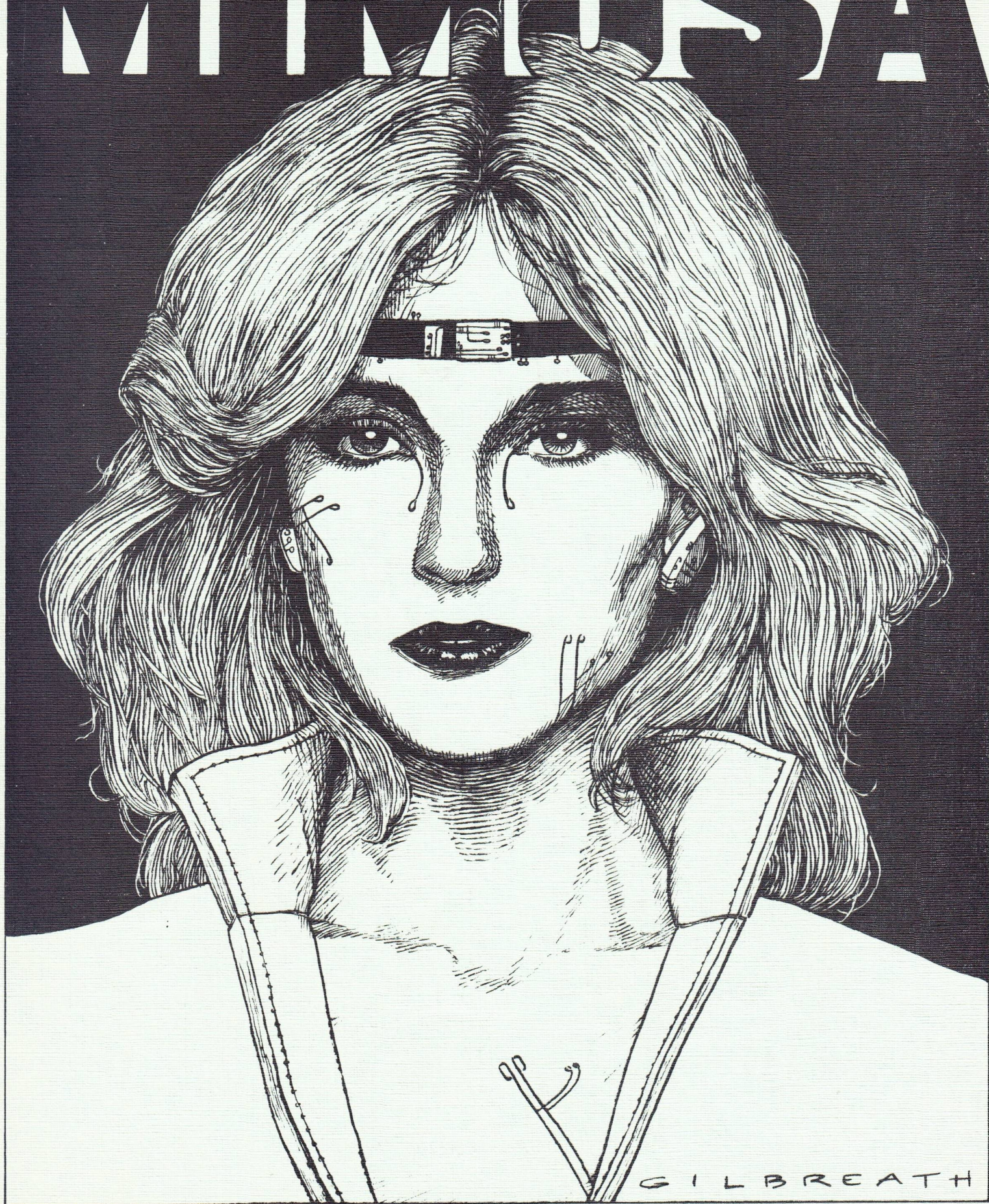


MIMOSA



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Mimosa #3, from Dick and Nicki Lynch, 4207 Davis Ln., Chattanooga, Tennessee 37416 USA

This issue of *Mimosa* was published in September, 1987, and is available via. U.S. Mail free for the asking (we won't refuse \$1.50 to help send it your way, though). Letters of Comment or The Usual are also welcome, and will put your name near the top of our mailing list for our next issue. Opinions expressed by contributors are their own. You see? We promised it wouldn't take another five years...

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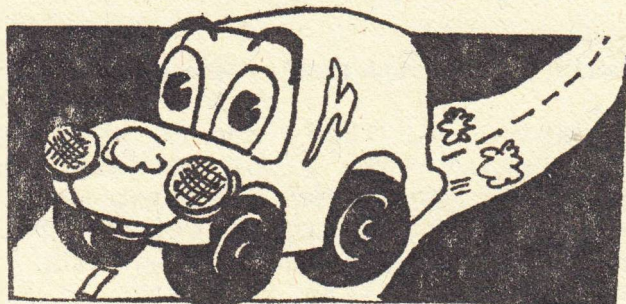
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Like a Car

Opening Comments by Nicki Lynch

When I first got my car, it turned over and started the first time I stepped on the pedal and turned the key. As it got older, my car refused to start on the first crank, but usually would start on the second or third try. As time went on, my car decided that the summer was the pits and would often refuse to start for five minutes, while in the winter, it would only take a try or two. Currently, I have to go through a ritual to make it start that would do a beginning religion proud. But, on rare occasions, my car will still start on the first crank.



When we first started going to conventions and fandom was new and shiny to us, it was exciting. The people seemed full of life, funny and, most of all, friendly. We were one big happy family and we all had the same roots. As the years went by, the flaws in the people we saw continually at cons became more apparent and the common roots and sense of comradeship erodes. Now cons seems to be groups of people who meet at a specific time and place, but don't really know or interact with each other. The common bond of fandom is missing and the common history and comradeship is gone.

However, like my car, the old feeling is there every now and then. I became aware of this when we attended our first Corflu in Cincinnati earlier this year. It was a small con and we didn't personally know all the people there, but they were people we had heard of, in relation to fanzines, or had read about, for years. And they were as nice and interesting as fans had been when we first started going to cons.

The programming at Corflu IV was sparse, but, as the line goes in the Tracy and Hepburn movie Pat and Mike, "It was choice." The main programming on Saturday was a live fanzine, something that we had never seen before, but obviously not a fannish first. It was wonderful!

Then, that evening, the consuite sparkled with talk... about fanzines! Not who was dating who, politics, or petty disagreements, but fanzines as I'd never heard talk about before! I didn't agree with all that was said that night; I don't believe in a narrow definition of a fanzine, but it was interesting to hear people seriously discussing fanzines as if they actually read them and were interested in them.

Maybe this is unique to Southern fandom, but fanzines are rarely a topic of conversation. Yes, it is grudgingly admitted that they do exist, but Southern fandom exists for cons and parties, much like Southern colleges exist for sports. So, to hear fanzines talked about as a vital part of fandom was great!

Which leads me back to my car. Every now and then, the old car starts like new, as if it were fresh off the lot and ready to conquer the roads. And that is how Corflu makes me feel. I feel new and fresh, that the thing that interests me in fandom -- fanzines and communicating with other people -- is still around and still a part of fandom. I suppose that's why we decided to keep on doing *Mimosa*, to communicate with people and keep the tradition and interest alive for us and those who read this.



Bob Shaw, of course, needs little if any introduction. He was once, and still is whenever he finds time for it, fandom's best writer. And an all around nice guy, too, because he'll do things

like let a couple of American fans he only slightly knows reprint one of his speeches. Here is a transcript of Bob's Guest of Honour speech from Rivercon, in Louisville, KY this past August. - D&N

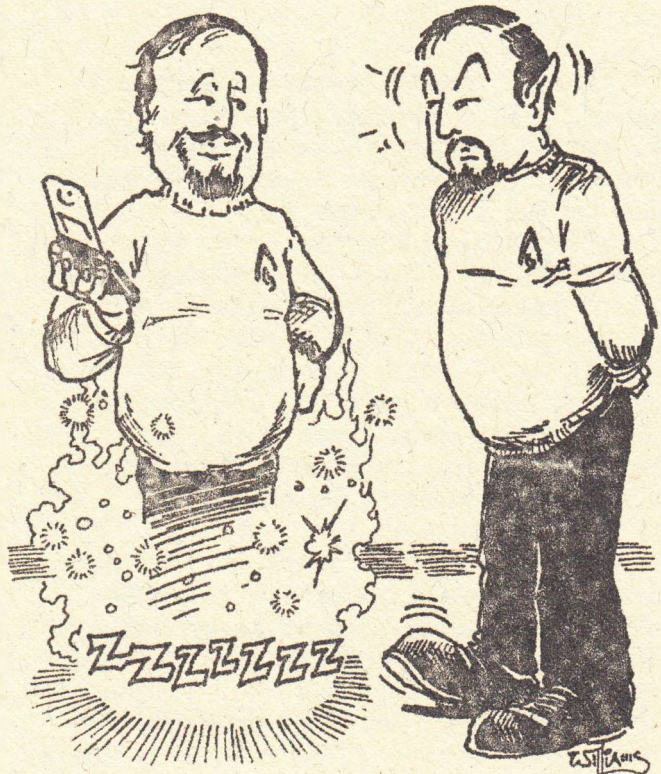
What I Learned from Watching *Star Trek*

Rivercon XII Guest of Honour Speech by Bob Shaw

I was very interested just now to get the recipe for that great southern fan drink 'swill'. It sounded pretty good, and it's prompted me to give you a recipe of my own. One of the most famous drinks in the world is Irish Coffee. It's a good drink, but unfortunately everywhere I've travelled I find that people make it all wrong. They get the proportions a bit out of balance. To get the proportions right, what you do is take a large glass and fill it with Irish Whiskey, and you get a coffee bean... You tie it on a piece of thread and you dip it in there three times; any more spoils it... Then you throw that bean away because it's finished...

