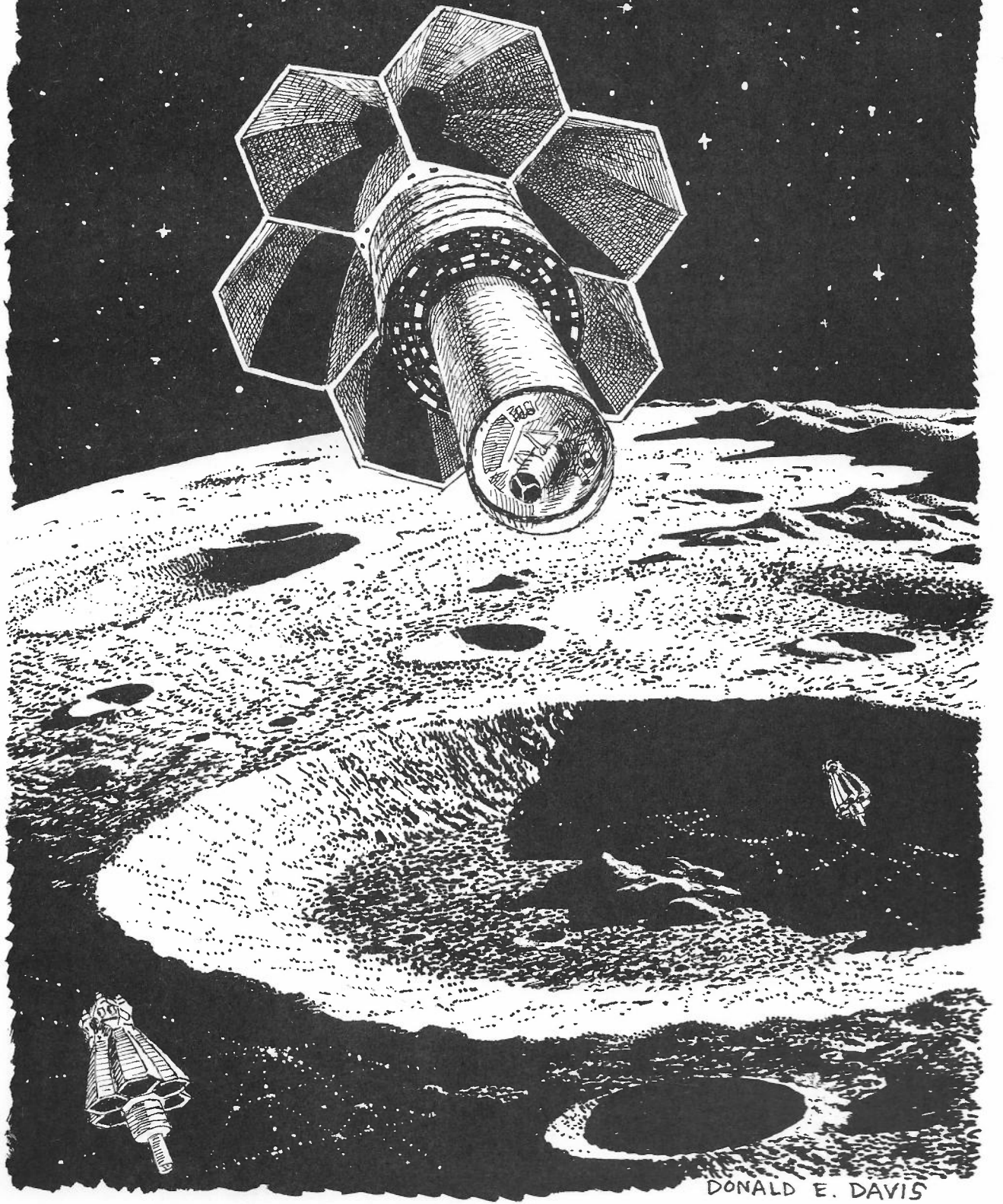
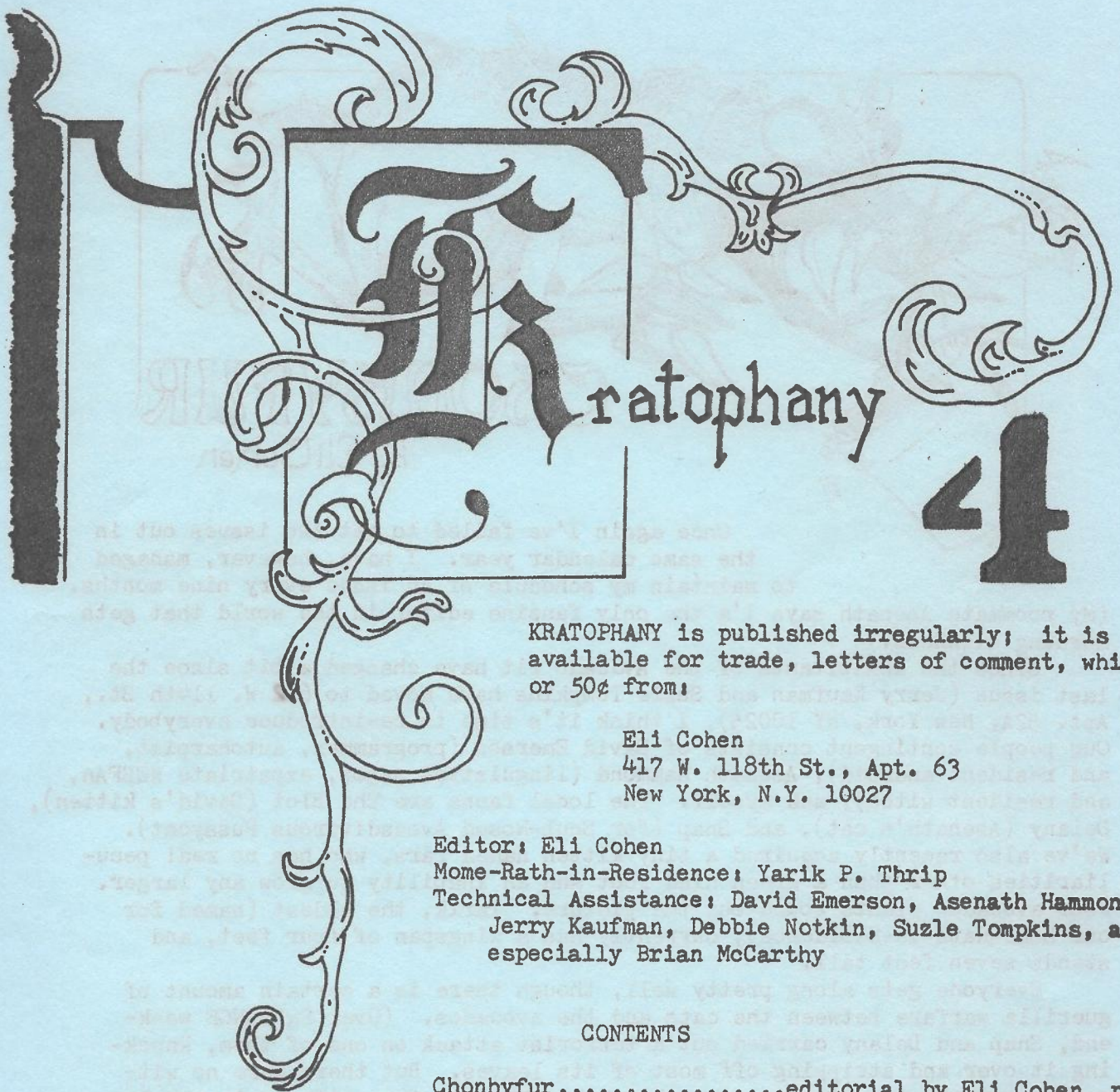


KDATORPIANY KRAJOTIANY





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Eli Cohen
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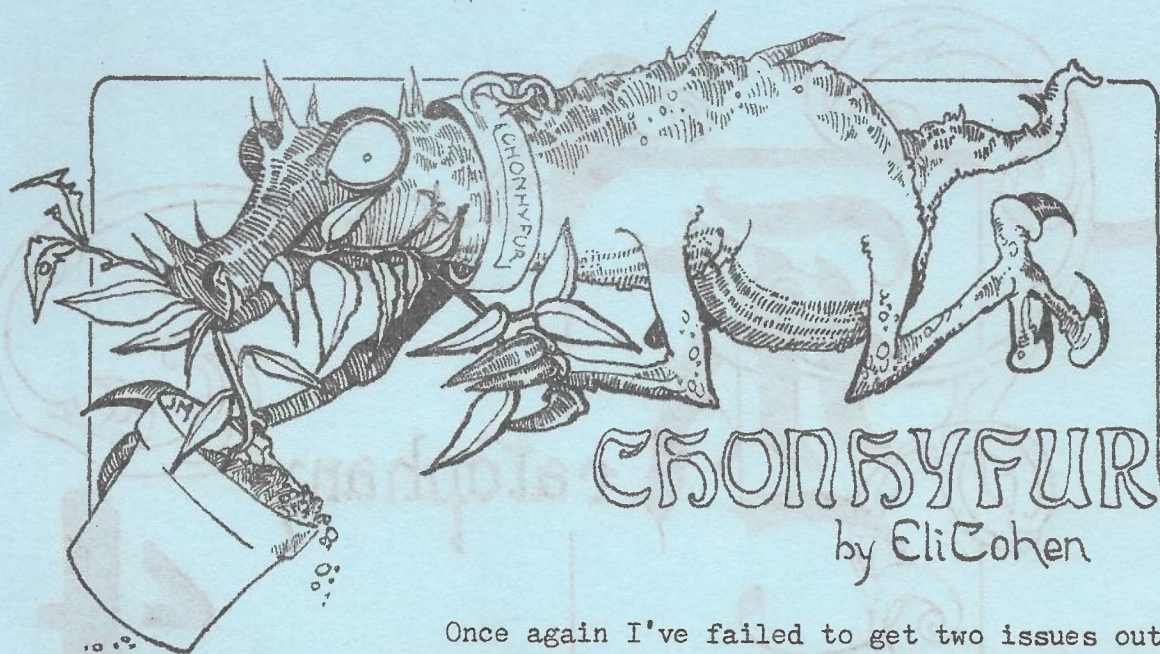
Editor: Eli Cohen
Mome-Rath-in-Residence: Yarik P. Thrip
Technical Assistance: David Emerson, Asenath Hammond,
Jerry Kaufman, Debbie Notkin, Suzle Tompkins, and
especially Brian McCarthy

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ARTWORK: Don Davis -- Cover; Sheryl Birkhead -- p.1; Judy Mitchell -- p.2, 13-18; Jim McLeod -- p.4; Mike Gilbert -- p.6; Robert E. Gilbert -- p.7; Dan Freffan -- p.8; Freff -- p.10, 22, 23, 32; Bernie Zuber -- p.21; Sandra Miesel -- p.24; Alexis Gilliland -- p.26; Bill Rotsler -- p.27; Steve Stiles -- p.29; Grant Canfield -- p.31.

This is an official Avocado Pit Publication.



Once again I've failed to get two issues out in the same calendar year. I have, however, managed to maintain my schedule of an issue every nine months. (My roommate Asenath says I'm the only fanzine editor in the world that gets morning sickness.)

Since the inhabitants of the Avocado Pit have changed a bit since the last issue (Jerry Kaufman and Suzle Tompkins have moved to 622 W. 114th St., Apt. 52A, New York, NY 10025), I think it's time to re-introduce everybody. Our people contingent consists of David Emerson (programmer, autoharpist, and resident android), Asenath Hammond (linguistics major, expatriate NESFan, and resident witch), and myself. The local fauna are The Blot (David's kitten), Delany (Asenath's cat), and Snap (for Snub-Nosed Avocadivorous Pussycat). We've also recently acquired a tiny kitten named Lars, who has no real peculiarities other than a green hind foot and an inability to grow any larger. Four avocado plants round out the picture. Yarik, the eldest (named for our Mome-Rath-in-Residence), currently has a wingspan of four feet, and stands seven feet tall.

