



**idea**

Number 5



WHERE THE  
WIZARD  
LIES

---

*Wale*



## Wondering why?

- \_\_\_ Me, too!
- \_\_\_ You're in it.
- \_\_\_ I have cause to believe you like to shop.
- \_\_\_ You turned me on to The Home Lovers Encyclopedia.
- \_\_\_ You're an official friend of Toad Hall.
- \_\_\_ You were at Corflu 9.
- \_\_\_ I don't know, maybe it was the roses...
- \_\_\_ You have frogs in your new kitchen.
- \_\_\_ You're Fannish as Hell.
- \_\_\_ You show me yours.
- \_\_\_ It seemed like the thing to do.
- \_\_\_ You're Vinç Clarke.
- \_\_\_ It's the least I could do.
- \_\_\_ What's essential, you cannot see...
- \_\_\_ You sent me socks.
- \_\_\_ It's spring!
- \_\_\_ You're into strip mountain-climbing.
- \_\_\_ You tell me.

## Idea #5

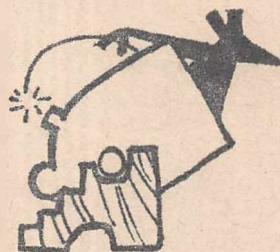
Bill Rotsler: Where the Wizard Lies .....	Cover
Geri Sullivan: Editorial .....	3
Geri Sullivan: A Different Shade of Corflu .....	4
Linda Bushyager: The True Meaning of Fandom.....	10
Stu Shiffman: I Remember Corfluvia .....	12
⇒ Stu Shiffman, artist	
Don Fitch: "You've Run Out of High-Caffeine Diet Cola!" .....	16
Jeff Schalles: The Eclectic Reader .....	22
⇒ Glenn Tenhoff, masthead artist	
James White: George and the Aliens of IF .....	25
Readers: Letters .....	28
⇒ Illustrated with ATomillos	

### Additional art credits:

ATom: 2  
 Erin McKee: 25  
 Bill Rotsler: 9, 21  
 Stu Shiffman: 5, 6  
 Dover Clip Art: 17, 19, 20

### Additional credit and thanks to...

Jeff Schalles: mimeography, first aid, and faith  
 Glenn Tenhoff: official *Idea* logo artist. Accept no substitutes  
 Garth Danielson: Corflu 1-shot reproduction, encouragement  
 Steve Sneyd: Widower's verses  
 Chuck Harris: ATomillos  
 Fred A. Levy Haskell: Official Happy Deadwood  
 Corflu 9: material and motivation  
 The Raffles art files  
 Idea #4 collators (in the order they signed the Toad Hall Register):  
 Kay Drache, Eileen Lufkin, Martin Schafer, Nate Bucklin, Mitch Pockrandt, Karen Johnson, & Jennifer Baker



Idea Volume 2, Number 5

April 1992

Geri Sullivan, Editor

Copyright 1992 by Geri Fitzgerald Sullivan, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA. All rights revert to the contributors upon publication.

A SMOTHRA publication. Member: fwa. Founding member: Minnesota Fanzine Recovery Act.

## Editorial

I am in a curious position — how many faneds get to explain “why this issue is early”?

Like most good things in this fan's life, we can blame it on Corflu. At the end of the Corflu 9 banquet, when I asked Linda Bushyager about printing her GoH speech, I thought *Idea* #5 would come out just before MagiCon. But when I spent the hours flying back to Minneapolis jotting page after page of convention report notes rather than catching up on sleep lost the night before, I began to fantasize about having *Idea* out by Minicon. Never mind that Minicon was just 6-1/2 weeks away, or that I'd spend 2-1/2 of those weeks visiting fans in England and Ireland.

It wouldn't even matter if the page count was light. (Hah!) In the stack of fanzines I'd collected at Corflu were the masters of the rubber-stamped one-shot we'd produced Sunday night ... late Sunday night. I'd mail it out with *Idea*.

Rationality seemed to have the upper hand, but I nonetheless found time to turn the one-shot masters over to Garth Danielson for experimentations, draft my own Corflu report, and type Linda's speech before flying to London. My trip provided the convenient excuse to discuss minor changes to “George and the Aliens of IF” with James White (I love face-to-face editorial conferences, especially when they take me home to Northern Ireland), and I was able to find a few moments to re-write my article as well. Chuck gave me two pages of ATom's fannish Kama Sutra illos, further expanding the *Idea* art files, and I picked up a collection of felt tip markers in 100 different colors, perfect for coloring cover feathers. I returned home to Minneapolis to find Stu Shiffman's article and art awaiting me (months before the deadline), and a few letters of comment scattered amongst the bills, direct mail offers, appeals, and catalogs that were stacked on my side of the table.

Not wanting to appear too organized, I frittered away most of the next week, trying to get my body clock back on a Central Standard Time schedule. Waking at 5:30 am exceeds my definition of absurdity! I called on clients, delivering Thorton's toffee and reminding them that I'm back and available for projects big and small. Jeff came down one morning to find me scrubbing the kitchen floor. The next day we raked leaves that spent the winter buried under the 28 inches of snow that fell on Halloween. I puttered around the yard, cutting down weed trees. I spent the week doing the human equivalent of pissing along the perimeter, using instead business calls, scrub brush, rake, and saw to mark my territory.

And I waited impatiently for the mail, knowing Don Fitch's article on the care and feeding of a consuite was en route. Neither of us had yet realized that my addresses was typoed on the Corflu membership list. If you have a copy of the list, please change the only “2” in my address to a “3” and avoid the fate of Jerry Kaufman and Don — in the weeks after Corflu both sent me “extra postage required” envelopes only to have them returned as undeliverable. Several encouraging LoCs arrived while I waited for Don's column, including one from Steve Sneyd that contained 74 Widower's verses, a few of which you will find scattered in these pages.

Timely articles, fresh art, interlineations, and encouragement. How could I not publish? Thus it is that I now announce, with some bemusement, that #6 should be out in time for MagiCon — and that I hope to see you there.



### Available for the usual from:

Geri Sullivan  
Toad Hall  
3444 Blaisdell Ave. S.  
Minneapolis MN  
55408-4315  
U.S.A.  
612/825-3558  
612/825-0136 (FAX)

### Contributors:

Linda Bushyager, 24 Leopard Rd., Paoli, PA 19301  
Don Fitch, 3908 Frijo, Covina, CA 91722  
Bill Rotsler, 17909 Lull St. Reseda, CA 91325  
Erin McKee, 2415 Glenwood Ave. N., Minneapolis, MN 55405-1014  
Jeff Schalles, 3444 Blaisdell Ave. S., Minneapolis MN 55408-4315  
Stu Shiffman, 8618 Linden Ave. N., Seattle WA 98103  
Glenn Tenhoff, 3033 Georgia Ave. S., St. Louis Park, MN 55426  
James White, 2 West Drive, Portstewart, Co. Londonderry BT 55 7ND,  
Northern Ireland, UNITED KINGDOM



# *A different shade of Corflu*

The pilot's voice came over the loudspeaker as we flew west: "It's sunny and 73 degrees in Los Angeles."

Those who know my playful obsession with the Minneapolis in '73 worldcon bid will understand the fannish significance of the pilot's weather report. It boded well for the weekend I would be spending in Los Angeles at Corflu 9.

I found the hotel with ease, and moved into room 720, which was on the third floor. A useful security measure perhaps, but the room keys didn't sport the number anyway. I rather liked the Cockatoo hotel. Sure, it was run down in spots, but it had personality, and you got to walk outside to get from place to place. That's a real plus to a Minnesotan. So much warmth, at the end of February. Even the rain was nice.

I spent the first few hours taking care of the usual: getting registered, handing out fanzines, meeting Joyce and Arnie Katz, delivering genuine Halloween-blizzard snow to Don Fitch, and making puff pastry fruit tarts for people to enjoy in the consuite. It was good to see so many friends and friendly new faces. I missed Corflu 8, and two years without Corflu had been Too Long.

Corflu 9 scheduled a minimum of programming or other group activities, leaving us the maximum amount of time for small group conversations with friends old and new. Unfortunately, this didn't fit my mood until Saturday afternoon. I don't know if it's a sign of spending too many hours in my attic office, working the night away, but I was conversationally-impaired for most of Friday and Saturday. "What am I doing here? Why does it matter? What do I have to contribute?"

It was fun, though, watching Laurie Yates. Her energy and enthusiasm reminded me of my own first Corflu, six years ago. And I gained a deeper appreciation for how Patrick & Teresa Nielsen Hayden must have felt back in 1986 when I approached them about coming to Not-A-D-Con over Memorial Day weekend, compliments of the soon-to-be-invented Wimpy Zone Fan Fund. I remember Patrick looking at me in critical confusion and saying, "well, sure, we'd come, but WHY are you inviting US? We've only just met."

"When are you coming to Las Vegas?" demanded the neo-fannish chorus of Laurie Yates and Woody Bernardi, six years later. Yes, it was flattering. But it was overwhelming, too. They didn't even know me. Here I was, trying to mentally sort out why I was even at Corflu, and they were clamoring for me to come to Las Vegas.

This confusing conversation took place over dinner, on Friday night. We were with Joyce and Arnie, Robert Lichtman, Jerry Kaufman and Suzanne Tompkins. Jerry and Suzle ran into some friends as we were leaving Canter's deli, and Robert and I ended up returning to the hotel via his old neighborhood. Conversation worked better one-to-one, but I still felt out of it.

What limited conversation skills I could drag up from the depths of experience were further quashed Friday night by my presence at the historic reunion of Ted White and Arnie Katz. I forget which one of them said it, but the first words spoken as they shook hands were something to the effect of, "Well, I guess you're not going to punch me out." Time passed quickly, lost in the serconnish atmosphere as Ted, Arnie, Joyce, and Robert got re-acquainted. I remember Andy Hooper fitting a few words in, and Joyce and I fell into a brief chat as Joyce tried to catch up on the last 17 years or so in the lives of Jim Young, Ken Fletcher, and Fred A. Levy Haskell. At least I know each of them, so could at least provide some reasonably accurate facts even when words were the last thing on my mind.

*by Geri Sullivan*

Throughout the weekend, I admired the way Vijay Bowen, Arnie, and Laurie kept jotting notes so as not to lose events in haze of yesterday. And others were writing away at the computer, creating their contributions for the Seventh Inning, the official Corflu 1-shot. It was published Saturday afternoon, before I'd figured out how to make words work. Given my state of mind, it was too early to write impressions of the con, and I couldn't conceive an interesting contribution about my life as an entrepreneurial desktop publisher cum book designer cum food writer. I knew I missed the sense of family I'd found at previous Corflus. The unique community-building interactions flashed only briefly during the auctions and the banquet. But people were clearly having a good time, and I knew I would be, too, if I could only click into things.

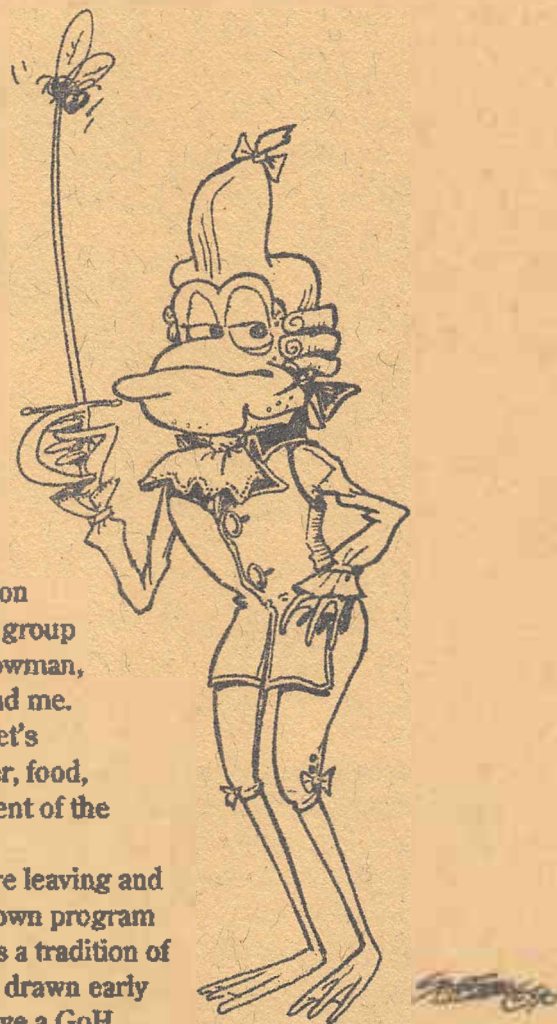
Saturday flowed along, with me looking for one then another of the do-it-yourself program items that never came to fruition. I was hanging out in the consuite late in the afternoon and at last fell into conversation with Elst Weinstein. Curious. My first real conversation of the day was with someone I'd never met, and knew so little about. We both love good/interesting architecture and chatted on about favorite buildings in San Francisco, Toronto, and New York.

After that there was no turning back. I caught up with friends like Moshe Feder and made new ones like Jeanne Bowman. Great conversations, each one different, just kept happening. Even as I was making my way back to my room, I fell into a deep and wonderful conversation with Art Widner. I don't know how long we stood talking in the courtyard; I just savored the feeling of being able to talk about anything, and to follow the conversation as it made its way through a variety of life experiences, some thrilling, some nothing but hard. This was the Corflu I'd come for. It just took me a day to find it.

Three Corflu groups made their way to The Pelican restaurant for dinner Saturday night. Ours included Mike Glyer, Elst, Dick and Nicki Lynch, Moshe, Nigel Rowe, Art Widner, and Dave Rike. We walked down to the ocean afterwards. A high wave caught Moshe unaware and he high-tailed in up the beach, only to fall, laughing, onto the damp sand as the sea subsided. It was good to hear him laugh so much. Nigel and I tried playing fanzine volleyball, only to discover that when you serve three fanzines at the same time, they scatter in the wind. If only we'd had a copy of the new *Outworlds*.