This is one of the craziest conventions I've ever been to... I've been to lots of crazy conventions, but for different crazy reasons. One of my weirdest experiences ever was when I was invited to be Guest of Honour at a *Star Trek* convention. The only reason this strange event came about was because in the talks I do at media conventions, where people with brains go, I used to do a talk about *Star Trek*. The whole idea of it was that while we're watching *Star Trek* every week, something awful always happens. They run into a vast invisible force field and everybody gets thrown out of their seats. And even though it's three or four centuries in the future, they've forgotten about seat belts. It's occurred to me that this is happening once a week without fail, and it's always with the same people on the bridge. And assuming that the ship works three eight-hour shifts, it means there are two other crews on that ship that nothing ever happens to... They're just as well off, really, because of some of the things that DO happen. Take Scotty, for instance; he was at the *Star Trek* convention where I was a guest. He was a

more important guest than I was. I know that because they gave him more whiskey than they gave me... And he drank it faster than I did... I never really thought much of him as an engineer. I was in aircraft design myself, and aircraft aren't as far advanced as space craft, of course, but I never liked the way Scotty went about his job. Every now and again he had to fix the main drive, and he wouldn't delegate it to one of the two or three thousand assistants; he always did it himself. Which involved lifting up that hatch, just outside the canteen, and getting down in there and moving the different colored Lego blocks. I was always amazed he did it right...

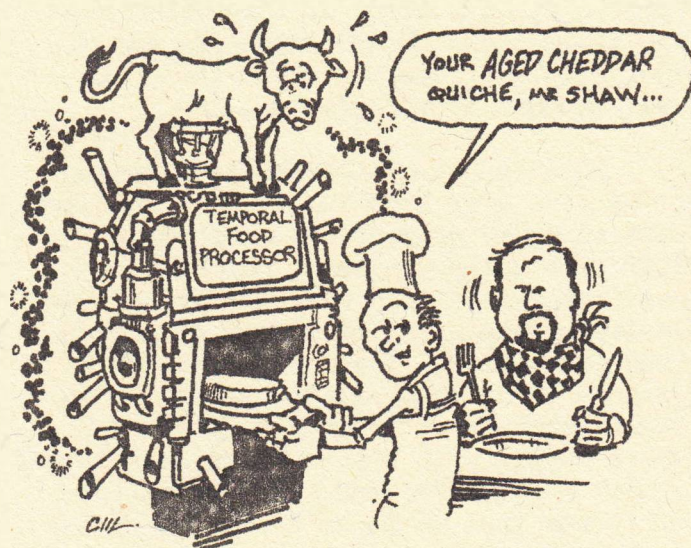


But Scotty was at this convention and I was very pleased to meet him in the flesh. He allowed me to buy him a drink, and then he allowed me to buy him another drink. And then he allowed me to buy him ANOTHER drink... So at that point I sort of lost interest in the whole thing. When he came out to do his talk the audience went mad. He walked up and down a bit, then he explained that being in *Star Trek* for so many years had given him an insight into how space ships worked... He said that McDonnell Douglas had invited him to go to see how they were getting along with making some part of Challenger or something. He said they took him in this design office and these engineers were all sitting there looking sick, because they had been working on this problem for about four years and they hadn't been able to get anywhere with it; they were stuck. And Scotty looked at it and summoned up all his space ship expertise which he'd acquired from *Star Trek*, and he looked at them and said, "Have you tried putting that there, and that there, and that there?" So they looked at him and went (* smacking palm on forehead *), "Why didn't WE think of that!" And the audience went mad, in that they believed every word of it... I was in aircraft design and I knew it was all lies. They were GOOD lies, but they were lies...

Also at that convention there was Chekhov, Walter Koenig. He was a nice guy, but he came up to me and he said, "I understand that you go on making a lot of money making jokes about me." I didn't try to explain to him that I go to conventions as a fan. It costs me MONEY to make jokes about *Star Trek*... And also, even more, I didn't like to explain, but I haven't made any jokes about him because he's too unimportant... So that night, when I was doing my speech, I put him in especially, just so his feelings wouldn't be hurt...

I find from many years of reading and also writing science fiction that I too have picked up this mistaken knowledge about the way things work. I'm not very good with motor cars, but I know how space ships work, and time machines and things like that... Time machines were a favourite of mine; my favourite design of

a time machine came out in a mystery story in *Analog*. Time machines all sponsored the same description; there was a cage made up of shimmering rods, and if you remember, they always went together at certain angles that were very hard to comprehend. When you tried to study the shape of one of these cages, you got a curious wrenching sensation behind your eyes... I loved those time machines. I put one of them into my science fiction novel called *Who Goes Here*; it's ten times as funny as *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, but nobody seems to realize it except me... But in there I have one of these time machines with a cage made of shimmering rods. And this one was used in a restaurant where, if you wanted a vintage wine you just ordered a new wine and shoved it in there, switched it on, and waited a while. You could have it thirty years old if you wanted, forty even. You took it out, and LIVED it.

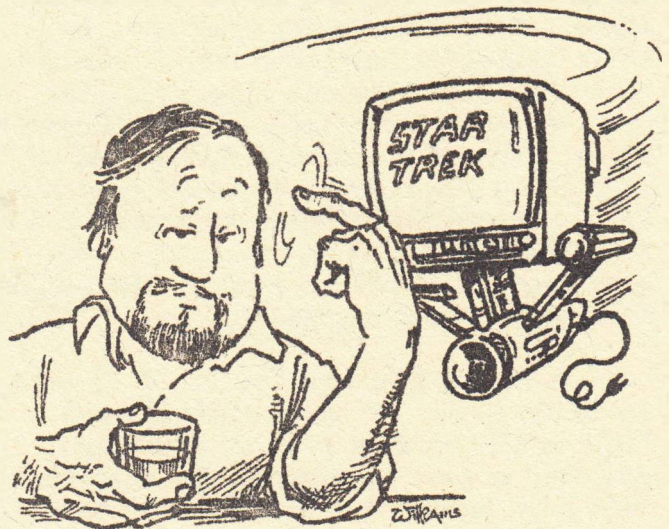


I don't plug my own books, of course... In that same book I had some wonderfully funny ideas. For instance, I had a species of insect that was so ugly, so awful looking that it reproduced through being stomped upon. It's body was full of acid and also eggs, so when you stomped on it the acid ate through the sole of your shoe and before you could get your shoe off you had a foot full of little bugs. They went right through you and it was too late. Mmmm; that's nice stuff to hear right after a banquet...

But we're drifting away from the subject of time machines, which as I mentioned is a favourite subject of mine. I remember many years ago back in Ireland in the 1950s, for the cover of a magazine I had to do this picture of a time machine. The only material I had to work with was a wax stencil and a dried-up Bic ballpoint pen. And so I decided not to attempt the shimmering rods and the curious eye-wrenching effect, on the wax stencil with the dried-up Bic ballpoint... Even Da Vinci couldn't have done it... So I went in for a time machine which looked a bit like a telephone booth, and it was for sale in a shop window. It was obviously a time machine; there was a notice on it -- the thing was called 'Chrono Clipper Mark IV', price \$10,000. And there was a note under it which said, 'four years to pay'... That's a very subtle joke... The idea was that a person could go into that shop, give the owner a hundred dollar deposit, jump into the time machine, come out four years later, and you'd OWN it! But I never figured out who was making the payments... All this goes to show you what a complicated thing time actually is. We tend to visualize it as a straight line, where the present is a dot. It isn't like that; time is more complicated than that. People often get precognizant dreams, and sometimes KNOW something is about to happen before it actually happens. For instance, just last week I dreamt that I needed a haircut... And I woke up in the morning and I DID need a haircut! It's incredible...

