover.

Mike, certainly you've heard of keylining. Now you know how Karen Johnson helped. Actually, "Key Line Pie" was the name of a very silly editorial written by Karen, Terry Garey, Erik Biever, and me at the last minute for the Minicon program book back in 1984.

Can't say that I'm all that willing to promise to never-ever-again interrupt a contributor. Seems to me there are a few times and places where it can be an okay thing to do, particularly if the editor clears it with the contributor, as I did with Elise. I will keep your lesson in mind, though.

In whole, your letter proved the truth of the lyrics "Read it fast and the beauty's stunning, read it slow and you catch all the punning." I guess that's why you sent it to *Idea*.

So, Mike, how many people attended Torcon II? From what I've heard, Minicon has grown to the size of the worldcon you so kindly hosted for us. There's one key difference: we hold Minicon every year! More seriously, your comment did a nice job of reminding me why I will do what I can to ensure that Minneapolis doesn't host a worldcon before 2073. (Rumor has it that fandom will give that one to us by acclamation, regardless of whatever rotation rules exist then.)

Renowned expert Professor F. Abbott Haskell suggests that you hold cards with your left hand, leaving your right hand free to manipulate them with greater grace, style, and precision.

I have nothing personal against Mike Anderson, either. There's a lot to like about his sound. Not to mention his style. (Obvious follow-up suppressed.) Glad you liked his story. He's met and likes EmerDavid; he's not mean to him. He also didn't mean him. He didn't mean to confuse you.

If you didn't have such an aversion to computers, you could get a computerized loccing service like Harry Warner, Jr. secretly uses. Personally, I prefer the computer that does the home "improvements." (Let's not talk about the simple coat of varnish my "new" dining table needed...) — gfs

**Kay Drache**

3140 Pillsbury Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55408-3035

28 January 1989

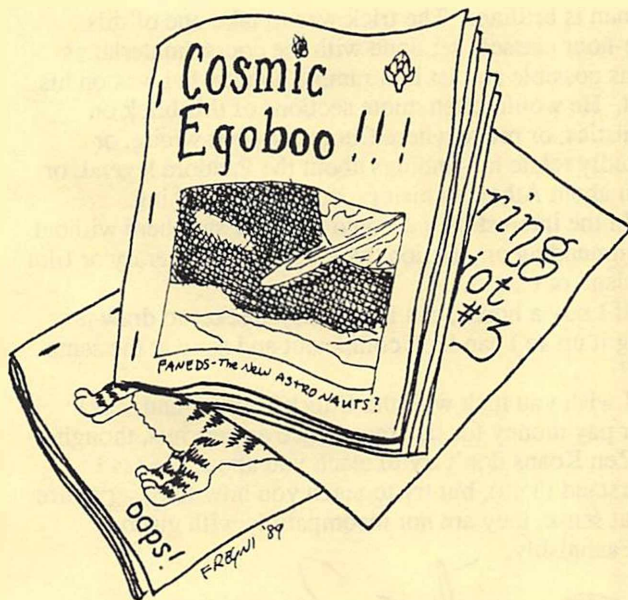
So I'm starting out to write a LoC for *Idea* #1, and what keeps going through my head is Reed's wonderful cover for Corflu 6's PR2 (Corflu: the con with progress reports that look

like fanzines!).

Omaha standing outside the smof suite, looking nervous and worried (are they all going to laugh at her minac? The sign says "no neos": should she even try?) -- and I can relate! If the three levels of fanzine fandom are 1: readers; 2: responders; 3: publishers, I'll probably never get to level three on any regular basis. But that doesn't prevent me from reading and responding, eh?

I like (no, love) Glenn's cover and the name and logo. *Idea* is a very good name for a 'zine; vastly superior to "Cosmic Egoboo" or "Dithering Idiot" or "My Cat Just Farted," which seem to be the prevalent types of names I see as mail-toter to Minn-Stf. Anyway, the detail in Glenn's stippling is great. And interior art that goes with the articles! What a concept!





Of the articles I particularly enjoyed Nate's on lefties and music: a problem I can personally relate to; "Geri Sullivan, Girl Homeowner" (and not just because this is where my ego-scanning eyes lit!), and Jon Singer's booklist, which reads just like listening to Jon talk and made me miss him.

The fanhistorical reprints accompanying Jim Young's story were great, especially the Strib refering to fans as "fandoms." Whose put-on was this? Or was it current usage? Reminds me of condoms, I'm afraid...

Of course I hardly need mention that the layout and repro are lovely: but one expects nothing less from a SMOTHRA publication.

*Kay*

For the few readers who didn't get the Corflu PR, the outstanding cover Kay mentions is by Reed Waller, creator of *Omaha The Cat Dancer*. (Picture record album by the Shakers now available! Check your local comic shop.)

Without readers, especially responders, publishers would have nothing to do. Just be sure to keep those LoCs coming. I've heard different stories re: "fandoms." Guess it's time to consult SMOTHRA. Its newest member reports that it wasn't a put-on. Dear old Gerald Vizenor really thought he understood what it was all about, but didn't, as reflected in "fandoms." — gfs

**David E Romm**  
3308 Stevens Ave. S.  
Minneapolis, MN 55408

8October1988

I suppose it's unfair to comment first on layout and typography, given how much we've already discussed the matter, and especially since most of my comments would be nitpicking on what is, after all, a really sharp looking zine. But that won't stop me. It's the first thing that leaps out at me, paging through the issue.

First, the cover. A splendid effort by Glenn Tenhoff. Innocence and Evil contrasted. Will the monster drink the warm milk or eat the child? The picture on the wall is signed by Glenn and suggests the former, but who can say? The *Idea* logo is swift, and I really like the slap of color on the quill. Personal nitpick: No issue number on the cover.

When I talk of the advantages of Desktop Publishing, it's the flexibility of technique and the ease of complicated layout. Justified paragraphs are such a basic tenet that it doesn't even get mentioned. I harken back to the days when Pete Presford croggled readers by having justified paragraphs, and he apologized/bragged by saying all that it entailed was typing the page twice. Justification is one command. It is the single distinguishing feature between an amateur publication and a professional publication. It simply looks better.

The fannish personality you most remind me of is Jerry Kaufman. He too, for years, was a fanzine fan who hadn't published a fanzine. When his and Suzle's zine came out it was called *The Spanish Inquisition* because no one expected it. I'm not at all surprised that you pubbed your first ish after a con in his city.