Corflu shared its Sunday banquet with the Regency Dancers, who were also convening at the Cockatoo that weekend. We'd conducted most of the usual business earlier in the weekend, what with auctions held both Friday and Saturday, and Robert Lichtman's election as the 1991 past president of fwa on Saturday. Like the rest of Corflu, the banquet was good for small group interaction. Our table included Don Fitch, Art Widner, Jeanne Bowman, Andy Hooper, Barnaby Rapoport, Spike Parsons, Tom Becker, and me. William Rotsler was at the next table, and he provided the banquet's highlight by drawing on plates, cups, saucers, bowls, a salt shaker, food, and the like — much to the delight of the fans and the bemusement of the hotel staff.

Socializing was intense at the end of the banquet. Many were leaving and it was time to say goodbye. The Regency fans departed for their own program while we grew anxious for Linda Bushyager's speech. (Corflu has a tradition of drawing the GoH from a hat at the convention. Linda's name was drawn early Saturday evening and it therefore became her responsibility to give a GoH speech at the banquet.)





Linda's years of fanwriting served her well, and her speech reminded us of the basic tenants of fandom in the guise of fannish entertainment.

Sunday afternoon found me hanging out in the consuite. Robert Lichtman invited me on a tour of LA, to include dinner at Canter's. Robert was eating there at every possible occasion while he was in town. The tour sounded like fun, but I had a hard time tearing myself away from the pleasantness of the Corflu consuite. Don Fitch clearly had the time of his life running it, and we all appreciated his efforts.

At last, I was ready to go, and we made it to Venice Beach in time to wander along the beachfront in the late afternoon sun. It was the quintessential California experience, complete with new age hippies, rollerbladers, body builders at the beachside gym, and blocks of shops.

Fannish reader, I am compelled at this point to continue my factual reporting of the day's events, no matter how shocking it might be to fanzine fandom. The information revealed to me that sunny afternoon might well prove useful to you in your future travels. To some it might be a startling exposé — it was to me. If you're a long-time friend of Robert's, my discovery may come as no surprise. Whatever, the truth must be told.

Robert Lichtman — TAFF winner and talented editor of *Trap Door* — likes to shop.

Yes, dear reader, be prepared as I was not. Beware on the day he offers you a tour about San Francisco, say, during next year's worldcon.

This startling truth *was* an onion — revealing itself in many thin layers. It started early on in our walk. There, tucked between t-shirt and tie-dye shops galore, stood a friendly bookstore. No B. Dalton this, or

Border books, too brightly light, open and impersonal. Robert appeared ready to stroll by, but it was just a ruse. The second I turned toward the door, he said, "So you're another one of those people who has to go in every bookstore, like me? This is a particularly good one."

So he wouldn't get the wrong impression and think my book browsing habits were in the same league as those of Vinç Clarke or Eric Lindsay, I replied that while I greatly enjoy wandering through bookstores, I often resist temptation and walk out empty-handed.

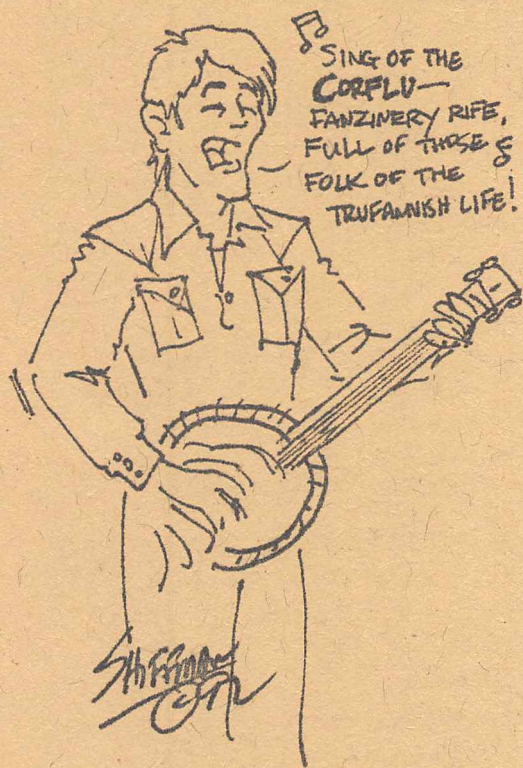
"I do the same." His words reassured me as we walked inside. The bargain table caught my immediate attention, but nothing leapt into my hands. Confident that I was in normal bookstore mode, and that my few dollars would remain safely tucked away for my upcoming trip to England, I moved on to an exhibit of black history books, where Robert caught up with me after a brief check of other sections.

Children's books were next. I would have like to have shown him *Tuesday*, but the shelf held no copies of that delightful story showing how on a Tuesday night the lilypads rose and the frogs rode them to grand

adventures in town. A paperbound Dr. Suess drawing book reminded me that I'd love to find a couple paperback copies of Suess' *On Beyond Zebra*. Besides wanting an intact reading copy, I hope to someday frame the Suess-abet provided at the back of the book. In the book, Suess picks up where "Z is for zebra" ends and shows us letters we never learned in grade school. It's a wonderful exercise in creativity for the literal-minded.

Alas, they had no other paperback Suess books, but I used the convenient excuse of being on vacation to pick up the hardbound copy of *On Beyond Zebra* that sat on the shelf.

Several shelves of personal travel books caught my eye, but a quick look at two confirmed my suspicion that choosing a really good one would take more than a bit of time, so I moved on with Robert



to the SF shelves. The usual assortment of familiar titles offered comparative safety. Robert didn't point out any exciting recent releases, and while I plan to read more Philip K. Dick, I wouldn't buy a specific title without first checking Jeff's collection.

While I had a book in hand, it appeared Robert would escape unscathed until a check-out display of well-bound miniature autobiographies snared him and he selected one by Robert Creeley, a favored poet. So much for our mutual habit of walking out of bookstores empty-handed.

Robert's book fit in his jacket pocket, while I was forced to carry mine in a bag. I ought to have recognized this indicator of Robert's shopping expertise as we continued to make our way down the concrete walkway beside the beach.

When we turned back toward the car, passing stores offering muscle shirts and other beach paraphernalia, I remarked that the clothes I'd liked best were those we'd seen first. Ever helpful, Robert pointed out we'd be passing those shops again.

I still didn't catch on.

I fully deserved what happened next. Supershopper Lichtman brought my attention to a Guatemalan woven cotton patchwork jacket hanging above a shop. It was fully lined, ideal for a Minnesota spring. Or, for that matter, an English or Irish spring, all of which I hoped to experience in the weeks ahead.

"These Guatemalan jackets are quite popular here right now. Have they made it to Minneapolis?" he asked.

"Not yet — or not that I've noticed." I don't follow fashion trends all that closely.

I think I was the first to actually enter the shop, to look at several similar jackets on display, but it's hard to know when one is unknowingly under the influence of an expert shopper. Before I knew it, Robert was helping me remove my outdated world map jacket (with the F.S.U. — Former Soviet Union — taking up most of the back). I slipped my arms into the bulkier (and even more colorful) Guatemalan one he held.

The game was almost up when he straightened the collar, and when he commented "That's a good price," I at last knew I was in the company of a shopping professional.

I checked things out in the shop's mirror. Robert, no doubt, would have pulled a reflective surface from his pocket if the shop hadn't been able to oblige.

The jacket was Almost Right. Like so many highly-patterned pieces, it ... well, 'clashed' is too strong a word. It didn't clash, exactly, with my body and coloring. It just didn't complement them to my satisfaction. I was reminded of the First Rule of Shopping: If it looks better on the hanger than it does on you, don't buy it.

Robert was quick to pull out the other size large jacket from the selection. The colors harmonized as only fuchsia, sky blue, emerald, purple, lime, red, orange, turquoise, burgundy, yellow, and black can. I looked in the mirror and knew that I'd Found It. The price was low enough that I settled for an unobtrusive quality check: smooth seams, non-binding zipper, tightly stitched cuffs and waistband. I'd noticed Robert checking out similar details as he looked through the selection and knew he'd point me to any out-of-the-ordinary construction defects.

So when we left the store I had two (count 'em two) bags to carry. Still empty-handed (if not empty-pocketed), Robert stopped to admire several batik patchwork jackets as we strolled toward the car. My comparative neohood showed most clearly as I failed to even try to get him to try one on.

---

Socrates died by his own hand,  
Imagine what this means...  
A whole life wasted — he never tasted  
WIDOWER'S WONDERFUL BEANS

The very first Widower's Verse  
by Eric Needham

---



At last, we were safely back in the car. I got out of our stroll along the beach for less than the price of a room night at the Cockatoo Inn, and picked up two needed items, so I can't complain too much. But I hadn't parted with a penny during the walk on the beach the night before!

From Venice Beach we drove up Santa Monica Blvd, a familiar site to any eye exposed to movies and tv. We passed through more quintessential California as we made our way onto Wilshire Blvd, then past UCLA toward Beverly Hills.

Dusk was settling but we saw several mini-mansions and gated driveways as we made our round-about way to Rodeo Drive. Robert drove up one side and down the other, giving me full view of all the shops, then headed for Hollywood Blvd., where we found a convenient parking place and walked up the star-studded boulevard to Mann's Chinese Theater to gaze at the hand and footprints left by stars for the past ~60 years. Or, in the case of Jimmy Durante, hand and nose prints.

We checked out a few tourist shops along the boulevard, but I was curiously immune to the usual magnet-postcard-coffee mug compulsion. I settled instead for souvenirs from the Universal News Service, probably the largest newsstand in LA. I picked up a heavy metal magazine for Jeff and B-grade erotica less often seen on the few Minneapolis newsstands I've encountered. Good Hollywood souvenirs.

Our next stop was Canter's, where I made the mistake of ordering the large Cobb salad. The bowl was significantly larger than the dinner plate it came on, and deep enough to hold a salad for six or maybe eight, if you have an Irish fan or two in the bunch.

On our way back to Corflu, we stopped by Robert's hotel (just a few blocks away from the Cockatoo and a third cheaper). He settled with the desk so as not to disturb the owner when he left early the next morning. In the process, I got to see a vibrant Navajo rug Robert had purchased on his trip to L.A. He also had a book showing a variety of regional Navajo weaving styles. I could have happily read the entire book rather than just skimming it, but the Corflu consuite beckoned.

It was Sunday night, after all, and there was tradition for me to pursue. Sunday night at the Seattle Corflu I spent hour after hour talking in the elevator lobby with Gary Farber while a friend slept and snored the night away back in the second bed of what was supposedly my single room for the night. It wasn't the snoring that lead to my night in the elevator lobby. Nor was it the wet spot left on my bed earlier in the evening by two other friends. Rather, I credit the newly emerging "Sunday night of Corflu" spell. Curious and ultimately wonderful things seem to happen to me Sunday nights at Corflu, especially if there's some Canadian beer to add to the equation.

The next year, at Corflu 6 in Minneapolis, Chuck Harris adopted me as his fan mother late Sunday night. I left tucking-in duties to Sue Harris, so I don't know if he got to hear "Around the World in 80 Lays," one of the bedtime stories suggested by Rob Hansen at the time.

Sunday night of the New York Corflu is forever lost in the serconnish haze of conversations that permeated that weekend, and I didn't want to miss what might happen in 1992.

As we pulled up to the Cockatoo, I consolidated the bags that had piled around my feet and ankles in Robert's car, toted them back to my room, slipped on my new jacket, and made my way to the consuite, where the party lived on, albeit smaller than it had been all weekend.

The primary source of entertainment came from making sure Don Fitch spent what remained of the night partying rather than working. If the man had told us where the rope was, we would have tied him to a chair. (Surely there was a hank of rope among the seemingly hundreds of Rubbermaid carry-bins Don used to tote consuite supplies to and from the convention.)

---

Capone ended up in Alcatraz  
The worst Chicago Mobster  
His life of crime left him no time  
for WIDOWER'S WONDERFUL LOBSTER

by Eric Needham

---



We did pretty well sans rope. As the night progressed, more fans took on spotting duty, bringing it to my befuddled attention whenever the ever-wily Don escaped sight, usually to be found packing supplies, sorting garbage, or straightening pictures on the hotel room walls. Bill Bowers was especially vigilant, and between us, Don didn't stand a chance.

The party broke up around 3:30 am and I wandered back to my room for most of a night's sleep before packing and checking out Monday morning. The bag that carried snow, whipped cream, and puff pastry from Minnesota was filled with fanzines for the trip home.

I caught up with Pat Virzi, Bill Bowers, Eric Lindsay, George Flynn, and Barnaby Rapoport in the restaurant for a late morning breakfast. Afterwards, Eric, Bill, and I wandered down to the smoking consuite (Don's room) only to find a note taped to the door: "Geri: Up. Alive. Soaking in hot water. Don."

Re-using the tape and paper, I left a note of my own: "Don: I hope you're a happy prune. Geri."

I checked out of my room, storing my bags in Eric's and seeing a small portion of the books he'd purchased during his 6-week stay in the states. (He'd previously shipped back ~80 lbs, but fell prey to the predictable malady of Minneapolis visitors who dare to go on Denny Lien's bookstore tour.)

Back in the lobby, we were joined by a suspiciously smooth-skinned Don Fitch. Only a later check of his room verified that he hadn't snuck off with a load of the food and supplies he was donating to a Native American group instead of soaking in the tub.

Don must have been a bit daunted by the packing job ahead, for he allowed me to pitch in with minimal fuss. We made a noticeable dent before I had to catch the airport shuttle.

Saying goodbye to Don and Eric Lindsay bore a resemblance to my Tropicon parting 3+ years ago. We watched and we waved, knowing we'd reached the end of something special.

Bad news and good awaited me at the airport. My flight had been cancelled, due to "weather" in Minneapolis. They were able, however, to get me on an earlier flight — one that had been due to leave 30 minutes before my arrival at the airport. It had been delayed in Minneapolis by the same ominous "weather." I called Jeff to tell him my anticipated arrival time and was relieved to hear the weather was merely foggy, rather than Toad Hall being ensconced by the more-typical spring blizzard or ice storm. As the plane headed east, I wrote the notes that formed the basis of this convention report. "Sunny and 73 degrees" was soon but a memory of friendships formed and strengthened.