Everyone gets along pretty well, though there is a certain amount of guerilla warfare between the cats and the avocados. (Over PgHLANGE weekend, Snap and Delany carried out a terrorist attack on one of them, knocking it over and stripping off most of its leaves. But there were no witnesses and the two of them deny the whole thing -- the evidence is purely circumstantial).

Asenath has a tendency to bake strange things at absurd hours. There was the time we were all sitting around listening to Firesign Theatre; it must have been close to midnight. Asenath would occasionally leave for a few minutes, but we didn't pay too much attention. Suddenly, "No anchovies? You've got the wrong man. I spell my name Danger!" David and I started muttering about how nice a pizza would be. And Asenath walked in with one, a pizza she had just baked.

The trouble with her baking, though, is that she's on a diet, and that means that David and I have to eat everything ourselves. All those cakes and cookies and pies ... We occasionally complain as we roll ourselves around the apartment, but Asenath just laughs. I really have to admire her will power. The other day she made brownies, and when she had finished she held up a chocolate-covered hand, looked at it longingly, and then asked "Who wants to lick my fingers?"

We generally lead dull, normal lives. I asked Asenath what we had done recently that was weird.

She looked up and said, "Weird? Us? We never do anything weird." And went back to drawing the pentagram on her floor.

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Daughter: Daddy, what is an instinct?

Father: An instinct, my dear, is an explanatory principle.

D: But what does it explain?

F: Anything -- almost anything at all. Anything you want to explain.

D: Don't be silly. It doesn't explain gravity.

F: No. But that is because nobody wants "instinct" to explain gravity. If they did, it would explain it. We could simply say that the moon has an instinct whose strength varies inversely as the square of the distance ...

D: But that's nonsense, Daddy.

F: Yes, surely. But it was you who mentioned "instinct," not I.

D: All right -- but then what does explain gravity?

F: Nothing, my dear, because gravity is an explanatory principle.

D: Oh.

-- Gregory Bateson, Steps to an Ecology of Mind

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It was a strange summer. I expected to spend it working on my thesis, but was fitfully looking for a job anyway. (I figured I could do more work if I didn't have to bum nickels on street corners). At one point it looked like I'd end up working for the NYC RAND Institute, but I eventually found myself as a statistical consultant for the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund.

The lawyers I was working with had strange sounding Puerto Rican names, like Teitlebaum and Abelson. It was a very eclectic project -- there I was working for two Jewish lawyers, in cooperation with a Black organization (Kenneth Clark's MARC), which had loaned us two Chinese girls, to help Puerto Ricans. The PRLDEF is suing the Board of Education of the City of New York to institute bilingual education programs, on the grounds that Puerto Rican children are unfairly discriminated against when their language handicaps cause them to fall behind in school. My job was to look for statistical evidence to support the claim of discrimination.

The main thing I discovered was that the Board of Ed didn't know what the hell was going on in the school system (this wasn't a complete shock to me, since I spent my formative years in that very school system, but the decentralization into 31 school districts since then has created unbelievable havoc in an already chaotic organization.) For the benefit of out-of-towners, there are well over a million children in the system (23% of them Puerto Rican). We kept getting cartons of data, but never quite what we asked for. I don't know if I actually accomplished anything (I think I did show that Puerto Ricans are doing significantly worse than other groups with similar economic backgrounds, such as Blacks), but in any case it will all be irrelevant as soon as the Supreme Court rules on an almost identical case from San Francisco. ("Absolute truth is a 5-to-4 decision on the Supreme Court.")

I personally am in favor of bilingual education for everybody. The more languages you can teach kids, the better. I consider one of the more

monumental stupidities of the present authorities their belief that grade school children are "too young" to be taught languages. An experiment in Quebec, where English speaking children were put in a French-dominant bilingual program, showed that by 5th or 6th grade not only were the kids fluent in French, but they were doing better than their monolingual English contemporaries in English language skills.

Anyway, it was fun pretending to be a statistician for a few months.

(Biographical note: I've passed all my language exams, and now there's nothing standing between me and my doctorate but a thesis. Ha, ha, ha. That's really funny. Nothing but a thesis. Ha, ha, hee, hee. I think I'll go kill myself.)

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Signs of the Times: Observed in a store window --

"Sale! Kennedy half dollars -- 98¢"

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A young man once came to a Zen master and asked to become his student. The master said to him, "A story is told of the Buddha. One day as he was walking, someone asked him 'What is the meaning of life?' In response, he dropped his walking stick. Can you comment upon this?"

The prospective student, striving to impress the master, discoursed learnedly about life, man, the universe, and the nature of the Buddha. From time to time the master would nod, or ask a question. Eventually, some hours later, the student finished.

The master nodded solemnly.

"Not bad," he said, "But you did leave out some things."

The student, seeing a chance to partake of the master's wisdom, eagerly asked him to explain.

"Well, for example ..." said the Zen master, and dropped his walking stick.

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There are a number of strange people wandering around the Columbia University Mathematical Statistics Department. Prof. Robbins, for instance. He used to be the chairman of the Dept., but this year at least he managed to palm off the job on Prof. Siegmund. One of his quirks is to continually inform visitors that the Columbia Statistics Dept. only accepts other places' rejects. "Anybody," he says, "can educate brilliant students. The challenge is educating ones like these." At which point he gestures expansively at whatever students are in the vicinity.

Or when he explains why decision theory is not too practical in areas like medicine: "Because you have to assign exact numerical values to losses and gains. And in this country, at least," (his voice rises to a dramatic pitch) "We won't put a number on the cost of a human life!" He thumps the desk and then continues,



"Because of inflation, and economic fluctuations..."

A while back the weekly departmental seminar had its time, and hence its meeting place, changed. We all trooped over to the School of International Affairs (SIA) and discovered that with typical Columbia efficiency, the room we had been assigned was in use. We kind of milled around while Robbins repeatedly told everybody how glad he was he wasn't department chairman. Finally we decided to go liberate a classroom else-

where. Now I should mention at this point that SIA, because of subject matter, staff, and governmental connections, has been the object of many student demonstrations. Picture the entire Department of Mathematical Statistics gathered at the Amsterdam Ave. entrance to SIA, waiting for the traffic light to change. Picture Prof. Robbins in the center of this mob of 30-40 students and professors. He looks around, and suddenly begins to chant at the top of his lungs, "On strike! Shut it down! On strike! Shut it down!"

Fortunately we shut him up before we were all arrested.

I dunno. Maybe sometime I'll tell you about Columbia's answer to Rowan and Martin, the brilliant comedy team of Robbins and Siegmund.

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Signs of the Times: There's a store in Greenwich Village called The Marquis de Suede. I feel the only appropriate response to this is "Ouch!"

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I'd like to mention that installments 1-3 of "Wendy and the Yellow King" are available for 50¢, limited quantity only.

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A book recently offered by the Publishers' Central Bureau:
Peter Piper's Practical Principles of Plain and Perfect Pronunciation.

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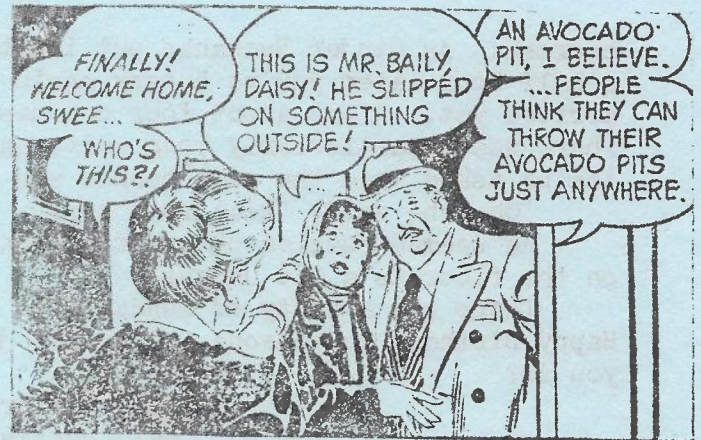
PgHLANGE V, Pittsburgh

For various and sundry reasons, I flew to the convention. Airplane travel is amazing -- it takes an hour to fly from NY to Pittsburgh, 45 minutes to get your luggage (and one of the other luggage waiters was mumbling about her luggage having to be sent back from California), and more than half an hour to get from the goddam airport to the hotel.

Friday night was an 8 course Chinese banquet that was fairly uneventful, except that it took 4 hours and Topher Cooper got run over by a car in the middle of it.

But I'm getting ahead of myself.

There were about 35-40 of us, taking up about four large tables and two rooms in the restaurant. The food was delicious, but there was never quite enough of each course, and about a 30 minute or longer wait between

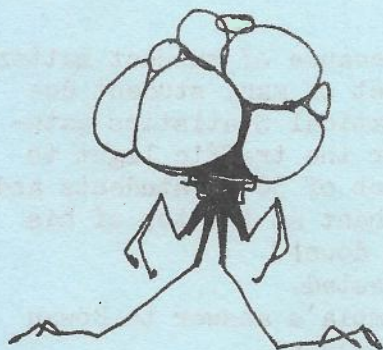


courses. As Ginjer Buchanan put it, the trouble with Chinese food is that a half hour later you're hungry again -- for the next course that hasn't arrived yet. After about four courses we realized what we were in for. There was a particularly long wait, and when the owner came in with more tea we asked when the next course was coming.

"Oh," he said, "Real soon now."

He seemed puzzled by our reaction, though I suppose ten people writhing on the floor is a bit unusual.

There was a party of mundanes in the front room who started singing Happy Birthday to someone, so we all joined in. I mean, what else would you do?



The program Saturday was relaxed and informal, consisting mostly of andy offutt. He spent a while knocking Allegheny Airlines ("Coming here on Allegheny was a new experience for us. Usually when we go to a convention we drive or fly.")

In the middle of his talk, the wall phone at the front of the room rang. And we all, including the GoH, waited politely while Jon Singer answered it, found out who the caller wanted, and fetched him from the huckster room next door; and then we waited until the call was finished. Like I said -- relaxed and informal.

Jon played Toastmaster at the Banquet Saturday night, and introduced andy with an atrocious feghoot.. Andy gave a pretty good speech while a table of WSFans played musical chairs and Rusty

Hevelin kibitzed.

Saturday night was one long incoherent party. In honor of the Highmore, South Dakota bid, sheep jokes were invented (The Weapon Sheep of Ishtar, I, Sheep, Rendezvous With Ram, Stranger in a Strange Pasture, With a Finger in My Ewe, etc.)

By 4 A.M. we were singing old TV western themes. By 5 A.M. we were doing Firesign Theatre, at which point David took up his autoharp and sang "Goodnight, Irene." The party took the hint and broke up.

In keeping with the general relaxed, informal atmosphere, Sunday morning Rachel Maines served home-made pastries in the con suite.

* * *

The right to free speech does not include the right to shout "Nova!" in a crowded planetarium.

--Freff

* * *

I always thought canned cat food looked and smelled terrible; my suspicions were confirmed one day when I found Delany scratching at the newspaper under his food dish, trying to cover up his 9 Lives Kidney Parts.

* * *

The left rear wheel of an automobile makes a perfect paperweight ... if your desk is at ground level.

-- Jon Singer

A new monk came up to the master Joshu. "I have just entered the brotherhood and I am anxious to learn the first principle of Zen," he said. "Will you please teach it to me?"

Joshu said, "Have you eaten your supper?"

The novice answered, "I have eaten."

Joshu said, "Now wash your bowl."

-- Zen Stories

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Picture the following cartoon: A large office, with a batch of exhausted, bleary eyed Congressmen surrounded by stacks and stacks of thick, massive books labelled The Pentagon Papers. A middle-aged lady carrying an attache case has just walked in. "Hi!" she says, "My name is Evelyn Wood."

I had been toying with the idea of taking a speed reading course for years; last summer the time and the money were both available, and the cartoon (prominently used in Evelyn Wood advertising) was the clincher.