"It has often been said that reality is to a large degree subjective." True in all important respects. However, one quibble: a 'degree' is always a 360th of a circle. There are no 'large' degrees. Perhaps this obtuse misconception is why Elise, otherwise an acute observer, thinks Como Park has gone off on a tangent.

In Jim Young's version of the past, the only good times he had were discussing the future. He never seems to have had any fun at the time. The club was too large and being taken over by gamers. His fanzines weren't a success. Fred Haskell quit the club over the name of a fanzine. He admires the unifying efforts of Mike Wood with *Minneapa*, yet it brought about the only acrimonious split of the Minn-stf. He never did get his worldcon.

He gives the impression that the "mythos" presented was just fannish spin control. I know differently, and hoped for more than sour grapes that Fandom Isn't The Same Any More. I, too, sometimes forsake my future orientation to look back at The Good Old Days, but at least I remember them fondly.

Being a frequent mover, I can sympathize with Karen Johnson's life in a box. Just a few days ago, a former roommate found a box of mine mistakenly in his possession. It's been four years since we lived together. I wondered what happened to my films. Now if my other former roommates would cough up the other boxes I'm sure they have because I can't find certain items...

"The Eclectic Reader" is a good idea! Can I play too? Can I recommend some books just off the top of my head without having to give all that library-type information? Of course I can: I already asked. And I'll try to keep my list down to 10. Or so. And if the book is at my fingertips (as several are) then I'll get specific.

In no particular order:

*Holy Blood, Holy Grail* by Baigent, Leigh, and Lincoln. Delacourte Press (1982). A fascinating history, tracing backwards from the turn of this century to Biblical

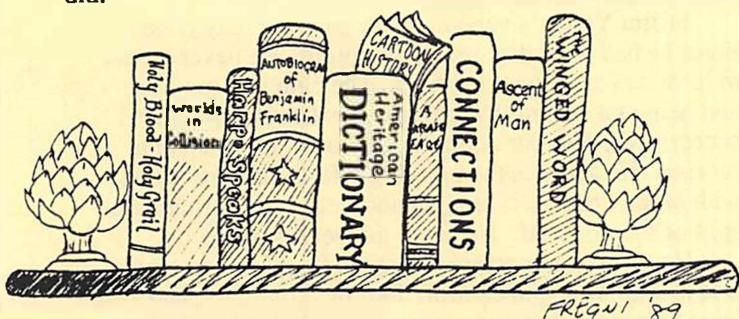


times. It provides an explanation for numerous actions in the religious world from the Crusades and the Knights Templar to the Rosicrucians to the editing of the New Testament. I once got a friend entering the priesthood mad just by mentioning the name of the book.

**Worlds in Collision** by Immanuel Velikovsky. Dell Publishing (1950). Velikovsky was definitely a crackpot, but that doesn't mean he was wrong. Indeed, his basic premise is demonstrated many times: If an event written about in one history (such as the Bible) was as cataclysmic as described, it will be written about in other histories all over the world. His research is unassailable (many have doubted) and loads of fun to read as comparative anthropology. His celestial mechanics leave much to be desired, but if he's right, quite a bit of history fits into logical patterns.

**Harpo Speaks** by Harpo Marx. (Roughly 1960) The autobiography of my favorite Marx brother, a member of the Algonquin Roundtable. The best rags-to-comedy story ever published.

**The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin**. Possibly the single most influential person in U.S. history, he did everything. He named the country, was behind the scenes for the Declaration of Independence and Constitution, bought the Louisiana Purchase without authorization, popularized notions looked down on at the time like bathing regularly and exercising, among other notable accomplishments. How he lived as interesting as what he did.



**The American Heritage Dictionary**. Houghton Mifflin. What makes this dictionary notable (besides being a good dictionary) is the table in back of Indo-European Roots. If you're into etymology at all, this is for you. WARNING: I've heard the latest edition doesn't have that section; look first.

**A Cartoon History of the Universe** by Larry Gonick. Rip-Off Press. A wide-ranging but irreverent look at various periods of history in comic book form.

**A Distant Mirror** by Barbara Tuchman. Ballantine (1978). "The calamitous 14th Century," covering the 100 Years War, The Black Death, two popes, and much more. Tuchman never fails to interest, and this is my favorite of her works so far (I haven't read most).

**Connections** by James Burke; **The Ascent of Man** by Jacob Bronowsky. Companions to the TV shows tracing the development of ideas and culture. History in action.

**The Winged Word** by Prof. Berkeley Peabody. I must confess I haven't actually read this one. But the author was my Greek History teacher in college (Albany NY) and

the man is brilliant. The trick was to take one of his three-hour classes, get done with the course material as fast as possible and let him ramble about what was on his mind. He would often quote sections of this book on linguistics, or prove where Chomsky went wrong, or excitedly relate his findings about the Pandora legend, or go on about Athenian history, or almost anything.

In the interest of space and time I'll stop here without recommending any fiction, massage books, literary or film criticism, or essays.

If I buy a house, can I get Larry Becker to draw me fixing it up so I can look competent and sexy at the same time?

I wish you luck with the Chuck Harris Fund, but I never pay money for fanzines. Nice art reprints, though.

Zen Koans don't try to teach you about life (as I understand them), but try to teach you how to observe life. In that sense, they are not incompatible with gusto.

Faannishly,

*David S. For*

Justified columns may well be more "professional," although many professional publication designers would say "bullshit." I accept that, to you, justified columns look better. I, however, care a more about readability and studies show that ragged right copy is more readable than justified copy. So, I pay the price that goes with ragging my columns. (Justified copy crams more words into the column, making it more economical.) Ragging also allows me to control and minimize hyphenation. I far prefer the *Hyphens* published by Walt Willis to the distracting ones that appear at the end of all too many justified columns. I guess I also buy into the argument that ragged copy is more "modern" in design terms.

Good point re: degrees. Now how do the tens of thousands of bachelors, masters, and doctors fit into the circle?

I like your reading recommendations. When I was a first-term frosh, one professor required each student to own a dictionary. He recommended the American Heritage, adding that it had "all the swear words" (or at least more than any other dictionary of the day). I shared this exciting news with my roommate and together, we quickly flipped through the pages of my copy. Yup, fuck was there. So was shit. Our naivete quickly showed itself; we soon ran out of words to look up.

As you know, Becker has a great imagination. You probably don't even have to buy a house. You could, for instance, change your name to Dick. — gfs

rich brown  
508 n. highland, #b-5  
arlington, va 22201  
[Note COA]

24October1988

Don Marquis was speaking about publishing a volume of poetry but I've always felt that what he said also applied to publishing a fanzine: It's like dropping a rose petal down the Grand Canyon and waiting for the echo.

