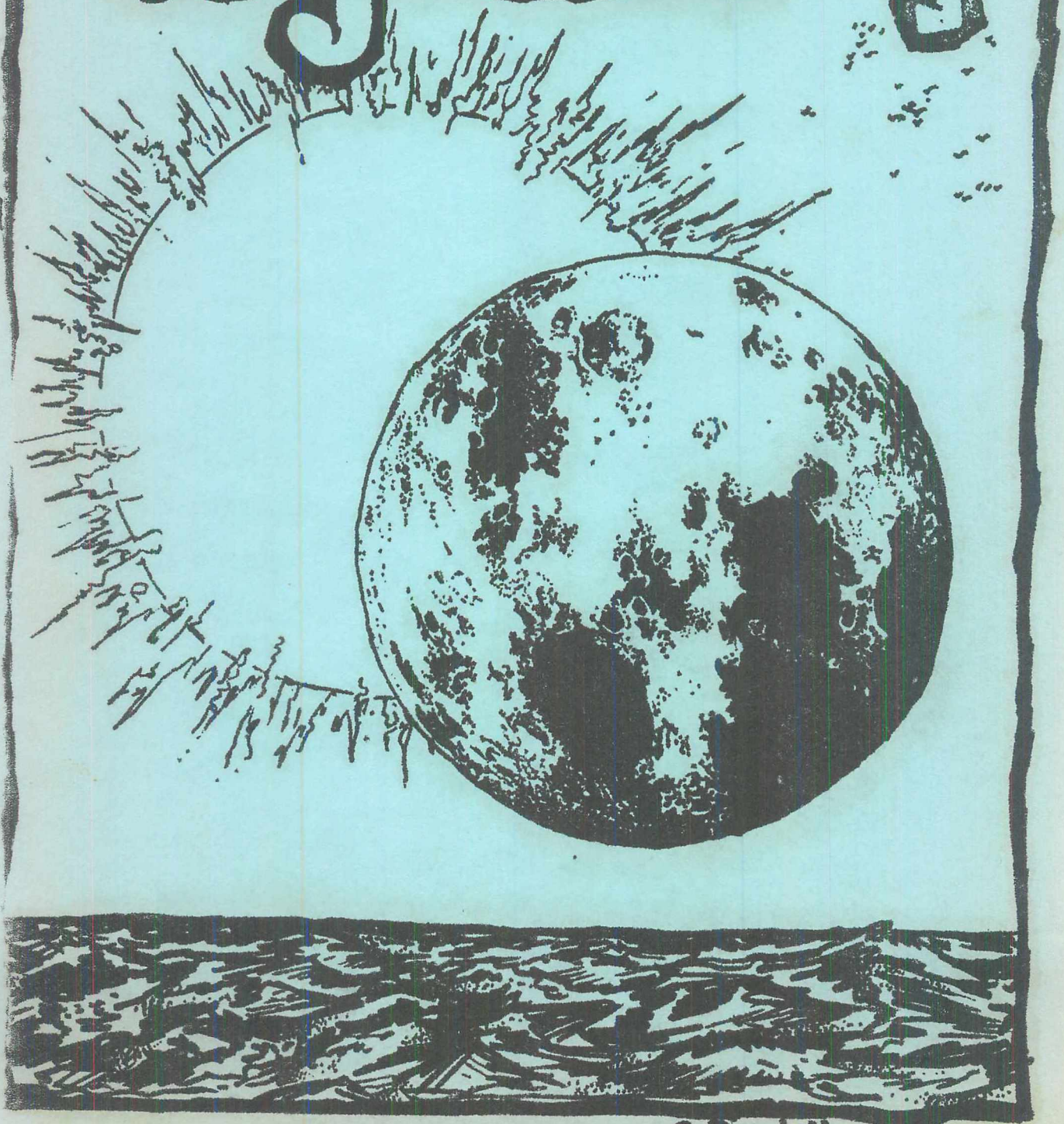
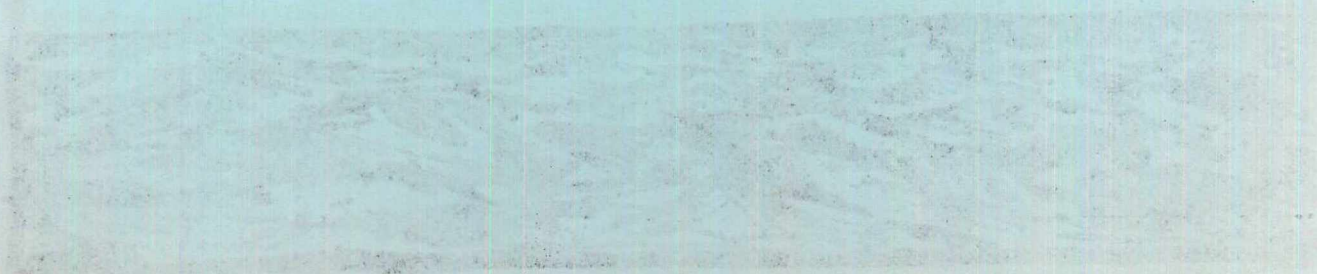
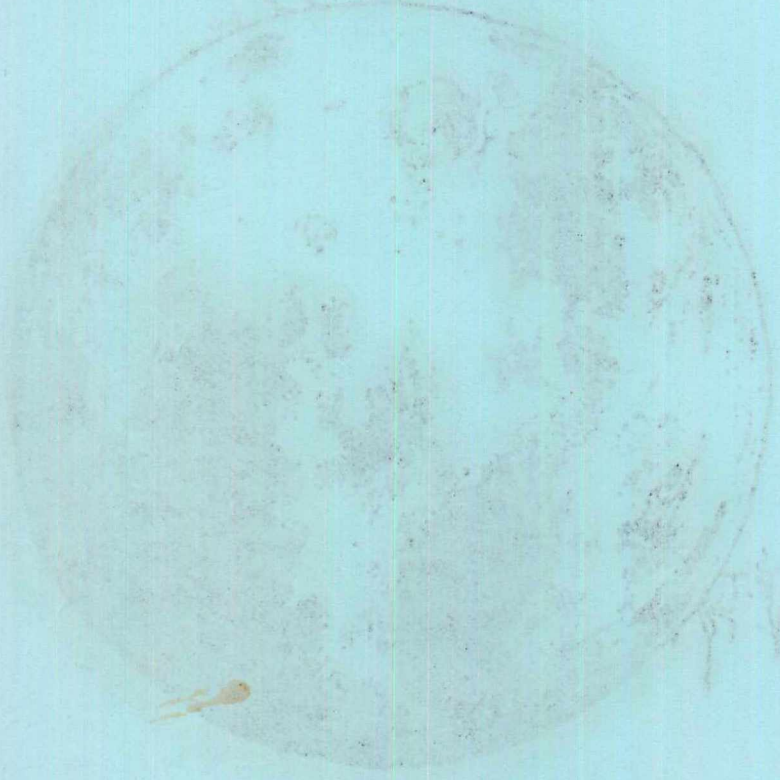


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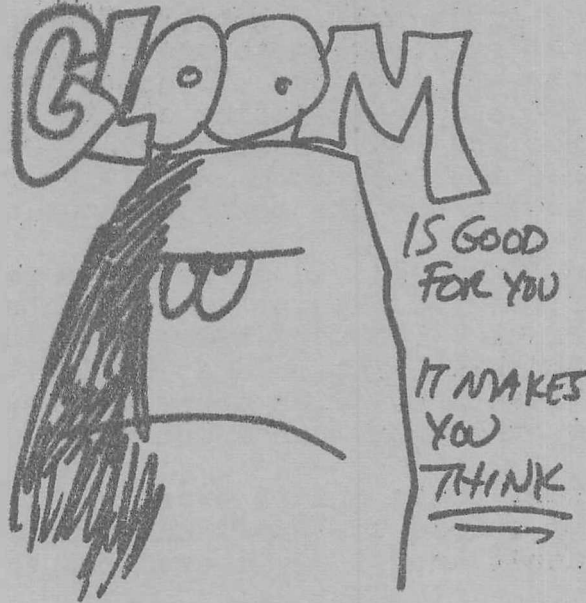
S. Randall

本國



KYBEN 4

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NAMELESS NATTERINGS

7 October 1972

~~Must~~ it always be this way? Must something always go wrong when things are going right?

The moaning and groaning above is prompted by the disturbing fact that I lost my job last September 21. Ann and I were eating dinner when the phone rang; I answered it and was told not to report to work any more.

I was assistant manager at a Walden Book Store, and in a week we were going to open a new store (to which I was transferring as asstmgr), and I was very much looking forward to it. (Ask anyone; that's all I talked about.) But the manager, who has not liked me in the four years I've worked with her, finally came up with enough excuses to get the home office to agree to letting me go. (Things I'd damn near forgotten about; she'd been saving them for god knows how long.)