It's now almost a year and a half later, and I still haven't made up my mind if it was worth it. By the end of the course I was able to read at 2000 words a minute and with almost total comprehension a book that I normally would not have read at all. On the plus side, I can, with a slight extra energy expenditure, double my former reading speed, bringing it up to about 800 words per minute with no real loss of information (by underlining with your finger as you read, which prevents your eyes from backtracking and wandering all over. But your hand tends to get tired after a while.) If the material is, say, a relatively straightforward SF novel.

One of the major things I learned from the course, you see, was how small a portion of reading time the actual reading is. In my case, most of the time consists of digesting information and trying to fix it in my memory. With speed reading, I can zip through a contentless book in a half an hour -- but normally I would look at the blurbs and the first page (a process consuming maybe two or three minutes) and not read the book at all. Big saving.

Evelyn Wood Reading Dynamics aims at efficient reading, which usually means you have to know when you start just what you are after. But there again -- when I read non-fiction, what I'm after is any stray bit of interesting information, usually just the kind of parenthetical aside you miss when you skim. My professional reading, on the other hand, is mostly mathematics, and Evelyn Wood is purely and simply irrelevant there. (One cannot speed-read an equation, unless you already know what it is.)

I can see how the techniques would be very useful to people who have to read a lot in their work. But that is perhaps the most serious indictment of the method: It makes reading work instead of pleasure.

So then: Using your hand can probably double your reading speed, unless you're naturally an efficient reader or the material itself is too difficult to read that quickly. You get more confidence in skimming and its ability to pick up information, but generally only when you know what you're looking for. Efficiency can be gained, but at the cost of hard work and discipline. TANSTAAFL.

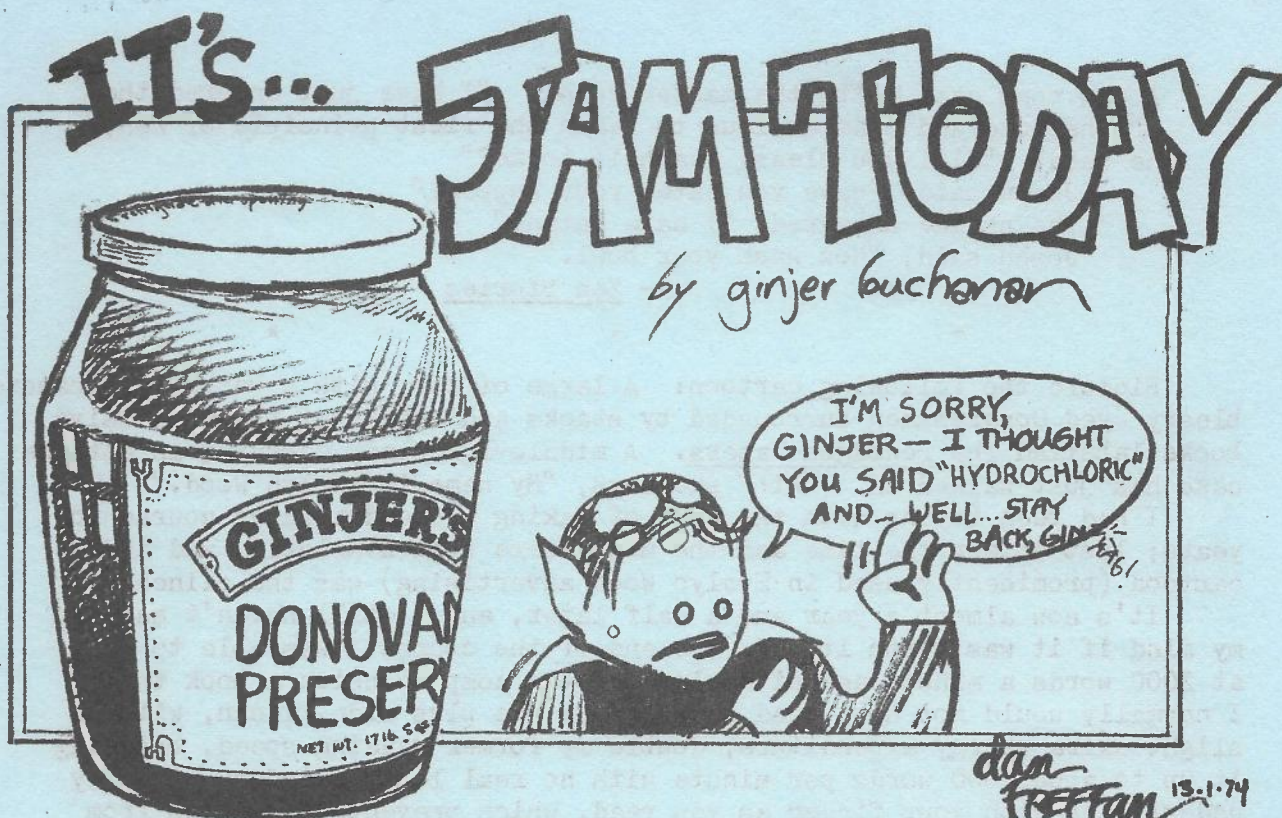
"I speed-read War and Peace last night."

"Oh? What's it about?"

"Russia."

7





I have this dog, see. His name is Donovan. He's medium-sized, black and white, with longish wavy fur, semi-floppy ears, and a curly tail. He's sort of cute, in a dog-food ad way. He's also sort of dumb. Suzle Tompkins claims that he was really very smart until he had The Fever as a puppy. That's as good an excuse as any, I suppose.

Despite Donovan's glaring stupidity, I think he's swell, an opinion shared by none of my friends and/or acquaintances. Reactions have ranged from guarded acceptance (Piglet, who said he was a Boss Dog) to indifference (Silverberg, who said he was adequate) to horror (Chip Delany, whose comment when Donovan peed on him is best left unrecorded). Suzle is the only one who shares my enthusiasm for the dog, and since she gave him to me originally, she can be accused of some prejudice in the matter.

(By the by, I'm throwing in Famous Names not to be pretentious, but to be relevant. This is, after all, a science fiction fanzine.)

Anyway, speaking of me, Suzle, and the dog: One fine Sunday afternoon in early autumn, Suzle and I decided to visit my friend Miss Paul-the-Librarian, who lives in a cottage by the sea in Setauket, Long Island. (Yes, I said Setauket. It's down the road a piece from Poquot.)

So off we went, accompanied by Donovan, who has a romping relationship with Miss Paul's back yard. I figured that taking him along would be a much more constructive use of his energy than simply permitting him to race from the couch to the bedroom and then to the other couch, repeatedly, rather like a demented baseball player. Besides, Donovan travels well. Put him in any vehicle, accelerate that vehicle to 40-50 MPH, and he stands in the back seat and goes into a trance -- legs braced, mouth slightly open, and eyes glazed. A clear case of auto-hypnosis.

The day passed pleasantly enough. The leaves were appropriately autumnal, the company was amiable, the conversation was pleasant; God was in heaven and Robert Browning was thrilled. We journeyed to Miss Paul's, unloaded ourselves and then Donovan, who came out of his trance and proceeded to do his romp-thing. Miss Paul wined and dined us, and too soon came the time to ride off into the

sunset (literally -- New York City is due west of Setauket).

So I went out to call the dog. Not that he responds, you understand. Inevitably, I would have to chase, corner and cajole to convince him that it was, indeed, time to Go Home. But it's the gesture of calling that counts. After all, one must stitch up the hem of one's existence with gestures.

This time, though, I didn't have to look long or far. The dog was huddled very close by the door, looking exceedingly miserable. And smelling exceedingly miserable -- a vaguely familiar aroma that I'm sure would have been instantaneously recognizable to any passing woodsman. It took me a minute, however, while little doors opened in my mind between the olfactory and cognitives senses.

My dog, who cringed away from squirrels, who regarded cockroaches warily from a distance -- my dog, Dear Dumb Donovan, had caught a skunk.

I sighed in amazement (Don't quibble. It's possible), and called Suzle to the door.

"What's wrong?" she inquired.

I indicated Donovan, crouching unhappily at my feet.

"Ah." She came out to console him. "What's the matter with the furry puppy?" She bent down. And breathed.

"Oh," she remarked. "Oh!"

Well, among the three of us -- Miss Paul maintaining a discreet distance -- we quickly determined that no one knew what to do about a dog that's been skunked. It was quite clear that there were two things we could not do: bring the dog inside, or drive back to NYC -- an hour and a half in a closed car.

I went out to sit with Donovan while Suzle called NY to inform various people that we might be a trifle delayed.

He was rolling in the grass.

"Great dog. Not only do you stink, you're filthy."

He came over and leaned on me affectionately. Then he tried to crawl into my lap. I began to get a bit grubby about the edges.

Suzle came to the door.

"They laughed," she said, mournfully.

"Who laughed?"

"Oh, whoever answered the phone, and whoever was in the room, and the people next door, and tens of thousands of huddled masses yearning to breathe free..."

"Suzle, you are getting hysterical. Did anyone have any suggestions?"

"Yes."

"What?"

"Get a cat."

My usual bearish good humour, a source and well-spring of contentment to all those know and love me was beginning to evaporate. I grumped inside. Miss Paul suggested that I:

1) Have a drink

2) Call a kennel or vet or some such similar doggy expert.

(Being a librarian, she has that sort of organized mind.)

So I drank some wine, and called a few places which either didn't answer, or answered, and laughed, and hung up, or answered, laughed and suggested I put the dog in the basement for a few days "until the odor dissipated."

"I can't do that," I screamed to a very bad connection. "I live in a Manhattan high-rise and I can't even find a place to store my absolutely inanimate snow tires, let alone a living, breathing, barking, excreting, stinking dog!"

The voice at the other end said, well, I could try giving him a bath in staticstaticstaticstatic acid, and that might help.

"Acid?" I repeated. "What..."

The line went dead.

"Acid," I mumbled. Very funny. Bathe the dog in acid, he dissolves -- no skunk smell. Ha, ha.

Suzle then suggested she call her brother in Harrisburg, Pa. When I first met Suzle I assumed she was exaggerating her brother's competence. I soon learned otherwise. He did indeed Know All. And he also owned two huge dogs (named Bonnie and Harold) and would likely be at least sympathetic.

So she called. And explained. And nodded. And hung up.

"Well?"

"He laughed."

I winced.

"Just a little. But the same thing once happened to Harold, and I guess the person at the kennel wasn't being mean, because Ken said acid too only you can't just get it, so what you have to do is get what it comes in, and we should be able to, so everything will be all right, Bear."

"What?"

"Tomato Juice. And soup. And ketchup, too, I guess. You know -- Hitchy acid."

Suddenly it became clear. Hitchy acid! Of course! All we had to do was give-the-dog-a-bath-in-tomato juice. Simple.

Well, Miss Paul didn't happen to have a few gallons of tomato juice on hand, so she and I went foraging while Suzle stayed behind to hold the dog's paw.

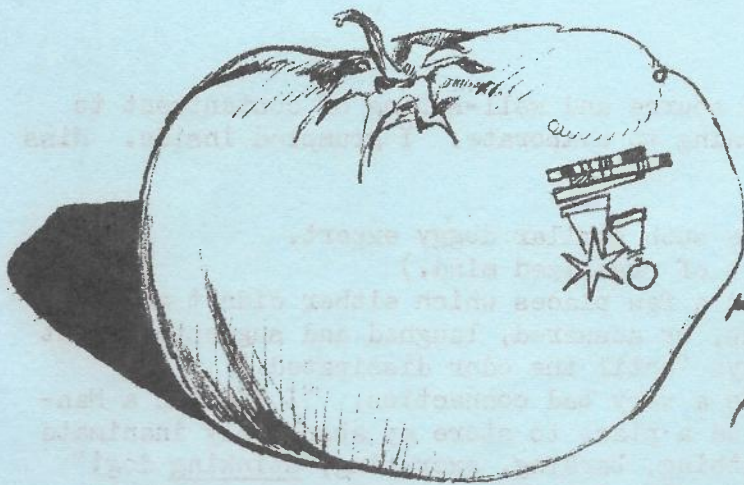
This was about 9 o'clock of a Saturday night. In Setauket, Miss Paul had often commented on how difficult it was for her to buy provisions at normal times and hours. Setauket is outaways, as they say.