The more I think about it, though, the more I become convinced that *Idea* is an excellent title for a fanzine.



When someone tells you they have a wonderful and/or great and/or brilliant idea, rather than having to listen to them rattle on, you can blush modestly, shuffle your feet, and thank them for the compliment. The only negative thing I can see is that it might cause some fans to write you only abbreviated LoCs -- once they come to realize that you're just one slim letter away from publishing the *Ideal* fanzine...

Jim Young's Minnesota fanhistorical reminiscences, "Logic Has No Bones," is a genuinely fun read. But I do have a small bone to pick with him, and I'd like to think there's some logic to it.

He speaks of a sense of "unpleasantness" that he and others tended to associate with "some of the big East Coast clubs and LASFS" and cites *The Immortal Storm* to show that East Coast fandom tended to be "too authoritarian" for his tastes. He's talking about how he felt in 1968, or some 20 years ago -- but that's still 30 years beyond the events depicted in *The Immortal Storm*. The mind bobbles.

Now, I've been a member of the LASFS — and it's now possible to say that, by the way. I mean, it is possible now to speak in the past tense of having been a member of LASFS. At least, I hear somewhere that LASFS will now drop you from their rolls after a certain period of time for nonpayment of dues. It used to be that (as Francis T. Laney put it) death would not release you — even (as Ernie "The Doormouse" Wheatley once added in explanation) if you die — which is how LASFS managed to claim 500+ "members" as far back as the late '40s. And it's true, as Jim implies, that people in the L.A. area who loathe each other may attend from time to time, but do their socializing with their real friends at other times and elsewhere. That is, it was true when I was a member and I suspect it's just as true today. And, although I'm no LASFS apologist, I would have to say that in Los Angeles, this is often not as horrible as Jim makes it seem. LASFS can sometimes be a buffer between feuding parties or factions, the one place where at least minimal communication remains open between the two (or many) sides. That, I think, is a good thing...if it eventually leads to greater understanding.

But in New York, in the very early days of fandom, this was a much more terrible thing; Jim generalizes by speaking of "East Coast fandom" but if the large Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, or Baltimore/Washington fan clubs had any such problems during the '60s and '70s, news of it tended to stay within those clubs. But in New York, fans who despised each other could not remain civil to each other in a "big club" setting — and most of the rest of fandom knew it.

The "solution" that eventually evolved in New York was really rather eloquent. Factionalization led eventually to the formation of several smaller but more viable clubs, as opposed to one big one over which the various factions would be jockeying for power — although for people who feel Machiavelli might have made a trufan and who therefore like that sort of thing, there was still ESFA.

By forming clubs of their own, and not co-mingling,

the warring factions in New York found themselves first in a state of truce and eventually in a long-term peace simply because they were not forever confronting each other. The Lunarians were into serious (sf-related) fanzines, conventions, amusing themselves playing furniture games with Roberts Rules of Order (anything not properly chaired or couched in proper terms tended to get tabled, etc.), moderate drinking and card-playing (Hearts). The Fanoclasts were primarily fanzine fans, with no formal structure, heavy into conversation and partying. The Fannish Insurgent Scientifical Association (FISTFA) was also an informal partying club, made up of about 65% Fanoclasts, 30% Lunarians, and 5% "others" who could not wangle an invitation to Fanoclasts or be voted into membership at Lunarians; it was the most egalitarian club in New York Fandom at the time. And ESFA was ESFA.

The point of all this — and my quibble with Jim — is that the fan club "extremes" during that period ran the gamut from LASFS (the big centralized club in a large metropolitan area that everyone goes to whether they like each other or not) to New York (where one went to a club, a couple of clubs, three of the clubs or all of the clubs, depending solely on whether one liked the other people who attended).

Jim makes the mistake of lumping the two together as being at the same extreme of the spectrum — largely on the basis of some things that happened on the East Coast some 30 years earlier.

Perhaps, as Karen Cooper-Hallin suggests in your letter column, Gerald Vizenor believed he was being humorous in his newspaper piece about Minicon by not comprehending that fandom is the microcosm that fans inhabit. Or, as Calvin W. "Biff" Demmon used to say, \*Maybe Not\*. As dumb as it is, this certainly isn't the least intelligent newspaper report ever written on an sf convention. Why, even today, it's seldom that such a report does not contain at least one major gaffe (along with the usual half dozen or so minor mistakes), which has been known to cause Twonk's Disease and whirling dervishism among certain convention committee personnel. Frothing-at-the-mouth syndrome has also been observed.

On the other hand, it's interesting to speculate how anyone could have legitimately come by such a conclusion. My guess is some fan, in the wee hours of the morn, waxing philosophical, perhaps saying something like, "We are all fandoms unto ourselves."

I used to be a journalist. I started as Managing Editor (albeit for six little "shopper" newspapers in Brooklyn and on Staten Island) and worked my way up (salary-wise) or down (title-wise) to Reporter (for Reuters, the international British newswire). I wrote quite a number of stories about topics I was not really knowledgeable on — getting my information from people who were — so I have to wonder if I every fouled up as badly as this and didn't know it. It's quite possible.

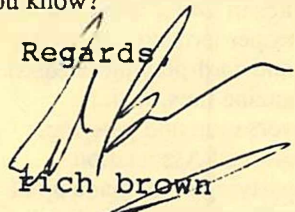
Too, whenever I come across something like this, it fills me with a sense of...well, dread, I guess. I mean,



# LETTERS ❖ OF ❖ COMMENT

when you see how many dumb mistakes an honest journalist (not an oxymoron -- really) can make when they're writing on a topic you know something about, it kind of makes you wonder how reliable they may be when they're writing on topics you don't know much about -- you know?

Regards,

  
Rich Brown

I will observe that abbreviated LoCs don't yet appear to be a problem with *Idea*. Thanks for the historical perspective and general club info. Good stuff for the historically-minded, like me. Minn-stf is another one of those "Death will not release you -- even if you die" clubs, and, to my knowledge, has never levied membership dues.

Unfortunately, I have yet to read a newspaper article, written on a topic I was familiar with, that did not contain errors. Yeah, it makes me wonder. And shudder. — gfs

**Chuck Harris**  
32 Lake Crescent  
Davenport, Northants  
NN11 2EB  
Great Britain

26 October 1988

Jon Singer was one of the names I "recognized." I met him at Brighton and found him very likeable and interesting. He has a strange talent of relaxing people. Teresa [Nielsen Hayden] said he often helps her by massaging away tension and stress.