Linda Bushyager was Corflu 9's guest of honor. We enjoyed the speech she gave at the Sunday banquet, a speech written on less than a day's notice. I hope you enjoy it, too. I've tried to replicate some of the congregation's outbursts during the speech. You'll find them in *italic type*. – gfs

# The True Meaning of Fandom

## Corflu 9 GoH Speech by Linda Bushyager

The title of today's sermon is The True Meaning of Fandom. I am here today to confess. Yes, my friends, I have sinned. I have strayed from the true path of fannishness.

Many years ago I was a truefan. I stenciled, I published, I collated, and I brought forth a genzine, and I called it *Granfalloon*, and it was good. Say Hallelujah, my friends. *Hallelujah!*

But as I got older my fannish enthusiasm began to wane. *Oh, sister*. But still I stenciled, I mimeoed, and I collated and I pubbed a newszine, *Karass*, and it was good. *Hallelujah!* But as the years passed, my enthusiasm waned yet further and soon all I could publish was a lowly apazine. And oh, the shame, the depths of degradation I fell to. For it wasn't for a trufannish apa like *Fapa*, *The Cult*, or even *Apa-69*. No, I had sunk very low indeed, my friends. *Tell us, sister*. It was for *Apa-VCR*, an apa about videotaping.

BUT THEN, a few years ago, I came to a CORFLU. And a miracle happened. *Hallelujah!* As I stood in the fanzine room I felt a strange stirring, a tingling down in the tips of my fingers.

As I looked up into the glare of florescent lights above my head, I saw a swirling of colors and a cloud-like shape began to appear. And the clouds parted, revealing the shape of a giant beaver spreading out above my head. Yes, folks, it was the shape of an animal, a fannish beaver wearing a propellor beanie, smiling at me. I realized it was the great fan god Roscoe himself. *Hallelujah!*

And his spirit descended on me and spoke. *Tell it, sister*.

"Linda, you should pub again.

And I said, "No, no, I don't want to. I hate those inkstained hands, those paper cuts, that smell of ozone from the electrostenciller." *Amen!*

And Roscoe said, "Linda, you must pub again."

And I said, "No, no, I hate begging artisits for cartoons, rejecting crummy fan fiction, and waiting by the door for the postman to bring LoCs which never arrive."

And Roscoe said, "Linda, you will pub again." *Hallelujah!*

But still I said, "No, no, I hate arguing with the Post Office that my fanzine qualifies for 4th Class Book Rate and that staples are just the same as a regular book's binding."

Roscoe just looked at me and smiled. And suddenly I felt a surge of fannish enthusiasm course through my body. Suddenly I felt like a young neo again and I heard myself muttering "Gosh o wow oh boy oh boy." *Hallelujah!*

But I blinked and Roscoe vanished. I looked around, but he'd disappeared. My eyes focused in front of me and there stood Leslie Smith. She, too, looked a little dazed as though she'd seen something unusual. Our eyes locked.

"I'm going to publish again," I said.

"And I'll be your coeditor," she cried.

And so we published *Duprass*. And it was good. *Hallelujah!*

But the years passed and the issues began to fall farther and farther apart, and my fannish enthusiasm began to fade. I climbed the Mountains of Inertia. The Glades of Gafia beckoned. I went to Corflu after Corflu, hoping Roscoe would reappear, but he didn't.



And the terrific articles by David Langford, Dave D'Amassa, Richard Brandt, and others sat half-typed in the computer. And the beautiful Steve Stiles cover and Tara! art portfolio began gathering dust. I know how much you would enjoy seeing them. But — Unfortunately, Roscoe didn't come to this Corflu either. Up until last night I felt guilty and ashamed that I was once more straying from the true path of fannishness.

But last night another miracle happened. *Hallelujah!* Yes, folks, the Spirit of Ghu visited me. *Hallelujah!* He sent me a message in my Chinese fortune cookie. Yes indeed! *Hallelujah!*

You see, after the meal we played the fortune cookie game, where one person asks a second person a question, and that person's cookie provides the answer. The second person asks a third, and so on until the last person asks the first. So my husband, Ronald, asked me "What will the content of your guest of honor speech be?"

And the spirit of the great fan god Ghu entered the fortune cookie and wrote this: "You will always be surrounded by true friends." *Hallelujah!*

Suddenly a feeling of peace and calm washed over me.

I immediately realized what Ghu was trying to tell me about the true meaning of fandom. I was forgiven for not publishing. For fandom is more than fanzines. What's important are the people who are in it, the friends like you. I'd like to thank the Corflu committee for doing an excellent job in providing this forum for us to gather in. And I'd like to thank you for letting me represent you as this year's guest of honor.

Ghu's message was really for all of you as well as myself. For now that we are fans, all of us will always be surrounded by true friends.

Say *Hallelujah. Hallelujah!*

Amen.





# I REMEMBER CORFLUVIA!





"Stu," said Andi, "why are we going to the LA Corflu? No one will talk to me because I'm not a big fanzine fan, and besides — there's no good coffee down there!" Coffee is very important to most Seattleites, even one of only a year-and-a-half vintage like Andi. A latte a day makes ... actually, I haven't figured that part out. Something about a Mr. or Ms. Coffee-Nerves fighting against the giant rainforest slugs.

Jon Singer probably knows, but I refuse to pander to that type of personality-cult.

Anyhoo, the love of my life was having major pre-con jitters. We've all had them before a con or a big party with people we don't know too well. "Everybody hates me, won't talk to me, and will go out to dinner without me until the inevitable return to a private party with all my friends — and without me!" I endeavored to reassure her that, indeed, she was cherished and loved, she was a good writer and that all fanzine fans did *not* hate all non-fanzine fans. Together, we wondered about the history of this new being, "Pat Virzi," listed in the progress report. And could Bruce Pelz and Robbie Cantor give us a Corflu with true *fannischekeit* and *fanzinekultur*?

I had a good time at the LA Corflu, despite my still-incomplete recovery from the dreaded head-and-chest cold that would not die. But still, I did not find that once-and-future experience, the ideal Corflu weekend within that hotel that so well fits into Andy Hooper's definition of the Tudor Nightmare Village. Rather than just reviewing what did not work for me, I began thinking about what elements were *right* and what the Platonic (or Shiffmanian) Ideal Corflu requires.

After all, I am a Past President of FWA. If I could only remember of what year....

## PHYSICAL LAYOUT

*"What we need is e-space."* CREATURE COMFORTS

Don Fitch put together one of the best Corflu hospitality rooms that I'd ever seen. There was plenty of room (even the smokers had a good separate area that was comfortable and accessible), plentiful seating, and good snacks and drinkables. A very good atmosphere. This contrasted sharply with the New York Corflu in the Roosevelt Hotel, where the smoking room was tiny and bled down to the non-smoking space, which felt dark and crowded. This was not helped along by the pool to determine when Moshe and Lise would have their first screaming argument or when the rest of the committee would reach the end of their rope.

Bill Bowers' Cincinnati Corflu in Covington, Kentucky, also had a claustrophobic feeling (and the first Tudor Nightmare Village). Both Seattle and Minneapolis had the best con suites, but Minneapolis had most of the noshies and other items in the smoking room. I suppose this is somewhat understandable, as Fred and Susan (the Amazing Flying Levy Haskells, or Haskell Levys) were both heavy smokers at that time. I found this made things uncomfortable then, and would be even more now that I've had my asthma diagnosed.

## THE CONVENTION PROGRAM AND FUN WAY

*"We're all bozos on this bus"* Firesign Theatre

You need a good-sized space for the business and interchange of the Corflu. The first con at the Claremont set a standard, with its space for exhibits and fanzine sales and discussion groups in one open area. This was followed two years later by the Tyson's Corners Deskset opening up the discussion groups into a Live Fanzine on the model of the 1976 Live *Spanish Inquisition* at Balticon. Program now had a separate room from that of registration/exhibits/one-shot production, etc. This model was closely followed by the next year's Cincinnati Corflu, whose Live Fanzine even included a reprint excerpt by Jerry Kaufman and Suzle from the Live *SpanInq*. Bowers also deserves plaudits for his publishing the contents of the Cincinnati Live Fanzine program in a post-con production.

Wow, a fanzine, just the thing we're looking for — to paraphrase Peter Cook and Dudley Moore.

Seattle had plenty of space and diversified its programming, with panel discussions, Twinkle tosses on the Minicon model, fanorama readings (as originated at Wiscon) and more. Minneapolis also

# BY STU SHIFFMAN

recognized the importance of a solid program to give form to Corflu. New York tried, but was too forced and depressing with its debate on the Death of Fanzine Fandom, panels on non-fan fanzines, memorial for ATOM, and video pilgrimage to the Living Buddha of Hagerstown. Maybe I wasn't feeling well, maybe I felt disconnected from the much anticipated New York Corflu after having moved to Boston, or maybe I just thought that Moshe never understood what made Corflu special to me.

OK — now a lengthy digression on philosophy. Yeah, we're fanzine fans. But we're also faanish fans who embrace Corflu for the sense of family reunion and need after the feeling lost in the growth of the larger unknowing lumpen fanetariat. We have a coming together at Corflu like all the best fan rooms at worldcons (Avedon Carol's Constellation was the best proto-Corflu experience that I can recall). It's not mimeographs or Selectrics, but a special kind of communication that the current state of electronic fandom with its modem-linked networks, has yet to achieve. Deep down in someone like Terry Carr was the soul that rejoiced in reaching out and finding like-minded fen. I know that once the Nielsen Haydens felt the same. I know that Ted White and Rob Hansen and Geri Sullivan and Andy Hooper, among others, understand what I mean. Fanzines are communication through special sorts of sustainable artifacts that allow me as artist or writer or editor to connect with those others out there who embrace the science fiction community and the special quality of fannishness.

The bulletin boards and discussion groups are more ephemeral than apas and less than simple phone conversations — but I still would rather talk with Jeanne Gornoll once a month on the phone, that all the possible connections on an electronic network.

Corflus should be just the best in-person experience that approximates fanzine fandom at its best.

But back to the subject at hand. The LA Corflu made a major mistake by treating itself as just another relaxicon interrupted periodically by auctions. A large Mah-Jongg game table in the middle of the program/exhibit space did nothing to aid the atmosphere. In addition, a Mid-Con Opening Ceremony and auction during the usual dinner hour further disrupted the convention's rhythm. Through these program decisions, the LA Corflu missed having the essential structure to distinguish it from any other relaxicon.

## THE T-SHIRT

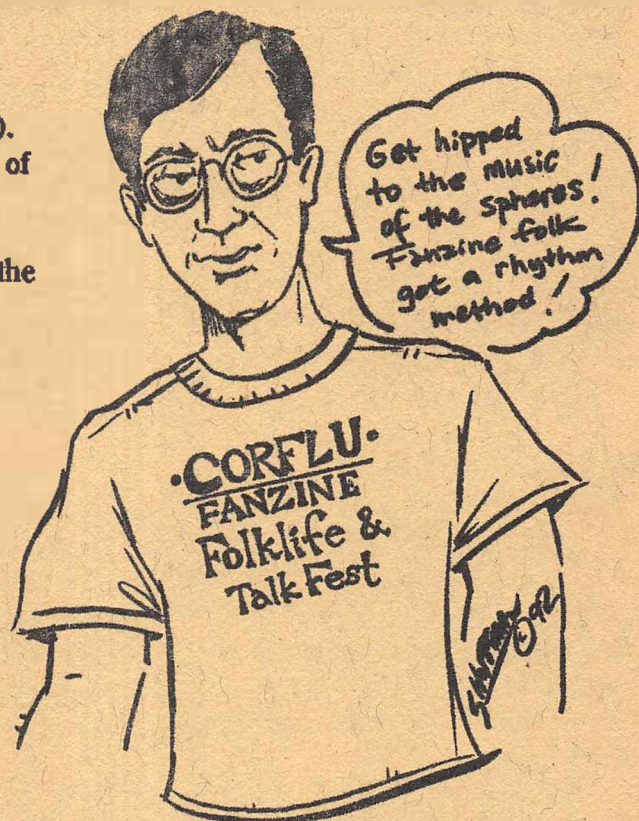
The ideal Corflu should have a really cool t-shirt of black or other dark cotton, with a killer design in a light color by a notable fanartist. This is just a personal preference. My own faves among the Corflu t-shirts include Ross Chamberlain's multi-color design of mimeo stencil and artist's hand for New York and Napa's wine-label design. I'm also proud of the collaboration between Ken Fletcher and myself for Minneapolis, which, typical of both our work, included several dozen fan references.

Special kudos to Taral's wonderfully sensual multi-color design for the first Ditto, with its ink beglopped critter hugging a Gestetner tube.

## THE BANQUET

*"More Meat! More Meat!"* King Henrie (as sung by Steeleye Span)

The Corflu banquet in the hands of the ghods. If the hotel requires a food function, then we're all stuck! But the banquet is now an important element in the Corflu structure. Here we vote on the Past





Presidents of the Fanwriters of America (FWA) and future sites, hear the speech by the guest of honor, and raise money by auctions.

The award for best banquet goes to New York, for its expedition to Sichuan Pavilion. No other Corflu can match it. It deserves a proper place in fanhistory, if only for my fight with Moshe Feder over who was going to sit at my table and Moshe's comment that we lacked the proper "Corflu Spirit." Whatever that may be, we are still friends.

The very first Corflu in California deserves an award, perhaps Miss Congeniality, for the Frozen Prell Shampoo dessert and crepes of questionable content.

### THE MEMBERSHIP (AND ATTENDANCE)

*"If you build it, they will come ..."* FIELD OF DREAMS

Ya gotta have fen, lots and lots of trufen, the crystallization of faanishness. Yeah, it all comes down to the people. The East Coast Corfluers didn't get the Bayareans in most cases — that always seemed a loss. I know that the absence of Jeanne Gomoll and some other friends was the reason that the texture of the LA Corflu was lacking for me. It's all highly subjective.

I make a distinction between membership and attendance because of the usual bleedthrough of other local fans who, despite not being particularly interested in fanzine fandom or fanzines, join or just drop in for the parties. Usually there is no problem with this, but sometimes you don't even want these people in your homes much less at a Corflu. I felt trapped with some of these people at the New York Corflu and some others. Why should some walking disaster think that I want to talk to him any more at a Corflu than any other social gathering in the past? Maybe I'm getting older or snobbier, or maybe it's just my sinuses, but I feel less tolerant and more possessive about this convention.