I've come across only one serious attempt to travel into the future. This was an idea invented by an Irish science fiction fan named Walt Lewis, who's one of the best writers I've ever met. He invented something called 'subjective induced temporal acceleration'. The system is that you put a person in a very cold, miserable, damp room, and you keep him there for two or three days. He's not even allowed to drink anything except alcohol-free lager, and he's forced to listen to Barry Manilow records. After he's been there for about four days, you pull a handle and the poor bloke falls through a trap door, and he lands in a room where there's beautiful nude young

women plus champagne and cigars and everything like that. You know how it is when you're not enjoying yourself, time slows down? Well, when you're enjoying yourself time speeds up. So while he's been in this awful business time has been dragging on; then suddenly he's dropped in this other situation so he goes into temporal overdrive... And disappears into the future... I don't know how far he got into the future, but I volunteered for experimentation...



Science fiction writers do not deal very much with time travel. It's a difficult subject. Take travelling into the past, for instance. One of the best ways to travel into the past is to be struck by lightning. For ordinary people in real life, if you get struck by lightning you just die. But in science fiction if you get struck by lightning you get thrown into the past. And the distance you get thrown into the past is governed by certain variables -- your body weight, the exact number of billions of volts in the lightning stroke, and also the period of history that the author wants to write about... I've never read a time story yet where somebody has got thrown into the past where he couldn't speak the language...

That's possibly enough about time machines. I'll tell you what I've learned about space travel through watching *Star Trek*. I'll CAN tell you one thing; the old idea of firing people into space by a gun doesn't work... That's no good. The old Jules Verne idea of a gun a mile high is a total impossi-

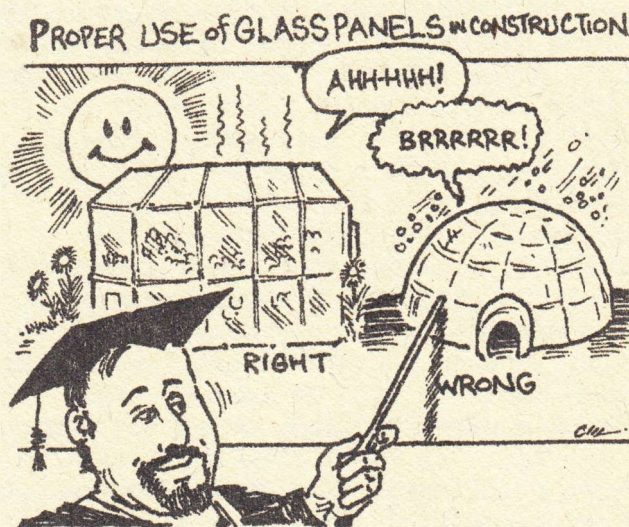
bility. When you think about a gun a mile high, how could you ever get enough leather to make a holster for it... And who could wear it? You can't even think about wearing it underground because it's illegal to have a concealed weapon...

Then there's the modern communications revolution. There's so much happening these days with computers! I'm not quite caught up in that yet; I'm still stuck at the Alexander Graham Bell stage. I feel sorry for that guy; he built himself a telephone and it was no good, because there was nobody to ring up. He finally realized what was wrong, so he invented another telephone and he gave it to somebody so he could ring him up... Then after a while he invented a third telephone and he gave it to somebody else, and when he rang up the second telephone it was engaged...

Well, that covers the field of telecommunications. I think that science fiction is becoming part of education. I remember a good four years ago in Britain we'd been having a series of very bad summers. We haven't had one this year; it's been awfully good, but four years ago it was a typical summer -- raining, cold, and miserable. One day when I was sitting chatting with the landlord, he said, "You might not quite buy this, but we don't get good summers anymore." I was interested, so I said, "Why? What is the reason?" He said, "It's this business they've brought in about leap years. Every fourth year they put in an extra day. These days are all adding up, and the calendar is getting out of step with the seasons." There followed three hours of innocent conversation, where I tried to persuade him that he had a nut loose, and that the extra days were there to keep the thing in step. But he won in the end when told me, "Just look right through the door. Is it summertime, sir?"

There's also the greenhouse effect. Everybody's worried about the ozone layer disappearing. In Britain, energy costs are a bit more expensive than they are here, so people get double glazing on their windows put in to save on their heating bills. And it's a funny thing about this. If you know the greenhouse

effect, you have a little glass house; it keeps the heat in and plants grow better. That's what greenhouse means. So, what they're saying is, if you have a greenhouse, the heat comes in and stays in and keeps the place warm. But when you have an ordinary house with windows in it, the heat goes out through the glass and makes the house colder. So after many years of study I realize that house builders in Britain are putting the glass in the window in backwards... You've just got to turn it around, and all the house will start being warm. Of course a few people made a mistake with greenhouses and they end up with little icehouses instead...



Well, I presume everybody has heard about the Bermuda Triangle mystery. That's another one I solved through my intuitive knowledge of science gained by watching Star Trek. The big thing about the Bermuda Triangle is that ships and things keep disappearing. Now, there have been millions of books written about the Bermuda Triangle, paperbacks made of very absorbent paper. And since there have been shiploads of books written about it, people who live in the Bermuda Triangle want to read them, naturally enough. So all these ships full of very absorbent paper are fishing around inside the Bermuda Triangle. And when all the absorbent paper gets wet and heavy, all the ships disappear by sinking... And this leads more people to write books about the Bermuda Triangle mystery, and the whole thing keeps going on and on...

The great thing about science is that to make great scientific discov-

eries, you don't have to be a genius. I found this out through watching *Star Trek*... Take the case of old Albert Einstein himself. He made his mark in science, but it wasn't his great I.Q. that made Einstein famous and successful as a scientist; it was the fact that he had a simple child-like approach. For all I know, I might be even more simple and child-like, so I may be making even better discoveries than he did. But the one about the twins paradox I'm afraid was his greatest slip-up. Two twins - one of them gets on a spaceship and flies way around the galaxy, on a holiday cruise... Just like in *Star Trek*... This character, he swarms around the galaxy for two or three years, having a lovely time, having drinks, watching comets go by and watching *Star Trek*. Then he comes home and lands and he gets out of the spaceship and he's younger looking than the twin that stayed behind. Well, of course he is! The other one was looking after the house; he was paying the bills. He was doing all the work. That poor twin brother was worn to a shred! He seemed much younger so Einstein mis-interpreted that time had passed more slowly for the one on the spaceship. He got it all wrong...

I was promised I'd be heckled... As well as practical science that I've been

talking about, I hope I'll say a little bit about pure mathematics, another field of mine that I learned from watching *Star Trek*... Probability mathematics is a great favourite of mine. It's difficult in that you cannot predict the future as any student of horse racing will tell you... One of the themes of probability mathematics is that if two people lose each other in a very large department store, there's no guarantee that they'll ever meet up again unless one of them stands still. On the face of it, that seems a useful piece of information except that if it happens to you, how do you know which one moves and which one stands around... So it's a big decision to make. You could stand there and the store could close, and one of the assistants could come up and start taking your clothes off... And that would be all right except they would start by unscrewing your arms... So I've given up on probability mathematics altogether.

Anyway, in closing, I just want to say how pleased I am to be here tonight. And I'm just about as happy as a NASA scientist if a Mars lander had dug up definite proof of the existence of Ray Bradbury. Thank you for listening for so long. Now if anybody wants to heckle, I'll heckle back...

Artist Credits

Brad W. Foster - 36

Wade Gilbreath - Front Cover, 26, 27

Debbie Hughes - Back Cover

Alan Hutchinson - 3 (logo), 23, 24 (both), 29, 32, 34

William Rotsler - 37, 38, 40 (both)

Marc Schirmeister - 18, 19, 20, 21

Julia Scott - 4 (top), 13

Charlie Williams - 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17

Another fanwriter who needs little introduction is Arthur Hlavaty. We first met Arthur about ten years ago, fannishly in print, as it happened. Even though he moved south to nearby North Carolina several years ago, we unfortunately still

only cross paths infrequently. But we did see each other at Corflu (the fanzine fan's convention) in Cincinnati this past April, where he agreed to write this article for us. - D&N

The Mad Dogs of Memory

by Arthur D. Hlavaty

I think I can usually manage to present myself as a moderate and civilized person, perhaps even shy. But I know that beneath that unassuming exterior lurks a screaming ego, a thing of massive proportions, ready to proclaim itself to the world. It's not money or power that I want; it's the idea of leaving a monument of words -- my words, my phrases, my ideas -- out there where everybody can see them. In my more grandiose moments, I want everything I say to be known and remembered.

Now that's egotistical, bombastic, perhaps even megalomaniac -- but nobody's perfect. That doesn't bother me so much, but I've realized that there is something worse about it than that: it would mean that everything I say *would* be known and remembered.

Laws of the Universe, particularly those who hold that belief without believing in God, rather as if the Universe were a police state without police.

I was having a delightful time watching Wilson smite those he disagreed with (and maybe miss once or twice), until he got to one writer who "regards nature as a combination of slaughterhouse and madhouse against which, by great effort, a few human beings have created a few enclaves of reason and decency..."