Now, usually I don't believe in magic touch or anything, but this time we got a demo. We had one Brit girl in a bad stress crisis at the convention and Jon with his hands and his voice calmed her and eased her and gave her more peace than she would have got from a truckload of Valium. I wish now I'd had more time with him -- but that's what you should wish about everyone at a good con.

Books? I get thru three or four every week, but I can no longer read dozens at the same time. Usually I read one "main" book during the evenings and odd moments and then a short story collection last thing at night. (Fanzines and anything else in the mail get read whilst I eat breakfast (Muesli!) -- as soon as they hit the door-mat.) When I first found fandom I read NOTHING but SF. I had access to the best British library and EVERYTHING that was published as soon as it was off the press. In those days this was quite feasible. Nowadays I doubt if anyone could read a quarter of what is available.

Or would want to.

Best thing I've read recently is Tom Wolfe's *Bonfire of the Vanities*. Last night's book was Damon Knight's *The Man in the Trees*...simple but impressive and thoughtful. Tonight's book is either David Brin's *The Postman* or Condon's *The Whisper of the Axe*. Recommend something? Yea, *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker -- deceptively plain and low key but clever and memorable.

Non-fiction? Hell, I guess anything about language

-- words, wit, humour. I no longer itch to write pro, but I'd dearly love to write well, be able to turn a smooth phrase, or get down a crushing witty retort just when I need it instead of a couple weeks later when it's all history and far too late.

Best thing in the issue????? Mike Moir's one-liner. The myth lives on...but tell him that he'd barely park his skateboard on the average English sex drive whilst Joe Britfan knows that all American men are sexual athletes in the Jack Kennedy mould. Further, we don't even drink like you'd imagine from our convention reports. It's all disillusionment today -- even Teresa was a bit startled when she saw the pint pot of gin and tonic before me on the platform until she discovered it was two gins and eighteen tonics. Most of my friends seem to be macho streetwise coffee drinkers whose only excess is having two spoonsful of sugar each time.

Sue, who had exactly the same problem as you with rotting window frames, offers the perfect solution. Forget the sanding, the filling and the painting, she says. Tell Him to forget the new car he was thinking of and sign up with the uPVC plastic man who will rip out the old ones, install the elegant double glazed plastic ones, leaving no mess whatsoever and Him tidy and bankrupt. (The "Him" is the bit YOU solve -- she can't think of everything.) She had ours done last month and honest, I really don't mind now when the neighbours sneer about my vintage car when the exhaust drops off in the driveway again, and I reckon that by Christmas we'll be able to have real dinners again sometimes instead of this damn catfood.)

Best,



The easy solution to having more time with people is to go to lots of conventions. Jon plans to be at the Minneapolis Conflu, why don't you come over and spend some more time with him there? (Grim!)

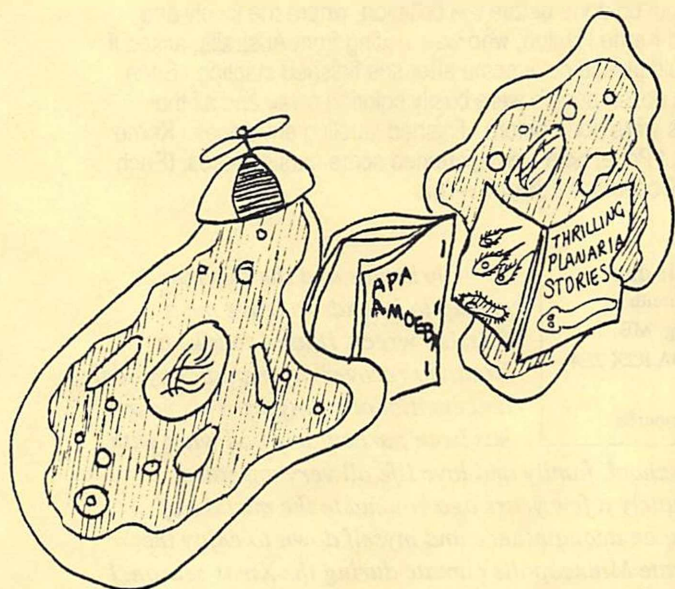
If only the "Him" part could be so easily solved. The only "Him" I know is already quite happily taken with and by Madeleine. (Besides, he doesn't have a beard.) By the time I find the "him" Sue is undoubtedly referring to, the windows will quite probably have rotted away. Meanwhile, would you like some recipes for Kitty Fritters, Kit'n'Canary Quiche, or Kitty Curry? With a little imagination and the right condiments, those catfood dinners can be transformed into haute cuisine. — gfs

**Reen Brust**  
4880-106th Avenue NE  
Circle Pines, MN 55014

20 October 88

I found a copy of *Idea* sitting on my television the other day. I managed to find time to read it somewhere between the declension of Latin nouns and the cell structure of Eukaryotes. It was well worth the time. Great job! Catchy title. What a wonderfully warped thought. Between four kids and four classes at the U, I find very little (read: none) time for socializing. It was a pleasure to read *Idea*, it brought back a flood of memories, and reminded me of a lot of warm connections. I also enjoyed reading the latest *Rune*. I really like the direction they're taking it. I am finding for the first time that fannish writing is a lot more important





to me than it ever has been before. It's about the only fanac I can manage to find time for these days. I hope I can persuade you to add me to your mailing list, I'd like to see more.

Oh, and would you please pass on this suggestion to Singer:

***The Sacred Pipe***

Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux

ISBN #0-14-003346-7 \$4.95 pb (1953)

Recorded and edited by Joseph Epes Brown

Pub: Penguin Metaphysical Library

Thanks,

*Reen Brust*

Gosh, a LoC from a second-hand reader. Heady excitement, that. Re: getting on the mailing list; consider it done. I agree with you on the direction Jeanne Mealy and Dave Romm are taking *Rune*. The Minnesota Fanzine Recovery Act seems to have been a good idea. — gfs

**Harry Warner, Jr.**  
423 Summit Avenue  
Hagerstown, MD 21740

23January1989

I was immediately prejudiced in your favor by the nice large type-face and only moderately colored paper, and the material was not only easy for elderly eyes to read but enjoyable to the portion of my head behind the retinas.