From this you may infer that all attendees of Corflu should be perfect ghodlike beings fit for a Great Wall expedition for Stu Shiffman. Take it as you like — I am glad that every Corflu has introduced me to new friends.

### LOCATION LOCATION LOCATION

*"Somewhere, over the Rainbow..."*

For Roscoe's sake, don't bury us out in the middle of nowhere in a tractless waste of suburb where cars are needed for every meal. Yeah, we need a cheap hotel — but it needs access to restaurants and transportation. Find a nice new Tudor Nightmare Village with an inexpensive three-star restaurant in a safe downtown location convenient to all the best fooderies and cultural attractions (like a paleontological museum!) the conurbation can offer.

Hmmm, maybe this section needs more realistic thought.

### IN CONCLUSION

So: find that divinely-talented committee with sensitive fannish faces, impeccable faanish credentials (and impressive bibliography) from a major and attractive fan community. Scour the territory for a hotel with fiscally responsible rates, within easy walking and transportation access to restaurants. Choose large and comfortably couched consuites, and elaborate program spaces. Stock it well with bheer and cheer and soda pop (colas and seltzer fizzies) and sweets and savories. Make the weekend fun with toys and computers for one-shots. Erect a program structure that combines the best of Live Fanzine, fanorama readings, laughter and cheer, and discussion circles. Anoint a toaster worthy of the honor, who will herald Chance's GoH in only occasionally purplish prose and hyperbole. Have a membership list prepared for distribution *at* the con. Avoid personal strife. Do good. Make many puns. Remember that if it ain't fun, it ain't done. Attract the best and brightest, and create a Corflu that all who miss it will regret the twisting of their fate. Ask me or some other fannish fanartist for a t-shirt design.

Maybe next year in Madison, that midwestern Jerusalem, will be the Ideal. At least Jeanne Gomoll will be there!

I'll see you then.

*A Fannish Archangel turns neo and takes on the Corflu ConSuite...*

# 'You've run out of High-Caffeine Diet Cola!'

*by Don Fitch*

Perhaps it began at the San Diego (sic) NASFIC. A bunch of us were sitting out on the patio adjoining the ConSuite, late Sunday night. I'd been holding forth on what had been wrong with the convention when Bruce Pelz asked, "And what makes you think, Don Fitch, that s-f cons should be planned and run to satisfy you?"

Greatly taken-aback by this question — I *thought* I'd been careful to distinguish between things that were "actually Wrong" and those I happened to dislike — my response was so inept that I've forgotten it. It should have been something like "Maybe potential con-runners need to search out and attend to as much criticism as possible, to have a basis for evaluation. If a significant number of the kind of people/fans they want at their con complain about such things as membership badges that leave the wearer effectively anonymous, ConSuites that are closed precisely when there's nothing else happening and a gathering-center is needed, Programming that hasn't been vetted for conflicts of interest/time, or neglecting to channel *all* official publications through a competent proofreader, maybe they'll try harder to Do Something about such snags at the cons *they* work on."

Months later, when Bruce asked me to "consider handling the ConSuite" for Corflu 9, I'd long since forgotten this conversation. I wasn't so naive as to fail to realize that "consider" would imperceptibly but inevitably transmute into "actually do it," but only in retrospect is it clear that he also had in mind a Lesson in what's involved in putting on a convention — the sort of thing one can't fully deduce and appreciate from merely attending them. (Another of his reasons — people hardly ever do anything from only one motivation — must have been that there aren't many Fanzine Fans in the Los Angeles area, and I may have been the only one gullible to have the time and energy for so much Work.)

Corflu is a small convention, drawing between 50 and 125 people. (There are many more Fanzine Fans than that in the world, of course, but lots of them stay home and pub their ish, or dream about the issues they have published or intend to produce Real Soon Now, or save their money to pay for duplication and postage.) As befitting such a small gathering of people who (mostly) have known one another for a decade or three, there's little formal programming. Members spend much of their time in the ConSuite, talking (and occasionally listening). Since there are no bidding or other open parties (or, as far as I know, closed ones) other than groups that coagulate to go out for meals, the ConSuite plays a greater part here than at more formal and structured conventions.

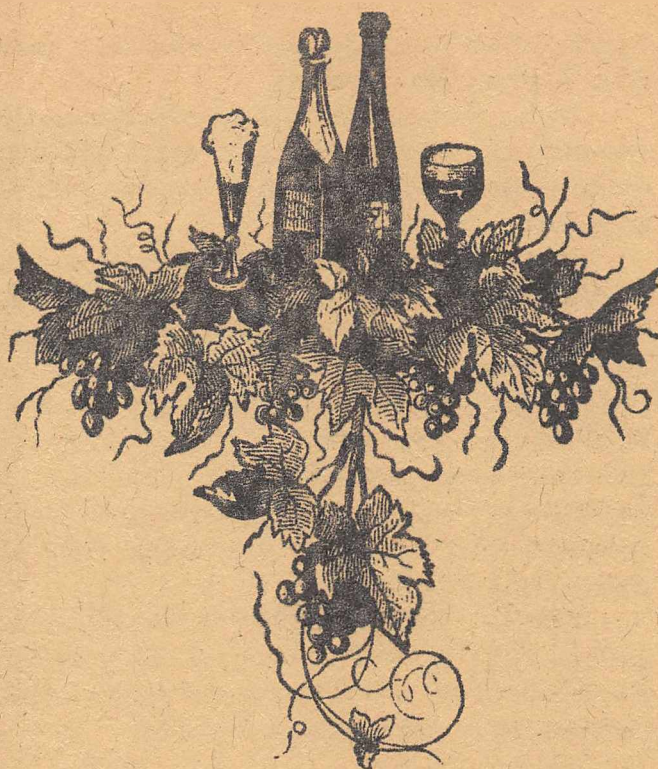
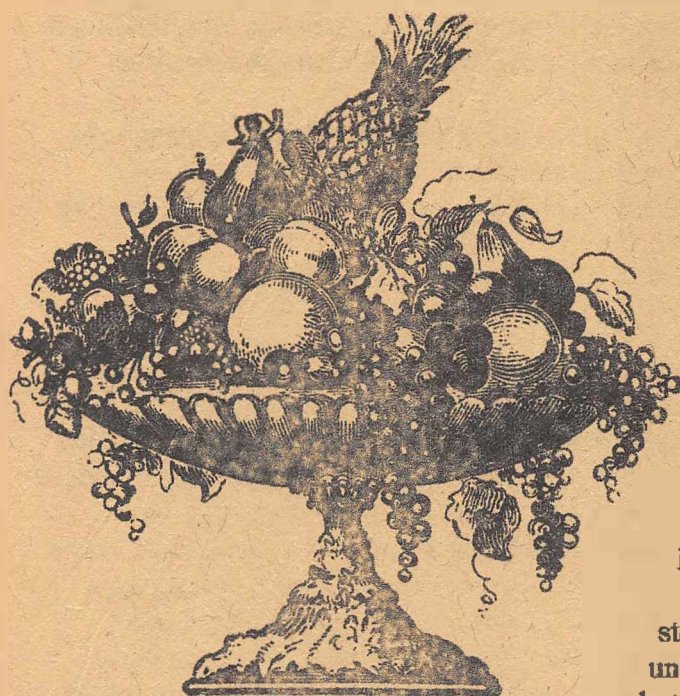
## *Caviar Dreams...Potato Chip Realities*

William Rotsler seems to have said it first, with the same economy, precision, and directness of his line-drawings: "Get a bunch of fans together and they'll have a good time." When you're Giving A Party for your friends, though, you want to do more than just provide a place for them to gather. Besides, it's a fine opportunity to indulge in little luxuries that one's puritanical nature (or diet or budget) may prohibit in everyday life.

Requisite to Fannishness is the capability of having great — even grandiose — dreams and imagination; requisite to putting on a Convention is the ability to scale these back to a realistic and practical level. (\*sigh\*) As in any Truly Fannish Project, I started with the Great Dreams and Plans stage.



It didn't take long to disperse the visions of the dancing girls and boys, the Flying Karamazov Brothers, the luau (with roast ~~long~~ pig, buffalo humps and tongues, a side of beef, pheasant under glass, &cet.), the massive silver epergne (topped with a wombat, of course, either in cast and chased silver or roasted and stuffed with truffles) holding the finest caviars and patés, the fountains flowing with the noblest champagnes and wines, the string quartet ... whatever you can imagine, I probably covered.



First to be discarded, of course, were the ideas for things not properly ConSuite functions — the enormous batch of Hekto gel (the beef feet eventually went into my own soup stock, instead), and the state-of-the-art DTP set-up for publishing *The Most Spectacular Fanzine Ever*, as a One-Shot.)

"Of course you can use your entire budget to buy a sterling silver champagne bucket," Robbie Cantor said. "I understand that 'Fanzine Fans deserve the Very Finest,' but remember there will be fans who will not be satisfied with sitting around looking at it. They'll want something to

drink and munch on. If they start to hit you, I wouldn't think of interfering." I settled for a plastic scrub-bucket, on for 97¢ at Pick-n'-Save. Well ... and (from my own funds) a \$10 aluminum wine-cooler, which only got used to chill a few bottles of beer.

Approaching the nuts-and-chips planning stages, however, I was amazed and disconcerted by the paucity of Real Data available. Maybe something has been published by the SMOFCon people. Perhaps Minicon and Boston ConRunners have Detailed Records that could be obtained. But it appears that the sort of precise detailed information that would be extremely helpful to the first-time con worker is retained as Arcane Secrets, to be passed on only by word-of-mouth from Adept to Apprentice. How much per head, on average, do most conventions budget for the ConSuite? How many and what kinds of soft drinks and beers do X-many fans consume? What always runs out first? What do most people complain about or wish had been provided or are most appreciate of? All I could do was guess, follow my personal preferences and memories of a few con reports, and solicit suggestions and requests (all too few of which actually got followed, for various reasons. \*sigh\*).

After the fact, I can partly understand this lack of information; I was certainly far too harried to keep track of supplies purchased and used — about yea much (gesturing about a cubic yard) of assorted soft drinks (more of which should've been diet colas) and maybe a third that much beer (mostly micro-brewery or imported), for 60 fanzine fans — which really isn't very helpful. But larger cons are probably much more



organized (they'd *better* be) and I do wish they'd publish more of their statistics, and that these were available from a central source.

Try to get an estimated budget as early as possible and (unless you're planning on adding some of your own money) never commit yourself to spending more than you actually have on hand. Fine-tuning can be adjusted down the line, and even during the convention since you'll probably be making a few trips to the supermarket anyway.

For me, budget was no problem. It worked out to \$10 per head, which is probably at least twice as much as most conventions budget for ConSuites, and at the very beginning I'd decided to follow the Bowers-Peters/Mattingly Principle: "Figure on spending about as much of your own money on a convention you're putting on as you would to attend a similar one in some distant city." I first heard it from Patty Peters, at the Ditto she and Gary Mattingly hosted in San Francisco, but she recently said she emulated Bill Bowers' approach to his Corflu. It makes a great deal of sense to those of us who feel we've gotten more out of fandom than we've put into it, and who don't have much opportunity to give parties for our (especially non-local) friends. Besides, spending someone else's money implies maximum care/thrift, and I wanted to feel free to save on time and hassle by buying most of the supplies at the most convenient place, not the cheapest one.

Make sure you and the Chair (and/or the Treasurer) agree on how much accounting is going to be involved. I'd never take it if I were expected to keep close track of expenditures, but apparently some people actually like to do that sort of thing. It's probably a good idea, though, to keep most of the receipts together, just in case there's any Question.

*"I'll sleep when I'm dead..."*

One person, working alone (with occasional emergency aid from a few of the members), CAN handle the ConSuite for a 60-person, 4-day (scheduled as 2, but...) convention — though not really *well*, I think, or pleasurably, or without getting pretty darn grumpy towards the end. Since a distinct attempt was being made to avoid involving any but Fanzine Fans, of which all the active ones (and their spouses) in the LArea were already on the ConCom, I could schedule no local assistance. Approaching the Honorable (but disgusting) Status of Old Fan and Tired, I can no longer depend on being able to stay up until dawn, much less go entirely without sleep for 48 hours or more, so the ConSuite couldn't be kept open around the clock. Fortunately, Corflu people and the venue were such that I could say "Last one out please make sure the coffeemaker is unplugged, the lights are out, and the doors are locked" and crash at 3 a.m. or whenever, and not open the suite until 8 or 9 a.m., leaving early risers on their own or at the mercy of the hotel restaurant for breakfast.

The adage, "What you have isn't as important as what you do with it" applies to ConSuites. Minicon, for example, does a superb job on a comparatively small budget, mostly by way of Planning, Organization, and precise Timing. The Corflu 9 ConSuite could have been at least 3 times as satisfying if there had been about twice as many fan hours available to operate it. Probably the minimum, for a full-time ConSuite of any size, is three people, working 8-hour shifts, plus the occasional assistance of a gopher to carry some of the heavy stuff and make trips to the supermarket.

Late Sunday afternoon, Geri Sullivan positioned herself firmly in front of me, as if about to Lecture, though her expression wasn't quite that stern. What she did was announce that I had achieved "... a score of ... oh ... between six and seven on The Minneapolis ConSuite and Party-Giving Scale."

"Errr ... just how is the scale arranged?" I asked, thinking that a range of 1 to a top of 100 would be reasonable, as would one ranging from a low of 10 to a pinnacle of #1.

Come to think on't, she didn't answer my question.

"You do, however, need to work on Delegation," Geri added firmly and almost chidingly, "as well as to sit down and rest for a while." Since she gave an example of Delegation by enlisting half-a-dozen bystanders to ensure that I did the latter, I turned the portion of my mind that wasn't occupied with thinking about the tables that hadn't been cleared off recently, the ominously-bulging fit of the salsa carton, and the bottles of wine that hadn't been unpacked and set out to working on what she had said.