Tiptree says I'm better off not working for her, which is true, but that was my bookstore. I'd worked there longer than she had--by a whole week!--and while she has been continually looking for other jobs during the four-year period, I (being curiously resistant to change for an sf person) was quite happy and content to stay there until she found what she wanted and left the store to me.

Working for her was impossible for me. Everything everyone did wrong got me yelled at--I wasn't going to quit; she could treat me how-

ever she pleased. And I can give you a real good story to show just how bad things could get:

One Friday afternoon a woman came in and asked boss lady for some empty cartons. She was told to come back Monday, because Friday's trash had already been thrown out. Nothing was said to me, but Saturday (when the manager didn't come in) I saved all the stubby boxes from the day's mail. Monday afternoon when I stepped in the back door I was met by a raging tornado. What was the idea of not taking out the trash on Saturday? I was saving boxes, I said. Clean up this mess! she said, indicating all the boxes I had saved and all the new ones from the heavy Monday mail. Grumbling and muttering and cursing, I cleared the back room. And when I got back in she screamed at me for throwing out the boxes she was saving.

So I am well rid of her, but not of the job. I doubt that there are many of you happier in your jobs than I was in mine, despite everything. (The side effects of the job were good, too--I met Dan Hertz and Mike Archibald at Walden--and through Mike Charlie Hopwood...and even Ann. Plus other people whose names you wouldn't recognize, though they mean a lot to me.)

Well, phase one is over. Phase two starts when I find another job. Of course the \$46/week unemployment checks look to be so much fun I don't know if I'll even bother...

27 November 1972

Richard E. Geis I'm not, but I did expect to be writing more often than once every two months. Well, we shall see. A fair chunk of the "silent" period has been spent on PEANTASMECOM 10, which at this writing is mostly sitting here on the floor, collated. Alas for the "mostly"--Paula Marmor's illustrations were completed by her and sent to a nearby California electro-stenciller about two weeks ago. And still we wait.

At this writing also, I have but a tentative table of contents for this issue of KYBEN--which I will not list for fear of being embarrassingly far off the mark.

Soon after writing the first part of this editorial, I got a job. Not a great job, but a job nonetheless. And still with books, though in a lesser capacity. I am currently employed in Penguin Books' warehouse, where I perform such menial tasks as packing boxes of books, unpacking boxes of books, pulling boxes of books off fifty-foot-high shelves, carting boxes of books around on a forklift, carting boxes of books off to the post office in a van, and being attacked by boxes of books in my dreams.

It is not a bad job, really, and I like it more than I would have ever expected to like a warehouse job. Unfortunately for my small--yea, even miniscule--reputation as a raconteur, there are not too many funny stories to tell. The main reason for this, I suppose, is because I am not dealing with the public as I did in the bookstore. (The public is incredible to deal with, as many of you know. But bookstore stories pale into insignificance beside hospital stories. A friend of mine is an emergency ward nurse, and...well! Her stories aren't fit for a family fanzine such as this. Come to think of it, not too many of the stories told here are, but...)

We all (a dozen or more of us) went up to Philcon this year--my wife's first full con. It was a very strange weekend, with some good times and some bad times. An involved conreport might prove depressing, but the good times should provide you with the flicker of a smile.

Don Keller made arrangements for a bunch of us to stay in Bob Dills' Philly apartment, about five blocks from the hotel. Unfortunately for our wallets, we decided to act snobbish and decline, once we got there. Only Don stayed there, and the rest of us fended for ourselves. Six of us--five a night--took one room. The others scattered elsewhere.

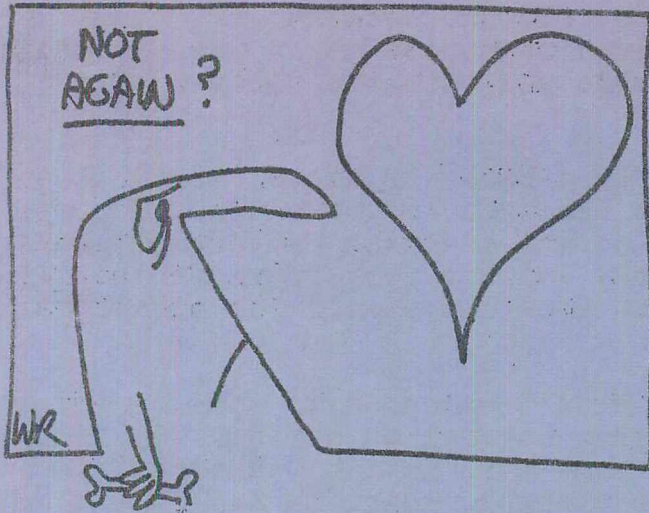
While it did cost us money we hadn't expected to spend, we rediscovered the pure enjoyment of sleeping several to a room. (Also the pure enjoyment of being alone with your wife in a hotel room but knowing that somebody out there was probably going to back Real Soon Now, as someone invariably was.) The first night, the early-to-bed contingent consisted of Ann and myself, Dale, and Jeff Clark. Ann and I took one bed; Dale and Jeff took the other apart. Dale slept on the box springs, Jeff on the mattress on the floor. They flipped for the pillow and Dale won. He rolled up his jacket and let Jeff use that as a substitute--and first thing Saturday morning sprang across the room to salvage the now-crushed cigars from the jacket pocket. When we debated over the best way to get a cheap breakfast, Dale offered to go over to Bob's apartment and catch something--a slightly unfair cut. We did eat by going to the Great Scot market, buying food (doughnuts for breakfast, rolls and deli meat for dinner) and taking it back to the hotel room. Which cost about 50¢ apiece, much preferable to going out for dinner. (When Laurie, Jeff Clark's girlfriend, came down Saturday evening she stayed with us in our room rather than getting her own as she had planned, and spent the money she saved thus on brunch for us Sunday. A much-appreciated gesture, you can be sure. And incidently, it was the best meal I ever had in a con hotel, \$3.45 for all you could eat, and a never-ending display of foods to choose from. Not everybody liked everything, of course, but we did not want for tidbits that did meet our fancy.)

Saturday being my birthday, and Sunday being Pat Sullivan's, we had a big double-birthday party beginning Saturday night. At this point Darrell Schweitzer finally reached puberty, and would roll on the floor to Patty's feet and beg her to "Ravish me! Ravish me!"

The pictures of that party I'd just as soon not see, I think, but Charlie Hopwood says he expects to have them this week. *sigh*

No, although I complained at the time, the weekend was far from a total disaster. I think the major problem was that on the three days of the con, first Ann, then Patty, then Laurie all felt a bit under the weather. (The weather! Aargh!) Next time we'll all feel wonderful and all have a marvelous time.

The egobco involved for me at the con was tremendous, incidently. Everybody loved the last KYBEN. Thanks, people, I needed that. Also of note: I talked with Linda Bushyager, and she intends to publish an At!ast! issue of GRANFALLOON which will contain a three-year-old Schweitzer piece and a two-year-old Jeff Smith piece. Mine is "The Story Behind the Story that Tells the Real Story Behind the Story," which consists of a short story ("A Tale from a Crowded Alehouse") and somefannish anecdotes on writing it and trying to publish it. I



haven't read it for some time now, but I have fond memories of it. --That, of course, means nothing. At Philcon I stood at a comic book table in the huckster room and went through some early-sixties HAWKMAN issues looking for my letters of comment. I found one short one that impressed me as being about as good as the locs I write nowadays, but when I finally found my full pager I could have cried. I had intended on buying the issue so I could keep that earlier opus on hand permanently, but when I saw what I had written I quietly

slipped the issue back into place and walked away. So, I suppose, fond memories are just not to be trusted.

I wonder how that old JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA script I wrote back then would read now...? (Don't dig through your closet; it was never published. Julius Schwartz wanted me to write ELONGATED MAN instead.) (Don't dig through your closet; I never did do an ELONGATED MAN script like I was supposed to, and that's why I'm not in comics today. I'd love to have another chance.)

10 March 1973

From 11/27/72 to 3/10/73 is one hell of a time lag, isn't it? Not damn little has happened in the period. PHANTASMICOM 10 was finally finished, and is being mailed off in fits and spurts. I decided to make PhCOM 11 the last issue, and so will devote all my time to KYBEN. Some PhCOM-type material will be appearing here now, but probably not a lot; KYBEN shouldn't change too much--except that I might be able to get it out more often. September was a long time ago...

I'm still slaving at Penguin. I'm not actively searching for another job yet, but I'm keeping feelers out. I had been hoping to get into a new bookstore opening here, part of the B. Dalton/Pickwick chain, but they are strange people and I didn't get in.

Strange? Well, they put an ad in the Baltimore SUN one Sunday that said they'd be interviewing people for full- and part-time positions from 9 AM to 3 PM on Monday and Tuesday at the warehouse they had rented to store their books before transferring them to the store. I assumed this to mean they would interview for twelve hours and then select their people. I was there quarter of nine Monday morning to find that they had hired everyone they needed--from the looks of things, the first twelve kids who had walked in the door. Ah well. Que sera sera. Again, maybe I was better off not getting a job with them; they're strange.