I find Elise's concern over the mysteries of St. Paul's parks quite mild compared with my own worries over Hagerstown's main part, which starts only a block from my home. For one thing, I got lost in it once while I was taking another fan to look at the old steam locomotive that is one of its features, and this isn't Central Park but measures only six blocks by two blocks in dimensions. This park was once listed in second place among the

nation's natural parks for beauty but every year the city does something unspeakable to it like replacing a beautiful little rustic bandstand with a bandshell that looks like an interstate highway bridge. If St. Paulines will just trust in the basic rightness of that statuary and stop worrying about it, perhaps the contagion that has afflicted the local park won't move Twin Citiesward.

Jim Young's leisurely stroll through Minn-stf's memories was a delight. Some of the things he writes about I already knew or had already seen but other things in his article were new to me, familiar though they may be to your local readers. Am I right in assuming that the picture of the young fandom in the *Minneapolis Star & Tribune* article is the very same Karen Johnson who has the next article in this issue? All the reprinted illustrations are a fine way to stir up nostalgia for fandom past.

"A fan who hasn't unpacked her books for four months must be in bad shape," Karen writes. What could she conceivably say that would be adequate to my situation? I moved to this address in 1957 and there are boxes of books in the attic that I haven't opened since then. This creates a terrible suspicion in my mind every time I go into a secondhand book store or find books at a yard sale. When I spot a volume I've sought vainly for many years, I feel a tremendous outburst of happiness that ten seconds later is ruined by suspicion: do I by chance already own this book and have simply forgotten that fact because it has been packed away so many years? I did go through a box of books in the pantry a year or two ago and found I had absolutely no knowledge that I owned two-thirds of the volumes in it.

Nate Bucklin's article is a fascinating and perplexing one. I can't decide why this problem with rhythm should exist for learners on the guitar who are left-handed but playing in like right-handers. Consider the case of pianists. Perhaps four out of five of them are right-handed. But the left hand provides the main rhythmic impulse in most kinds of piano music. It's absolutely vital to the rhythm in such areas as solo piano boogie woogie and it formed the main source of rhythm in many dance bands back in the early years of this century before drums and string bass became prominent in the smaller dance groups. If left-handed guitarists have so much trouble, why haven't right-handed pianist complained about the need to establish the rhythm with the wrong hand? Although Nate mentions left-handed conducting, I've always heard that no conductor will ever risk conducting a good-sized musical organization with his left hand beating the time because there's too much danger of a musician absentmindedly following whatever gestures the right hand may be making for expression because it's always been universal practice for conductors to beat with the right hand. I have somewhere a book detailing a scientific inquiry into the rhythmic impulse and capabilities of children. It made no mention of the left-handed problem, but the researchers found there is absolutely no correlation between intelligence and rhythm skills and also found it's very difficult for an individual to become more skillful at tapping a foot or waving a stick in exact synchronization to a beat.



# LETTERS ❖ OF ❖ COMMENT

For a while I thought Jon Singer was putting us on and reviewing books that exist only in his imagination. But then I encountered one or two volumes I'd heard of before. When will he give us a sequel, in the form of reviews of books he hasn't read but knows he doesn't like?

I hope I'm wrong in my fear that Chuch's accident will force revision of your schedule for bringing him to North America. Nobody deserves the honor more than he does. You've undoubtedly heard by now about the probable length of time needed to be up and around again. And it was a strange feeling to look at the list of auction materials and see reproduced the cover of an issue of *Odd Magazine*, not too long after I learned about Ray Fisher's death. It doesn't seem like twenty years since he and Joyce were publishing fanzines.

The art is splendid throughout this issue, but that's an old Minneapolis fanzine tradition and I wouldn't have expected anything less. I hope you didn't need to take the time to put the feather's color on the front cover by hand on each individual copy.

Yrs., &c.,

*Harry Warner, Jr.*

Well, you know about assumptions. It was a different Karen Johnson. We tried to avoid the typical confusion by identifying the modern Karen as Karen David Johnson.

Actually, I like your idea of Jon reviewing books that exist only in his imagination more than the sequel you suggest.

We're still waiting to see how his recovery goes and for the doctor's ok for Chuch's trip. I just consulted my Mattel "Magic 8 Ball." It says Chuck will be able to come to the Minneapolis Corflu "Without a doubt." Earlier this week, in an amazingly consistent exchange of six questions and answers, it first told me that it better not tell me then, that it would tell me later, and that I shouldn't count on liking its answer. Four hours later it told me that it could not predict then, that it quite decidedly would be able to tell me this week, but that it was very doubtful that it would be able to tell me that day. I had not asked it again until just now, when I did so in response to your comment about the trip. I expect to have the 8 Ball's expertise substantiated or discredited by the time *Idea* is published, so look for updates elsewhere in this issue.



Thanks to my collators, I didn't hand-color each feather. I had about 65 done before the collation, where the lovely and talented Kerrie Hanlon, who was visiting from Australia, asked if she could please color some after she finished stapling. Soon, about a dozen people were busily coloring away and all the feathers were done before I finished labeling envelopes. Kerrie and Paul Price, both artists, created some masterpieces. (Each copy a Collector's Edition!) — gfs

**Don Bindas**  
421 Monreith  
Winnipeg, MB  
CANADA R2X 2E4

31 December 88

*Christmas and the two month run up to it tends to leave me a frazzled wreck. It used to take a month to recover my mental, physical and emotional strengths. This year has been particularly bad what with work, school, family and love life all very unsettled. Fortunately a few years ago you made the mistake of inviting an acquaintance and myself down to enjoy the temperate Minneapolis climate during the Xmas season. I had such a fine time that I have made this an annual event ever since.*

*Idea* is wonderful and I was very impressed when you met Dave, myself and the rest of the Winnipeg train people, as we passed through town on our way home from Nolacon. I was even more impressed when you waved all these sheets of paper under my nose and screamed "I pubbed my ISH!", even if the station master and the rest of the people in St Paul station stared as if we were crazed.

*It always seemed that you were happy to see me and it had never occurred to me as I drove through the blizzard that shut down Minnesota, North Dakota and three other states, that this relationship might cool but let's not dwell on that.*

Glenn's cover is very good and would require only a small change to achieve greatness. The small picture in the upper left should have shown the smoldering remains of the rug rat laying in front of the dragon. Perhaps this just reflects my viewpoints about children and the dangers of excessive cuteness.

After the scales fell from my eyes it was with total amazement, I realized there is something fishy in this tale about the artichoke lovers. It need not be pointed out they were driven under by the pyramiding costs in finding private waterside retreat in which to ply their woo.