Well, that certainly seemed excessive, maybe a way of excusing failure, or maybe just a way of making one's life seem heroic and melodramatic, but certainly something that could use a bit of Wilson's skilled scorn. Except that he had mentioned whom he'd heard that idea from: me.

Did I really say that? Well, I'm afraid so, or at least something close to it. It wasn't all that long ago, and I can more or less remember doing it. I was thinking of the way the life of our primitive ancestors probably was nasty, brutish, and short; of the fact that people could not survive in most environments without such human inventions as houses and clothing; of the presence of predatory animals, disease germs, and other elements hostile to human survival; of the fact that almost no one makes it to 100 years, and apparently no one makes it much past that. I was thinking of Yossarian, in *Catch-22*, translating the fact that he, as an Allied bombardier in World War II, was being shot at by Axis anti-aircraft guns, into "someone's trying to kill me," and thinking one could make a similar statement about



One of the drawbacks to this plan for self-aggrandizement just came up as I was reading Robert Anton Wilson's new book, *Natural Law, or Don't Put a Rubber on Your Willy* (Loompanics tpb, 1986). In this most enjoyable work, Wilson takes on those who believe that there are Moral

nature and the world in general.

It made a kind of sense. All I had to do was ignore the fact that nature also provides all the good things we enjoy, and that what we do, just like what is done to us, is part of nature. It sounded good at the time.

I would like to tell you that this was my one fall from grace, the one time when, intoxicated by my own words, I stumbled into strange ideas that I myself would eventually see as horrible examples. I would like to, but I am sure that there are other things I wrote that sounded good at the time and will be quoted back at me. For instance, there's -- but no. A questionnaire that ran in a couple of apas I belong to included: "If there were one fanzine of yours that you could expunge from history, which would it be?" Many of us leaped to the chance to recount embarrassing, even disastrous episodes from our fannish past. I believe that one person -- not me -- had the good sense to reply, "You don't think I'd tell, do you?"

I know that if the stuff is there, it will come back. As a science-fiction fan, I live in a community that sometimes seems to have too much memory. As I was writing this, the doorbell rang. It was a friend of mine who was involved in con-running feuds five or more years ago. He was waving around a copy of a fanzine which talked about these five-year-old feuds as if they were going on right now, before our very eyes. Fandom is held together by shared memories and shared experiences, but the bit players and even the villains of those drama are the stars of their own plays and don't want to be

seen forever as the Iagos and Osrics that they once appeared to be.

I feel as if I am doubly cursed if I write something I'd later like to see forgotten. Not only have I introduced my folly into a community with far too good a memory, but I have put words on paper, and even of all the people forgot, the paper doesn't forget. In the latest *Izzard*, Teresa Nielsen Hayden talks about copies of a 25-year-old secret apa that fell into her hands. It is a reminder to all of us that the printed word will not go away by itself. In fact, there may well be some corollary of Murphy's Law stating that it's the worst (or at least most embarrassing) zine you do that survives the longest.

I do know that it could be worse for me. I entered science-fiction fandom in my thirties, and when ever I think of the fannish pleasures I may have missed by not discovering it sooner, I remind myself that this also means that I am luckier than some of my fellow fans, in that there are no extant writings of mine from my teenage years, when I would have been emitting heartfelt statements like "I'LL NEVER GET LAID!!!!!"

And there's a more cheering though than that. I've been doing this stuff for ten years now. If in that time, I hadn't written anything that I strongly disagreed with now, it would mean either that I'd never written anything controversial in those ten years, which is such a boring prospect I'd rather not think about it, or I hadn't changed my mind about anything in 10 years, which is the next best thing to being dead.



One of the things that interests us most about fandom is its history. At Confederation in Atlanta, we were Fan Programming department co-heads; one of our themes was Legends of Fandom. We're fortunate that many of fandom's founding members are still active, but many of the hijinks that made fandom an interesting

place to be back then are still only fragilely preserved, mainly in the memories of the participants. Anyway, we met Roger Sims at Confederation, at one of the Legends of Fandom panels. He will be Fan Guest of Honor at upcoming NOLAcon II, and here is his account about the founding of Second Fandom. - D&N

Everything You Didn't Know About Second Fandom

by Roger Sims

Did I hear you ask, "What is Second Fandom?" That's like asking, "How long does a John Deere last?" But unlike the television commercial, I'll at least attempt an answer.

The first and obvious answer is that it's the fandom located between the First and Third. Most of the numbered fandoms, One to Six, were explained many years ago by Jack Speer in *All Our Yesterdays* by Harry Warner, Jr. However, I don't believe that his concept of Second Fandom is the "One True Concept" as laid down by its perpetual leader, me! As a matter of fact, it wasn't until I started typing this article that I even began to answer the question for myself. So hopefully by

journey's end I will have not only learned the answer but will have presented it to you the reader.

Here goes!

The logical place to start is with my definition of First Fandom. And at the same time without wasting space, how Second Fandom differs from First Fandom. It's not my intention to confuse you the reader but instead to present a starting point -- one from which the definition of Second Fandom, if I do it right, will arise like the phoenix from the understanding of what we are not. So in the list below, the elements of First Fandom are on the left and the non-elements of Second Fandom are on the right.

FIRST FANDOM

1. Is highly organized
2. Individuals in the group read science fiction and were what ever fandom was prior to 1938
3. Has highly visible activities
4. Has a definite time table for meetings
5. Has a publication

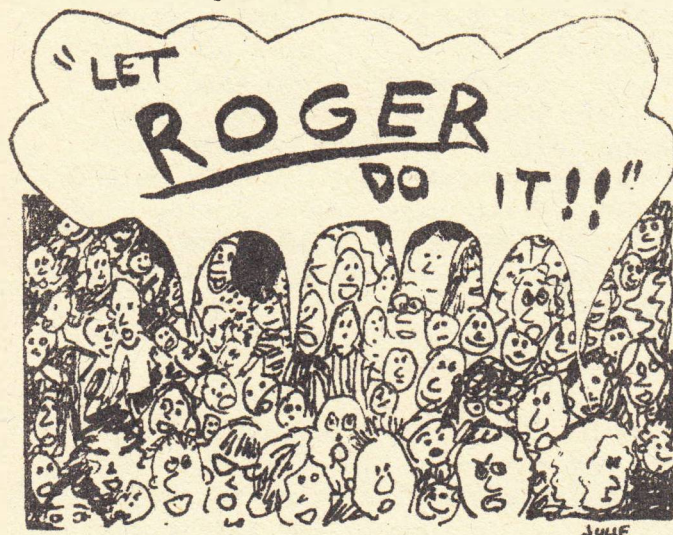
SECOND FANDOM

1. Has no organizational structure
2. Members do not read all science fiction, only that branch we consider speculative literature; many are not active in fandom
3. Has no activities
4. Meetings are held at the whim of its leader
5. Has been trying to produce a publication for the past ten years

THE BIRTH OF SECOND FANDOM

Before Suncon 1977, my wife Pat and I spent a few days with the Kyles in Florida. During this visit, Dave approached me with the idea of a formal Second Fandom. Explaining that a number of First Fandom members were looking to the future and wondering what could be done to insure that the work of First Fandom would be perpetuated, he asked my opinion about the possibility of a real Second Fandom. It sounded like a good idea to me, so that convinced him that a meeting should be called at Suncon.

And so the Sunday before Labor Day 1977, 33 potential members met at Suncon at the Fountainbleau Hotel. Dave Kyle opened the meeting with a short history of First Fandom and why Second Fandom, too, was an idea whose time had come. At the time I don't believe too many of us believed him, and as I write this almost ten years later, I think that the "too" can even be removed. During Dave's speech my mind wandered off. This was a mistake, for when I returned to the present from wherever I'd been, I was told that someone had said, "Let Roger do it," and that all had then agreed that I should be the new leader, the next leader, the old leader, and the only leader. Anyway, my first official act as Despotic Leader was to hold elections. Sue Sanderson agreed to be our Treasurer and Ruth Kyle agreed to be Chief Hostess. Ruth then appointed Carolyn Hickman and Pat Sims as permanent assistants.



Next we entered into a most serious discussion: what we wanted Second Fandom

to be. Everybody at the meeting had something to contribute, and about half way through it became apparent that most of all what we wanted was not to be a copy of First Fandom. It was also very clear that what we *did* want to be was a loose collection of fans who became aware of speculative literature at about the same time, and who sooner or later drifted into fandom where we found "fans" who liked to talk about the "sense of wonder" that we derived from this reading. Then there was discussion on the topic of Traditions. One of First Fandom's yearly activities, one which they feel is most important, is the honoring of a person who has over the years made outstanding contributions to the field and they hoped that Second Fandom would institute some similar tradition of its own. Dave Kyle, as First Fandom's spokesman, pleaded their case. I, thinking that we really should do something for the authors and others who gave us the wherewithall to have "sense of wonder" discussions, decided that we would do something and then promptly tabled the proposition without dissension from the group.