(I was so turned off by this that when they needed someone desperately I turned them down. Also a factor was that the person they needed replaced was grossing less than I was netting. I'm easy-going about money, but lines have to be drawn someplace. I do like having money for books, records and fanzine publishing. --Ann says

I should spend some of it on socks and underwear, but that's so mundane!)

Last Sunday morning Mrs. Whitehouse, the Walden manager, called and asked if I wanted a part-time job, evenings and Saturdays. While this would not conflict with my Penguin schedule, the prospect of a sixty-hour week did not thrill me. It was easy to turn down her offer. I would have had more trouble turning down a full-time job, but I don't think it would be wise to go back. I wish I hadn't loved the job so much.... (James Taylor, a friend, works there part-time now. One evening I stopped by and talked for a bit. He walked around straightening the books on the tables, and without thinking I did the same.)

I am glad we talked, for now we no longer have to hold the grudges we were clutching. That first installment of "Nameless Natterings" this issue was the product of my grudge; she tossed me dirty looks when I passed by the store.

Unfortunately, our reconciliation--as such things too often happen--came over tragedy. Ken Anderson, who was working at Walden part-time for a sixty-hour week total, was smashed head-on by a 17-year-old drunk driver. Ken's car--as reported by a friend of my mother's who lives near the accident site--was totally demolished. She said if whoever had been in there lived it would have been a miracle.

Ken was in a coma for about ten days. He never regained consciousness. If he had lived, the doctors said he would have suffered permanent brain damage. I didn't hear about the accident until he had died. Someone told Ann at work, and she called me at home. I called Walden--Mrs. Whitehouse had known Ken for years, before he started work with us. And for the first time in months, we talked.

Ken was a very brilliant person. He earned his Bachelor's degree at the University of Maryland in three years. At the same time he worked to support his father, who had gone bankrupt. After graduating, he worked eight hours a day for the State, four nights and Saturday for Walden. (When the switched stores, and me, he dropped to a mere three nights and Saturday.) When he started at the bookstore I disliked him intensely--he was brilliant, and he knew it, and he was insufferable. But, gradually, we became friends.

A friend of mine was one of Ken's nurses; she did not associate the name and battered body with the person she had known outside the hospital. An emergency ward nurse, she saw the other driver come in a couple hours later and complain of a headache and a stiff arm.

Such seems to ever be the way.

The next morning, the day of the funeral, I went to work as usual, but brooded a lot while filling orders. The day was saved by the generally-humorless warehouse manager, who decided to take the current slack period as time for a talk on safety regulations. One of the things he was clamping down on was the use of the small wheeled jacks as scooters. Henceforth, anyone caught riding a jack or cart would be yelled at, and anyone falling off and hurting himself or running into someone else would be immediately terminated. But

if anyone was incapable of spending the eight-and-a-half hour day without riding across the warehouse...he disappeared into his office, then returned...we could ride this during breaks. And he had a very small, yellow plastic child's scooter.

A small thing, but my spirits were brightened considerably. There may be hope for the world yet.

14 April 1973

Then my grandfather died. This we'll pass over very quickly; he had meant a great deal to me. I have tried to follow his example of generosity and gentleness. Enough.

I have yet to mention this year's Balticon, which was its usual quiet, dull, but pleasant self. Again, a full conreport would be out of order, but one incident deserves mention. It is the Can You Dig It incident.

Saturday we shared the Lord Baltimore Hotel with Serendipity-Do, a religious group whose nuns stole our program books. That night we got our religion in a quite different manner.

We had just been shown the Australia-in-75 promotion film (if you ever get a chance to see it, do so; the damn thing should get a Best Dramatic Hugo) and I was with the Zelaznys and Dannie Plachta listening to Jack Chalker tell some of the behind-the-scenes stories connected with the movie. Then I turned and saw Charlie and Patty and Ann and some strange-looking person. I started over that way but Ann and Charlie left and hurried around the corner of the mezzanine. I followed and saw the incredible sight of Charlie rounding the corner, leaning against the column, and literally collapsing in hysterics. Ann wasn't in much better shape. Patty soon joined us and I finally found out what was going on.

Our inebriated friend first approached Charlie, looked at his "Balticon '73" badge, and asked what it was. Charlie explained that it was the Baltimore Science Fiction Convention. The alien turned to Patty and said, slowly, "The whole world...today...is science fiction. Can you dig it?" Patty said, "Yeah, I can dig it." "Can you really dig it, or are you just saying you can dig it?" "Oh no, I really dig it." Charlie looked at Ann. Ann looked at Charlie. Charlie got up and left, Ann following. Mr. X said, "He can't dig it." So Patty said, "I don't think I can dig it either." And that's how we all got together.

Weirdo then leaned against the wall by the steps, staved at the ceiling, and talked to God. Loudly. When Gardner Dozois came down stairs we asked him to go over and drive the guy crazy, but Gardner seemed to feel it was too late for that. He wandered around staring at the guy for a minute or two, then went down to the desk to lodge what turned out to be the second request for security to eliminate the character.

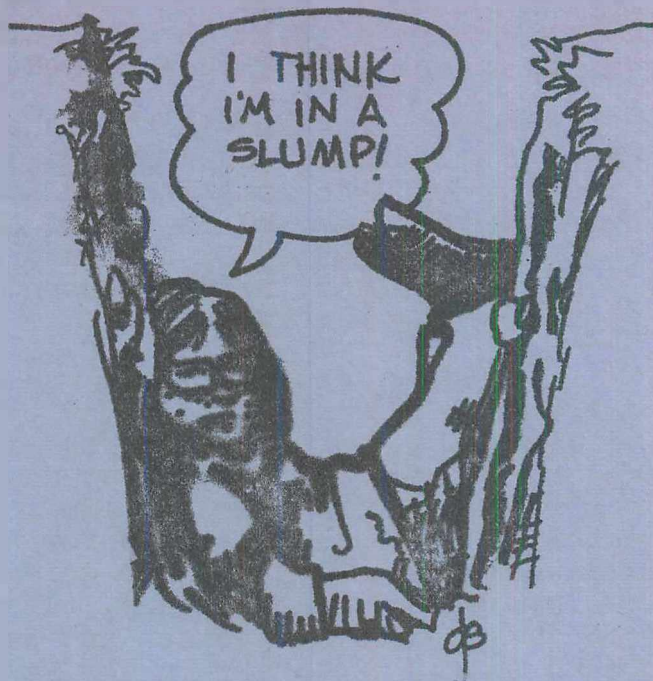
At this point, according to Ted White in LOCUS, the hotel dicks threw the guy down the steps. My own eyewitness impression was that he fell down two of them--no more, and without losing his almost upright position--due to his somewhat listing condition. The hotel people talked him down, very patiently. He kept saying, "Do you know

who I am?" "No, and we don't care. You have to leave." This dialogue was repeated incessantly until they finally got him all the way downstairs.

As the coup de grace, the following: Just before abandoning the hotel completely he went up to Gardner and asked, "Are you with God?"

Gardner looked at him coolly, replied, "No, I came alone," and took the steps back up to the mezzanine.

Goodness and virtue triumphant again.



April

I got nothing written this month, but I will cover Lunacon eventually. The next bit I wrote was on:

28 May 1973

A rainy Disclave weekend:

I had never driven in Washington, D.C., before. The mere thought of me driving somewhere I have never been before makes people like Don Keller quail. (After we make them quail we cook them for Sunday dinner.) (That remark does not deserve the permanence of print.) So Disclave was going to be quite an experience.

My first problem with the con was that I didn't know where it was to be held. I never got a flyer; couldn't find the info in LO-CUS; this was Friday night and everybody else had left already; I was at a loss. Fortunately, since I had joined Discon II to vote for it last Worldcon I was able to find their first Progress Report and Disclave was mentioned therein. The Sheraton Park Hotel.

I checked a map of DC I had inherited from my grandfather when he sold his car to my father to give to me as a birthday present before I had a driver's license or even a desire to drive. Alas, the Baltimore-Washington Parkway hit DC a long way from the hotel. I knew I'd never get there that way. Then I noticed that Route 29, which I'd used often to get to the New City of Columbia, came in pretty close. I decided to take Route 29 into Washington, then to Columbia Road and then to Calvert Street, where the hotel was. I managed to stay on 29 all the way in, though it is a fickle route and once you reach Silver Spring it jumps from road to road like a cricket in heat (line courtesy C. Hopwood). I was very proud of my-

self when I hit my first weird intersection and picked up Columbia Road almost intuitively. Calvert Street wasn't as easy; it doesn't really connect with Columbia. At the intersection of Columbia, Euclid and Adams Mill you have to go onto Adams Mill for about three inches and then pick up Calvert. I missed it, but found it easily enough when I backtracked.