*Did I thank you for the jewelry, Geri? Thanks, I really appreciate it but does it come with a key?*

Did you ever have a card trick that you would use to amaze friends or maybe have a humorous song you would do that was so popular that you got so as to be able to do it in your sleep. And that is as much pleasure that it gave you. Jim Young's article on the early days of Minn-Stf reads like that. The information is there. The reprints are great (I really got kick out of the old picture of Fred),



and the article seems well crafted but it feels like this has been done before. Maybe I have been listening to too many tales of the old days of Minn-Stf but I would rather hear interesting anecdotes from Jim's experiences in the Diplomatic Corps. Perhaps that sort of thing is too sensitive but it would make for more novel reading.

*Look Geri, if you aren't gonna give me the key, at least get off the phone long enough to hand me a beer. No. Not an american golden brown pop. Bring one of the O' Keefes E.O.S.'s. Thanks.*

Having Kara do the illos for Nate's article was appropriate and fortunate. Her prowess with guitar and electric bass are well known amongst the musicians of Winnipeg fandom (she was last year's choice for the Musician's Hat Fund) as is her abilities as a writer (*Nightingale* may well be the best the best F&SF novel published in 1988). Her illos provided a humourous and appropriate counter-point to sinister and serious article. A good combo and very dancable.

"The Eclectic Reader" is superb. I do like the idea of listing books that the writer (in this case J. Singer) finds interesting but I have a problem with passing on second hand recommendations. Still that one objection does not keep this from being a fine and very interesting list of recommendations. An opportunity to compare reading habits is fun as well. Six books at once I can comprehend but sixteen?!?!? I might join the J. Singer fan club yet!

The idea that the somnolent S.I. Hayakawa, graduate of St. John's High School in Winnipeg's infamous North End, was a scholar capable of writing an interesting text of a subject as esoteric as language, is truly amazing.

*Here I sit, chained to a portable PC in some room with bare plaster walls that have been dotted with posters and torn clown masks. Plaster dust and paint splatters cover the floor. Trying to watch the Bears vs the Eagles on the colour TV and all I get is fog. It's time to rattle my chains. Time to shake off my shackles and to break the locks that keep me tied to this loc. Geri, the repro is wonderful, the art is delightful and I have finished this loc. Can I go to the bathroom NOW?*

Don, all that time you thought I'd chained you upstairs so you'd loc *Idea*. I must confess to an ulterior motive (Get your mind out of the gutter, Bindas!) — it kept you out of the kitchen and Toad Hall was safe from conflagration at least a short while longer... — gfs

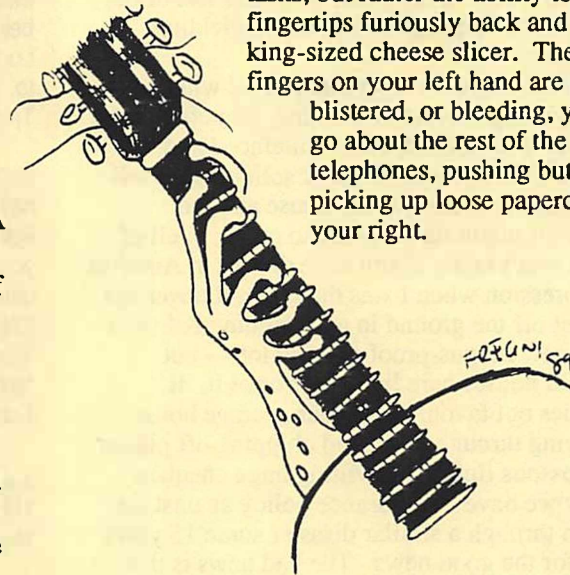
**Craig Hilton**  
28 Success Crescent  
Manning, 6152  
Western Australia, Australia

30October1988

Nate Bucklin's piece on left hands, right hands, and guitars was especially interesting to me as I myself have been learning the guitar now for just over a month. It's natural to assume, as Nate did, that left-handers have an

advantage as the left hand does most of the work, i.e., fingering the chords. Practice, however, has proven this to be wrong...well, half-wrong. It's not a case of how agile

the chording hand is at small manipulative tasks, but rather the ability to slide your fingertips furiously back and forth along a king-sized cheese slicer. Then, when the fingers on your left hand are calloused, blistered, or bleeding, you can still go about the rest of the day dialling telephones, pushing buttons, and picking up loose paperclips with your right.



But the smaller hand is better at chording, at least the one with narrower fingers. The ideal fingers are ones which are as narrow as chopsticks, and preferably also as long and hard, with at least five joints apiece. Having experimented with the scores from the songs that the Beatles composed towards the end of their partnership, I now realize that they took LSD in an astonishingly successful attempt to turn their fingers into plasticene.

Many of us are not blessed with such hands, and even a choice of two is insufficient at times. If your own hands are the wrong shape, you simply have to use someone else's. Unfortunately, then that lucky bastard cops all the credit.

Enough of this whinge. Thank you for using my illo of Bunny alongside so much quality artwork. The excellent reproduction and pride of place were helpful, too. Bunny says she's always wanted to be a "page three girl."

*Seeyuz, Craig Hilton*



Today, *Idea*, tomorrow, *The Sun*. Page three girl indeed! News flash, folks! Craig, and his wife, Julia, will be in the States for a visit soon, and will be in Minneapolis for Corflu. Fanzine fans from England, Australia, and North America...whee! — gfs



# LETTERS ❖ OF ❖ COMMENT

**Walter Willis**  
32 Warren Road  
Donaghadee  
N. Ireland BT21 OPD

15 October 88

My favorite thing in *Idea* was the DIYSM article. However it left me in a state of some unease, on account of your reference to "spackling and sanding". Sanding I am all too familiar with; I have an orbital sander and the smoothness of my orbits is

much admired. However so far as I know I have never spackled anything in my life. Maybe the omission of this vital step is the reason why after 23 years of hard work, Madeleine and I are now huddling on a single bed mattress in the boxroom at the back, while the rest of the house is under attack by gangs of workmen wielding pneumatic drills.

This particular sequence of events started with the man next door coming round one evening, whitefaced and trembling, (not to be confused with Whitefaced and Trembling, the P G Wodehouse firm of solicitors) to tell us that dry rot had been found in his house and the engineer thought it might have spread to mine. Well of course it had. I don't know if you have dry rot in America — I got the impression when I was there that it never has the chance to get off the ground in any building before it finds itself in a new fungus-proof parking lot — but owners of big old houses here live in terror of it. It involves activities not favoured by your average householder, like sawing through joists and chipping off plaster and injecting noxious fluids and writing huge cheques.