We careened along the highways and byways, racing from one shopping center to another, unsuccessfully. The fourth market we tried was still open, but only y just. I parked the car and rushed in, much to the distress of the personnel.

"Quick -- where's your tomato juice?" I asked a check-out girl. She looked vaguely frightened and made a few incoherent sounds.

A man came up to me. He was the manager, a fact I deduced from the word MANAGER embroidered on his shirt. Nifty.

"Miss, the store is closing."



The Cavalry

Tomato 1st Class Huntz-Hitchey of the 2nd
Vegetable Battalion, distinguished
service in the Skunk War of '73. Fry.

"But I have to have tomato juice. It's very important. It's -- it's A Matter of Life and Death."

He looked vaguely frightened, too. I realized that I was not making a really great impression, merely because I was dirty, disheveled, had wine on my breath, and was heatedly insisting that I could not live without tomato juice.

I slowed down, and explained the situation as logically as possible. The manager, who, it turned out, owned a collie, a poodle and a Bedlington terrier, was very helpful. Once he stopped laughing. He even raided the stock room for more produce. I came away with a renewed faith in my fellow man and a hell of a lot of soup and juice. (I'd rejected ketchup and paste, reasoning that I had to bathe the dog, not prepare him for barbecuing.)

By the time we got back to Miss Paul's, it was rather late and rather chilly. However, duty called, so, coatless, wearing large aprons to "protect our clothes," Suzle and I fell to. Miss Paul stood in the doorway making encouraging sounds. (She is a Good Friend, but there are limits.)

Unfortunately, Donovan had gotten used to his odor by this time, and was in his usual good spirits. He wanted to play!

Whee! Chase me. Run, run. See the dog leap. Leap, leap. See the shaggy dog make blithering idiots out of two supposedly adult women.

Miss Paul was laughing.

I'm not certain if I am equal to describing what it is like to pour and slather tomato products over a squirming, gleeful dog at 10 PM in the gathering cold in Setauket, Long Island. By the time we finished, we both looked like El Topo extras and the dog was no longer black and white, but black and nicotine yellow.

But it worked! Hitchy acid does wash out skunk! Ah, the wonders of chemistry!

Miss Paul offered to let us stay the night, but we declined. She then mixed us "one for the road" (Bloody Mary's, of course) and helped us load ourselves and a once-again socially acceptable dog into the car. We were Home-ward Bound.

I hit the Long Island Expressway and turned on the radio and the heat. Suzle fell asleep, and Donovan went into his trance.

As we drove along, I began to notice something --

Ah, yes, indeed. The wonders of chemistry. Hitchy acid does take care of skunk. And leaves behind, in a heated, enclosed space, an odor extremely reminiscent of a 42nd Street Pizza Parlor.

Anybody want a small furry dog, with mushrooms and anchovies, to go?

The nun Chiyono studied for years but was unable to find enlightenment. One moonlight night she was carrying an old pail, filled with water. She was watching the full moon reflected in this water, when the bamboo strip that held the pailstaves broke. The pail fell all apart; the water rushed out; the moon's reflection disappeared. And Chiyono found enlightenment. She wrote this verse:

This way and that way
I tried to keep the pail together
Hoping the weak bamboo
Would never break.

Suddenly the bottom fell out:
No more water:
No more moon in the water:
Emptiness in my hand!

-- Zen Stories

((The following is principally the fault of Jon Singer, Bridget Dziedzic, and the members of the Avocado Pit. However, accessories include Jon's parents and most of a Fanoclast meeting.))

THE FOOD FOR THOUGHT RESTAURANT

(Table d'Hôte, or A La Descartes)

Appetizers

Chicken Nietzsche Soup
James Juice
Chopped Chicken Livy
Stewed Proust
Antipicasso

Hegel with Lockes
Niels Bohrscht
Kanteloupe
Hillaire Belly Lox
Bartlett's Familiar Pears

Entrees

Alfred Lord Venison
Broiled Lobster Thales
Steak and Kinsey Pie
Jack London Broil
Wor Shu Oppenheimer
Pheasant unter Grass

Keats Lorraine
Sweet and Sartre Chicken
Pascal Lamb (Sunday only)
Spinoza Cheese Pie
Kentucky Fried Dickens
Blue Plato Special

Shakespeare, Lettuce, and Tomato on Toast

All of the above served with choice of potato (Boyled, Blaked, French Freud, or Hume Fries), B. Russell Sprouts, and Alfred North Whitebread

Special Salads

Avogadro Salad
Hearts of Archimedes Salad
Marquis de Salade
(Hoyle and Wigner dressing -- 35¢ extra)

Beverages

Margaret Mead
Galileo Hearty Burgundy
Hot Rum Ptolemy

Malthus Milk
Choice of Socra Teas

Desserts

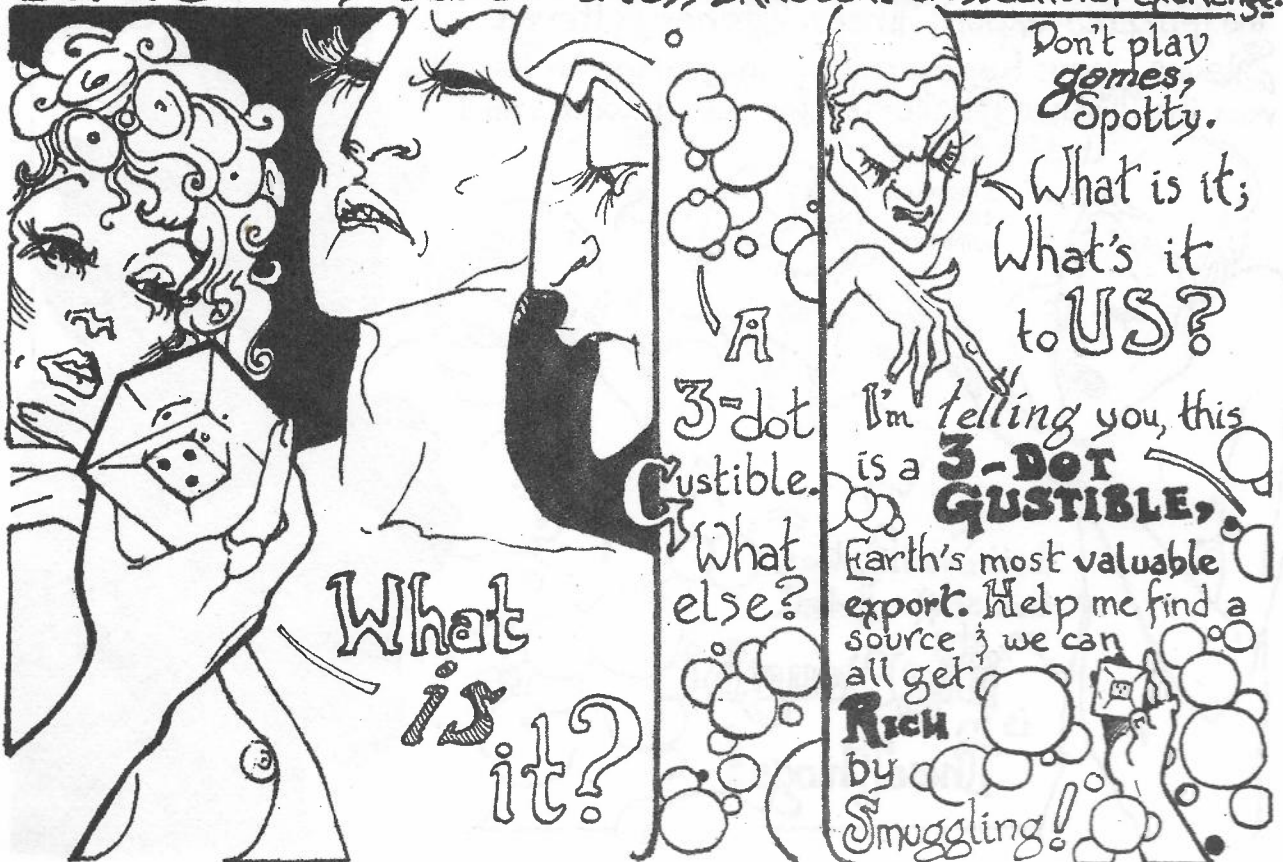
Charlotte Rousseau
Marxipan
Engelsfood Cake
Lenin Meringue Pie

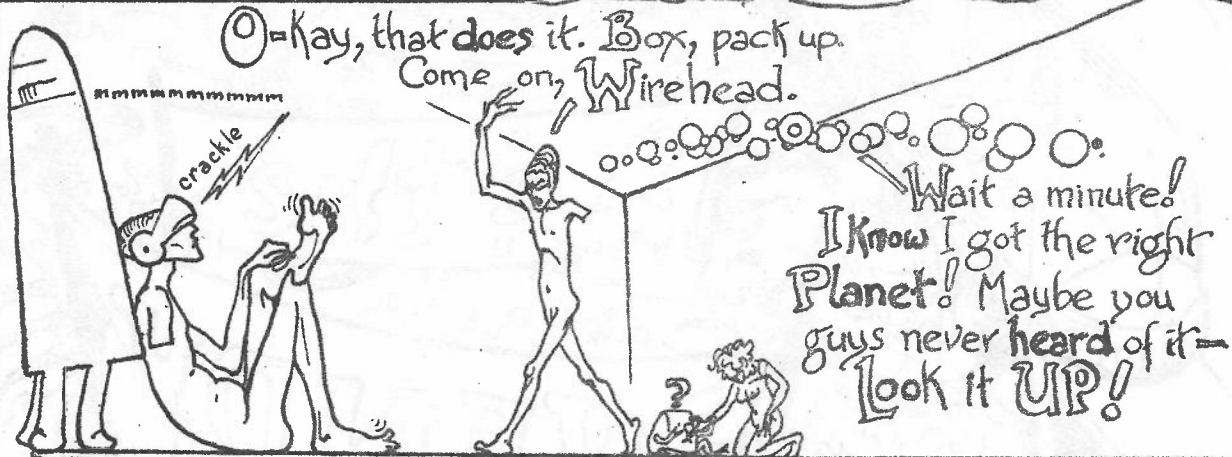
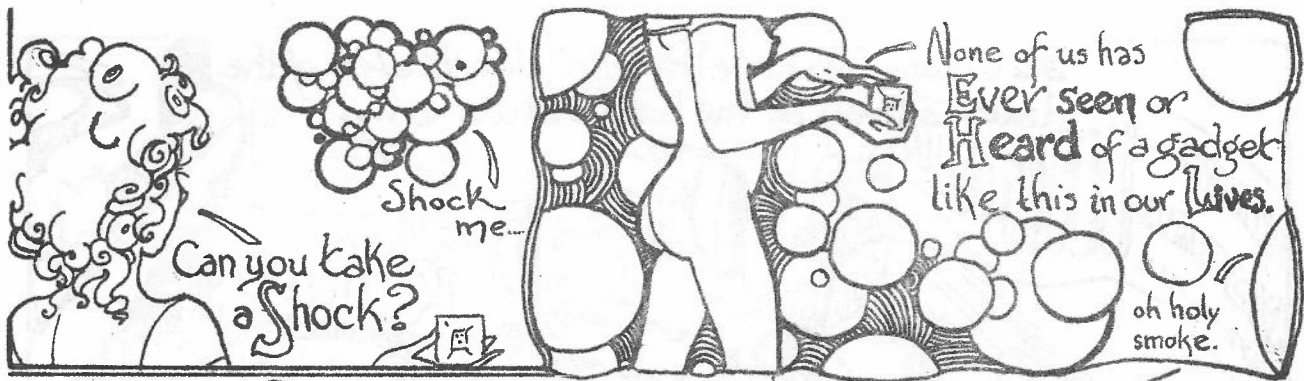
Ezra Pound Cake
Camusbert Cheese
Frisch Fruits (in season)
Assortment of Wines and Jesus