THE HISTORY OF SECOND FANDOM

In the beginning we held meetings twice a year, one at Midwestcon and the other at the Worldcon. and for the first six or seven years also held a party at Worldcon. The most recent Second Fandom meeting was held in the lobby of one of the hotels in Atlanta. So we haven't yet gone underground, but a high wave might swamp out boat. More on the topic of future meetings later.

At the 1980 Midwestcon meeting I decided that we would finally begin presenting our annual award. In keeping with the benevolency which I use to hide my despotic nature, I inquired, "When shall we give the first award?" After listening to the discussion for a few minutes, I announced in a firm voice that the first award would be given at the combined party with First Fandom in Boston at the Worldcon. When I asked for nominations a torrent of names came forth. This went on for a while, then all of a sudden no more names were mentioned. Everyone looked to me and I

said, "that last name sounds like a winner." All agreed, so in Boston at the combined party the award was presented to L. Sprague DeCamp. Shortly thereafter the following news release was sent to several publications:

"The first Annual Groff Conklin Memorial Award for Excellence in Promoting a Sense of Wonder in the reader was presented to L. Sprague DeCamp at the 38th World Science Fiction Convention held in Boston, Labor Day Weekend, 1980 by Second Fandom. The members of Second Fandom feel that of all the authors we read during the late 40's and 50's, L. Sprague DeCamp stimulated our imagination the most. Future awards will be selected to represent the form that best displays the author's main theme. The next award will be presented at the 39th World Science Fiction Convention in Denver, Labor Day Weekend, 1981."

Well, we have yet to give the second award. Why? Will it be given again? Good questions! It just so happens that I have answers, some of which may even be true. The fact is that we, or at least I, feel that there isn't anyone who we all can agree had the ability to give us the sense of wonder, at least to the extent that L. Sprague DeCamp did. And I for one will not pick somebody just for the sake of giving an award. So, since no one has suggested that we give another one, it would seem that all of us share this opinion. However, nothing is written in stone, and maybe it's time to look for a second recipient. Any suggestions?

By the way, if the reader thinks that our track record for awards isn't very good, check our publication record. In the past ten years or so we have had four editors, and have yet to see a first issue!

QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The one thing that everybody at the

first meeting wanted was a feeling that they belong to a group that had limits. The limits agreed to at this first meeting, and still exist to this day are: 1939 and 1959. In order to become a member of Second Fandom, the potential inductee must have read science fiction during this period. Once this has been attested to by the petitioner, the members acting as a committee for the whole either accepts or rejects the claim. I'm not sure I agree with this process; I believe that all fans who have gained a sense of wonder through reading should be members of Second Fandom. But as all true long lasting dictators must, I will yield the final decision to the members. I will add a word of advice, though: if we do stick to the period of 1939 to 1959 we've created a last person group, and I don't think that's what we want. Time will tell, though; if we don't let others in, who will hold our drinks and do the other chores we have become too old to perform?

WHO WOULD JOIN US?

Why should someone want to join us? I believe that the individuals who came to fandom during the period we did do want to and given an opportunity, will join. We are and will always be science fiction fans. We would be even if science fiction ceases to exist.

So, where are we going? Right now not very far. At this time we (read: I) see no need for a more formal rigid structure than what we have now. In short, we currently do not want to be a younger copy of First Fandom. This undoubtedly will change, though, and First Fandom has taken steps to help us change -- they are busy inducting associate members. The day must therefore come when at a future meeting all of the members present will look at each other and in a single voice pronounce, "We are Second Fandom."

So, if you meet our qualifications, why not join us? If not in the flesh at least in spirit, for we will know and accept. This then is the true reason for Second Fandom: To reach out to those in our community who found Science Fiction when we did.

By now, practically every center of population in the free world must have its own fannish community. Here in Tennessee, we've been personally associated with two of them -- Chattanooga's, which still exists, and Knoxville's which flared brightly like a nova for a few years before it broke apart. We made a

lot of new friends from our association with Knoxville fandom; the following article was written by one of them. Incidentally, one of the Knoxville SF Club's bimonthly parties was held at the house described below. We were there, but the cats stayed away that night.
- D&N

The Wrath of Khat

by Ronald Lee

It was during my last two years in college that I found myself living in the White House. The money I had put away for my education was nearly gone. I had broken my foot. There were no job offers to be found. So it was that I found myself in an exciting career with great potential: House Sitting.

As houses go, it was a "quaint house of local history". My translation: hey, at least it has indoor plumbing. The house was nicely isolated -- just past the local cemetery, over the railroad tracks, up and down a winding road and there you are. It was eighty years old. Somewhere down the line, someone had decided to torment the house by wrapping it in aluminum siding. There were places on the porch you just *didn't* step. It did have an outhouse, now covered in a decade's growth of ivy and kudzu. As interiors go, it had no heat, no insulation, and sub-standard wiring. You could not run two outlets in the same room at the same time -- you were sure to blow a fuse. Still it was a house, and as I was house-sitting so that the fire insurance would remain, it was also rent free. My only expenses would be food, electricity, and heating oil in the winter. But the house was a trap. Something had been left behind that no amount of preparation could be enough. After living in dorms for the past four years, I was braced for the isolation. But no one told me about... the cats.

I had been left with the custody of fifteen cats.

I know there is a long standing tradition of fandom of liking cats, but let me explain. I come from a long line

of cat haters. My Uncle Bean seems to be the family example. He used to do terrible things to cats with tugboats (I refuse to give details). And now I come nose to whisker with the Legion of Cats.

These were not the "sweet kitties" that your Aunt Patty used to have. They were not the type of cats you took compassion on and brought into the house for a saucer of milk, only to watch them curl in front of a fire and purr contentedly. No. These were survivalist cats. They had seen the end of human civilization and had taken to the woods, only coming out to see how much longer they had to wait. They honed their skills on the local moles and shrews that crossed their paths at night. Once proud trees were now scratching posts. Claws had torn strange runes into the trunks of the trees. I'm sure they said something like "Spike eats it" and "Ain't gonna be no



human's pussy". Now I was moving into the house. The house at the edge of their territory.

They knew this was to be a challenge. And they made the first move.

All fifteen of them sprayed my car.

In minutes, I came to know them all. Vol was the leader, an orange tom that had weathered seven winters in the woods. There was Peanut. Jefferson. Lincoln. Tom. Cthulhu. The rest seemed to fade in and out of the trees. I would catch an occasional glimpse of strange and alien fur rushing under my car.

You wouldn't believe the things they left on the carburetor.

I braced for the first night. My belongings stayed in boxes for the most part. I unloaded a few belongings into the kitchen. A box spring and mattress had been left, along with a couch and a few chairs. Sometime past midnight, I decided to pack it in for the night so I climbed into bed, and started to read before going to sleep. It was at this point I made my most grievous mistake.

The book I was reading was *Salem's Lot* by Stephen King. Now, that novel by itself is enough to lose sleep over, but add to this I was alone in a strange house for the first time. There was none of the usual noise you hear in a college dorm and come to take for granted. It was a special quiet. Country quiet. And the cats knew how to use it.

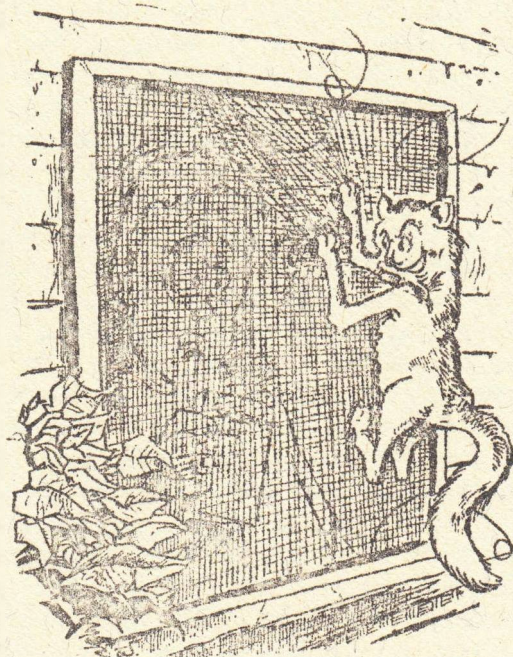
Barlow had just spoken: "I see you sleep with the dead, teacher." O-kayyy, enough fun for tonight. I shut off the light. Five minutes of quiet. Then...

The noise began. Long, inhuman howls surrounded me. From every window in that house, there came a banging. I turned on the lights... and it stopped. I checked outside... Nothing. So I reluctantly turned the lights out again.