Fortunately we have an insurance policy against dry rot, having been through a similar disaster some 15 years ago. So much for the good news. The bad news is that the insurance people say the basic trouble is that the cement rendering outside is parting from the bricks in places, letting water creep about underneath. So my neighbour and myself are having it all chiseled off and redone. Our houses are what they call here semi-detached villas (i.e. one building in one lot: I'm not sure what the US equivalent is. Duplex?) built about 100 years ago with solid 9" walls. They are big with lots of fancy bits (a local architectural survey described them as "seductively ostentatious") and it's a big job, likely to be still going on when we leave for Tropiccon.

Back at *Idea*. I enjoyed all the contents but was most fascinated by Jon Singer's Eclectic Reader. I used to read like that, and wish I still could.

That was a brilliant illo heading your DIY piece. I see that like me you belong to what I think of as the Lizzie Borden school of home decorating. Your mention of being asked to return the sander reminds me for no very good reason of what Tommy Cooper, the English comedian, offered when asked what he thought was the best joke he knew.

"Knock"

"Yes?"

"Is Fred in?"

"I'm afraid Fred died suddenly this morning."

"Oh. I'm terribly sorry to hear that. Er...did he happen to say anything about a can of paint?"

It's one of those jokes that tell you more about human nature than you really want to know.

Best,

*Walt*

What I want to know is how you and Madeleine arranged a dry rot invasion so as to have the excuse to huddle together on a single bed for months. Seeing how close you two are convinced me that part certainly wasn't an ordeal. The gangs of workmen, though, and those drills...well, there comes a time when even being a guest of honour at a worldcon would be a better fate... Lucky for you it was warm, comfy Tropiccon that you could escape to. (I must thank and credit Steve Stiles for "warm, comfy Tropiccon" — a most accurate description.)

Yes, duplex is the right term, at least for units with two homes. If they're small, they're double bungalows. Fourplexes have four homes joined together on one lot. Townhouses are like rowhouses; you share walls with one or two neighbours, but your floors and ceilings are your own. In condominiums, you usually share a common floor and/or ceiling as well. At least, this is how the terms seem to be used in Minnesota. Now we've figured out your equivalent of "spackling" and our equivalent of "semi-detached villas"! Wow, yet another SMOTHR service — Trans-Atlantic-ations. — gfs

**Andy Hooper**  
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3 February 89

I want to commend you on turning out one of the three most handsome zines of 1988. Between *Rune 78*, *Pirate Jenny* #1, and *Idea* Vol 2 No.1, one could practically hold a clinic on how a fanzine of good

taste and breeding ought to comport itself in the contemporary small press landscape. All these amazing lines and boxes and logos and headers! I hardly wonder that I have not, as yet, received a second issue; having set such a standard for yourself to follow, I imagine it will take quite a while to get the individual issue out.

But on to content. Yet more fawning praise; some very good articles indeed, on some interesting topics. And those pieces that dealt with topics I felt had been recently covered at length in other organs had the singular and rare virtue of being brief. I really enjoyed Elise Krueger's insights into the decorative vagaries of Como Park, as I do everything she writes; her style is so fluid and easy-going that I wish there was more of her work to be found in other zines, or that she would, Ghu forfend, get it into her head to put out another *PI* or *Penny Dreadful* or something equally time-consuming. Nate Bucklin's piece was also very entertaining, considering a topic I'd never read one word on previously.

Jim Young's little treatise on the origins and practises of crazy Minneapolis fandom was amusing as well. Interesting to note that Fred Haskell has been trying to Gafiate since 1968, and why won't people let him, anyway? Fred strikes me as an ideal Minneapolis version of the sleepers who awoke and warily embraced Britfandom in the early '80s, Chuck Harris, Vince Clarke, and so on. See, we get Fred to fall into the river some



January, and he freezes into this big block of ice, right? Then we let him sit for twenty years, and then thaw him in time for the Bloomington worldcon in 2009. Put this idea to him, Geri, see what he thinks. Point out the benefits of this plan; by then, there's an even chance that *The Last Dangerous Visions* will be published, and that Lucas will have made another Star Wars movie, too.

Young's piece put me in mind of just how long things have been going on in Minneapolis on an organized level. His comparatively short piece on his own memories served really to tantalize me; some one ought to write a more complete history of Minneapolis fandom, your own version of *A Wealth of Fable*. There is a need for someone, somewhere to write a worthwhile history of an ongoing fan group, if for no other reason than to prove it can be done; I still have the bad taste in my mouth from reading Bill Patterson's *The Little Fandom that Could*, his memoir of Phoenix fandom and its Gotterdamerung, IguanaCon. There has got to be a better way...

Found looking over the items in the Chuck auction very interesting. My memory of Corflu last April is emphatically punctuated by the shark-like frenzy brought on by the appearance of those old *Hyphens* on the block; I should certainly hope you made enough money to bring Chuck over here. If you made a proportional amount by mail to what you did at Corflu last year, you ought to be able to put Chuck in the bridal suite.

I found Jon Singer's selection of books for review entertaining, if also a trifle impenetrable. In looking over the zine this was the one thing that struck me as being something I'd really love to do; if you have the room at some point in the future, please consider me. This is the sort of thing I could write in a short period of time, and have a lot of fun doing it.

Warm Regards,

*Andy Hooper*

I won't deny that it takes a lot of time to produce *Idea*. But fancy layout is a hell of a lot faster on the computer than on stencil. I've done both; this is more fun. If I may borrow your words, Andy, having set such a standard for yourself to follow in *Take Your Fanac Everywhere* #1, I imagine it will take quite a while to get the individual issue out. Given that same standard, I'm sure it will be worth the wait.

You run quite a risk, encouraging folks to let Fred gafiate just a few weeks before Corflu. It'll have to be next January, or a later one. And, as he pointed out, I did put the *Idea* to him, last September. As I remember, he found it satisfactory. Perhaps even quite satisfactory. One more point, you've got 80 years to wait for a Minneapolis area worldcon bid that will enjoy the broad support of local fen. Minneapolis in '73! Park and lock it. Accept no substitutes.