My next problem was that the Sheraton Park Hotel is not on Calvert Street, like the map said, it was. But I knew from the map it was around the many Woodley Roads and Plazas and Epps that dot the area, so I parked on one of them and walked around looking for the hotel. I passed by a corner of it once--the sign was shrouded by shrubbery--and traipsed around the block until I hit it again. (A pretty big block, too.)

Actually, getting there was no problem at all, as far as I was concerned. I went inside, saw people, bought a Wilson Tucker book, talked, listened, etc. The usual stuff. I found Don, who had disappeared from Baltimore a few days previous. I met R.J. Raub and his cronies, whom I had avoided meeting for three years. (Nice people.) Darrell was there for his second non-Philly-con (he had suckered Frank Flutter into going so they could stay at Frank's uncle's place in Arlington). I said "hello" to Judith Weiss and she just patted my stomach and said "you're getting fat, reducing me to tears. Conchairman Jay Haldeman's mother and I discussed Watergate (we're both Senate-hearing addicts). And so on.

At midnight I left to go back to Baltimore. I thought, Foolish child!

I was parked at Woodley and Cathedral. I assumed I would go down Cathedral to Calvert, turn left, get Columbia, Route 29, Route 40, Old Frederick, Athol, Frederick, Yale, and Potter. Alas, alas, Cathedral goes under Calvert, so I turned left onto the Potomac Parkway or something equally obscene. (Had I turned right, that would have taken me to Calvert.) I ended up in Arlington. I turned back, circled the Lincoln Memorial a couple times (one o'clock in the morning and the place had tons of tourists!) and checked my map. If I took 23rd Street to Washington Circle, I could pick up Route 29 there. Halfway up a car pulled beside me and a woman asked me if I could direct her somewhere or other. I giggled hysterically and drove on.

At Washington Circle I drove around, found 29 and took it. My first inkling of tragedy was: all the cars around me had Virginia license plates. Sure enough, Route 29 crosses the Francis Scott Key Bridge into Virginia. I had missed the North 29 turn from the circle and had unwittingly taken South 29.

Before me I saw an open gas station, which in this era of fuel shortage I had not expected to find. There was a car at one pump and I pulled in behind it. I figured I'd ask directions and then refill my almost-empty tank. "How do I get to Route 29 North?" "I dunno, where do you want to go?" "Baltimore." "Oh, well I can tell you how to get to Baltimore." And he started this long series of directions. Meanwhile, the guy behind him was shaking his head No. He said he was going to the Capitol Beltway and he would lead me there. I could pick up 95 or 29 or whatever from there. I said fine, thank you. So he jumped into the car ahead of mine and took off. I had to do without gas, and followed him at almost 75 mph on

rain-slicked roads.

I had no choice.

From 495 (the Beltway) I got 29 and to home. Very nervously. In the daytime 29 is one of the more attractive highways I've been on. Lots of green trees and such. At nights, though...well, there are no lights. None. And I was very low on gas. I kept odo checks on all the phone booths I passed so I'd know how far away they were if I had to walk back to one.

But I made it home okay. There was an all-night gasser off Route 40, a couple miles from the Baltimore City Line that I buzzed into. I didn't know that car held 13 gallons.

A nice con, very low-key, very enjoyable. Unfortunately, Guest-of-Honor Gardner Dozois ("Who's Gardner Dozois?" was not an unheard remark) had a cold, and bets were being placed as to whether or not he would make it through his speech. (A nice speech. I wanted to print it. So did Andy Porter. So did Ted White. I think that puts me at number three on the list.)

Oddest time at the con came on Sunday afternoon, when a girl named Paula, who looked to be about fifteen but claimed to be a student at MIT, confronted us. She was wandering around trying to count the number of people at the con from Massachusetts, which she assumed to be a worthy endeavor. Why she got into a long discussion with our group I dunno, but it certainly was lively. Somehow she got to mentioning that all Germans were Perry Rhodan freaks, and when I pointed out that Perry Rhodan did not sweep the Hugos at Helcon she looked at me witheringly and said, "Hugos are for English language only, dummy." "Not in 1970," I replied, but she had already settled that issue and had moved on to something else. When Darrell returned the favor and referred to her as an "idiot" she grew quite indignant. She was an ANALOG freak, and the sales figures obviously showed that ANALOG was the best sf magazine. Don's opinion that ANALOG readers are ANALOG readers and not sf readers, that they read little or nothing else in the field, made no sense to her. She countered my statement that I don't know a single person who reads ANALOG at all with the statement that all her friends read it. At MIT, sure, I said, but who else does? Lots of people, she said, after all it's the best-selling...

Oh, she had lots of weirdball opinions, all expressed at the top of her lungs. Eeyah! You meet the strangest people...

25 June 1973

KYDEN is at last nearing completion; unfortunately, it hardly looks like nine months work, which is how long it has been since number three. I did do PHANTASMICOM 10 in between, but really I've done little in the way of fanac at all. I refuse to feel guilty about it, though. KY will in the future appear at less than nine-month intervals, and will remain almost my total fanac. There are fanzines (PIACEBO, for one) that I would like to contribute to, but so far my efforts at writing have proved fruitless and have consumed much time. Results: less than zero. When I do feel guilty is when I sit here typing a letter of comment when I should be cutting a stencil. I haven't the time I'd like to have.

KYBEN will vary. Some will be nattering issues, like this one. Some will be heavy on articles, like next time and last time. But I do intend to do one every couple months or so. (I am working on the last PHANTASMICON, too.)

One disaster: The mid-Atlantic seaboard states suffered several sudden stupendous storms since spring, and one of them caught me with my pants down. Or rather, with my artwork file in front of an open window. Some pieces smeared rather badly. I'll be using them anyway, but... I really feel bad about this, of course. Contributions to KYBEN are gifts to me (and you), and by my negligence I have shown less than respect for the fruits of other people's labors. I am quite unhappy with myself. At any rate, neither words nor pictures now occupy the monsoon area, even when the window is closed and I'm sitting here typing right next to it.

One success (conditionally): A couple days ago I received a copy of GALAXIE, Juin 1973. On page 128 there is an item entitled "Si ça ne fait pas rire, à quoi bon?" The subtitle is "Rencontre avec JAMES TIPTREE Jr." And finally, "Une interview de Jeffrey D. Smith." Yes, I have reached professional print. The interview I conducted with Tip early in 1971, and which was published in PHANTASMICON 6, has been translated into French, and I have been paid 250 francs (\$58.88).

The question is: How well? Those of you who have read the interview (those of you who haven't should rush me 75¢ for PhCOM 6 immediately) will recall that it was in very idiomatic English. (This should be obvious from any "20-Mile Zone.") For instance, how the hell do you translate "egcboo" into French? Well, the phrase "After recovering from the egoboo..." came out as the sentence "Le temps pour mon ego de desenfleur un peu." Which I gather to mean "It is time for my ego to deflate a little." Now, that's not too bad, maybe. It's an obvious good try, but I don't know much in the way of French words and nothing in the way of connotation. But... to me the English version implies "I have recovered from the egoboo you gave me" while the French means "your statement cured my egoboo." But I really don't know and hopefully I'm wrong.

Tip mentioned in a letter once the bloopers that resulted when GALAXIE translated one of his more idiomatic short stories ("Beam Us Home"). "A 'put-on' they translated as wearing a mask. 'Making it' was fabricating something. And on and on."

Perhaps he'll have time to report on this new ~~example~~ example.

I tell you though, it's really strange to see the two of us talking away in French--particularly me, because I don't know enough French to know what I'm saying. Weird.

30 June 1973

So much for this being the June issue. Voila! It is now the July issue. (Not having a distribution contract is one hell of a fine thing.)

MIDNIGHT SPECIAL has just come on, and Paul Williams is singing. I am continually astounded by the fact that I am the only person I know or read about who prefers IN CONCERT. (Dave Gorman, in GORBETT

4, is the latest to put down IN CONCERT--though he isn't overly fond of MIDNIGHT SPECIAL. Incidentally, since there are no fanzine reviews this outing, I'll take this space to plug Dave's effort. If you like PhCOM and KYBEN, you should like GORBETT, which is like a mixture of the two--and maybe even better. (Is it possible?) 50¢, 5/\$2 to David & Beth Gorman, 3515 Lauriston Drive, New Castle IN 47362, Very Good indeed.)

I promised you Lunacon, which is now over two months in the past. But, let us hop in our time machine...

Six of us went up: Bill Gill, Don Keller, Jeff Smith, Pat Sullivan, Karen Townley, Sue Wheeler. Two cars. Yes, Ann let me abscond to New York with Patty. I couldn't take advantage of the situation, though; Harlan Ellison was in the hotel, which meant Patty was preoccupied. She whimpered through the entire weekend.