Actually, I have no real problems with delegating things. Of course, if I want something done *right* I have to do it myself, but I'm quite comfortable with the frequently realizations that if something is going to get done at all, someone else is going to have to do it, that Perfection isn't always necessary, and that very often other people can do something better than I can. The crucial point here is the distinction between "delegating" and "co-opting." I'm delighted to take advantage of *mobile* volunteers (and frequently did so, as Geri, Jeanne Bowman, Dave Rike, Eric Lindsay, Nigel Rowe, Andi Shechter, George Flynn, Bill Bowers, Patty Peters, and many others know well) but I simply don't feel *Right* about asking people who have travelled a long distance at great expense to give up a substantial part of their convention. Asking for a bit of help now and then is one thing, and easy enough, but imposing a time-consuming assignment is something else, and the number of people who volunteer is not large. Maybe I should study the technique Geri worked out for the Minneapolis in '73 suite ... perhaps by volunteering for several 2-hour shifts at MagiCon, instead of only the one she requested.

### ***"What's this about contingency planning?"***

It's OK to start as many sentences as you wish with "Our contract with the hotel provides..." but don't weave those sentences into baskets for too many of your eggs. The hotel is pretty sure you really won't sue them, and knows perfectly well there's nothing you can *do* about last-minute changes. Switching the ConSuite from the contracted one (with refrigerator, serving tables, and a most comfortable ambiance) threw a real monkey-wrench into to the works for me. The change was good in some respects — the main room was large enough, and giving me a 2-bedroom suite (at the cost of the single I'd reserved) kept the smoking and liquor section open after I went to bed. But juggling 4 ice-chests, and 5-6 plastic tote-tubs of chilling drinks was a major time-consumer, not to mention the patés, chopped liver, salsa, pickled eggs, sour cream, &cet. I threw away because the chilling was inadequate.

If I (instead of Elayne Pelz, hotel liaison and Treasurer) had needed an emergency operation a day or so before the con, the ConSuite would have had to have been cancelled — a good argument for having two people on every major job. I'd rented a storage area near the hotel, rather than trying to shuttle 30+ cases of Stuff from home, an hour's drive away, and I was the only person who knew where the place was or had a key to the lock, not a wise gamble at all.

With Corflu, it wouldn't have been a major catastrophe, despite the importance of the ConSuite. Most of the members have been in fandom long enough to remember, or at least be familiar with, the Early Con Traditions. At the first ones I attended, in the early '60s, the 'ConSuite' was the Committee's operations center and occasional sleeping place; if you Knew Someone you might be able to get a soft drink or beer there, when things weren't too hectic. Even into the late '60s, when the ConSuite became an open party (usually only when there wasn't an open bidding party going), the Tradition continued: open parties (especially the ConSuite) were for neos; Real Fans were invited to closed or semi-closed parties, or had Techniques for finding them. But that's something else again. The point is that Corflu has a significant proportion of members who do not depend on others to make a party for them, but can easily slip back into the pattern of making their own party.



## ***"What do you want done with the 25 lbs. of left-over banana chips?"***

Acto Miriam Knight's Rule — "It's a Good Party if people eat and drink almost all of everything, and no-one throws up down the furnace register." — you should expect to have some left-overs. It's a good idea to have a non-wasteful way of disposing of them figured out in advance (they can go to the next meeting of the local fan group, a shelter for the homeless, &cet.) I gave a lot of the Corflu left-overs — the semi-perishables such as cheeses and salami, and most of the chips — to friends in another fandom who were entertaining a group of Indian Singers from Oklahoma the following week, because I was reasonably sure the Official Budget's worth of stuff had been consumed at the con, and I was pissed off with the local s-f club.

## ***Following in the footateps of my dreams...***

Early on, in the planning stage, I made a list of things to keep in mind. Too few of them were actually followed, but they still seem good, and of potential use to others who may be handling a ConSuite:

- ☛ Try for as much variety as possible.
- ☛ If you serve alcohol, make it available, but don't feature it and never press drinks on anyone. Most fans who drink (a decreasing number) do so responsibly, and pace themselves. Remember Burbee's Observations — "Most fans will drink X-containers of beer, regardless of size; it's to everyone's advantage to supply standard, rather than Giant Size, ones." and "If the Hard Liquor is Really Good Quality, people drink less of it, behave in a more civilized manner, and are less likely to get a hangover."
- ☛ Playing Genial Host(ess) is OK, but not necessary, in fandom and making sure that things are stocked and replenished has higher time-priority.
- ☛ Encourage people to help themselves, or ask for/about anything they want, as if at home or at the home of a close friend.
- ☛ Provide at least equal service to the Smoking Room.
- ☛ Scatter dishes of nuts (mixed or fancy if budget permits) &cet. widely, to discourage overcrowding in a single service area.
- ☛ Avoid messy, drippy, carpet-staining items and/or provide plenty of small plates and napkins.
- ☛ Don't be optimistic about having time to make dips and spreads (or doing *any* Fancy Cooking) at the site; make them ahead (if you're *sure* refrigeration is available) or buy prepared ones as they are needed.
- ☛ Use small serving trays, and replace (rather than replenish) frequently, to avoid the build-up of crumbs and scraps.



---

In Xanadu built Kubla Khan  
A pleasure dome for his workers  
An illuminated, prefabricated  
WIDOWER'S TRAVELLING CIRCUS

by Eric Needham

---



- Recycle — glass, aluminum, plastic bottles, compost, birdfeed crumbs — as time permits. (The hotel employees/maids will often be delighted to take the money-refund items off your hands, and this means you don't need to leave them quite such a large tip.)
- Post as much information as possible — a tourist station (with maps, guidebooks, transit/bus maps, schedules, and fares for nearby lines) may be appropriate for the ConSuite if not provided elsewhere; directions for operating coffee-maker (or suggestion to ask someone who knows); indications of ingredients (low-cholesterol, low-salt, spicy &cet.); updated map of working ice and soft-drink machines); map of nearby eateries, with price range, hours, and space for evaluations and comments.

### "Having had this Experience..."

No, I'm not going to cease criticizing conventions or ConSuites; flaws need to be pointed out for the benefit of future Practioners of the Art. I'll be much more careful, though, about distinguishing between shortcomings resulting from wrong-headedness or inadequate forethought and those resulting from sheer lack of hands and volunteer hours; blame for the latter should fall upon those who don't volunteer (or who make the work harder, rather than easier, and don't even bother to pick up their own trash), not on those who are devoting a lot of time and work and are doing the best job they can.

Now, the next time ... *what am I saying! Never Again!* ... Well ... maybe if there's ever another Corflu, or a Ditto, or a Hekto, or similar small con, within driving distance, I'll 'consider' a couple of 8-hour shifts. Meanwhile, I'm glad I did it, Glad, I tell you! But if I ever get around to making a List of Conventions Attended, it'll be difficult to — honestly — list Corflu 9 as one of them. Two or three hours of attending to what was going on isn't enough to Qualify, and I spent the rest of my time in communion with Things, rather than with People.

Oh, yes, and I'll probably learn to say things like "There's a large supermarket only three blocks away, and I'm sure they have lots of High-Caffeine Diet Cola, even if the machines in the hotel don't...and learn not to feel miffed when someone says something like that to me when I'm desperate for a Coke Classic at another convention.







# The Eclectic Reader

## Thoughts on Wilhelm Reich

by Jeff Schalles

Bean, Orson, *Me and the Orgone*, Fawcett, Greenwich, CT, 1972.

Boadella, David, *Wilhelm Reich: The Evolution Of His Work*, Dell, New York, 1975.

Chesser, Eustace, *Salvation Through Sex*, Popular Library, New York, 1972.

Keel, John A., *Disneyland Of The Gods*, Amok Press, New York, 1988.

Mann, W. Edward, *Orgone, Reich & Eros*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1973.

Reich, Peter, *A Book Of Dreams*, Fawcett, Greenwich, CT, 1973.

Reich, Wilhelm, *The Function Of The Orgasm*, Pocket Books, New York, 1975.

Reich, Wilhelm, *Listen, Little Man!*, Noonday, New York, 1990.

Reich, Wilhelm, *Selected Writings*, Noonday, New York, 1970.

Rycroft, Charles, *Wilhelm Reich*, Viking Press, New York, 1971.

Sharaf, Myron, *Fury On Earth*, St. Martin, New York, 1983.

Smith, Patti, "birdland," *Horses*, Arista Records, 1975.

I don't do rigorous analysis well. I'm not programmed for remembering and juggling myriad details. I seem instead to have been gifted with a high-level fuzzy logic program: I grasp, remember and synthesize large concepts far better than most people. And sometimes I even get my insights across to others. Now, I know I get sloppy when I'm lecturing. So before any terminally misinformed and hopelessly critical listeners in the room begin screaming in agony, it is important they remember, like the elevator operator said, "No need to shout, I can see you."

I've witnessed a lot of weird things over the years. Orgonon, Wilhelm Reich's lab in Rangely, Maine, is undoubtedly one of the most thought provoking. In the late summer of 1972 I was hitchhiking around the East Coast with my friend Tom Stockdill. We had already spent a weekend with Arnie and Joyce Katz in Brooklyn and were now up in Maine visiting our friend John Flodin. One day, John drove us up to Rangely in his 1960 Caddy. I didn't know anything about Reich. We took the tour of the lab. I saw a lot of aging scientific apparatus and a lot of nearly-good paintings (Reich's) and bought a copy of his *Selected Writings*. Tom Stockdill had given me a few quick details about some of the events that had happened at Orgonon, but he didn't try describing orgone itself to me. So I toured the house and the laboratory not knowing what I was seeing.

Around sunset we took a walk out through the woods to Reich's tomb and looked out over the rolling fields through the evening haze. An older gentleman came over and talked to us, referring to Reich with deep reverence. I realized later that this man was Tom Ross, Orgonon's caretaker, mentioned often in Reich's son Peter's *A Book Of Dreams*. My provisional acceptance of Reich's ideas comes from my brief memory of talking



with Tom Ross. I came away with the distinct impression that something extremely important in human events had happened here.

Pause for further warnings. Some of you readers already have an opinion on Wilhelm Reich. You were told he was a con man, shown some lies and distortions, and you found it convenient or even amusing to believe this conventional wisdom. The rest of you need to know that Reich considered it impossible for anyone to understand his work if they suffered from sexual repression, or armoring, as he called it.

Reich found that the muscles which tend to get armored are the ones that go crosswise in the body, across the eyes, mouth, chest, solar plexus, pelvis, etc. As they become chronically hardened, they interfere with the pleasurable, up and down, head-to-toe streamings of the orgone energy. When the orgone energy cannot stream and build-up in its natural fashion, sexual self-regulation ceases to operate.  
(Orson Bean)

Reich's first work was in psychiatry, working for a time with Freud. In the end, in the mid-fifties, he was making rain and battling UFOs. Along the way, as he was hounded from Germany to Norway to France and finally to America, he became interested in the connection between neuroses and unconsciously stiffened muscles. He developed new areas of therapy that underlie much of today's methods, like bioenergetics, Gestalt therapy, primal therapy, and Rolfing. Anyway, Reich found these muscular blockages and from them deduced the existence of Cosmic Orgone Energy. Eventually he postulated that orgone flowed throughout the universe, between the stars, and within all living things. He was seeking the ultimate unified field theory when he died in prison in 1957. His last book, *Creation*, was never recovered from the prison authorities, presumably destroyed. Einstein had already confirmed two of his findings, and said it would be a bombshell to physics if his claims were true. Unfortunately, *assassins* inflicted with the *emotional plague* had convinced the FDA to . . . get this . . . *burn his books and throw him in prison for contempt after he refused to refute his findings!*

Shades of Galileo! I mean, all he was doing was collecting orgone in simple wood and metal accumulators, using it to cure sexual dysfunction (and possibly cancer) and to make it rain. Oh, and in the early fifties he was battling UFO's with his "cloudbuster." They were intensely attracted to his energy experiments in Maine and Arizona.

Since my visit to Orgonon, I have been collecting books by and about Reich. Funny, although the government ordered his works burned, the books still exist, many back in print. There seems to be a cottage industry in interpreting his work. Geri and I recently visited the Museum of Questionable Medical Devices, in Minneapolis, to see the orgone accumulators they have there, on loan from the FDA. One is a steamer trunk-like box, galvanized steel on the inside, celotex on the outside. Enough space inside for a person to sit in a chair. The other is a small one, a box about one foot around with an attached flexible metal tube ending at a metal funnel. You are supposed to breath from it. Orgone is given off by organic material and blocked by inorganic. An accumulator consists of multiple alternating layers of organic and inorganic material, with the innermost lining being inorganic. Orgone gathers inside. I was surprised that the FDA's prized possession was only a 1X (one layer of each material) accumulator. They have been built with 20 or more layers, with lead and polyethylene showing the most effectiveness. Just don't try to sell one across a state line. That's a federal crime.

I like to think that I have seen the blue glow of orgone, have witnessed the streaming, the energy vesicles present in the atmosphere. In the depths of psychoactive drug experience I have most intensely felt the head-to-toe wash of ecstatic energy that constitutes vegetative streaming, but I believe I function well enough to have enjoyed it many other times, too. On sunny days I see the orgone fields shimmering around big old trees standing above green fields. I sense it while shoveling compost in the garden. Government "scientists" have declared orgone a fraud, detractors with little knowledge but much repressed rage jeer with derision. What they are really mad about is that Reich studied human orgasms. The most obvious links between Reich and proven fields of knowledge takes us to Asia, to the concepts of acupuncture and the body meridians, and to the idea that there are invisible lines of force running through magnetic

anomalies throughout the planet. Cosmic Strings, anyone? Something turns raw elements, carbon, hydrogen and oxygen, into living tissues. Orgone explains it as well as anything. Call it god if you want. Reich did, and then he set out to quantify it. In retaliation, his critics first drove him mad, then got the government to kill him. But he fooled them, he was picked up by a flying saucer.

A quick rundown on my small shelf of Reich books:

**Me and the Orgone** is one of the few books here by an actual Reichian therapy patient. It's readable and believable. And you thought Orson Bean was just another Hollywood Square.