The terror began again. *Something* was at every window, pounding against the glass. More howls. Lights went on again. Silence all about the house. Now

I couldn't sleep. So okay then, read something. But every book I had was still packed away in the boxes... except for *Salem's Lot*. It became the pattern. Read another chapter, turn out the lights, and wait for the attack. Lights back on, read another chapter, lights out and wait for the attack. Somewhere past three in the morning I decided I had to find the source, so I turned out the lights and hid beneath the window. Within five minutes, IT began. I threw open the window shade... and found a cat with its claws firmly attached to the screen. It howled, and while doing so, rocked back and forth on the screen, slamming into the window. Then it disengaged and fled into the woods. After that I left on the outside lights, but they showed no mercy. As soon as I tried to fall asleep, they were back.

I got no sleep that night.



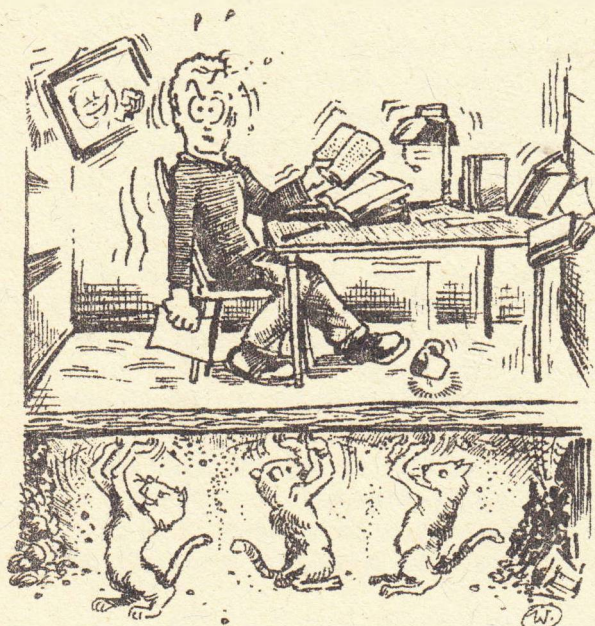
The next morning, they were waiting for me. I was to feed them twice a day (the food provided by the owners). They *knew*. They wolfed down Purina dog chow, and were gone, back into the woods, with elk and moose to stalk. The noise would continue for months.

I was determined to outlast them, but they had yet another weapon. They went out and had kittens.

I *know* they did it just to spite me.

One day I went outside to find four white kittens at the door step. They all stared at me, so I shut the door. An hour later, I cautiously opened the door again. There were no longer four white kittens; there were *eight*. If fear wouldn't work, then by God, they would breed me out of the area.

The cats had a wonderful plan to motivate me in my studies. Whenever I had to have quiet to study for an exam, the cats would slip into the crawlspace below the house. They would find the exact spot where I was studying, and then, methodically, claw the floorboards beneath my feet. It did wonders for my GPA.



I attempted a truce of sorts once. We got back to the house later than planned one night. I had left no outside lights on, and there was only the faint glimmer of moonlight. As I walked to the door, I noticed a furry body crouched on a table near the food tray. It didn't move when I approached, which was unusual in itself. Usually the cats fled at my approach, but this one stayed put. I went to pet it, then decided not to push my luck. I unlocked the door, turned on the light... and came face to face with a possum. It showed its teeth, hopped down, and made for the woods. They were recruiting allies. I knew it.

The cats *did* have their uses,

however. I went to visit my parents during Christmas, and when I returned to Chateau Aluminum that evening there was something unusual at the front door. I found a crowbar dropped at the bottom of the steps. I'm sure someone tried a little bit of breaking and entering, and I'm just as sure that Vol took care of him.

We kept an uneasy truce.

Our standoff lasted for over a year and a half. The cats gave in to the fact that I was going to stay there for a while, and I gave into the fact that my car would always have little cat footprints on the windshield. Then, they seemed to just all go away. Their ranks were decimated, all in the space of two short weeks. I found about ten pounds of orange cat fur on the porch one morning, and never saw Vol again. The other cats simply up and went. The tribe finally dropped to two: Peanut and Patrick Henry. Maybe there was a cat coup d'etat. Maybe there was a rival cat gang, or a roving pack of dogs. Maybe a kind hearted lady took them all in. More than likely, they pulled back into the woods. Someone more at home with nature could probably read something into their actions. Me? I'd like to think there's some sort of cat commune thriving there in the woods. A cat version of the lost colony in colonial Roanoke. But not one of them left a Croatoan sign.

For the record, I *do* get along quite well with cats now. Peanut was adopted by my mother-in-law. He lived another ten years, and went quietly in his sleep. The house was bought and sold four times. The current owners did heavy-duty reconstruction on it, and pushed the edge of the woods further back. They even got written up in the local newspaper for their efforts. A gate now keeps strangers out. I drive by it now and then, just to check. Somewhere back there, there's a group of cats, plotting, with intellects cool and detached. But they owe me for two winters. My recommendation for you? You've got a backyard? Plant catnip.

For I have seen the future. And it walks on little cat feet.

We met Elst Weinstein way back at Iguacon in 1978, at a peculiar form of entertainment known as the Hugu Ranquet. Without going into more detail about that for the uninitiated, here is Elst's explanation for what follows. - D&N

"This is actually the second article written about my experiences while

studying medicine in Mexico. The first appeared in *Catenary Tales* #1 and was titled 'A No Frills Guide to Driving in Mexico.' I also wrote a number of personalzines called *Dangerous Crudzines* about some adventures down there. I thought I could put all those bad memories away, but Dick made me dredge them up, so blame him."

Nightmares of a Quesadilla Fiend

by Elst Weinstein

For those of you who know me, you might recall that I am a pediatrician who does a lot of strange fannish things like put out fanzines and run the Hugu at WorldCons. But there exists a seamier side that I do not like to admit to others. You see, I lived for most of four years in a foreign country. Not just any country, mind you, but one almost in the middle of the third world (where ever that is!). This has had a most unusual effect on my personality, for at unpredictable moments I uncontrollably shout something in Spanish totally unintelligible to anybody but myself. But I digress. Actually, I procrastinate, for this article was supposed to be done months ago. I thought it might be the manana attitude seeping in, but I was a procrastinator long before I went down there. A friend of mine once noted that each day in Mexico was like a science fiction short story. I held out for it being like a brief episode of *The Twilight Zone*.

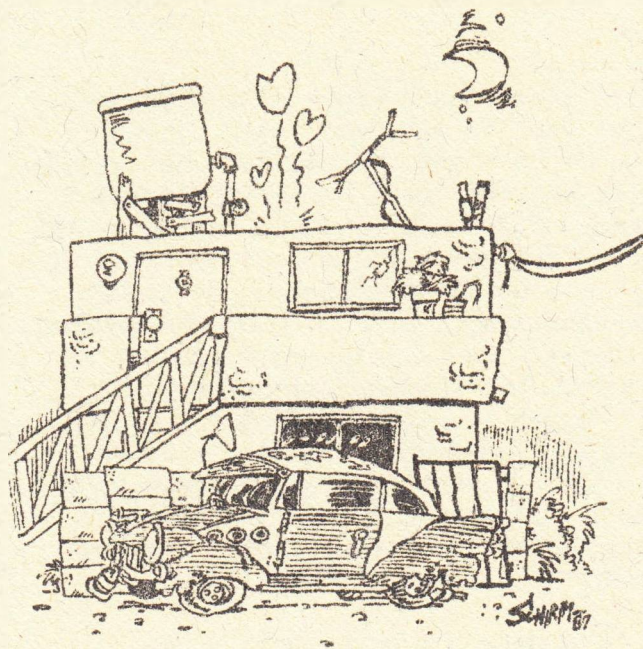
CHAPTER 1: The House

Most of us medical students found that the most affordable way to live in Mexico was to get together with a few others and rent a house. There were no dorms there, and apartments were few and far between. Besides, the rent was only about \$80 per month for a furnished place. Guadalajara (a.k.a. The Quad) is the second largest city in Mexico, and as luck would have it, there existed a number of suitable homes in the suburbs that were available. After a few near misses, I hit upon a place inhabited by two other students, Tyson and Sam. Tyson was American Chinese from Los Angeles,

and Sam was a Texan from Brownsville. And for a while things were just fine...