Goedel's Pudding
(The proof is in the pudding)



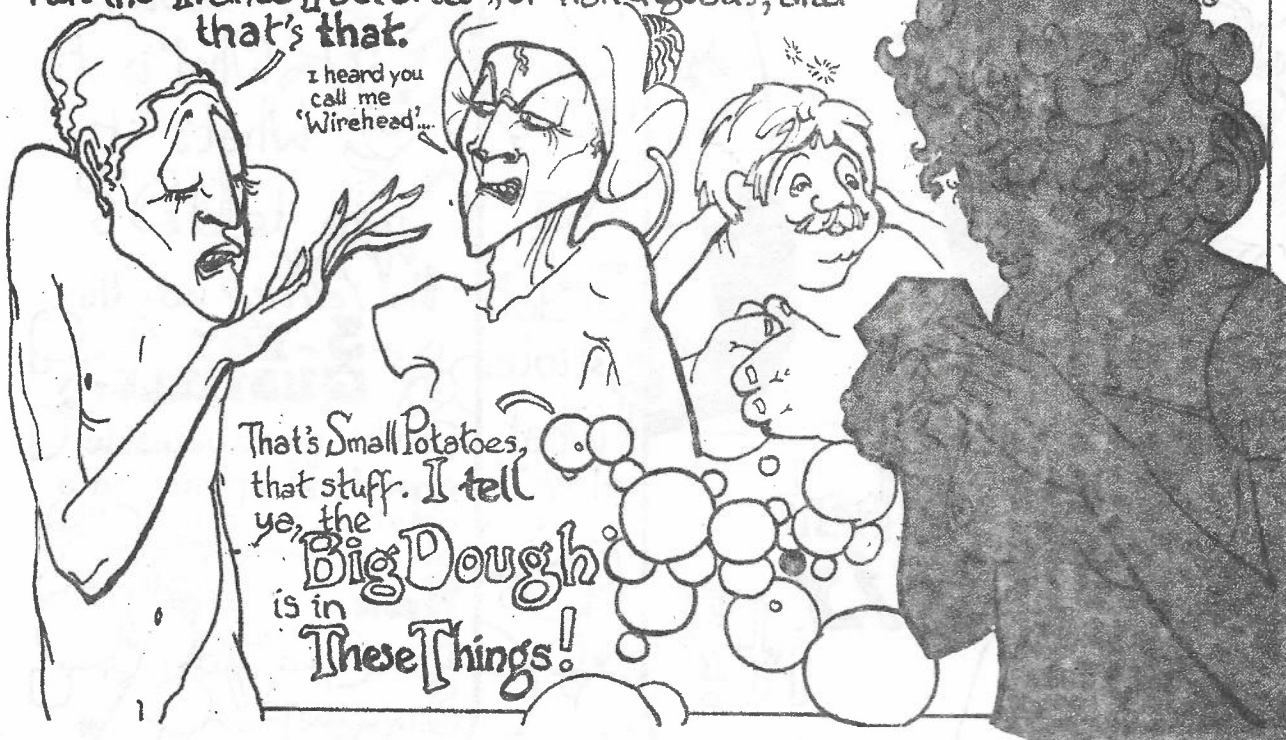
But in Bubbles' Suite - a less Innocent crosscultural exchange.

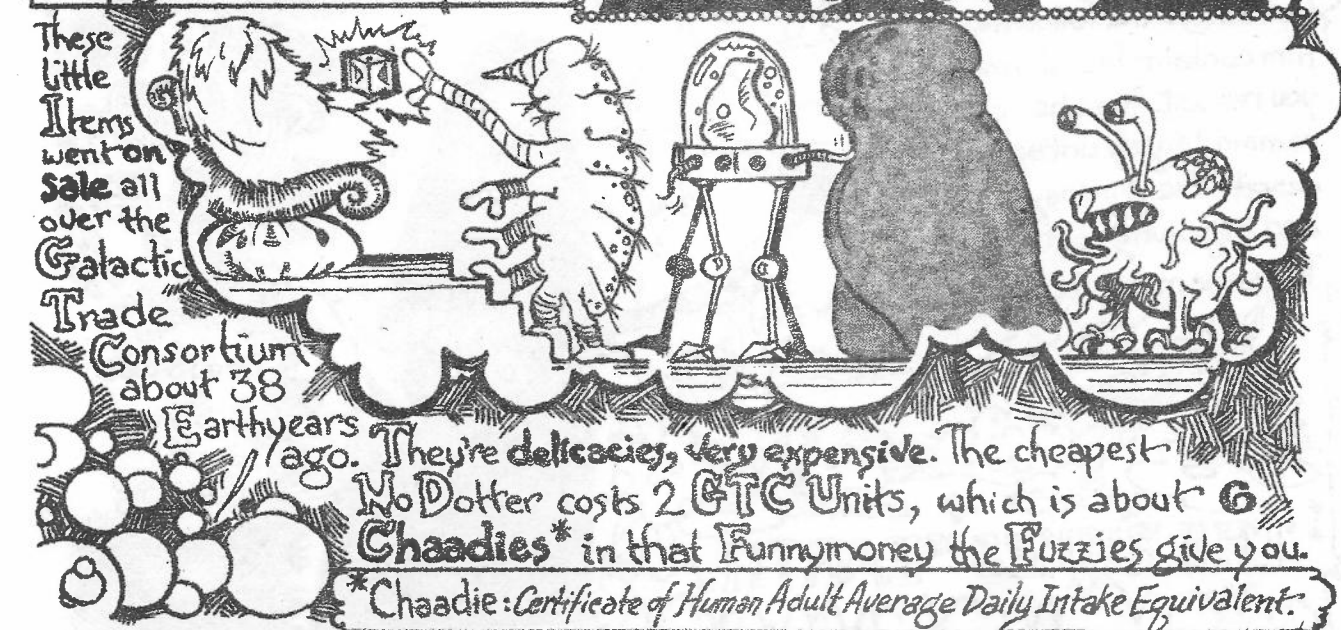
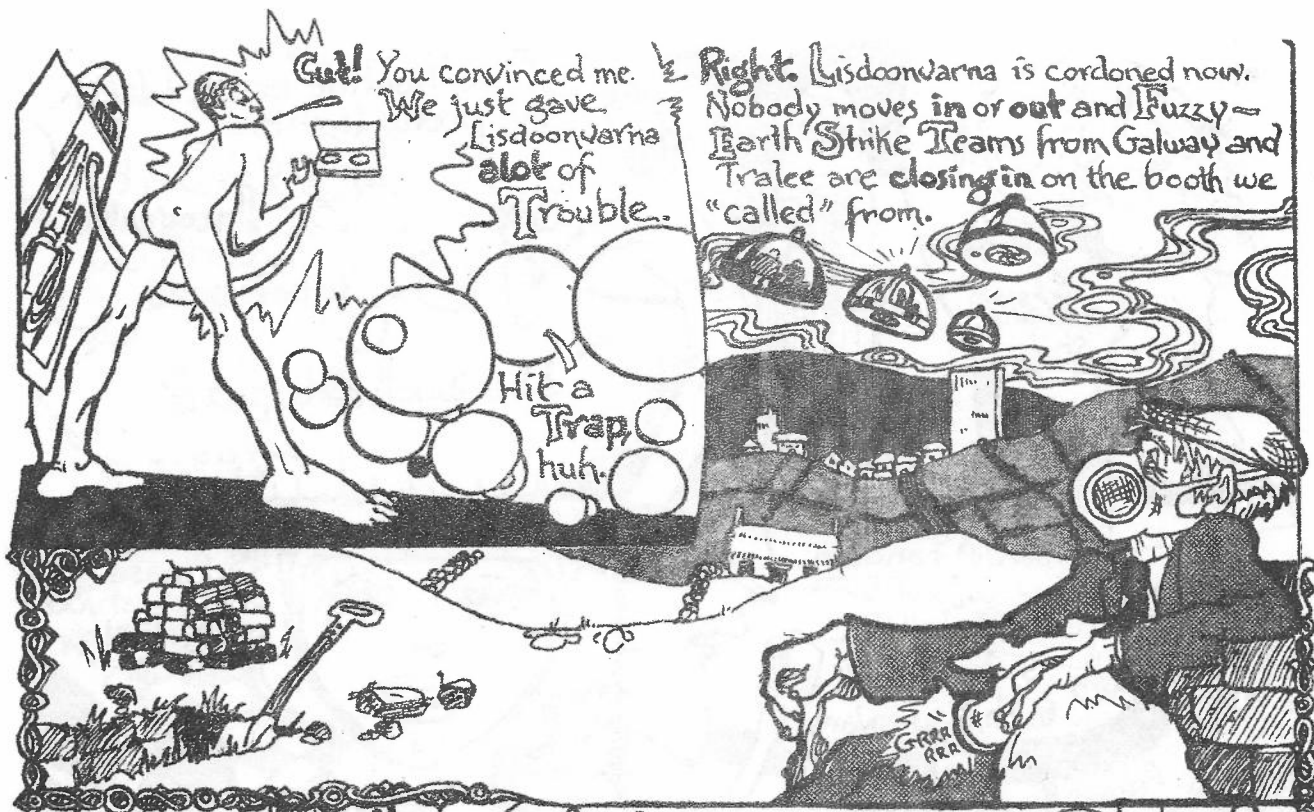




Horsetwee. For what? We know what the Fuzzles export: Trees, Gene-Altered Slaves, some handicrafts. They bring in Tourists, run the Trance Factories for hand goods, and that's that.

C'mon, Ice, look it up.
(Give him a Chance.)







The expensive ones, the 5 Dotters, cost up to 3 million GTC's. There's even a few 6-Dotters going for up to 50 million, I hear.... get our Mitts on a few of those....

What do you do, Eat them?

You got it, Sweetheart. These are layered Energy and Information structures, and nibbling off 1 layer of those patterns just grabs you and takes you away.

And these come from Earth?

Yup

Well, this one here is just a 3-Dotter, and it's about half used up; maybe 30 layers left. Say 5, 6 grand....

And they're 50 million GTC's?



Count us In.

But How do we Find them?

Wait a minute....
 Something's fishy here.
 The Fuzzies forbade us
 Tourists to ask you Natives
 about **GUSTIBLES**, but
 we figured that's just to put
 the kibosh on any blackmarket
 action, ya know?

this
 is a **Total
 Information Blackout!**

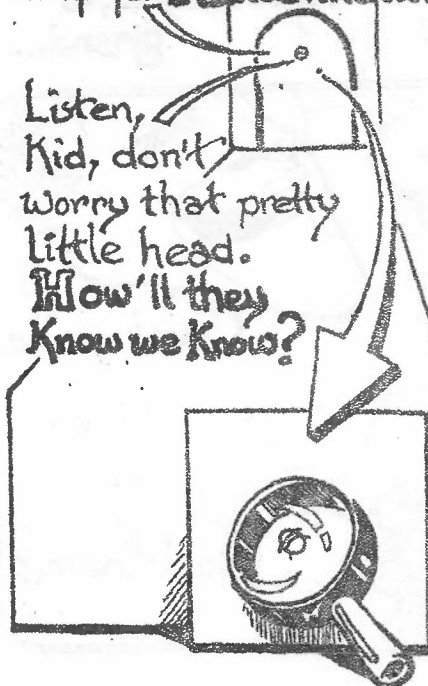
But....



Right! Nobody's ever heard of 'em, and as soon as
 you say "Gustible" on the air, Fuzzies fall on ya like
 a ton a' bricks. I mean, gang, they don't want you
 to know. This looks like a **Bigger Deal** than I thought.
 They're sitting on it because... somehow it'll **Blow**
 up if Earth folks find out about it....