David Boadella's **Wilhelm Reich: The Evolution of His Work** has a wealth of detailed material and a well balanced overview of the whole affair. This is a good introduction, if you can find a copy.

**Salvation Through Sex** is a shorter, but more or less complete, study of Reich. The book package positions it as pop culture fluff, but you have to expect this when dealing with such cosmic issues.

John Keel only briefly mentions Reich in **Disneyland of the Gods**, but I wanted to bring this book to your attention anyway. There is a ton of stuff here, lots of mindfuck overview synthesis.

**Orgone, Reich and Eros** is an ambitious study of orgone energy's relationship with current energy theories, and stuff from other cultures such as the Hindu-Yoga concept of prana and the vital-force theory behind acupuncture. There is also some very interesting material on work in the 1960's using accumulators and cloudbusters.

If you read nothing else from this list, read Peter Reich's **A Book Of Dreams**. It is currently in print in a Dutton Obelisk paperback edition. After reading it, listen to Patti Smith's song "birdland."

There are many of Reich's books out there. You won't find any of them easy to read, except maybe **Listen, Little Man!** And that one may piss you off, especially if you like to pretend that you enjoy the fact that you are sexually repressed. He writes in a forceful lecturing style about subjects that have a bit of an image problem to begin with. They cover a lot of ground. You might be able to get into **The Mass Psychology of Fascism** or **The Murder of Christ** or maybe **Ether, God and Devil/Cosmic Superimposition**. I dunno. I've borrowed and tried to read all of these and never gotten very far. They are currently available from Noonday, a division of Farrar, Straus and Giroux. I was amazed to find **Listen, Little Man!** at one of these horrid new "Borders" book stores.

Rycroft's book is the least generous of these mentioned. He provides all the information, but he doesn't quite . . . get it. At the same time, he doesn't come out and directly condemn Reich.

**Fury On Earth** is a 550 page definitive biography, which I've only skimmed. Actually what I do when I find a new Reich book is I look up "cloudbusters" in the index and read as much as I can about them. This book even has a fairly sharp photo of one. A cloudbuster consists of a bundle of metal tubes, say, 3 inches in diameter and 20 feet long, mounted on a big telescope or anti-aircraft mount. The lower end of each tube is welded to a long length of flexible steel conduit-BX to you electricians out there. There is a flexible tube for each long straight tube, and the flexible tubes are bundled and run so that the far end is immersed in moving water. You sweep the sky with the straight tubes and rearrange the local planetary orgone flows. Then the UFOs show up and you have to battle them. Aim the cloudbuster at one and it runs for cover! Wheeee!

I may build one some day. Dangerous territory. Don't try transporting one across a state line . . .

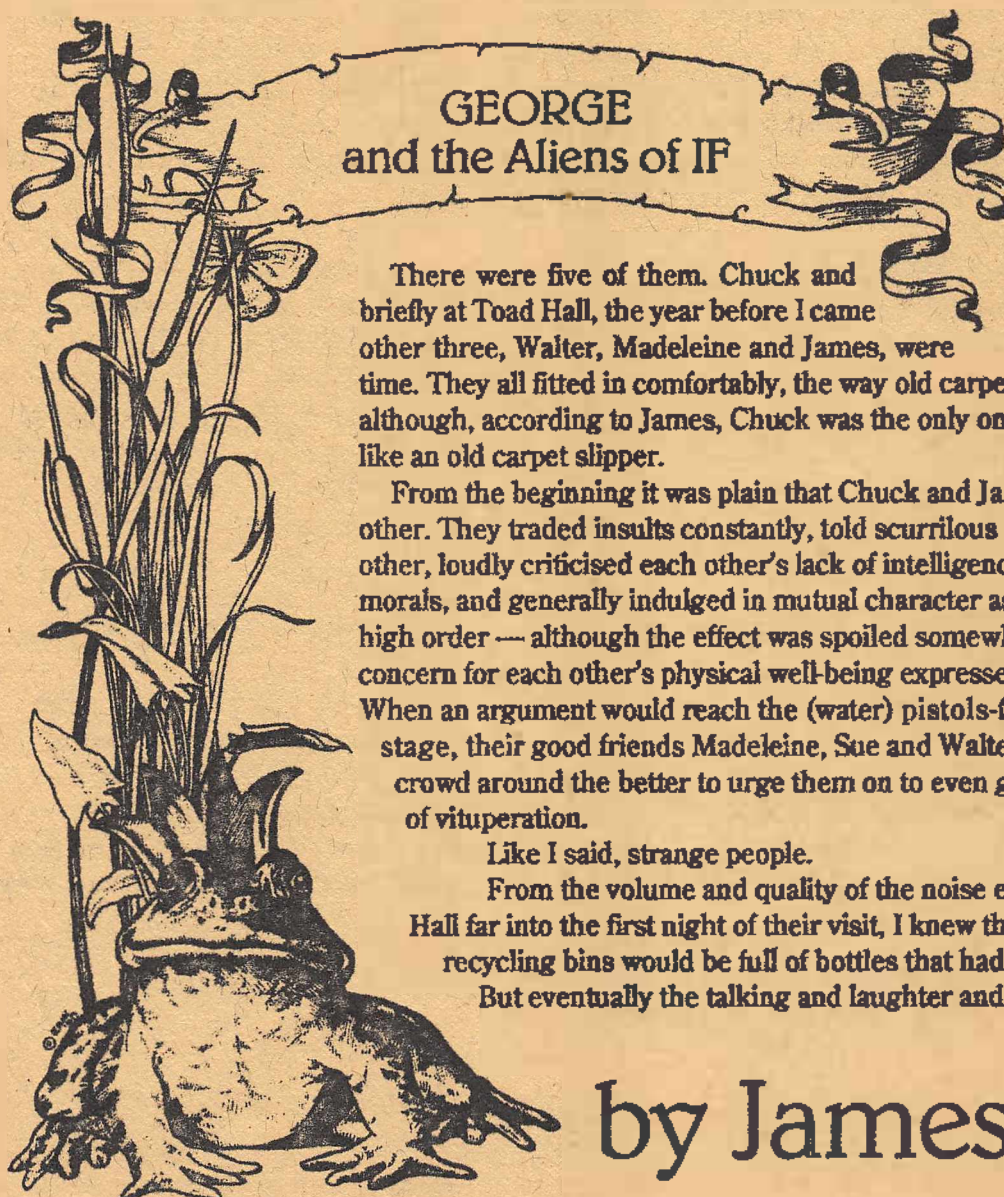
People who are brought up with a negative attitude toward life and sex acquire a pleasure anxiety, which is physiologically anchored in chronic muscular spasms. This neurotic pleasure anxiety is the basis on which life-negating, dictator-producing views of life are reproduced by the people themselves. It is the core of the fear of an independent, freedom-oriented way of life. The fear becomes the most significant source of strength for every form of political reaction, and for the domination of the majority of working men and women by individual persons or groups. It is a biophysiological fear, and it constitutes the central problem of the psychosomatic field of investigation. It has been until now the greatest obstruction to the investigation of the involuntary functions of life, which the neurotic person can experience only in a mysterious and fear-ridden way. (Reich, **The Function of the Orgasm**, pp. 4-5.)



# GEORGE and the Aliens of IF

## Prologue

In a past that is distant in more millions of years than there are black dots on this laser-printed, electro-stencilled, mimeographed page, when the stellar clocks were too new to tell the right time and the state of matter was still too confused for the place to be known with accuracy, I leapt into being. For a long time after this happy event there was nothing to do except wait until the stars condensed and the planets formed and, sometimes, bore the kinds of life that made my own life interesting. I investigated countless thousands of these worlds and life-forms, often taking their shapes and living among them or by adopting the form of an inanimate object and simply observing their behaviour. More recently, I chanced upon the planet Earth. While investigating the strange natives of this world, I finally selected two humans, Geri and Jeff, whose thinking was unusually keen, flexible and continually stimulating, for closer study. This was accomplished by my taking the form of a member of the species *Bufo* *ornamentalis* and causing them to take me home with them as a fosterling — a story that has already been told by Geri herself, in *The Story of George*. But my idyllic existence was not to last, because strangers with even stranger minds visited and briefly overran Toad Hall, and from the influence of one of them in particular I have still to recover, for this is the story of



## GEORGE and the Aliens of IF

There were five of them. Chuck and briefly at Toad Hall, the year before I came other three, Walter, Madeleine and James, were time. They all fitted in comfortably, the way old carpet slippers fit tired feet — although, according to James, Chuck was the only one of them with a face like an old carpet slipper.

Susan had once stayed to be here, but the visiting for the first time.

From the beginning it was plain that Chuck and James did not like each other. They traded insults constantly, told scurrilous stories about each other, loudly criticised each other's lack of intelligence, sensitivity and morals, and generally indulged in mutual character assassination of a very high order — although the effect was spoiled somewhat by their obvious concern for each other's physical well-being expressed through third parties. When an argument would reach the (water) pistols-for-two, coffee-for-one stage, their good friends Madeleine, Sue and Walter would laugh and crowd around the better to urge them on to even greater heights of vituperation.

Like I said, strange people.

From the volume and quality of the noise emanating from Toad Hall far into the first night of their visit, I knew that in the morning the recycling bins would be full of bottles that had once been full of beer. But eventually the talking and laughter and insults, except for the

by James White

friendly words spoken in parting by the local fan visitors going home, died away. Normality returned to my back yard; Louie said "Good-night" and went small game hunting; a full moon came out, and so did James.

He peered shortsightedly around the yard until he saw me, then came across to lie down — actually it was more like a soft crash-landing — in front of me before speaking.

"Lissen," he began, then cleared his throat and went on, "Sorry, it's Geri's beer, I meant to say listen. I've been evicted for the night. They told me to go away, as far away as the Canadian border if possible, because they want to sleep. They say ... Did *you* hear me snoring?"

I had, but until then had not known the name for what I had been hearing. It had been a deep, resonant, intermittent sound that vibrated the bones and curled the toes and shook leaves loose from the trees, and it had resembled nothing so much as an over-amplified male toad mating call in quadriphonic sound. When it first blasted out I had great difficulty restraining half of the frog population in the neighbourhood, and did so only by telling them that it wasn't for real. It was just James sleeping. I told them, and he was already mated to Peggy and, anyway, neither of them were frogs. Even so it was a very near thing. Jeff and Geri don't know how close their house came to being buried in faunching female frogs.

"Of course you heard it," James went on, "but you aren't saying anything. You're like all the other people around here, far too nice and kindly to risk hurting my feelings by agreeing with me. Don't bother to deny it."

I didn't.

He looked over his shoulder at the sleeping household and lowered his voice. "Geri and Jeff have a very high opinion of you, George. They think you can do anything. Not just regulate the local environment, keep the cat happy, make their vegetables grow and their paint dry, stuff like that — but frozen lakes and 28 inches of snow overnight at Hallo'een was a little bit over the top, don't you think? Were you trying to spread some of the winter into the Fall, where it wouldn't be noticed, or were you just feeling bored and under-used? Anyway, I'm more interested in you as a person, and in what and who you are. May I ask questions?"

"Are you under some kind of spell," he went on, taking my silence for assent. "If I were to kiss you, right on your warty nose, would you turn into a beautiful princess? I wouldn't do that, of course, because if you turned into a handsome prince instead, you can imagine what Chuck would say about *that*! Could it be that, in spite of the nice people and the lovely place you've got here, you are growing restless, discontented but, characteristically, you are unwilling to risk hurting Geri and Jeff by saying so? You don't say much, anyway. But you strong, silent types frequently hide feelings that are just as strong. I'm not a psychologist, but that Hallo'een blizzard was sloppy work, and could be an indication that your mind was on other things. But, well, there is a therapeutic compromise that you may not have considered, a holiday. You should think seriously about visiting *us*."

I was nearly shocked into speech. But Jeff and Geri had warned me against talking to strangers, even kindly, concerned and very strange strangers like this one. A supposedly ornamental frog was not supposed to talk to people.

"Naturally," James went on, his voice becoming both enthusiastic and persuasive and much more sincere than the last encyclopedia salesman's who had called, "there would be a few things you would have to do first, just to help you fit in. We don't go in much for socialising with your kind at home, even though you are a particularly nice shade of green, so a few changes would be necessary. A spot of cosmetic surgery to remove the warts, for openers. But not all of them because the odd wart gives a face like yours character. And it's too cold for all the year round nudity, so you'll need an outfit. But don't worry

---

As shepards watched their flocks by night  
Came an angel with a Banner  
"If you want to snooze  
Protect those ewes  
With WIDOWER'S RADAR SCANNER"

by Chuck Harris

---



about that, I used to be a tailor and I've custom-built suits for worse shapes and even more bow-legged people than you. Something in green corduroy, I think, and a matching tweed hat with the brim turned down all the way round. A knitted tie, in a quiet, speckled lovat design would make a nice, restrained statement. Shillelaghs are *passé* these days, but if you could smoke a clay pipe and ... Never worry, if you could keep from talking too much, which is not a problem for you, you'd pass as a leprechaun any day.

"Honestly, George," he went on, "you'll just love it over there. It is green, forty shades at the last count, and damp and misty all the year round, although in summer the rain is warmer. There are ancient, moss-covered, crumbling ruins steeped in legend — not like Walter and Chuck and me, I mean the kind that stays put — all over the place. You could stay wherever and for as long as you like. In Donaghadee you could sit looking out at a lighthouse that is whiter than white against the deep blue of the Irish Sea; or in Portstewart you could watch the Atlantic storms or the sunsets over Innishowen that grow more spectacular every night; or, if you needed a rest from all the scenic grandeur and vulgarly ostentatious meteorology and wanted a change of crack, which thereabouts means stimulating conversation and company and not the drug, you could visit Chuck and Susan's place at Daventry, which is in the middle of an otherwise unimportant off-shore island called England.

"And you could really relax, George," he rushed on. "If you slipped-up and dumped three feet of snow on us, at Hallo'een or St Patrick's Day or even the Twelfth of July, no problem. The people who weren't too sozzled to notice are the ones who complain about the weather all the time whatever it does. And another thing ..."

Many other things he told me about that night, giving me much to think about, answering my every question without ever giving me the chance to ask it, even if I'd dared. The moon set, the sun rose, and suddenly there were the sounds of voices other than his.