CHAPTER 2: The Land Lady and Family

The land lady lived in the duplex upstairs from us. With her were two relatively bratty little girls and a paleozoic man, supposedly her father or grandfather, we never knew which. The land lady was the type that actually came to our door the first of each month to demand the rent, yet never seemed available if anything went the leastwise wrong. She had slimy boyfriend types who approached the house noisily in vehicles better left for recycling to Japan and departed at random hours between 12 and 6 AM. (Other sounds heard are not reproducible in family fanzines.) The little girls communicated in long series of whines, much like a guinea pig with gas



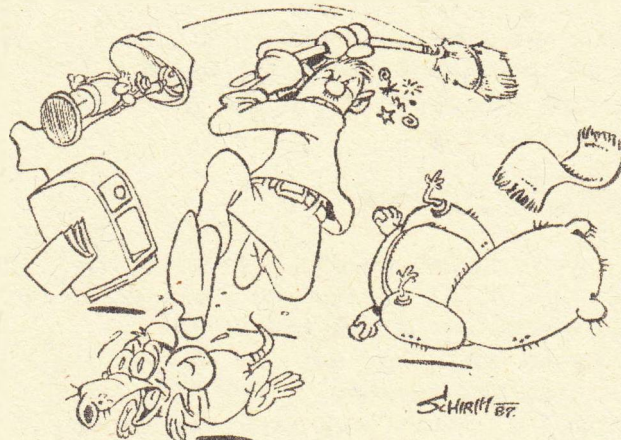
pains, only much louder and a bit shriller. The mother answered in a lower pitched whine, and the old man only grunted.

Senor Methuselah was incredible. We guessed that he was old when Pancho Villa rode through town to recruit banditos. Imagine if you will, Pancho yelling at him, "Sign up now!" "Sorry, Senor Pancho, but my rheumatism is acting up again." One day we heard a knock at the door, and on answering, the Old Guy just barged in, mumbling "Yerba Buena!" ("Mint!") repeatedly, like someone in the desert begging for water. He plodded through the house and out into the back garden. There he briefly paused, creakingly bent over, grabbed a mint plant and shakingly yanked it out of the ground. I could almost hear it scream. Clutching the plant in one hand with dirt dropping in clods onto our just cleaned floor, he walked back through the house shouting over and over again, "Yerba Buena! Yerba Buena!" What plans he had for the poor plant were beyond our comprehension, but Sam suggested flaying alive or electrocution.

CHAPTER 3: The Door

Mexican builders just do things differently. Tyson said that they drew up floor plans only after a building was completed. Sam said they never did draw up anything, they just stole supplies from another construction site and built until this ran out. My favorite theory was that nobody built the houses at all, they just dug deep holes, buried a few bricks and watered the site everyday for a week. Edifices seemed to go up overnight without any noticeable advance planning. One example is the doorway -- constructed first and a door placed in later. Unfortunately, doors in Mexico are more standard than the doorways, and in our house this meant a three-inch gap at the bottom of the door. All sorts of creatures decided that this was for them. At first it was the cockroaches. These were not your swishy, timid, Gringo cockroaches. No, these were Macho roaches that benchpressed 20 pounds and considered ToxicWaste[®] Roach Spray to be a cologne. Next came all manner of disgusting six, eight, and hundred-legged

creatures that naturalists have yet to get up enough courage to classify. Lastly, we were invaded by the Mexican Mouse Patrol. Almost daily, one of these furry fellows wandered aimlessly into our living room from outdoors. We would chase him about, with Sam finally subduing him with a broom. (The Texan seemed to enjoy this...) After the first mouse was caught and disposed of, we complained to the land lady but she of course ignored our request to fix the door. The next mouse was captured and placed in a peanut butter jar, which we left on the porch in front of her upstairs door. It only took four jarred mice during the next week, and miraculously somebody came over to fix our door.



CHAPTER 4: Agua Man and The Creatures of the Black Spittoon

Many scary tales have been spoken at campfires about dreadful ghosts, blood-sucking ghouls, and Mexican tap water. Well, they're all true. The water supposedly comes in from a purification plant and is pumped into the city. So far so good, eh? But as it gets to the individual house, it enters into an open cistern and is later pumped up to the rooftop tank. By "open," I mean that the tank allowed runoff from the driveway to seep in, not to mention all sorts of unwanted guests. The first time we looked into the cistern was a shocking experience. Assorted bug-eyed monsters, slime worms, and three-inch long Id monsters were squirming around at the bottom of the tank. We could only imagine what was in the tank on the roof. Not even Sam would climb up there.

Needless to say, this water was not for human consumption.

For that, we entrusted our gastrointestinal tract to the Agua Man. This was a little guy who drove around on a modified motor bike carrying bottles of "safe" drinking water. The claim was that ozone was filtered through the water, and that by gas warfare it killed the germs inside it. Agua Man called attention to himself by yelling out a nasal whine that sounded a lot like a buffalo in heat, "Aaaaaaaah, Aaaaaaaah!" He drove up to the house, took the empty bottles and dropped off the new bottles. We continued to get this water on a regular basis despite the rumors that it came fresh from the tap... And the fact that one of the two big brands was Agua Coli (as in E. Coli, a famous intestinal bacteria) was a constant comfort. We bought Arco Iris (rainbow) water.

CHAPTER 5: The Pump

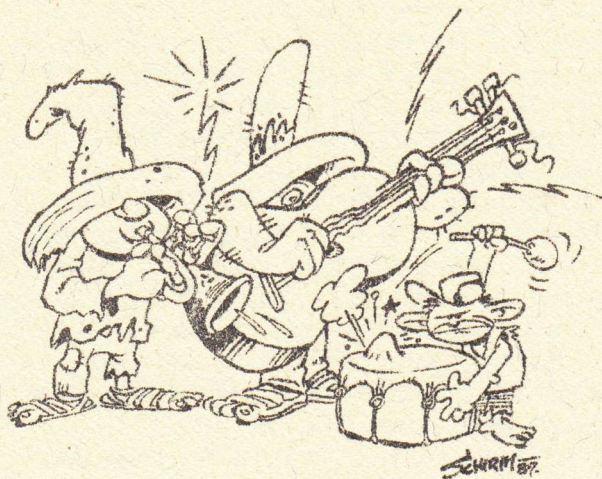
Even though we did not drink the water, we still used it to wash up, clean the dishes, and flush the toilet (although only the last use wasn't defeating the purpose). For this, we required a little pump near the ground that would normally send water into the upper tank. From there, the water flowed by gravity into both our house and the land lady's upstairs duplex. The pump was about as powerful as a Triple-A battery, and had a bad habit of giving up after only a few gallons of flow. As noted above, our wonderous proprietress delayed in repairing anything. At one point, the toilet became clogged and would only flush by flowing up the shower drain. Obviously, this was not a fun situation. We complained and as usual, were told to wait. We threatened to take showers upstairs in her house, and Sam emphasized the emotional effects that three naked men would have on her daughters. She just laughed. Actually, there was a simple solution to this delicate problem; we just unplugged the pump. As the lovely people above used the tap water for everything, the roof tank rapidly went dry. Again, miraculously somebody came over that very day to fix our plumbing and the pump.

CHAPTER 6: The Gas Stove

Our little house *did* require another outside utility, and that was a delivery of gas cylinders. We used them to cook, and to heat water for washing and showers. Usually this was a benign experience, except once. As we were cleaning up behind the stove, we noticed the copper coil connecting the stove to the gas cylinder had a section that had rotted all the way through. Since this made cooking a prime hazard, we turned off the gas and reported the break in the line to the land lady. Getting as much response as we'd gotten in the past, we came up with a great plan -- Tyson merely reminded her that as students we were seldom at home during the day, but that she and her family were in the house all the time. I mentioned that if the leak continued to occur, there would be an explosion that would have a much greater chance of getting them than us, because we intended to stay with friends until the problem was solved. And again, miraculously, somebody came over that very day to fix the gas system. In this case, I think it took less than an hour.

CHAPTER 7: The Mariachis

The person who introduced the German brass band to Mexico must be guffawing loudly at the universe from his own private place in Hell. Even though the concept of Mariachi music makes most people think of the pre-recorded polyphony punctuated with wolf howls played in the background of Taco Jose, it's a fact that in Mexico that any group of three or more who can gather up a guitar,

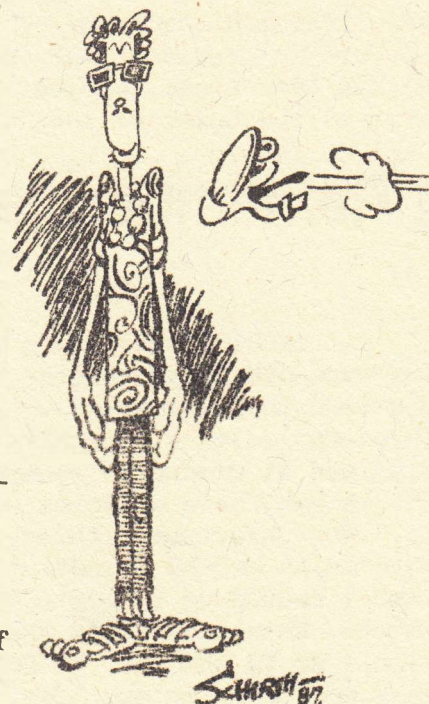


trumpet, and drum can afflict misery on their neighborhood. It may come as a surprise to you, but it was a medical student tradition to cut classes the last few days prior to exams in order to cram sufficiently to pass them. In one of these times we heard a sound that human ears had forgotten since the last Mammoth died. Sam asked, "Who's out there dyin'?" I got up to look, and noticed a five piece Mariachi band outside our front door. "Maybe if we ignore them they'll go away?" suggested Tyson. So we tried to go back to studying. But alas, the band played all the louder. Finally, I went out front and told them to get lost. Wrong move. They played a new selection of screeching chants that resembled a cat in a trash compactor. In desperation, we turned on our radio at full volume, hoping against hope that they would just go away. No such luck. Amazingly, they played all the louder and all the worse. It was time for moves bordering on the last ditch, so I phoned a friend who supposedly knew the proper way out. I was told that the Mariachis would play on until you paid them to stop. This actually seemed logical, so after another ten tortuous minutes, we were prepared to pay for our peace of mind. Dredging up about fifty pesos (\$4), we ended the wailing and returned to our studies.