Lunacon may be unique in my life--I never before and may never again attend a con and go to almost all the program and almost none of the partying. But Harlan was on the program, which made it worth seeing. We all staggered home with sacks of anecdotes tossed over our shoulders. I open mine occasionally, and out will pop "Because I worked on the movie, I saw the original manuscript of VALLEY OF THE DOLLS, before the editors worked on it, and if you thought the published version was shit..." or a mickeymouse voice saying "Okay, Donald, get that camera down between Minnie's legs. I want a picture of those flaming labia!"

I will always remember Harlan reading to us. I had heard him read a story at Pghlance in 1970, but it was a joke story, and not a good joke at that. At Lunacon he read us a chapter of THE HARLAN ELLISON HORNDUCK, and then his new story "The Whimper of Whipped Dogs." The lights were turned down, and for what seemed like hours we sat there being slowly drained of all our emotions. He began reading to an audience of people but finished to an audience of puddles soaking into the carpet. Okay, but our hands were clenched so tight they were literally white. It's a powerful story, one of his best. Then, as the closing of his Guest-of-Honor talk, he read the essay on the death of his dog from "The Deathbird" in F&SF, bringing much of the audience to tears.

There were a lot of panels, one on best-sellers, one on sf mysteries...and one on starving young writers. I cannot begin to describe the insanity of Harlan, Gardner Dozois, Piglet and Jack Dann on this panel. It was the funniest bit of con programming I've ever seen. Both audience and panel were in continual hysterics. They...no, words are inadequate.

Harlan also showed movies. The one I saw was "Demon with a Glass Hand" from THE OUTER LIMITS, his best tv sf so far. In this the alien KYBEN (aha! now you know) were trying to get Robert Culp. (What the hell, ROBERT CULP would be a really dumb name for a fanzine, now wouldn't it?) I was not wearing a "Jeff Smith/KYBEN" name tag, as I probably would have had not Bob Dills made me a gorgeous "Jeff Smith" one. (Paula Marmor has also done me a "Jeffrey D. Smith" one.)

Friday night was comparatively dull. Patty found out that Barry Smotroff's room was next to Harlan's. Since she had to get as close as possible, Barry, Jeff Clark and I escorted her to Barry's

room and gang-raped her, hampered only by the fact that Moshe Feder and Don kept wandering in and out, trying to engage us in conversation. Patty just whimpered throughout.

Saturday night we went to Patty/Bill/Sue's room and turned on the television. TOM JONES was on. A coach crashed, and a woman was killed. A young man (Tom?) was told: "Your mother's gone to the angels." Bill looked up. "You mean she was traded to California?" We wanted to Boo and Hiss but it was too funny and we cracked up. Pat went looking for a party and I fell asleep in her bed. When Jeff woke me up and asked if I wanted to go home (I was staying at his apartment in Flatbush) small Sue was zonked out in bigger Bill's bed and Bill was resignedly curled up in her cot. TOM JONES was nearing an end. I went "Uhhnnn" and didn't move until, in a purely reflexive and defensive motion, I curled into a foetal ball when Patty burst back into the room and hurled herself onto her bed. Obviously, I survived.

There were two names I mentioned constantly upon my return from New York. One, of course, was "Harlan Ellison." The other was "Roger Touhey" (and I am not sure of the spelling). Who? you ask. Roger Touhey, I say, main character in ROGER TOUHEY, GANGSTER. This was the incredibly funny/bad movie that followed TOM JONES. The film was old, but the print was fresh; the station apparently did not show it often. Understandably. The stars were unknown to us, but a baby-face Harry Morgan had a small part and Jeff thought he saw Bogart as an extra in a police line-up.

It was an awful film and we were enjoying it immensely. Then, Jeff Clark, ex film student, noticed a certain peculiarity of the movie that had escaped the rest of us: scene changes were made by dissolves only. No cuts, no nothing but dissolves. So, at one-thirty or so in the morning, Sober Jeff Clark says, "I'm not sure whether I'm watching a movie or an Alka-Seltzer."

I think that's why Patty turned off the tv and kicked us out. Or maybe she just wanted to whimper in peace. I dunno.

A great weekend, even without Ann.



7 July 1973

Ballantine sent Terry Carr's BEST SF annual; again what appears to be an excellent selection. I was a bit surprised that of the three Tiptree stories he considered, "And I Awoke to Find Me Here on the Cold Hill's Side" was not among them. I am still of the firm opinion that it's Tip's best story.

I have not read all of 1972's sf--far from it!--but I got to wondering what I would do with an approximately 300-page "Best." I came up with these selections, from the minimal reading I did do:

Tossing "balance" and such to the winds, I would devote over two-thirds of the book to the three masterly novellas that alone would have made 1972 a good year for science fiction--Ursula K. LeGuin's "The Word for World Is Forest" (AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS), Frederik Pohl's "The Gold at the Starbow's End" (ANALOG) and Gene Wolfe's "The Fifth Head of Cerberus" (ORBIT). To my mind, if nothing else were in the book, I would have fulfilled my objective of gathering the year's best.

But since I've left myself a little room I'd like to raid AGAIN, DANGEROUS VISIONS for three more stories--Ray Nelson's "Time Travel for Pedestrians," Kate Wilhelm's "The Funeral," and Joanna Russ's "When It Changed." And finally the Tiptree story from F&SF I mentioned above.

That would be the complete anthology--and at this point in time it has everything in it I would like in it, were I limiting myself to one story per writer. But of what I have read of last year's sf, my favorites came from these seven writers. LeGuin, Nelson and Wilhelm had just the one story apiece, but the others!

Pohl had a banner year, perhaps the best year ever in a long and productive career; I also liked "The Merchants of Venus," "Shaffery Among the Immortals" and "The Meeting" (IF/F&SF/F&SF). 1972 was the year in which almost every good story Tiptree had written over the past couple was finally published, so he also had a very good year. Russ's "Nobody's Home" (NEW DIMENSIONS) and "Useful Phrases for the Tourist" (UNIVERSE) were deserving. Wolfe had good minor stuff in "Against the Lafayette Escadrille" (A,DV) and "The Headless Man" (UNIVERSE).

So my anthology contains stories by the seven writers I most admired in 1972--except for Silverberg. I haven't read all his short stuff, of which there are supposedly some goodies. I did read DYING INSIDE, which is a brilliant novel--better than THE WORLD INSIDE, better than anything I've ever read by him.

I'm currently in the process of reading Heinlein's new monster, TIME ENOUGH FOR LOVE. I'm not quite at the two-thirds mark yet, but I'm enjoying it immensely--particularly "The Tale of the Adopted Daughter," a 92-page segment. The beginning is very rough, Heinlein's typical, ghodawful, cute dialogue. But when Lazarus Long (of METHUSELAN'S CHILDREN) starts telling stories, well--Heinlein has always been one hell of a story-teller, and it's damn fine to see him back at it. When I reach the point where things get back to the main narrative it'll probably drop down to sixties-Heinlein level, but there are some great bits in the middle.

There are also slews of aphorisms. One of them, a long one, I'd like to quote:

There are hidden contradictions in the minds of people who "love Nature" while deploring the "artificialities" with which "Man has spoiled 'Nature.'" The obvious contradiction lies in their choice of words, which imply that Man and his artifacts are not part of "Nature"--but beavers and their dams are. But the contradictions go deeper than this prima-facie absurdity. In declaring his love for a beaver dam (erected by beavers for beavers' purposes) and his hatred for dams erected by men (for the purposes of men) the "Naturist" reveals his hatred for his own race--i.e., his own self-hatred.

I've found both halves of that statement extremely thought-provoking. The second part is a bit simplistic, but not without its truth--it points out the difference between the "look-what-we're-doing-let's-try-to-fix-it" kind of ecologist and the "well-now-look-what-you've-done-it's-all-over" kind. I don't read a lot of ecology books but I am aware that Man is not the only destructive force in Nature, that just because an animal does something does not mean it is for the general good of the ecology. The only real difference is that Man is capable of destroying all of Nature, while other animals can only affect small parts. This puts a large obligation on Man, for only Man has the responsibility to not destroy the earth.

It's a bit like the first time your parents went out for the evening without bringing in a baby-sitter. It was your responsibility to not destroy the furniture with your new freedom. Man is apparently being a bit irresponsible and destroying some of his furniture. Let's hope we have enough sense to not bring the house down.

After all, how will we explain it when our parents come home?

20 June 1973

I suppose I could go through this bottom drawer here next to the typewriter, take everything out of it, and staple it all together. But what I do instead, it seems, is slowly incorporate bits and pieces into various fanzines, and get things stapled that way.

Anyway, a large portion of the drawer is taken up by science fiction manuscripts, the vast majority mere fragments. (I've only completed about half a dozen stories, most of which have been published--in PHANTASMICOM, HOIWE LOND and GRANFALLOON. High paying markets all, no?) Tiptree got to mentioning story fragments, and how writers should gather bunches up for publication in PhCOM. Since I'm killing PhCOM, I killed that idea.

But I decided to inflict some of mine on you.