"Breakfast, James!" Geri was calling as she waved from the back door. "Come inside this minute, James," Madeleine was saying in a concerned voice, "that bloody dew will play hell with your arthritis," and Chuck was asking someone "Dammit, I can't lip-read Irish accents, but that remark sounded racist. What has she against Jews?"

James rose stiffly to his feet with a sound from his joints like the snap, crackle and popping of a breakfast cereal and said quickly, "Sorry, George, I've got to go. It was nice talking to you, but you may need more convincing. Think about what I've said, seriously, and we'll talk again tonight. OK?"

But he did not talk again that night nor on those which preceded the visitors' departure, because I am only non-human and can take only so much of his understanding, his gentle persuasion and his unsettling and seditious influence. I am not without some power over the natural and temporal laws, so I fixed it so he slept without snoring. Actually, I cheated a bit by transferring him for the nights involved onto an alternate history line in which the human race were slow to develop fire, and instead protected themselves from nocturnal predators by evolving the faculty of producing horrendous and terrifying noises in their sleep. I did not, of course, tell him what I had done in case he made another long-running series out of the idea. That would not have been fair to Chuck, who is still having trouble with the long medical words in the Sector General books. James is OK, I suppose, and they are all nice people but, well, I am very happy here.

Yet at night sometimes I get to thinking about all that he said to me, and I begin to wonder. I know Jeff would like to visit over there sometime, and Geri has already been twice to what she calls Sensawonderland and dreams to go back again. With all she packed for the first two trips, I'm sure she wouldn't notice the added weight if I stowed away in her luggage.

Then again, on my own it would only be a short hop.

---

Aesop's skill at telling tales  
Made him a fabulous fable relater,  
Some people fall for stories as tall  
As a WIDOWER'S GRAIN ELEVATOR

by Eric Needham

---

# READERS WRITE; WRITERS READ

Mark Manning  
1709 South Holgate  
Seattle, WA 98144

March 27, 1992

So you last pubbed your ish in mind-'89? That explains why you didn't respond to the *Tards* I sent, I guess. Well, yours is a great zine. OK. I hesitate to pen a long LoC, for fear it'll

never see print in my lifetime.

Great art by Glenn Tenhoff. Super LoC from him, too. Stop hiding him in the wintry wilds of Minnesota, please.

Chuck Harris' piece is great. More fun in two pages than in several entire issues of most fanzines.

Rob Hansen piece — another coup. Or maybe not, if you're so luck as to have actually met him. Receiving his FAPazine is certainly one of the cooler things about being a FAPAn.

So why all the quotes from W.B. Proudfoot? His book's OK, and slightly informative (even if no one but him has ever heard of Chinese file-plate mimeography — I've asked lots of Chinese who Should Know, printers and antique dealers and museum curators, but none of them believes such a thing ever existed), but mostly it's a Gestetner ad in long form.

I see I missed a Garrison Keillor pastiche in *Idea* #3. That's a Good Thing. My wife happens to be a member of one of the Baptist families of Anoka, MN, so any approval of the radio show hosted by "Uncle Jimmie's boy" is not allowed in her presence.

Excuse me while I converse with one of your letterhacks, in our common patois.

So hey, Berlien! You from 48-hundred North, and you call *that* Chi-town? What a geek, man! Hey, so you like Rogers Park, or what? Up there, folks are so polite the burglars all say 'thank you.' So quit fuckin' around, Berlien, come take a little walk in *my* old home turf. Yeh, we're *real* polite in *Uptown*, man. A little evening stroll down Wilson, either side of the L stop. Or maybe you'd like it better, to visit where I used to sell papers door-to-door. Ever heard of it? Cabrini Green?

Ah, yes, Geri, I love the respectful tone and soothing sonorities of Chicago's North Side. As they might say there, "So go pub your fuckin' ish already, man!"

*Idea*: More fun that \$10 riding against the Cubbies during the playoffs! edly yours,

*Mark*

Is this already enough for you, Mark? The lack of time in my life is nothing but a weak excuse for why I haven't yet responded to *Tand*, or, for that matter, to the drawer-full of correspondence and stacks of fanzines all enjoyed. Response is the lifeblood of fandom, and what little I manage to provide falls far short of being enough to balance all that fandom has done for me.

Why Proudfoot? I like the juxtaposition of "fact" then and "fact" now. I like looking at what is now outdated technology used only by a few "amateurs" in the light of it being innovative and used professionally and artistically. Besides, I like Gestetner mimeographs.

I'm still laughing over the walk on the wildside through Uptown, and I'm sure a few Chi-town friends will be doing the same. I'll give you three chances to guess where I stay when doing on-site studies of "Chicago Asshole." Does the apartment building at the corner of Wilson and Beacon ring a familiar bell? Yeah, and I love those assholes, too. — gfs



William M. Danner  
R.D. 1  
Kennerdell, PA 16374

3-5-92

It's refreshing to see pages of a fanzine without all that extra space between paragraphs. The earliest typed letters I have seen (reproduced in books) were not spoiled in that way; I

think some stenographer around 1900 must have tried it for the hell of it and both he and his boss liked it. There is certainly no good reason for the practice, and it spoils many an otherwise attractive page, especially those with many short lines of dialog.

Am I wrong in supposing that you have only to correct the lines on a screen and then push a button to justify all the lines, as you do in those occasional quotations? If so, why not do it? I have many occasions to observe that this seems to be the



era of unjustified magazines and justified personal letters. Justified pages *do* look better than unjustified ones; when you can do it so much more easily that I can with my hand-set type, why not give it a try?

I was surprised, in your note to Lichtman, to find that there is still Wilbur chocolate; I've seen no other mention of it for many years. When I was a kid my father knew some official of the company and once in a while brought home one or two ten-pound cakes of confectioner's chocolate. It was cast in one big slab with grooves to break it into one-pound bars about a foot long. The last time he did so was in 1926, and I took a one-pound bar to Carnegie Tech (this was my freshman year) and kept it in my locker. There was about half of it left at the start of the Xmas holidays, and when I returned Jan. 2 I found not even a crumb of it left; in exchange the locker shelf was covered with the tiny black pellets into which mice had changed it. I had never stopped to think that a locker made of expanded metal was an open sesame to mice, but *they* knew it. It was delicious chocolate and I've often wished I could find some these days. When I moved here from Pittsburgh in 1957 I found that stores in this area all carried at Xmas time 10-lb cakes of Hershey's, which were sold at about \$6.98 each, or sometimes less! The reason is odd: during the depression firms could not afford the Xmas bonuses they had previously given. They found that they could get those big bars very cheaply and began giving them to their employees. When the depression finally petered out the stores went on selling the big cakes until inflation ended the practice. While they were available a pretty good story went around about a man from this area who visited friends in Texas. He listened to endless stories about how big everything was in Texas and finally said, "Yes, I know everything down here is big, but you ought to see the chocolate bars we get back in Pennsylvania."

Your note on page 27 makes me wonder if you're old enough to remember when postal rates really were low. When I started *3d* it was 24 pages and a bit under 2 ounces. I sent it to domestic addresses by 3d class for 2¢ a copy and it was delivered in about the same time it is now at 29¢ for 1 ounce. Overseas copies went by printed matter rate of 1-1/2¢, and were delivered in about two weeks, quite regularly. Now, at the first-class rate of 70¢ for one ounce, delivery time varies from about three weeks to eleven months. Reluctantly I'm going to have to change to airmail for the overseas copies, with the chance that they may never arrive at all for any of many reasons. Talk about Progress in Reverse!

Sincerely,

*Bill*

I can't resist adding that until about 1907 1st-class mail was postmarked at the office of delivery as well

as at the initiating office. An aunt gave me a bunch of postals collected around the turn of the century in Wheeling. I found one from Stuttgart, Germany that had made the journey in 13 days, but had a red rubber-stamped apology, "Mail Delayed. Train Late." I wondered why until I found another one from the same place that had made it in ten days.

Yes, Bill, and in Donaghadee, N. Ireland, the mail is delivered well before 8 every morning. We're lucky to get ours before 2:30 pm! First class stamps cost 4¢ through most of my childhood; it was a big deal when they went up to a nickel.

Re: aesthetics and type. I'll disagree, there is at least one good reason for extra space between paragraphs: it breaks the page up into small bites, thus appearing less intimidating to unmotivated or poor readers. You're right, I can justify type with the greatest of ease. So why don't I? First, I hate most hyphenated words. They stop the reader, they're hard to read, but most of all, they usually make words ugly. To have attractive justified copy, you have to have some hyphens. There's only some much letter spacing and word spacing you can adjust. Second, ragged right copy is easier to read, supposedly because it makes it easier for readers to keep track of which line they're on. That's one of the reasons so many magazines are ragged right these days. (And that's the last nice thing I'll say about all too many designers.) It really comes down to the simple fact that I'd rather ditz around making an attractive rag than ditz around with letter spacing parameters and hyphenation zones to get an attractive box of text. — gfs

Chris Sherman  
P.O. Box 990  
Solana Beach, CA 92075

April 4, 1992

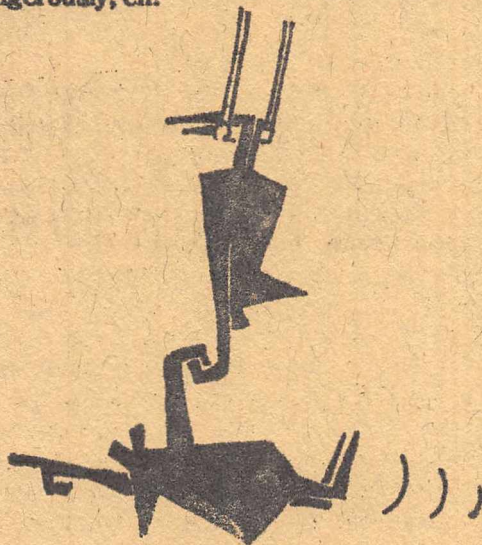
Ken Fletcher's back cover set off a blast of nostalgia for me, in more ways than one (Hi Ken!). My parents live in Golden Valley (famous for microwave popcorn and Steinbeck's

obscure reference in *Travels With Charley*). When I lived with them I had a fantastic view of the Northwest weatherball from my bedroom window. I used to stare at it for hours, imagining it as some sort of transcendental orb broadcasting a forecast of the emotional climate of the city for the following day — sort of a communal Scandinavian fortune cookie. Usually the weatherball was right. My weatherball verse: "Weatherball is green no change in weather is foreseen, weatherball is red warmer weather is ahead, weatherball is white colder weather is in sight. Weatherball blinks — oh, shit."

The vital information not included in the verse was that the weatherball could blink in any of three colors. Blinking green meant continued existential nausea and ennui, blinking red meant emotional

trauma (ie: my mother was going on yet another lutefisk kick), but blinking white was the best: lots of snow on the freeways to slide around on, and if I got lucky, my girlfriend wanted to stay home and be "prudent" rather than risk life and limb on the highways. Can't tell you the number of times I got "stuck" thanks to the weatherball.

Hmmn... here I am writing you a loc after Rotsler spent a good hour at Corflu trying to convince me to write for mens' magazines. Well, sometimes you need to live dangerously, eh?



I really like your layouts.

Hmmn. I seem to be fixated on a theme. Let me try again.

Your sense of visual presentation is wonderful. Being a techno-nerd, I'd love to hear specifics about the software you're using, and any good techniques you might want to pass on. As Harry Warner points out in his letter, there is a lamentable lack of knowledge/skill about how to use these wonderful tools for producing fanzines. You'd do fandom a great service by sharing some of your knowledge. Details, please?

Given your interest in cooking and Jeff's apparent interest in driving, there's a cookbook you should check out. Though I'm unable to recall either author or title, it shouldn't be hard to find. Essentially, you create various dishes, wrap 'em in aluminum foil, open up the hood, place them in strategic locations near the engine block, and hit the road. When you arrive, *voila*: dejeuner (chez what?). Obviously, the menu must vary depending on the length of the

drive. Three loops around the Twin Cities outer ring of interstates would be just fine for a lovely meal of curried pasta primavera with blackened saffron salmon (baste liberally with 10W-30 or 20W-40 to taste). A heartier meal, say rack of lamb with currant sauce and puree of kumquat soup would require a more ambitious trip — for example, to an out-of-state convention, with carefully orchestrated rest stops along the way. For the technically adept, using a modified windshield fluid sprayer for basting works like a charm. Also, the air-pocket inside steel-belted radials provides a wonderful, gentle stirring action for those sauces that otherwise might go lumpy or flat during the drive. All in all, a truly delightful alternative to slaving over a hot stove.

Your comment about connecting memories with books struck home. My reading memory is extremely spatial, rather than logical or eidetic. Though I might not be able to recite a paragraph word for word, I usually can tell you page number and physical location on the page (upper left third column) for a given topic. This ability is enhanced when music is playing. Unfortunately, I only seem to be able to do this with printed words. Strange how the mind works.

Robert Lichtman's pizza recipe sounds great. I'd only add that slices of fresh garlic are wonderful on pizza — baking garlic reduces the bittertang and adds another crunchy element to the pie. Fresh tomato slices, and a small handful of whole cummin seeds also work well.

It's hard to imagine Mike Glicksohn adopting a less flippant tone. His words provoked a ridiculous image of him walking into an orphanage, single-malt in hand, stepping up to the listening bar and requesting a Bach on the Rocks, or a double Mahler. The harried civil servant responsible for finding a good home for tones stares at him in astonishment, then breaks into peals of hysterical laughter, unwilling to let him consider *anything* other than a well-worn Liberace or perhaps some early Mojo Nixon.

Best Wishes.

*Chris*

---

Elderly maids who blush deep red  
At the mention of phallic symbols  
Display no shame when they acclaim  
WIDOWER'S WONDERFUL THIMBLES

by Eric Needham

---



Yes, certainly, but how would Mike respond to finding Elvis in his cheeseburger? Everyone who was at the Chicago Ditto, or who's received Cas and Skel's trip report knows what happens when Mike finds bugs in his Scotch....