Bubbles, dear, do you
 realize you probably lined
 us up for **Rehabilitation?**

Listen,
 Kid, don't
 worry that pretty
 little head.
 How'll they
 know we know?



See, First, it's simple. Transcom's
 tapped, and whenever he leaves, we
 track him. Easy.



?
 How
 Indeed
 ??
 Continued!

BRANCHES



((This unfortunately got misplaced, and didn't make it into the last letter column.))

Ken Ozanne
'The Cottonwoods'
42 Meeks Crescent
Faulconbridge, N.S.W. 2776
Australia

This is a LoC for KRATOPHANY 2. (I always start my LoC's by saying that they are LoC's -- it saves getting them confused with milk bills and the like.)

'Wendy and the Yellow King' was rather unsatisfactory in this issue anyway. Repro not always up to scratch, particularly for detail work on dark areas. If you can't improve this (and it means going from good to superb repro) then a few gentle words to your cartoonists might elicit simpler and stronger artwork wherever dark background seems essential to their artistic integrity. In other words: beat them over the head with a club if they won't cooperate -- artists aren't really human anyway.

Another gripe is that the character who says great lines like "grmmph.. / $\frac{1}{4}$ zzzz#*&\$,,," should say them in larger squiggles. It's just not fair to make your reader court eyestrain just to find that the dialog is in lower south martian.

On Astrology: you say (p13) that Astrology was well developed among all the early civilizations including Mesopotamia and Egypt. 'Taint so. Astrology was a late development in the middle east anyway (I don't know enough about China or Mayans to comment on them.). I haven't the inclination to look up references to check dates at the moment, but I fancy 4th century B.C. and thereafter is about right. (Ignore all references to the ancient Hermes Trismegistus -- anything further from the mainstream of Egyptian religiosity would be hard to imagine. And there is no defensible evidence for the existence of such a character.) The Chaldean astrologers were roughly contemporaneous with Socrates, Platon, Aristotle, and Alexander. Rome was also a going concern, just about ready to take over Italy. That just doesn't add up to early middle eastern civilization.

Appropos of nothing, let me tell you about two of my heros. Aristophanes of Byzantion, librarian at the great library of Alexandria from about 195-180 B.C., was the inventor of punctuation! Alone he did it. And the next (or next but one) librarian, Aristarchos of Samothrace (where the winged victory came from), invented grammar. (It was all his fault you see.) Spelling wasn't invented until about the eighteenth century A.D.

((And from a later letter:))

The Sleepwalkers is a very readable book. Very accurate of its type as well. But the reduction in numbers of circles from Copernicus to Ptolemy is not really as easy to count as all that. Specifically, there were as many versions of the Ptolemaic theory around as there were serious astronomers. Some used more, some less. Koestler does not give due weight to the violence done to received physical views by the Copernican hypothesis. (I've talked briefly to Koestler, by the way.) Anyway, try "The Copernican Revolution" (or similar) by Thomas Kuhn for a rather more scholarly account of much of the ground covered by the other book.

A very rough answer to Mike O'Brien's question is about 0.2%. I lack the room to show the calculations here, but they are certainly rough.

Mike Glicksohn
141 High Park Ave.
Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3
Canada

As usual, this is a visually impressive issue. Mister McCarthy's mimeo does good work and is used to advantage in Steve's excellent cover and Judy's brilliant comic strip. I also liked very much the headings for David's article and your

Avocado Abstracts; both added an extra dimension to the fanzine and gave it that overall sense of design that zealots like Labonte insist on in their fanzines.

Your Con Edison story was priceless and you have only yourself to blame; one wonders at the stupidity of these companies, but I suppose when you have a monopoly you don't have to care too much. If you had chosen some word other than "bill" in your note, would it have made any difference? The department head I work for wanted to have the bell removed from an extension phone so that it wouldn't disturb him when he was sleeping and there was someone else around to answer the phone downstairs. He made the mistake of asking the Bell Telephone people about it. Apparently there's an extra charge for the "service" of not having the bell ring and they started billing him for it right away. We got to wondering just how much they'd charge a month if he'd had them take the extension out completely. For "service" like that the rates would likely have been astronomical!

((As far as using another word is concerned, my mother sent me the following clipping:

"After purchasing some small gadget advertised in a mail-order catalogue, one George Smith had the misfortune of winding up with his name on a computerized mailing list.

"Thereafter, the junk mail arrived by the ton. At last in desperation, he started writing "refused" on all such pieces and sending them back. Finally the computer digested this bit of information. Now he receives junk mail by the ton addressed to George Refused."))

I hope you know what you're doing, Eli; to get away with puns like "drawn and quartood", you'd better be well hung.

The Mason-Mitchell comic extravaganza continues to dazzle the eye and the mind. Unlike Pat McGuire I'm enjoying immensely Judy's playing with the traditionally rigid restrictions of comic panelology and dialogue. It involves the reader much more when he or she has to struggle a bit to identify who's speaking and what unusual viewpoint is being used to distort the drawings. That overhead perspective shot on the second page is truly beautiful. I found the actual action of this episode a bit easier to follow than the last segment although the general story still hasn't become clear yet. Please do not delay another nine months before the next episode, Eli.

((Sorry about that. But it took them 8 months to do this installment.))

I note that the lightweight stuff is at the beginning of the lettercol and the heavier raps gravitate to the back. I also note a heavy concentration of Canadians in those early pages and ponder the significance of this phenomenon. And speaking of phenomenon (a chemical indicator, isn't it) there's an actual letter from Richard Labonte, revealing the considerable skill with which he links words together when he gets around to it. It took the demise of ENERGUMEN to get us a loc from Richard, so I suppose I shouldn't bother anticipating the next issue of KRATOPHANY after all. I had asked Richard not to reveal my changed personality but I suppose he was foolishly allowed to read an entire New York Times and in the resultant drunken euphoria he forgot his promise to me. Were I vindictive I'd tell you about how Richard's famous campaign for mayor of Ottawa (of which you may have read in FOCAL POINT and elsewhere) was derailed when his opponent uncovered a



still-readable ditto copy of HUGIN AND MUNIN #1 and spread copies all over the city. The humiliation was too much for Richard and his mind apparently went. He gave up his role of Boy Radical, trimmed his hair, went to enough doctors to get himself well, and took a respectable job with a great metropolitan newspaper. It's a sad sight indeed to see this once fine fellow sneaking about in broad daylight with a honeydew melon in his hand muttering "bang, boom" to himself. And on several occasions he's been arrested for stripping in a phone booth and trying to get into old blue jeans and a wig. Still, these things are between Richard and me and I won't embarrass the chap by mentioning them.

Lee Hoffman
350 NW Harbor Blvd.
Port Charlotte, Fla. 33952

Especially enjoyed the stuff about the theatre spree. I find an interesting relationship between the stuff about the "death" of the Player and the films of the "500" I watched last night. The curious question of reality and unreality. The reality of two human beings flung viciously about in flaming crumpled lumps of metal (fortunately as of last report neither actually died), the unreality of video tape replays, the rather offhand coverage of a man killed by a firetruck rushing to the rescue, and the absolutely unreal reality of an asinine reporter asking probably-preplanned questions of the owner of the winning car



--who'd just had a driver almost killed and a pit crewman actually killed.

I wish I remembered his exact words, but the essence was "Golly, Mister Granatelli, aren't you delighted! Isn't this a wonderful day for you!"

All very, very weird.

Speaking of avocados, some time back my mother gave me a couple of avocado pits to plant. As I do with all kinds of things, I stuck them in the ground by the corner and watered them occasionally. Eventually three little sprouts came up in that spot. I thought they might be avocado plants, or maybe I'd stuck some other seeds in that spot too. It's my favorite area for sticking in seeds.

Three plants from two pits? Well, it can happen.

But one acquaintance then told me that they couldn't possibly be avocado plants. Avocados "can't" be grown by just sticking pits into the ground. (How, I wondered, does the avocado get by when there aren't any people around to help it along?)

Other people looked at the plants and assured me they were, indeed, avocados. (I decided I'd wait and see what happened when they reached maturity.)

Then a book told me seedling avocados don't bear. (If they didn't bear, how would I ever know for sure what they were.)

My mother told me they'd get meal-bugs. (I asked her, if they don't bear and do get mealy-bugs, why did she tell me to plant them in the first place. Her answer eludes me-- as it did at the time.)

Since my place is heavily vegetated at the moment anyway, and I don't need mealy-bugs, I ripped up my three perhaps-avocado sprouts

and flung them out.

Now three more are coming up.

Six plants from three pits?

Eager little buggers, aren't they?

But what are they?

Matt Schneck
229 Albany Post Road
Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520

Where is the boundary between reality and acting? Are you acting when you put on a facade of anger, wordliness, or courtesy, to affect someone's judgement of you? When you narrate an anecdote to a friend, and find yourself roleplaying? When you speak before a group, and become immersed in your own presentation? When you and another person or group find yourselves spontaneously improvising a situation and a set of characters to go with it, just for the hell

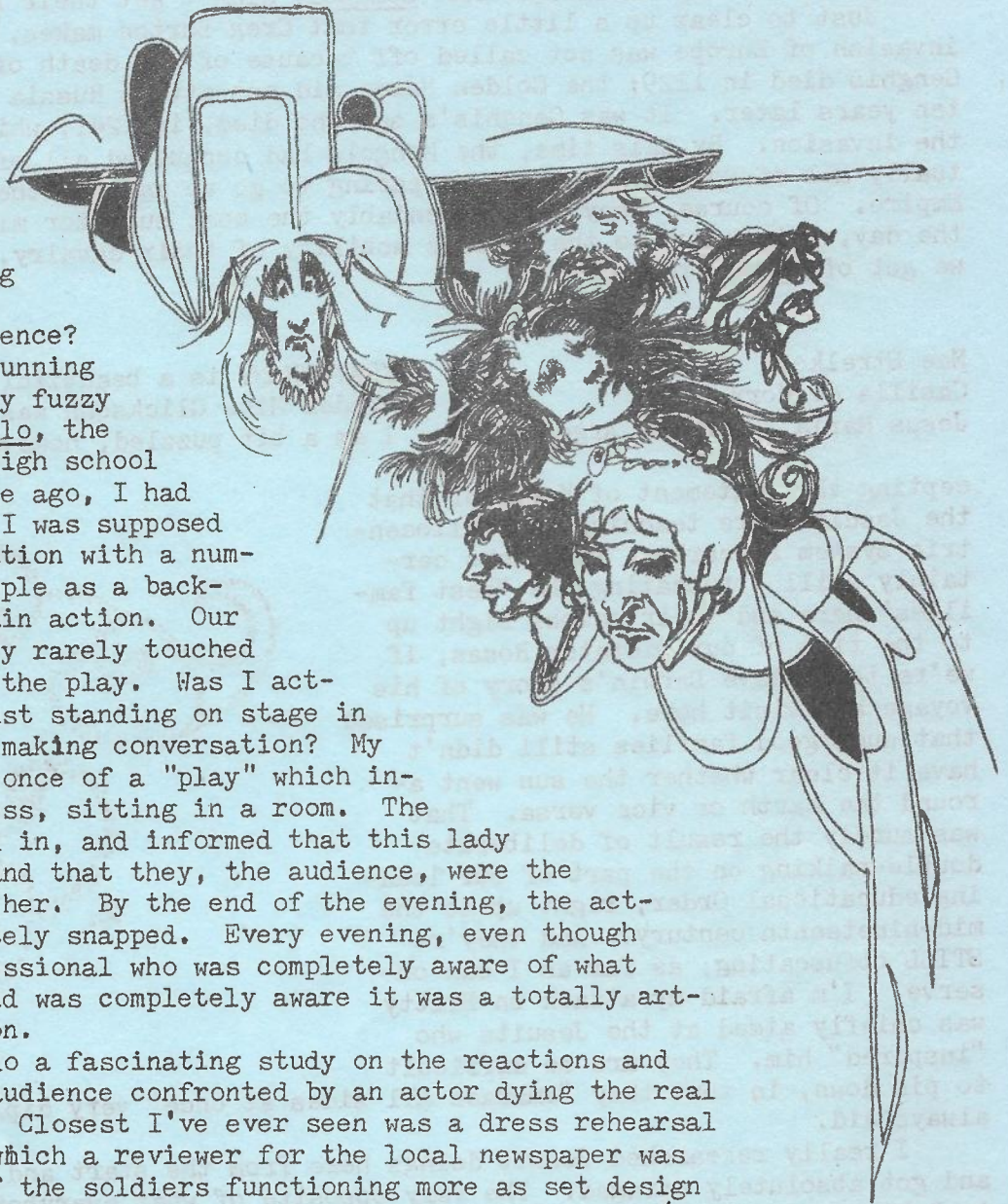
of it? At what point do you stop being yourself and take on the dimensions of another character, and at what point do you stop being participant and start being audience?