I like to write fiction; I like to see the words spill out on paper, and to see what characters of mine will do once given life. But I've only written three paragraphs in the timespan of this KY-BEN. My biggest hangup--I used to think it was description, but though I'm weak there I have one bigger problem--is in plotting. Not ideas--every sf fans is filled with ideas. But I have problems setting up a framework for the characters to act within. Consequently my stories often peter out after a few paragraphs. Like the fragment on the next page.

I just went to the typewriter one day, put in a sheet of paper, and typed to nowhere. (This is my only typewritten first draft in fiction.) Bob Silverberg said he liked this style of mine, But...

CHAPTER I

The universe is a big place; bigger than any of us. That may seem an obvious statement, but until you've been there you really don't know just how big it is. We each of us have our own little universes in which to move around, but the loss of even the largest of these would not diminish the whole, large, real universe.

That seems so inhuman. It is contrary to "No man is an island" and "Ask not for whom the bell tolls it tolls for thee." The only grasp of sanity we can hope for is that of our fellow human beings. We are so small, so insignificant, that we need the assurance of our own people that we do indeed mean something to someone. What else is love?

My thoughts are muddled. I don't really know how to say what I want to say. I want to tell you about the universe, about We Are Not Alone, about life. But I flunked philosophy--twice. I can't express such abstracts with any sort of coherence; never have been able to. I can just tell you what happened, let you draw your own conclusions. They'll probably--I hope--be the same as mine.

Me: I was a college student when it began--Haven't worried about college since. It was a little college in a large city; where doesn't really matter. If you're interested you can look through tons of records and find DIXON, JAMES. But why bother?

I commuted to classes (means I was a "day-hop," but not too many people bothered with the hideous term), driving a little red sporty car, foreign of course, that I couldn't afford and couldn't take care of properly. My friends at school were about evenly distributed between dayhops and liveins, and lots of people I knew were neither, but for social or economic or political reasons weren't in school at all.

MOVING ON

One of the things that made PHANTASMICOM easy--if "easy" can be applied--was the proximity of its editors. Don and I lived a couple miles from each other at the beginning, and not much further than that after my marriage. Jeff Clark was in New York, close enough for a weekend visit. We are now a bit scattered. New addresses below, please change your files.

Don Keller/401 Quince Street/Philadelphia PA 19147

Jeff Clark/4566 $\frac{1}{2}$ Hamilton Street/San Diego CA 92116

And while we're on the subject of addresses, can anyone (fan editors, please check your files) tell me where Hal (not Hank!) Davis is? I owe him five dollars worth of fanzines, money he gave me at Lunacon. We both assumed I had his address, but I don't. Thanks.

GAMES
JGPJREE, JR.

THE 20-MILE ZONE



6 Mar 73
Nr. Cozumel, Quint. Roo,
Mexico

Dear Jeff:

Sent you a card last week or so saying (in case it never gets there) that it's been a long time since hearing how you are, hope the silence means only the usual busy-busy-busy. This world can swallow one up leaving only a finger and a faint squak hanging out; no one knows it better than I. If you're in the swallowed stage feel no obligation to add to it by more communications, but my good wishes are with you.

This letter is prompted by guilt: I find I made an error in my Maya piece in Kyben. If you put another out, I'd appreciate including this:

Tiptree's report on Mayas erred in saying that "Huastec" Indians were Aztecs. Not at all. Huastecs were actually an isolated Maya-related tribe up in north-east Mexico. The Aztecs were Aztecs; they are also called by some, "Mexicans," for reasons too controversial to go into here. They spoke Nahautl, which they seemed to have picked up from the remains of the Toltec civilisation, and so did most of the tribes that they eventually overran. I probably should have used the term "Nahautl-speaking" Indians to distinguish the tribes in the main part of Mexico who did so much conquering and being conquered, from the Mayas who had a different history. By the way, there seems to have been another unconquered group just NW of the Aztec imperial power, the Tarascas. Be interesting to meet them.

If you crave one fascinating book to go to bed with the flu with, try DAILY LIFE OF THE AZTECS by Jacques Soustelle, Pelican. (Jeff, is this one of the Penguin lines that is mysteriously forbidden to be sold in the states?) He reconstructs the Empire's life just at the eve of the Spanish irruption. Unforgettable. Take this picture of 5 Aztec officials passing by what was to be their doom: (Bernal Diaz writing)

"Some Indians...came running to tell the chiefs who had been talking with Cortés that five Mexicans (Aztecs) had been seen, the tax-gatherers of Motecuhzoma ("Montezuma"). On hearing this they went pale and began to tremble with fear. They left Cortés to himself and went out to welcome them...adorned a room with foliage, prepared some food and made a great deal of cocoa...When these five Indians came...they passed by the place where we were with so much confidence and pride that they walked straight on, without speaking to Cortés or any of the others of us. They wore rich embroidered cloaks, loincloths of the same nature, and their shining hair was raised in a knot on their heads: each had a bunch of flowers in his hand and he smelt to it; and other Indians, like servants, fanned them with fly-whisks."

Shortly afterwards, says Soustelle, these Empire men called in the Totonac chiefs who had been talking with Cortés and gave them hell for presuming to negotiate with them.

As you can see, I've been at the books; one contracts a hunger to read everything on the mysterious world among whose bones one treads here. The French and English seem to have done more than the US, judging from what's here. Trouble is, book distribution in

Mexico is if anything zanier than in the States. Part of a series will be in the French, part in Swedish or Zulu; all of Vol. 1 of something is, say, at Uxmal, while all the Vol 2s are in Honduras. And anybody is an instant expert--there's one nut whose mimeographed booklets are all over who has found secret messages from the Martians in the snake-sculpture, and another series of cheap guidebooks that is apparently a translation from the Japanese--that was where I picked up the Huastec-Aztec booble.

Final note: A great new ruin probably more magnificent than Chichén Itzá has been discovered (from the air) near Tulum on the East coast of Yucatan. It is believed to be unlooted. The government is trying to protect it until proper funding can be arranged for clearing and restoration. Name is Cobá (Ko-bah). About ten years from now when you get down here the character being hauled up in the main pyramid in a wheelchair will be Uncle Tip.

Back to you, Jeff; by the way, no need to freeze this communication, it's being writ on a recently government-sprayed cucumber. When these boys spray, they make the US in Vietnam look like amateurs. Even the Tequila tastes of it.

I got back to the rancho and saw L'mus, a year older and definitely sinister now; his head has filled out into a more triangular shape, wide above the temples, and when he looks at a non-functioning motor with that primordial menace in his slit eyes you expect the motor to moan. He's thicker too, his wrists are about 6 inches across, like locomotive pistons--Did you ever see one?--and his hands should belong to a guy 6'6" instead of 4'9". He doesn't use a vise to drill metal; just grips it in one vast hand and drills a perfectly vertical slot. He's into gasoline motors this year. Somebody's station wagon gave out; L'mus yanked up the hood, stuck his screwdriver in his teeth and dived onto the engine block with it still running, hot as fire. All you could see were his enormous square feet expressively writhing, and suddenly the motor went wild and then settled down sweetly. His grin when he got out was the same old L'mus. A great guy. I gotta bring him a decent watch.

Lot of the Mayas around there are into learning English this year. The Maya-English accent is good, except the consonants sound like rifles. Even an "l". The extremely powerful lady who does the laundry for the fishing-camp caused some excitement by beamingly announcing, "Billow!! Shit!!!" ...You'd have to get the sound-effects to recapture it. Also the air of total mastery. I got the (important) flu while in her vicinity and she approached me and laid on me hands of such power and warmth that I cowered. I think the flu did too. She announced that she was going to pray for me, I wondered to what god. It worked. Clearly she is one of the ranch healers; her hands were really extraordinary. She took hold of both thighs and--well, maybe this doesn't describe so well. But it was not pornography. I'm told they cure many things by massage; one of the ranch-owners here is wondering if somebody shouldn't look into it, because some of the pregnant girls his Western medicine couldn't cure of various symptoms were fixed by the local massage-honcho down the coast.

Funny thing about medicine: Western medicine is cold. Here's a pill, go 'way. We all know about US hospitals, about doctors interested in diseases, not people, etc. etc. You see it clearly here; a pill or a shot is great, sometimes there's no substitute; but a person interested in you is something irreplaceable. The ceremonious

DEADLY LETTER

HARRY WARNER, JR.

I've probably failed to comment on the second AYBEN, and I'm sorry but I still haven't figured out a way to find time and strength for a loc on each and every fanzine, and why waste more space in apologies instead of using the rest of this letter for a loc on the third issue? (S(Don't expect more of yourself than we fanzine editors expect of you.)S) I like the idea of a special fanzine for less weighty material, and if the strain doesn't grow too terrible on your time and energy, you might find yourself keeping PHANTASMI-COM going much longer than it would have lasted if you'd fretted endlessly over balance in the big fanzine and the long dead weeks when locs have stopped arriving and the next issue hasn't been completed. (S(Oh, well.)S) The material in the third issue is very close to the kind of faanish articles that would stop people from complaining about faanish articles. I suppose it's an accident that it's mostly travelog prose, but that's a fortunate mishap because I'm another of those people who hate to travel but love to read about other people doing so, much as lots of very peaceful and timid folks delight in murder mysteries.