From getting "stuck" to "a wonderful gentle stirring action" — Rotsler may have an idea, there. The money's not as good, and you haven't seen *Idea* #2 to know, but I'm open to publishing provocative erotica, too.

You say you lived in Minnesota? Then certainly you know we'd be more likely to select a good 5W-30 for basting. Given Jeff's love of cooking and my love of road trips, especially those of the one-person variety, I was surprised to see your perception of those interests reversed. This, in turn, made me realize just how strongly Jeff and I share those interests. Thanks.

I've avoided techno-babble to date; I've seen how easily LoC columns turn into a computer forum, but seeing how you asked so nicely ... well, ok, let's see if I can keep it short. I'm using a Macintosh IIcx, running Microsoft Word, PageMaker, and dozens of other programs that come in handy from time to time but have little to do with the actual production of *Idea*. I proof and print masters on a Apple LaserWriter II NT, then Jeff performs electro-stenciller magic. We share the actual mimeography, hand-cranking when we have to.

My visual presentation is exactly that — a presentation. D. West might even call it a performance. Work with print production long enough and you'll pick up a sense of design even if you started without one. My own strength, the one that's making me a living these days, is that my visual sensibilities are heavily weighted toward type. Inviting, readable type. I marvel at the work of a good graphic artist, but am not one myself. Collect designs you like, and those you hate. I keep the latter in a folder named "good example of a bad example." The first three issues of *Idea* were produced using PageMaker on an IBM clone, laser printed, then photocopied. I used a 3-column format for the body of the fanzine, switching to 2-column for the lettercol. I liked the flexibility of 3 columns, and the easily-read line lengths. When I re-built the layout on the Mac, for mimeography, I looked through my fanzine files. Most of the mimeographed fanzines I found most visually appealing used a single column format, so I decided to switch. I like the comfort that comes from internal consistency, thus the uniform treatments on the quotes, within the lettercol, etc.

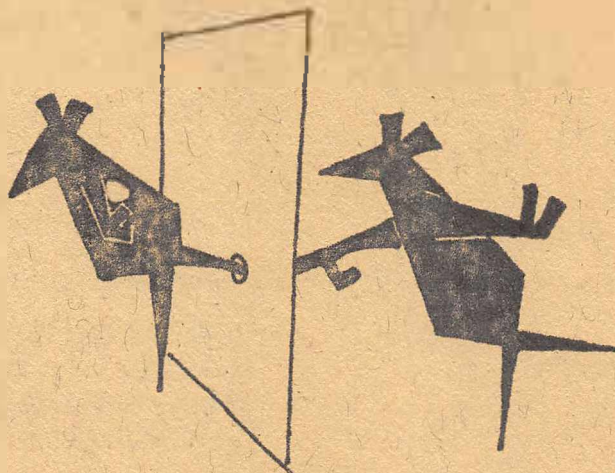
There's a bit of equipment I haven't mentioned yet, primarily the two Syquest drives, one of which is devoted to fonts (typefaces). While I've got literally hundreds to choose from these days, I settle on just a few for each project. I'd encourage anyone with an interest to play with the tools at hand. Fool around with the elements you have to work with: number of

columns, margin width, tabs, indents, typeface, leading, tracking, letterspacing, alignment, etc. Even after I'd settled on the typeface for *BEDEC*, I ran out about 10 sample pages, varying typesize and leading by half point increments. I finally wound up with 10.7/13.5 point type (that's type size followed by the amount of leading, or white space between the lines). The 10.7 was a bit odd, but 10.5 was too small and 11 point was too big. Remember to reproduce your sample pages using the appropriate printing technology. Photocopying will look pretty much like laser proofs, depending on the copies and laser printer, but there's a big difference between laser-printed pages and the final mimeographed pages. E-stenciller settings play an important role, too. I'm lucky that Jeff and I share type sensibilities; we can both spend an evening or two ditzing around with variations before settling on the look that satisfies.

On the other hand, it's important to know when to stop. The measure of "good enough" varies by project. *SFFY* had much higher production values than *Idea* does. I had spent a delightful weekend putting the Mac through its paces and breaking rules of typography left and right, all to ensure *SFFY* would look like an issue of *SFFY* rather than a high-tech imitation. How? We started with a typewriter typeface, but that was only the beginning. Very loose tracking helped a lot. I then used search-and-replace functions to put two, count 'em two, spaces at the end of every sentence. Then I roughened up the rag, to give it a hand-typed appearance. It was a blast.

I think the secret to it all is to have fun — play with your type, goof around with placement of graphic elements: headlines, illustrations, fillos, etc. Good music helps. Robin Adnan Anders' *Blue Buddha*, for example. (You may know of Robin as the drummer for Boiled in Lead; *Blue Buddha* is all percussion — great for transcendental design fugues.)

My response turned out to be longer than your letter. Sorry 'bout that. I hope it's a tenth as evocative. — gfs



William Breiding  
P.O. Box 26617  
San Francisco, CA 94126

3•7•92

I won't be comment specific, but what I enjoyed most of all were Jeff and Rob's pieces. Very entertaining, well written.

I don't understand all this hogwash about the

lack of good fanzines. It seems like every time I turn around I'm bumping into one that is at least readable, and *Idea* is way up there in faanish content and readability; breezy, but formidable, just how I remember (fondly) the best of the fanzines in the middle '70s (my neohood).

Thanks for *Idea* #4. It was a good end to Corflu 9!

Yers,

*William*

I'm under the impression, no doubt false, that the fanzines of the good ol' days came out every 2-3 months, or even more frequently. While I like plenty of what I see these days, I am concerned that, when I asked several people's opinions on Hugo nominations, most named just 1 or 2 fanzines worthy of nomination, and only one writer! Not that I think the Hugo's reflect the values of the particular "fandom" I belong to, but fanzine publishing seems to be the frosting, rather the contributing to the substance underlying our interactions. — gfs



James White  
2 West Drive  
Portstewart  
Co. Londonderry  
BT55 7ND  
Northern Ireland  
UNITED KINGDOM

25 March 1992

"In Search of the Crosstown Prairie" I enjoyed very much. I didn't know anything at all about Jeff but this piece reveals a personality that makes me want to know more. And those lovely para inserts of his throughout the mag, are, well, I can imagine him straightening up from

his labours or his computer, rubbing his aching back, making one of those practical, philosophical and pithy pronouncements and then getting back to work again. I sometimes think that interlineations are a kind of fanzine lasagne, but these are like paragraph-sized ornamental bricks decorating a wall. Not that I am suggesting that the rest of *Idea* is a blank wall, far from it, it is just that the break it up and make it a more intriguing read.

Your big hairy son I find difficulty in saying anything nice about, but his piece, "The Greening of Fandom," was well up to his usual standard but much too short. Why is it that such a decadent, morally-depraved, intellectually under-privileged, uncouth, dirty-cut, facially and sartorially unprepossessing person is able to write so consistently well? It doesn't seem fair, somehow.

Rob Hansen's "Novacondom" I liked, not because he mentioned my name twice it it but because it was both enjoyable and enlightening. Why didn't somebody tell me that these sorts of things were going on, or at least being auctioned? Did they all think that I was too young and innocent? Unfortunately, this year's Novacon will move back to Birmingham proper and The Royal Angus, which doesn't have snooker tables, so the needle matches between Norman Shorrocks and James White, his affianced since the Eastercon St Fantony Part at Great Yarmouth in sixty-something, are at an end and the game of radar snooker will never now be perfected.

In fact, I enjoyed all the other bits of your wall, too, including your own "Eclectic Reader" which somehow managed to stir the elements of literary criticism, culinary hints and trip report into a homogenous — it means there weren't any lumps, Chuck — whole that went down a treat.

All the Best

*James*

---

Lucifer fell from heavenly grace  
And landed in the gutter.  
What caused his slide was not his pride  
but WIDOWER'S WONDERFUL BUTTER

by Eric Needham

---



Glenn Tenhoff  
3033 Georgia Ave. S.  
St. Louis Park, MN 55426

February 27, 1992

Gosh, Wow! Thanks; to  
you, your contributors  
and Loc writers.

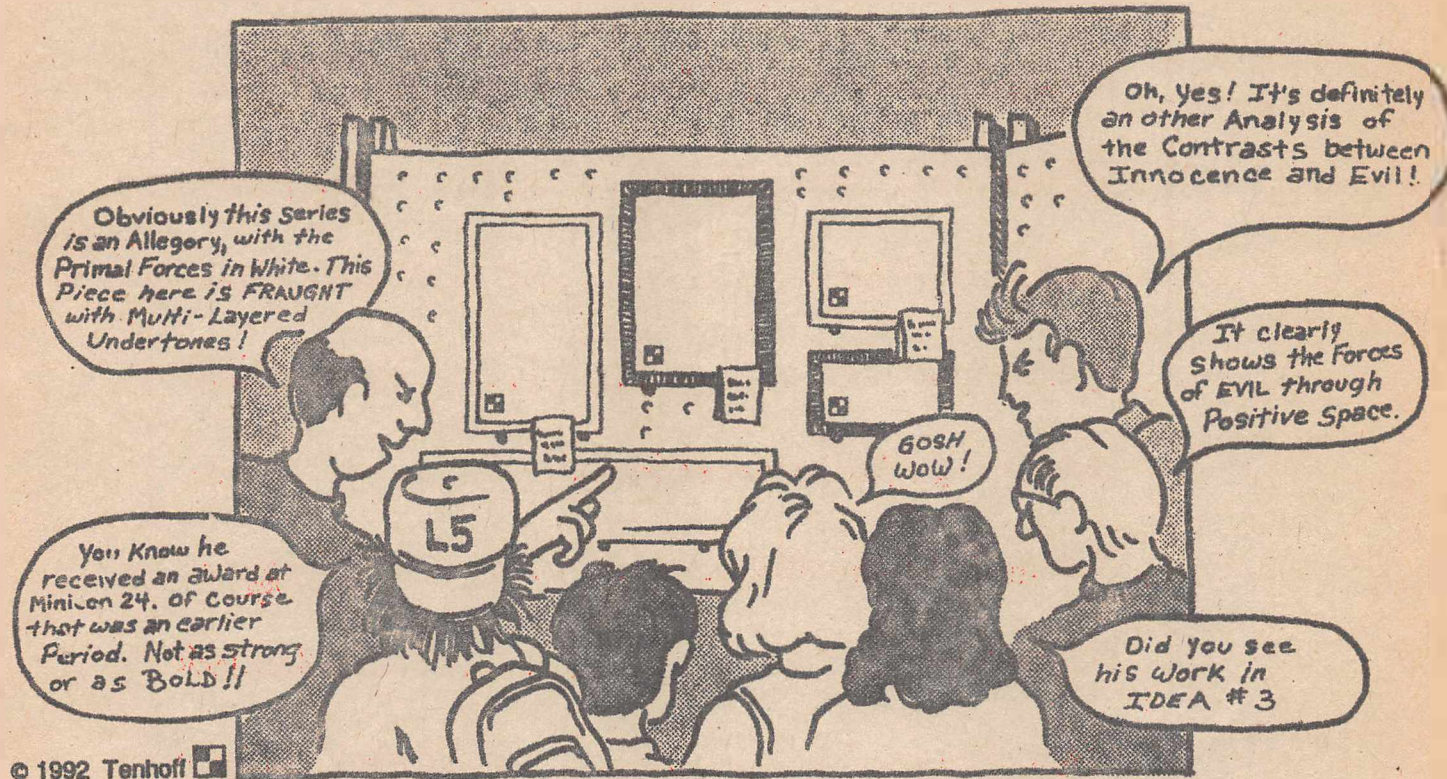
Instead of writing  
further, I've enclosed a  
piece of art (it started out

as a piece for Ken's "KLARN RAYS" Rune but took a  
right turn, went down two flights of stairs, stopped for  
coffee, then went out the east door and tripped over  
Dave Romm).

Jeff, on spring cleaning, à la Toad Hall:

*"If I can sweep them away with a  
broom, they're not steps anymore."*

April 7, 1992



Steve Sneyd  
4 Nowell Place  
Almondsbury  
Huddersfield  
West Yorks HD5 8PB  
UNITED KINGDOM

march 1692

Mentions of WWII bring  
back vivid fragments of  
memory, doubtless  
distorted. I was born in  
'41, so only a few things  
stand out: screaming  
because other kids got gas  
masks with Mickey Mouse  
eats and they'd run out

when it came to me and I got a bogstandard plain  
one; lying in a ditch in Somerset when I was about 3,  
during one of the last raids on Exeter further south,  
and seeing a huge glow in that direction from the  
flames about 30 miles away, and the searchlights  
crisscrossing all across the sky and then catching a  
German plane ( must have been trying a 'dogsleg'  
run home) in the 'intersection' of two (they got it —  
the bigger kids went and pinched bits off the crashed  
remains before the police got there and the village  
cop came round every house trying to get the bits

back); an evilly slimy nut cutlet meal when the meat  
ration ran out, fragments like that out of "the time  
tombs," but it seems immensely ancient to me, and to  
most of the 'younger end' of our population now is  
like the wars of Troy — hard consciously to believe  
that Britain, now a fading offshore island, was once  
capable of (a) such effort and (b) such cooperation  
between people, something Maggie so efficiently  
destroyed even while she was trying to get the  
"glory/nostalgia" vote with her Falklands Fling.

best  
steve  
steve (sneyd)

### WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Robert Bloch, Teddy Harvia, Jerry Kaufman,  
Kate Schaefer, and Jack Targonski.

## TOAD HALL CANNISTER KEY

Jeff's Best-Ever Pancake Mix . . . . .	Butter Bean Sack
Regular Whole Wheat Flour . . . . .	Squash
Whole Wheat Pastry Flour . . . . .	Big Black
Buckwheat Flour . . . . .	Middle Black
Bread Flour . . . . .	Tomato Sack
Unbleached All-Purpose Flour . . . . .	Cat
Refined White Death . . . . .	Eggplant
Miller's Bran . . . . .	Little Black
Pinto Beans . . . . .	Chinese Cabbage
Coffee Beans . . . . .	Green Pepper
Kidney Beans . . . . .	Blueberry Sack
Black Beans . . . . .	Pear Sack