I can remember running across a few very fuzzy lines. In Othello, the play the local high school presented a while ago, I had one scene where I was supposed to make conversation with a number of other people as a background to the main action. Our conversation very rarely touched on the world of the play. Was I acting, or was I just standing on stage in a funny costume making conversation? My parents told me once of a "play" which involved one actress, sitting in a room. The audience was led in, and informed that this lady was Cassandra, and that they, the audience, were the Greeks reviling her. By the end of the evening, the actress had completely snapped. Every evening, even though this was a professional who was completely aware of what was to happen and was completely aware it was a totally artificial situation.

One might do a fascinating study on the reactions and emotions of an audience confronted by an actor dying the real death on stage. Closest I've ever seen was a dress rehearsal of Othello, at which a reviewer for the local newspaper was present. One of the soldiers functioning more as set design than character fainted in the middle of a major character's speech. All was dispatched smoothly, the soldier's companion and someone offstage helped drag the fallen man off (he was right by the wing), an actor picked up the cue, and except for an inner concern, we appeared to forget the matter entirely till we got offstage. But once, not very long ago, at the Metropolitan Opera, a lead baritone took up position by the footlights, began a star aria, and before getting past the opening phrase, "Oh joy! Oh immense joy!", keeled over like a toppled oak. That time, they had to call the performance.

Reading "Wendy and the Yellow King" for the second time, it seemed to make a bit more sense. Perhaps by the fourth or fifth it will get coherent. Oh well. At least the graphics are superb.

The post office treated your folded KRAT's more kindly than it treated our folded ANYTHING THING's. With us, they tore the address off undeliverable copies, destroyed the magazine, and returned the remains of the magazine,



EXCEPT for the address shred, with "No Such Person" stamped on it. We had to pay 10¢ for the knowledge that somebody didn't get their ANYTHING THING.

Just to clear up a little error that Greg Burton makes, the Mongol invasion of Europe was not called off because of the death of Genghis Kahn. Genghis died in 1229; the Golden Horde did not attack Russia till 1239, ten years later. It was Genghis's son who died, in 1241, which halted the invasion. By this time, the Mongols had conquered all of Hungary, virtually all of Poland, and were preparing to go up against the Holy Roman Empire. Of course, they were undeniably the most superior military force of the day, mainly due to the extreme mobility of their cavalry. So all in all, we got off damn close.

Mae Strelkov
Casilla de Correo 55
Jesus Maria, Cordoba, Argentina

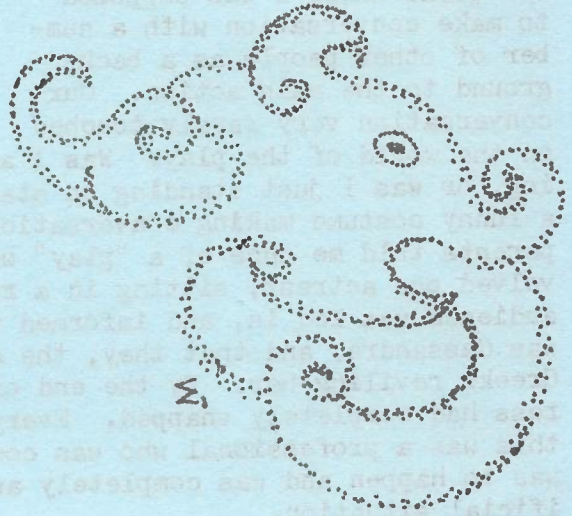
KRATOPHANY is a beautiful zine -- no wonder Mike Glicksohn was praising it. I am a bit puzzled, however, in your ac-

cepting the statement of Koestler that the Jesuits were teaching the heliocentric system so early. They were certainly still obfuscating the "best families" here and their scions right up to the time of our Dictator Rosas, if we're to believe Darwin's story of his voyage and visit here. He was surprised that such good families still didn't have it clear whether the sun went around the Earth or vice versa. That was surely the result of deliberate double-talking on the part of our leading educational Order, right up to the mid-nineteenth century. And they're STILL obfuscating, as far as I can observe. I'm afraid my attack on Blatty was chiefly aimed at the Jesuits who "inspired" him. They are so difficult to pin down, in that they "embrace all sides at once" very diplomatically and always did.

I really researched Jesuit doings here from the start and till lately, and got absolutely enraged. The very opposite of what everybody is made to believe concerning them is usually true. Read their own colonial historians (so smug and sanctimonious and stuffy) and you'll see what makes me see red every time they get praised nowadays ANEW!

Oh, it's darling of you all to support the idea of my visiting the States. It scared me stiff at first, but I'm gaining courage. To walk barefoot through a jungle with Indians blowing darts through blowpipes and jaguars roaring would scare me less. However, I'm reassured, knowing such nice people want me to come, and shall cower behind you all very bravely. I warn you I'm noisy and garrulous in real life too! (And in my vicinity everybody grows noisy also, very soon!) Another fan has warned me that I'll find fans introspective and shy. That doesn't worry me. We can sit around cozily and be introspective in a row.

You sadden me with the possibility we'll never go faster than light. But mebbly light is the fastest. After that, you're everywhere and anywhen at once.



Roger D. Sween
The Index Company
P.O. Box 351
Platteville, Wisc. 53818

When I was a child, introverted and alienated,
I looked about for heroes, especially those who
had made it against all the odds, and found three:
Einstein, Churchill, and Frank Lloyd Wright.
That my life was guided by three old men has

had a salutary effect; now that they are all dead, I am emancipated.

I read their biographies and every scrap of newspaper and magazine accounts I could find. But with Einstein, I failed to understand what he had done. To this day I try from time to time to understand relativity and fail repeatedly. When I saw your article, I took it up with renewed hopes and once again met with abysmal failure.

Not only would I like to understand my greatest hero, but the weight of scientific thinking demands that I understand him; it is necessary for my education.

Doubtless a large measure of my problem is my inability to think abstractly. I will agree that $2+2=4$ because I can also observe the equation in reality. But the rarefied theories of higher algebra and beyond elude me.

But more frustrating is that relativity and all its spinoff pronouncements do not seem reasonable. I can accept the impossibility of FTL, having no commitment to getting to the Horsehead Nebula, but I recoil from time dilation, contracting lengths, and expanding masses. Why? Because I am rooted in Aristotle: There is only one reality, the one that exists. Time for me is as constant as the speed of light. Such "proofs" as the life of mesons fail to convince me because I can always pass them off with, "We don't know enough, yet," instead of "Ah, yes, only Einstein's theory accounts for the phenomena."

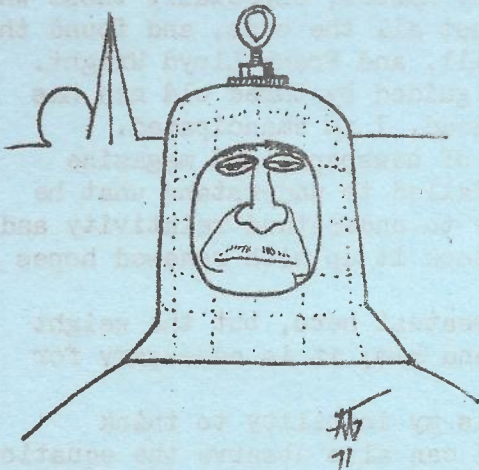
As far as your assumptions go, I would agree I) The speed of light is constant independent of any observer, and II) Physical laws are the same in any system, period. But in your third assumption, you lose me, and even if I can't understand Lorentz, I certainly won't take it on faith. When you get to your fourth, you start setting up your paradox, hardly a good means of proof since all paradoxes rely on at least one incorrect assumption in the syllogism. In other words, you are knocking down a straw man.

The article was entertaining, but it certainly wasn't enlightening.

((It's strange what some people consider reasonable. Assumption I is not only ridiculous and contrary to common sense, but also contains within it the seeds of all the "paradoxes" of relativity.

(They are paradoxes only because they conflict with your preconceptions; intrinsically, they are no more unreasonable than gravity. How do you feel about the wave-particle duality in quantum mechanics?) After all, if you're on a train moving at 50 MPH, and you throw a baseball at 20 MPH, it is an observed fact that to someone on the ground, the ball travels at 70 MPH. But to you, it travels at 20 MPH, which fortunate fact enables us to play ping-pong on an ocean liner. Why, then, should the beam from the train's headlights be observed to travel at c , instead of $c+50$ MPH? The only justification for assumption I is that that's the observed behavior of the universe, so we're stuck with it. And, of course, the deductions from it (which are purely logical, analytic if you will, and Aristotle should have no quarrel with them) explain such things as magnetism, the life of mesons, the orbit of Mercury, and the change in the rate of clocks aboard jet planes. Just what do you mean by "time," and in what sense is it constant? Please note that only I and II were assumptions; the latter steps are logical consequences of them which can be derived in more detail through simple algebra.))

Pat McGuire
11A Graduate College
Princeton, NJ 08540



FTL does not look too probable.
... For the Real World the conclusion to all this is that we should go back to the old radiotelescope for extra-terrestrial contact until STL travel gets a lot better, at which point we can go looking at some respectable percentage of c. Which we may well have to do: I have a suspicion that 99% of all sentient races may not get out of their equivalent of the Old Stone Age until contacted by visitors from elsewhere. It took us the better part of four million years to get into the neolithic age, after all, and we've only been around

some tens of thousands of years since. (But this emphatically is not meant as a plug for CHARIOTS OF THE GODS or even the 2001 monolith.)

(I tend to believe that industrially-oriented cultures vastly older than ours must either be rare, or must wish to have nothing to do with us, as they haven't shown up -- in any great number, at least -- in the last three or four thousand years.)

((But remember the number of stars that might have life (from the viewpoint of an extraterrestrial, who might put a GO star very low on his list), and the time it would take to search at STL. I think communication a la Project Ozma is not too far-fetched, but our technology may not be up to it. After all, a 100 years ago (a cosmic eyeblink) we didn't have radios, and now we're listening with radio telescopes. Less than 10 years ago, no one suspected pulsars, and now we're using them as part of the key on our interstellar messages (the Pioneer 10 plaque). Who knows what's being broadcast, or how? And who would even want to talk to a race that can't frammis their hitchies to receive the interstellar poindexter?))

I've just today finished an absolutely fascinating book: C.S. Lewis's The Discarded Image (Cambridge University Press, 1964). Technically, the book is supposed to be a help to students of medieval literature, especially English, by supplying them beforehand with an orientation as to what the medievals thought the world was like. In actuality, the book is of much wider interest. It throws light on conscientiously done modern quasi-romances such as Lewis's own fantasies, or LOTR, or The Broken Sword and Three Hearts and Three Lions, for one thing. For another, he mentions SF two or three times. He shows an understanding of philosophy of science quite beyond what one expects of a professor of literature, and says many fascinating things about classical, medieval, and renaissance world-views. I highly recommend it to anyone, but especially to you Avocadoans who seem so turned on by Zen stories that you have forgotten your own cultural heritage.