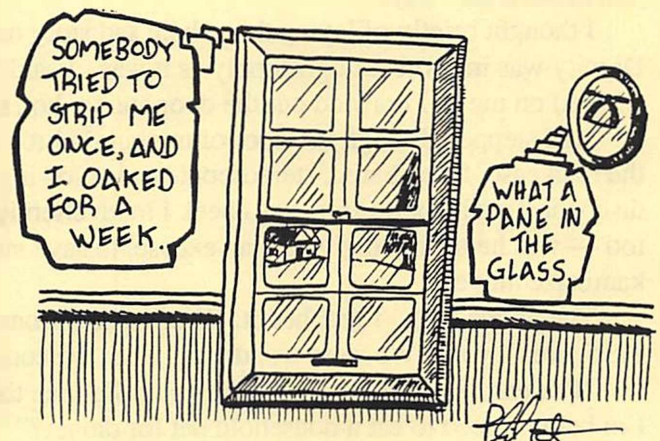
"There has got to be a better way..." sends shivers down my spine. "I felt there was a better way..." just so happens to be the title of the company history series I compiled when National Computer Systems was just over 20 years old. Deja vu. You will be glad to know there are transcripts of the Minn-stf Floundering

Fathers panel run at Minicon back in the late '70s.

The mail auction went better than I expected, albeit differently. Look for the update elsewhere in these pages. Bridal suite, indeed. Vincent Clarke just donated five issues of *Novae Terrae* (Britain's first fanzine) circa 1937-38 to the fund! Steve Stiles and ATom both donated original art. Chuck and Walter donated a few copies of *Hyphen*. I'm beginning to think fans are trying to send him on a round-the-world luxury cruise! Presuming all goes well, we'll all get to share in some extra fun at Corflu thanks to everyone's generosity. Film at 11.

For info on writing for "The Eclectic Reader," I refer you (and any competitors for upcoming slots) to Mike Glicksohn's column in this issue. If the stakes get high enough, I just may be able to take that year off in '90 or '91.

Sorry this is so long. Letters of comment are suppose to have comment hooks for other readers, and not so many for the editor! Got that? — gfs



#### We Also Heard From...

Phil Tortoricci (see cartoon of comment, above), Ben Yalow, John Robey, Robert Lichtman ("it certainly is attractive in a desktop-publishing-gone-wild sort of way" and a bid for MOTA #4), Moshe Feder, Gordon Garb, Dan Goodman, and Marty Helgesen, Teddy Harvia, Ruth Anderson, and Jon Singer, who recommends:

J.E. Gordon, *STRUCTURES -or- Why Things Don't Fall Down* Da Capo ('78?) This is just as nifty as *The New Science of Strong Materials*.

Jay F. Rosenberg *The Improverished Student's Book of Cookery, Drinkery, and Housekeepery*. Probably available through the Reed College Bookstore. 1968?

Sharon Olds [several volumes of poetry] Olds is a very good poet. I heard her interviewed on NPR and promptly bought two of her books. Some of this is heavy-duty stuff — if you are depressed, you may want to be a bit cautious about it.

Aleister Crowley *The Book of Lies* Crowley was an old so-and-so. He was also extremely brilliant. He was also a good liar. This is just one of many books.

Gregory Bateson and Mary Catherine Bateson *Angels Fear*

And more, more, more . . .



So I said to her, "Just what do you see in this cartoon mutt, anyhow?"

"Look," she snapped, "I told you — he can't help it if his parents were acid heads; it's been hell for him. He's going to change his name just as soon as they're both dead and he gets the inheritance."

I snickered, "I'd love to write the obit — 'Mr. and Mrs. McNally are survived by their son, Deputy Dawg, who expressed his wish hereinafter to be known as Doggy Daddy, befitting his new position in the family.' Real class, that kid. And you're looking to be queen bitch, eh? What's his idea of heavy petting? Humming your leg?"

"How did you — Oh, you're so cruel, Tom. Why did I even answer the phone, let alone agree to meet you here? You know it's over between us, and making crude remarks about the man I love just nails the lid down."

Two points. Right through the back of the skull. Should I keep going, and have the honor of chucking in the first few clods of dirt? Nah, best pack it in. I needed to get home, anyway. I was hungry, and even with the new microwave, dressing and cooking a marmoset was time-consuming and messy. Unpleasant, too. How do you explain to a lifelong pet that your boss gave you an appliance in lieu of severance pay?

I thought briefly of laying this whole sad story on my fervently-wishing-to-be-ex, but decided not to. Dignity was in short enough supply as it was. I said "See ya." She said she doubted it. Several people stepped on me as I crawled out the door and up hot, sticky steps to the el. Dry cleaning bills. Shit.

As I stepped through the door of my humid little apartment Merle launched himself at me from atop the bookcase, fangs bared, stereoscopic eyes glowing wildly red in the dusk. How did he know? In disconnecting his jaws from my cheek I inadvertently snapped his neck. Guess he'd know that'd happen too — was he trying to give me an excuse, to save me some of the emotional pain? Uh-uh; obviously a kamikaze move.

The phone rang. I grabbed it. That asshole from Sears. "Mr. Gibson, you are aware that you owe us \$215, aren't you? We were wondering when we could expect payment."

"I'm just as aware now as when you called me this morning. Are you aware that I'm so broke that I'm being forced to eat a household pet for dinner?"

"Yes. We just derive exultant glee from hounding you. In fact, we're going to do something... special, Mr. Gibson. We usually save this for our larger accounts, but, well... tonight, while you're asleep, we're sending little men into your dreams to—"

A knock on the door. Damn. Phone cord barely reached, and I wanted some idea of what to expect if I ever got to sleep. I clenched Merle's corpse in my teeth and turned the knob. The door swung slowly. A soft light from the hall diffused itself about the room. Funny how I'd never noticed how pretty that light was, making the orange-crate coffee table and fifteen-dollar director's chair look like a display at Field's...

The door opened fully and I was confronted with a vision of heartstopping beauty. The phone dropped. So did my jaw. So did the marmoset.

"Hello," she said (or did she sing?), "My name is Elizabeth, and I am but a poor waif, blown into this Big City by a mighty Nor'easter. I have found a flat, but have nothing upon which to sit or place my belongings. I was wondering — would you know where I might find some... furniture?"

Now if my heart would leave my mouth so I could speak. "Y-yes, I think I might. Uh, please, excuse me for staring, but you're so, so beautiful!"

"do you really think so? I suppose I please myself, 'though I've been thinking of changing the color of my hair. Do you suppose it would look alright if it was... red?"

I nodded, taking her hands in mine and gazing into the great green bays that were her eyes. "Please, come in and let me show you my... furniture," and as we stepped I heard a skittering at my feet. I looked down to see Merle sit up, blinking. Guess I'd just pinched a nerve. He sized me up, then Elizabeth, and then scampered up on her shoulder, looking at me approvingly. I kicked the phone into the corner. That Frank Capra; boy was he right.

— by Robert J. Berlien