Natterings, as you may have remembered by now, is indelibly associated in fandom with Ethel Lindsay, without whom few of us would recognize that word. I suppose it's Scot in origin.

Charlie Hopwood scored a direct hit on one of my weakest points. I've been an Austria fan for many years, ever since I was a stamp collector at such an early age that I thought my little album had a typographical error and had spelled the same nation in two different ways, Austria and Australia. I sit through even the dullest imported films on the late shows if they contain location shooting in Austria, buy travelers' guide books to the nation, play over and over the Erich Kunz recordings of folk music and semi-classic songs associated with Austria and southern Germany, and if by chance I can't find Austria I'll settle for Bavaria. I'm waiting for the Maria Schell appearance on ASSIGNMENT: VIENNA in the same way I used to look forward to Christmas, and I think I'd attend the Congress of Vienna instead of the Declaration of Independence signing session, if I had just one trip in a time machine offered me. Charlie's article gave me particular happiness for its indication that the American dollar's fluctuations haven't made travel ever there too impossibly expensive after all. Maybe I'll actually get up courage enough to go some year and it would be nice to know I could afford the trip.

Something else I've always wanted courage to do is wear a hearing aid, one that had been discarded because it was defective or obsolete or something. People who know me would understand that I must have some obscure purpose in wearing something when I don't need it, and it would come in very handy when I encountered one of the surly lousmouths described by Dan Mertz. All I'd need do would be point to my ear, shout loudly and without expression "BATTERY'S DEAD!" and he would, presumably, go bother someone else.

Of course, this wouldn't help the earthquake apprehension which I suppose I possess to a slight degree even though I'm not in California. Hagerstown had one many years ago that was severe enough to ring church bells. This whole area is honeycombed with limestone caverns just below the surface and a quake of moderate proportions might cause enormous damage for that reason. Matter of fact, I suspected a mild tremor the other morning, when I got up to find that two piles of unlabeled fanzines had toppled over during the night. They'd been all right when I'd gone to bed upstairs, nobody had been in the house, and there has been no sign of a rat or bat, the other possibilities that occurred to me. But I saw nothing in the newspapers about a slight earthquake, so maybe some large trucks went past too fast early in the morning or something.

James Tiptree is also fascinating in his description of far-off places. At least one fan has been in a Mexican jail on drug charges, lending support to what "The 20-Mile Zone" says about the need for caution once you get past the Rio Grande. I feel as well acquainted with the Mayas as if I'd sat through a long documentary on them at a theater or on the tube.

The artwork is fine. I liked the way the covers tied in with the material, and you're one of the few fanzine editors to have a back cover as a sequel to the front cover 'since John Berry made that an every-issue tradition in RETRIBUTION. I kept wondering how accurate the interior artwork may be: that is, whether the artists had seen photographs or knew the areas involved well enough to model after the real thing. (S(I gave Dany Frolich brief written descriptions of the principals involved for his drawings; the Canfield pieces just came out of the art file; and Mike Archibald worked from photographs.)S) And what can be said about the continuing Rotsler inspiration, except to compare him all over again with a much more sociable Picasso? If the great mundane world of art ever discovers him, museum directors and wealthy collectors will have one terrible time figuring out the significance of all the Rotsler pictures in fanzines that have meanings comprehensible only to fans.

JEFF CLARK

Just finished reading KYBEN #3 the other night, and, whereas the last one walked in and said "hello," this one sat right down and became entertainingly conversive.

I haven't been to Europe, but Charlie Hopwood fulfills my expectations of it from vicarious second-hand reports. I've heard much about European toilet paper, though. By friendly report, in England it may be just a cut above that in quality--even if you can almost expect little chunks of wood in the grain of the paper. I hear that each sheet is engraved with "British Institute something-or-other" or something on it. With all the toilet paper that's used each year, I'd guess it amounts to something like the effort (if not the craftsmanship) of etching the Lord's Prayer on a pinhead....A friend of mine found this unexpected novelty more impressive than the museum where he discovered it.

Tiptree is amazing, breathtaking...flabbergasting! (Really!) He is quite unlike any other pro writing for fanzines. The first installment of "20-Mile Zone" was good enough, but this one nearly made my eyes bug from my head. I can really see those Mayans, though

I've only had contact with half-remembered pictures of them. People have told me about the long-hair problems south-of-the-border--in fact I've heard that that and strange jail conditions prevail even in Ecuador....But Tip. I think we ought to encourage him to take on more travelling and write, write, write about it--cast it finally in the form of a travel book. He should be able to sell somewhere. Publishing--travel books--needs something like him. Couldn't be anything but atypical. (Aawww...)

DAN MERTZ

When looking in my Webster's New World Dictionary to check the spelling of "feud" I found a folded slip of paper somewhere in the A's. Opening it, I found in a feminine hand: "Dearest Doug (Don't take this the wrong way) I didn't tell anyone about your turds, Beth did."

I've had this dictionary ever since highschool, so it's a safe bet that note has been there quite a while. Only, I haven't the faintest glimmering of an idea how it got there. Even if that remains a mystery, it offers a whole realm of speculation (admittedly, a little warped). Such as: What were Doug's turds like? How did the writer of the note see them? How did Beth know about them? And finally (though I could go on), what kind of stories was Beth telling about Doug's turds?

(S(There will be NO prize whatsoever for the best answers to those questions. I don't want to hear it,)S)

GEORGE HAY

Although I once swore a terrible oath not to go in for strictly 'fan' zines, time being so short, I've had to break it; the best of them are really rewarding; how else can you find out how people actually live? I'm saying that I dig KYBEN. And as one brought up at a Catholic boarding-school myself, I really enjoyed Darrell Schweitzer's item. I well recall being fobbed off with phrases like 'Life is above reason.' (There's a sense in which this is true, but I'm pretty sure it wasn't the sense they had in mind.)

Also, because I have lived in Austria, I enjoyed the Hopwood article. He's so right about the Austrians. When I was a kind of English refugee, living in Vienna just after the war, I knew just about every progressive artist in the town. No-one in Vienna actually buys modern art, only visiting Americans and dealers, so they were all as poor as church mice, and most of them had Civil Service jobs at which they did the minimum of work, so they could do their real work in their off-time. They have a fine wit. There is an old, and still accurate, gag about the difference between the Austrians and the Germans. In the course of a war, the story goes, both Vienna and Berlin were surrounded. A telegram went from Berlin to Vienna: "The situation is serious but not desperate." Back came the reply: "In Vienna, the situation is desperate, but not serious."

And they have marvelous parties. You should have had yours there!

DANIEL DICKINSON

It seems to me it's been a damned long time since I've loded you or anybody else. I had a story published in SPACE AND TIME, but since leaving Plattsburgh for the wild west, I haven't had the space or time for any of those things I'd really like to do. Maybe I should write you a travel article about Utah; far stranger than anything you'd see in Yucutan or Europe (but perhaps not as strange as IA). The people in this city of Salt are divided into two factions, mormans and mormon haters. There is no middle ground. And people here haven't the vaguest idea how to operate a motor vehicle--if you ever see a car with Utah plates on it, steer clear! It's not that they drive fast; far from it. They are, rather, totally, absolutely unpredictable. Lanes mean nothing. Stop signs apparently turn invisible. Signals? Traffic lights? Never heard of them!

Utah has its good points, though. It's as clean as one of Hopwood's sin dens; Montreal is the only other city I've seen that is as clean and well-maintained as Salt Lake. Furthermore, you are in the center of the park scene: Yellowstone (everything everyone says it is), Grand Teton (the most beautiful--Hopwood would think of Austria), Bryce Canyon (rock-fantasy land), Capitol Reef (color cliffs and gorge), Canyonlands (the wilderness--hundreds upon hundreds of miles of gorges, canyons, Indian ruins and steep walled cliffs; no roads, no tourists) and Zion (unfortunately, this, however, is a loser) National Parks are within a day away. If you have a weekend you can catch Sequoia, Yosemite, Grand Canyon, Rocky Mountain, Lassen, Crater Lake, Glacier, Petrified Forest, Carlsbad Canyon and Mesa Verde as well. Besides this there are the National Monuments--some of them even better than some of the National Parks. I especially recommend Cedar Breaks (fantastic rock formations, alpine meadows and lakes at 11,000 feet up), Craters of the Moon (lava formations in Idaho) and Dinosaur (world's largest dinosaur bone quarry, and fantastic rugged scenery). Now you can see why I haven't had time to write any loc's! Besides these are the National Forests, Primitive Areas, Praries and Grasslands, but they are to too rumerous to mention.