(Just for that, I'm dedicating the following pairs of quotes to you, Pat:

"To see the World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour"

-- William Blake, "Auguries of Innocence"

"No day comes back again:
One inch of time is worth
A foot of jade."

-- the Zen master Takuan

"For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have
more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken
away even that he hath."

-- Matthew 13:12

"Baso said to a monk, 'If I see you have a staff, I will give it
to you. If I see you have no staff, I will take it away from you.'"

-- Zen Stories))

Harry Warner, Jr.
423 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown, Md. 21740

Steve's cover is beautiful.

I can't give you any Con Edison stories,
because the local source of power is Potomac
Edison. But a few years ago, my refrigerator self-
destructed one hot day, and I decided to purchase a new one from the utility
company's appliance branch. Everything went smoothly for quite a while,
because I knew one of the salesmen, he realized that a person living alone
wouldn't be a perfectionist with respect to the refrigerator, and he gave
me an excellent price on one that had been sold to a perfectionist couple
and then returned for a couple of trifling defects in the enamel skin.
The trouble came when I wrote him a check for the full price. He didn't
doubt my solvency but he did question my right to pioneer in this way.
Nobody, he explained, ever pays cash for a refrigerator. They always buy
it on credit. I saw no point in paying 18 per cent finance charges when I
was getting only four per cent interest at the time on invested money,
and insisted on paying in full. He called some business office people,
and finally worked out an arrangement. I would pay cash, the company would
accept the money, but there was no way to interfere with the credit account
machinery. I would receive ques-
tionnaires about my ability to
make monthly payments, forms
would arrive in the mail for my
signature about the time payments,
and so on. All I need do was ig-
nore them, no matter how urgent
or repeated they became, because
he had influence enough to pre-
vent the management from turning
the matter over to a collection
agency. I followed his advice,
tried not to worry about the doc-
uments that bombarded me, and
everything went smoothly. Potomac



Edison closed down its retail business not too long after that, and I sometimes wonder if I helped the decline of the downtown section, forcing another storeroom to sit vacant because I messed up the company's books.

((On FTL)) One thing puzzles me. Why does light travel at the speed of light? Could the Einstein theory be valid if this were a universe in which a speed limit existed but nothing, not even light, went that fast from natural causes? If it's impossible to exceed the speed of light, what would happen if science should come up with a method of slowing down the speed of light through some interfering mechanism or a peculiarity in the emitting body for the particular light beam that suffered the delay? If the speed with which light leaves a glowing object could be drastically curtailed, would the beam of light undergo the stupendous changes that a material object would theoretically experience as it approached the speed of light? In other words, is it coincidence or is a light ray somehow tied into the fabric of the universe, that light and certain other forms of radiation attain the limiting factor for motion in that universe?

((As I understand it the velocity of electromagnetic radiation is tied into the fabric of the universe. In the sense that if light didn't travel at the limiting velocity, it wouldn't be light. But "c" is the speed of light in a vacuum, and light is propagated at a slower velocity when it's traveling through some other medium -- that's when you get Cerenkov radiation, when something exceeds the speed of light in the medium. I'd heard this explained by saying that the photons are absorbed and re-emitted by the stuff in the medium, which slows down the light beam (though the photons are always travelling at c). David (my resident ex-physics major) tells me that if you look at it as a wave phenomena (rather than particles like photons) All Is Explained.))

Wendy and the Yellow King grows more mystifying all the time but is fine to look at in a baffled sort of way.

The interior illustrations range from good to magnificent. Steve's heading for the Emerson article would probably sell 74,839 copies at Marboro if turned into a poster.

((The following are excerpts from a typical Hal Davis letter.))
Hal Davis (I would've sworn I just heard Channel 13 announce
50 E. 1st St. that tomorrow they will begin "gabble-to-gabble
New York, N.Y. 10003 coverage" of the Watergate hearings.)

Ibid -- a bridge-playing extinct bird.

Cats (Siamese), as we know, know more than we do. (I shall read from Spencer Holst's The Language of Cats should I ever wander that far north). If they ever decided to put behaviourists in their place, serving them in a manner to which they would love to accustom themselves, would it be fair to call their environments More-Than-One-Waiter Skinner Cat boxes?

Don't take any wooden horses. (Beware of gifts bearing Greeks?)
Graffito: Troy is a one-horse town.

A cracked auto muffler makes an excellent
baby holder ... if you have a very long,
very thin baby.

-- Jon Singer

((This arrived in an official-looking envelope printed with the letterhead of the Greater New York Dental Meeting (complete with official seal and slogan "For Better Dentistry"). However, contextual evidence and the report of a top flight detective agency lead me to believe that the missive is the work of one Fred Phillips, of 65 Mt. Hope Place, Bronx, NY 10453.))

Dear Mr. Cohen,

The bill for extraction of four teeth comes to \$312.76. We caution you, to avoid having more of your teeth knocked out, to avoid this Mr. Phillips, who sounds like a violent and dangerous individual who should be put away for scientific study. You will forgive the Conference for commenting on your private affairs, but our sources indicate that this Phillips character resented your telling him that, figuratively, there was a sure-fire certainty of a camel passing through the eye of a needle compared to his chances of ever getting published in your fanzine "KRATOPHANY." He translated this resentment finally from a verbal to a physical expression and is currently contemplating the error of his ways at the expense of the municipal authorities.

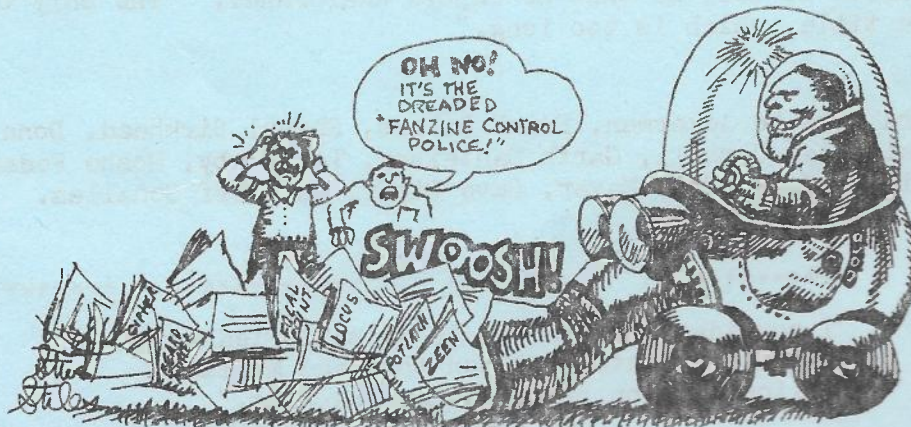
Your local Greater New York Dental Conference is constantly looking for bigger and better ways to serve its public. Our SF Fan Counseling Program is designed to fulfill the needs of the New York City Science-Fiction fan: "We fill your mind as we fill your teeth." I must admit that this has loomed as one of our more extreme cases. As we suggested previously, we recommend the services of a physician for your eyes: beef-steak is a folk-remedy and as such is subject to careful questioning on a medical basis.

Our final comment, after perusal of the document "KRATOPHANY" we received (unsolicited) is, frankly ... sell before the bottom drops out!

Our office will be very glad to serve you and your accomplices at any time in the future ... the far, far future. The farther future, the better.

Records made out of ceramic will last almost forever ... but the grooves tend to fill in when you glaze them.

-- Jon Singer



Ben Indick
428 Sagamore Avenue
Teaneck, NJ 07666

Dere Eli,

The only trubbble with your magazeen KRATOPHONY
is that every tyme I reeed it I feel like a dumbbell.

Other fanzeens dont do this to me. Some of them
I even feel just as smart as, sometimes, with some of them. But I never
feel smart as yours, with all its syentific and long-word articels. I
just get to feel dumb, with what they call an #infeeriorority complex#.
Why dont you have simpul articels for those of us reeders who arent in
college and arent so smart? It aint fair to make us feel that way.

Like take how you use french on the cover. Its just a good thing I
once read that dopey play by that stoopid Frenchman Alfred Jarry where he
starts it right off the very first word just like you on the cover, after
the title. "Merde" aint even a nice word; if I knew the long word, Id say
it, I think its defamation or something, but anyway, its just shit.
That's not nice on a magazine sold to people younger than 21, which Im not,
but my kids are.

Then you quote some plays inside, which I think they call existence,
or resistance, or existentialism, yeah! thats the word, existenchialsgjy ...
well...I didnt laff at them. Thats what I mean: theyre too smart for most
of us! Why dont you quote from plays we can understand, like SUGAR,
THE WOMEN, and THE SOUND OF MUSIC?

And the worst of all is your articel about Einstein. Wowee, now
who knows what all THAT is about?

After I got to the comic strip, I thought, good, now this should be
okay. But I didnt know where it started or ended on any page but the first
and last. And how come Snoopy wasnt in it?

So thats why I had trubble with your zeen. I dont say you shouldnt
put out an edishin like it for your smart reeders, but maybe you should
put out a plain language edishin for the rest of us. Like READERS DIGEST
does, in all languages. I think you should have more articles in it besides
scyentific ones; like you should discuss the last forty cons you went to,
and how everybody got boozed, and how you never reed scyence fiction at all.
Also, you should have articels about how underground comic books are the most
intelleckchual things of all. Then youll be like a fanzeen should be.

Thank you very much anyway, and avocadoes are reely good in salad.
I dont use the pits tho.

Ed Cagle, the renowned bastion of wild pickel fandom and editor of
KWALHIOQUA wrote to tell me that he enjoys KRATOPHANY. "The only thing
wrong is the title, which is too long."

We Also Heard From 4e Ackerman, Frank Balazs, Sheryl Birkhead, Donn Brazier,
Grant Canfield, Jay Cornell, Garth Danielson, Tom Digby, Moshe Feder, Ken
Gammage, Eric Lindsay, Eric Mayer, Dave Piper, and Jeff Schalles.

"I consider the man who is dissatisfied with
a universe containing ten thousand million
million million stars rather grasping."

-- Sir Arthur Eddington

THE ADVENTURES OF GRAYSON GREENSWARD

In the year 2314, Grayson Greensward stumbled upon the isolated planet of Wager, which had been cut off from the mainstream of galactic history for some centuries. In the intervening years, the inhabitants had developed a civilization based on an elaborate system of games and bets, resulting in a delightfully chaotic government. Grayson decided to stay for a while and watch the fun.

Sure enough, soon he found himself embroiled in a fierce contest for Regional Governor between three parties: the Progressives, whose symbol was a charging chess knight; the Regressives, symbolized by a flatworm in an experimental psychologist's maze; and the Transgressives, an independent third party, whose mascot was an ornery camel. The race was a close one, though it may not have been if Greensward hadn't been cleaning up on side bets all through the campaign. As it turned out, the final decision had to be referred to the High Council of Rules, which in turn came to an unbreakable deadlock. Grayson generously offered his services, as soon as the council offered his usual fee.

By this time, the intrepid galactic explorer had deduced that an undecided game was a relative rarity in this culture; so he took the opportunity to introduce a new twist on an old Earth game. Drawing two sets of intersecting parallel lines, he placed an X in the center of the pattern, and challenged the leaders of the Knights and the Worms to a series of games, the stakes being the deciding vote. Of course, Greensward forced tie after tie, and both leaders finally gave up in despair, throwing the election to the third party.

"I knew it," said Grayson. "It was the draw that backed the Camels' bloke."

-- Yarik P. Thrip

(With thanks to David Emerson)



WHY YOU GOT THIS:

- () Trade and/or review
- () It seemed like the thing to do at the time
- () You contributed
- () I thought you were running low on combustible fuel
- () You are mentioned
- () Your avocado pit just sprouted wild pickles
- () You Paid
- () You never do anything weird
- () You LoCed
- () I heard there was a toilet paper shortage
- () You think 20° below is balmy weather
- () This is your last issue unless you Do Something
- () You know someone who went to Stuyvesant High School