Somewhere along here I feel I should comment on KYBEN. Well, the layout is, well... On to other matters. I had rather ambivalent feelings about Schweitzer's article, somewhat like the feeling I got when I saw the film M*A*S*H. The article was good, but I found myself unmistakably on the side of the clergy, just as I backed Major Benson in M*A*S*H. I find myself drawn to dreamers--people who dare to live and construct reality on the basis of the way they believe, rather than the way the world believes. The story of a bunch of realists, who have come to terms with the petty vulgarities of their age, torturing a clergyman who cannot or will not (and for damn good reasons, too) come to an understanding with reality can have no appeal for me. But it was a good article, one of the best written that you've published.

I really enjoyed your Hopwood article. If he likes Switzerland-Austria, he should try Logan, Utah, or Jackson, Wyoming. The story of the man exposing himself reminds me of our local peeping Tom. When I moved here I was told my neighborhood was a rough one. The first time I pulled into our driveway a man came running through the bushes brandishing a mean-looking six-gun. "You seen that Peeping Tom?" I said no. "Well, when I do, I'm gonna blow his head off!" Then he fired a shot--to show, I suppose, that he meant it--and ran back off into the bushes. This goes on every night.

PAULA MARMOR

"Natter" means "to find fault; to be peevish" according to my trusty Webster's Unabridged second edition; related to "gnatter": "to nibble"; "to rattle or talk rapidly and idly," both usages being British dialectical, don't you know. The word is related to "gnat" and has cognates in Frisian and Old Norse, as well as Swedish and like that. I can't find any trace in Gothic, sorry about that. A "natterjack" is a toad, but that's probably from "atterjack," like in "attercop," meaning spider, or don't you remember your Tolkien?? The present connotation of "natter" is due to folk-etymology connecting it with "natty." Of course. Aren't you glad you brought it up? (Face it, Jeff, NOBODY but me would write you that paragraph...or, no one but me or Don. Relax.) (S(No one but you. Poor Mr. Keller believed that crazy stuff I made up last time. Yes, it's true. He should be ashamed.)S)

Whaddya mean no one decent lives in LA???????? or California in general????? Although I KNOW I said something to someone once about everything they heard about California being true, 'specially the contradictory parts...and I'll have you know we called us up a Santana wind (only unejacated newsmen and recent imports say "Santa Ana" wind) and there was less smog up here LACon weekend than there's been since. Ask Don about the view from the top of Mulholland. (S(You got Don to look off the top of something?)S) Anyway, where can you watch ADAM-12 and see the hamburger stand on the corner, or pass the Howard Publications building on your way home every night, or have Jack Jones and Lyle Waggoner have accounts at your bank, or pass Ellison zooming through Beverly Glen, like ships passing in the night? (S(Where else would you want to?)S) This is a town like no other town on earth (fortunately, I think). So there.

My, my, the Italian restaurant outside our windows just put up Christmas lights. In October....ah, California....sure, kid.

DON KELLER

Am I the only person in the world who likes LA? Dan Mertz makes a good case very amusingly, but I still proclaim loudly that there are good fans out there (mostly fantasy fans, true), and that it is a nice place. I'd much rather live there than New York.

I had read "The 20-Mile Zone" when you were still keeping it in its freezer bag, but remembered very little of it, I found on re-reading. It starts well, but wandering through the middle I began saying to myself, "Well, Uncle Tip's done a kind of blah one this time," but then--ZAP!--he got me with those last two pages. Really beautiful. If there's a better non-fiction writer in fandom, I don't know him. Those last few lines are ultrafabulous. His blend of fresh strange metaphors, achingly haunting images, and neat humor makes him irresistible. (I regret I can't get as much from his fiction.) You are to be envied your capture of him. Mike's illos, by the way, are topflight; the more I look at them the better they look.

I have to disagree with you about your putdown of prolificity. For me, anyway, if I like an author enough, I can't have too much of him. For example, David Gerrold has at least six books currently on the stands bearing his name, and I've read every one and enjoyed it; but I'm not surfeited. I'm looking forward to his next book. Same

with Schweitzer (who started the whole thing anyway); I'm always interested to see what his febrile brain will think up next, even though it seems like it's daily. Ask Mike Archibald if he'd cease being excited if Silverberg did a novel (a good one) a month. (We're not arguing quality, as I understand it--all other things being equal, the mere frequency will lessen reaction, n'est-ce pas?) And come on, if Harlan did a daily TV column somewhere, you'd look forward to it every day.

DARRELL SCHWEITZER

Jeff Smith here. Darrell's letter was rather boring, actually--his letters are seldom as interesting as his articles. He claimed his 223 fannish writings have gone to 56 different editors. On the one hand, he has spread himself out over a wide area; and on the other hand, he has still appeared in only a small percentage of the fanzines published.

And he wants to know how I can proclaim the virtues of a regular staff of contributors and complain about his prolificity. He is a regular contributor to some twenty fanzines.

To answer the last point, I would say something about the personality a fanzine develops. If an editor wants a memorable fanzine, he must be distinct; he must offer his readers something they can get nowhere else. This is not necessarily like having a monopoly on James Tiptree, though that could be a part of it. And in that respect--well, the name "Darrell Schweitzer" is on the contents pages of fifty-five other fanzines. What I have to do is publish good Darrell Schweitzer, in combination with other material. (And Darrell, I will name no names, but people have picked up PHANTASMICOM at cons, seen your name in it and put it down without buying it.) While I will print your articles whenever I like them, it will be people like Tip and Charlie that I will rely on to give KYBEN its kybenness. Of course, the true kybenness resides in myself.

As for the Don&Darrell question of how much is enough?, that depends totally upon the individuals involved. I get on kicks where I like to read a lot by an author--it has been Donald Westlake recently--but I don't think I'd want to be in the middle of a perpetual Westlake binge. This is my second time with Westlake; one more time and I'll probably catch up with all the old stuff. But I don't think I'd want a new book from him every three months. I like having something to look forward to. And how can you look forward to something you know will be coming before you can catch your breath? I have truly enjoyed the Schweitzer pieces I've published--I'd have sent them back if I didn't; and I have sent some back--but I know that as soon as I publish what I have he'll send me more. I certainly look forward more to when I get something from Tiptree--because I can never be sure when it'll be. The element of surprise is important--not the childish-type birthday-party surprise (when LOCUS tells you what books and stories will be published months ahead), but the pleasantness of hey!, here's one of them! I look forward to Silverberg novels now, because there are less of them and they don't appear every four months like clockwork. It is no longer expected. It is now an Event.

With all due respect, Darrell, a new Schweitzer article is not a treat, it is an inevitability. It is more to be expected than a Harry Warner loc. (And ask any faneditor if Harry Warner locs aren't more of a treat now that there are less of them.)

Darrell's other main comment was on Dan Mertz's article: "I do hope he doesn't seriously consider this thing an accurate description of west coast fandom." I would have thought it was obvious in the context of the article itself that Dan had little or no connections with fandom itself, only with the type of people in California that read sf and might have decided to drop in on a convention in Los Angeles that was as well publicized as LACon.

LAURINE WHITE

Maybe you didn't get much response to KYBEN 2 because it looked like a crudzine: garish covers, terrible artwork, different colored pages, staples too thick for the zine. The Schweitzer article was very good, and I'd like to read more in that vein, but I couldn't enjoy it too well because of the magazine's appearance. I certainly don't want to subscribe to something that looks like that.

Then you sent KYBEN 3. I liked all the artwork, the soft blue covers, all the interior pages the same shade of purple, good articles. Besides, it smelled like PHANTASMICOM!

Tiptree should have mentioned what impression he made on the Mayas. The Seminole Indians in Florida have never surrendered. I guess they are still at war with the U.S. government.

And, of course, everybody's favorite, WE ALSO HEARD FROM...

NED BROOKS -- I love that illo of the Austrian exposing himself outside the dining room window--he looks rather like Count Dracula from there..."Welcome to my overcoat..." ## Great piece by Tiptree, I hope he will write more about the Mayans. I find it hard to believe that they have no religion. Surely they didn't build those pyramids just for the hell of it? Or did he mean they have no religion now?

CY CHAUVIN -- I didn't think the IA article by Dan Mertz dated nearly as badly as you seemed to imply: very funny, any article that can raise a chuckle or two from me is an absolute gem. Your other contributors were in good form, too, with Tiptree edging Hopwood slightly.

D.K. WILEY -- After reading many short stories and 20-mile zones, I have come to the conclusion that Tiptree is a damn fine writer. Man, talk about giving a person some insight!

AND

JOHN BEAM, ROBERT BLOCH ("KYBEN is great"), BILL BOWERS ("I like KYBEN, it's one of the more enjoyable 'small' fanzines I've seen"), ED CONNOR, DICK GEIS ("Excellent issue of KYBEN. Tiptree and Hopwood and Rotsler superb"), CHRISTINE KULYK, KEN NAHIGIAN and BOB SILVERBERG. Thank you one and all, and God Bless Us...Everyone!