CHAPTER 8: These Shoes Are Made for Mocking

Eventually, Tyson and Sam moved out and some others moved in. At first things went rather well, but one of these people was Gorman, a simple minded school teacher. Gorman wasn't a med student, and never could appreciate the Guad student negativistic attitude toward Mexico. He, being from Frostbite Falls, Minnesota, embraced all that was Mexican. He lived in a dreamland, and worst of all, he never did his share of housework. It got to the point where piles of dirty dishes in the kitchen had made it nearly impossible to enter that room, and we were forced to go out to eat every night. At the end of the semester break, Gorman came up with a plan to make a fortune selling Mexican sandals (huaraches) back in Minnesota. He bought over two hundred pair of them, and put them all into a

large box in his room. Despite repeated warnings that we might cause him bodily harm if he didn't do his share, Gorman continued to slob around. Finally, I reached my limit, and so had John, the remaining room-mate, so I called over a number of friends who made a party of dispersing the sandals in as many directions as possible throughout the room. We made sure that no two near each other were a matching pair, and then we placed the now empty box on top of the pile. Gently we closed the door and awaited the fireworks. Gorman came home drunk from partying and flopped onto his bed. Or he tried to -- he slipped on the assorted sandals, knocking over the neat little tower we'd built over the bed. Collapsing into a pile of mismatched leather, he was so tired that he immediately fell asleep. He awoke in the morning, head probably throbbing away, and did start screaming at us. I doubt he bought my story that the roaches did it while he was away having a night on the town, but that was the one I stuck to.



There are other stories in this collection, but for now they must remain but horrifying memories. Tales of woe, tales of torture, tales of adventure on the road, and tales of strange creatures unseen by civilized man. But for now, I must end with a promise to do more manana.

The previous *Mimosa*, you may recall, included Lon Atkins's article on the great fannish card game of Hearts. While we were in Cincinnati at Corflu 4, we ran across Dave Locke, who was the object of some of the humor of that article. Far

from being offended, he thought it was actually quite funny. Anyway, in the interests of fair play, we're happy to present the following article, in response. - D&N

I Remember Lemuria, and Lon Atkins, Vaguely...

by Dave Locke

I should never go to conventions. I always come home remembering that I've promised to write articles for about three fan editors. Usually the memory dims and it gradually escapes me as to who it was these articles were promised to. The unfortunate thing is that I use this as an excuse to not write anything. What I should do is write the material anyway, then take it to the next convention I go to and pass it out to whoever asks me for articles. "Yes, thanks, Dave. However, an article about your experiences during the oil shortage of 1974 isn't exactly what I had in mind." "I know, but if I write about Lon Atkins it will be even less marketable to whoever approaches me for material at my next convention."

Being a fan editor myself, I understand all the problems. Obviously Dick Lynch does, too. When I got home from the April 1987 Corflu, I emptied my pockets and found the following note from him:

Dave Locke
Article for *Mimosa* #3
Reprint from *apazine*?
Story about Atkins?

Would like by about May 1, if possible.
For publication this summer (if all goes well).

Just my luck to run into an organized faneditor. After I promise, he puts it in writing and shoves it into my pocket. I'll bet he has a carbon of it pinned to the wall above his desk at home.

I've looked at this note many times

since Corflu 4, including on May 1st and more frequently on the days that followed. It's not that I don't want to write something because, after all, *Mimosa* is a good fanzine and Dick and Nicki are good people. It's not that I don't want to write an article about Lon Atkins.

Dick and I were talking in the hallway outside the Corflu consuite. We had been talking about fan X who was threatening legal action against fan Y, shaking our heads over the hate and discontent of it all, and Dick opened his fanzine to the article by Lon Atkins ((ed. note: "*The Great Hearts Shoot-out*")). He tapped his finger on the page a few times, then asked if I'd read it and if so what my reaction was. Immediately I leapt to my feet, threatened to sue his shorts off without ever removing his trousers, and made the offhand remark that "I didn't have to receive your fanzine to be insulted; I could have stayed married." I then sat down and lit another cigarette, told him that Lon was a great fellow and a good friend, and that I was as amused by his reprint of the article as I was the first time I read it. He then asked if what Lon had written about me in *Mimosa* #2 was accurate, and I told him it was all a pack of lies or at least no more than 85% true at best, or maybe 90%. All right, maybe even 95%.

Lon's article, you'll recall, was about how a hotshot SoCal Hearts player named Dave Locke got shot down in flames in two successive Hearts matches. Lon, who had almost always won any Hearts match at which I didn't sit in, rubbed his hands in glee after my second successive loss and proceeded to lock himself away in his fan den for twelve



hours to compose, edit, type final copy, and chortle over this one-shot article/publication which he would run through any apa he was a member of and any apa which would let him frank it through. He called it *Icepick* #6. He sent my copy on April 7th, 1980 with the following cover letter:

"Enjoyed the Hearts party, although I was saddened to see those terrible cards so consistently in your hand. (They would have gone much better with Glyer...)

"Nevertheless, thanks for hosting. After I return from my trip we simply must lure Mr. Glyer down again. He deserves a rematch."

But, of course, I moved out of the LArea in May of 1980, and the rematch never happened... A letter from Lon dated 5/27/80 and starting off, "Glad to hear of the safe completion of your journey", with a logo reading "Office of THE JACK OF DIAMONDS", contained the lines: "Sharpen up your Hearts game, Locke. We'll no doubt lock horns again ... it's always a pleasure to play

against a man who understands the game and never lets mere ethical or moral considerations stand in the way of razor-keen Hearts practice. A man like me..."

In August of 1980 Lon sent me a copy of his fanzine *A Hearts Primer*. His cover letter says "This is a zine I've been working on awhile (on and off). It's a humorous approach to the magic game; thought you might enjoy."

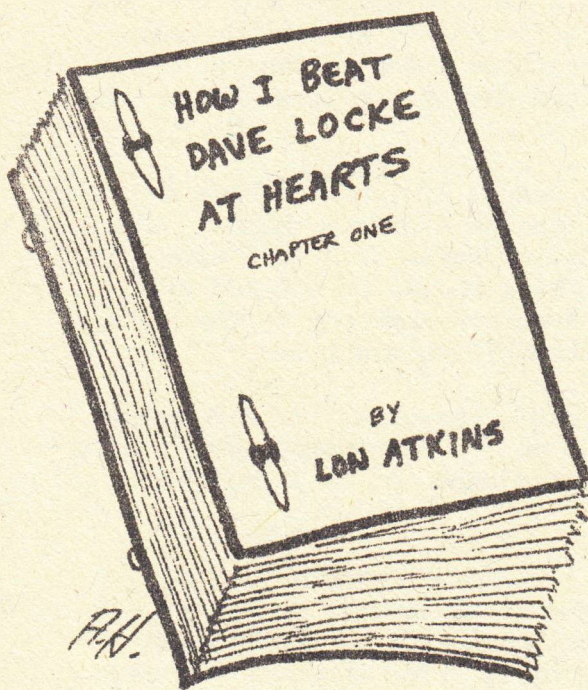
I did, very much. As did anyone I know who enjoys "the magic game". In my next letter back to Lon I told him:

"I might somehow find a segue in my apazine to prompt recollection of the Hearts game where, in three successive passes from you, I shot the moon three times. Any true Hearts fan who reads *A Hearts Primer* would naturally be interested in background stories about how you came to possess the Hearts skills that you now enjoy. Certainly my recollection must be of the game where you first began to pick up on the idea of passing a low heart to known runners..."

On March 24th of 1982 Lon sent me a short note which included the following lines concerning the Petards (the 'other' group in Los Angeles). It almost made me cry.

"We tried for a Hearts game at Petards, but couldn't find four players. Alas, the decline of Western civilization."

The foregoing was from my letter files. I also reviewed my apazines for *FLAP*, which started in January of 1980 -- still going strong -- wherein Lon and I are charter members. I didn't find anything worthy of being made into an article by itself, but I did find a few quotable bits which I had addressed to Lon on the subject of Hearts. The first one refers to the article which you read, in its reprinted state, in the last issue of *Mimosa*.



JUNE 1980

You're right: I did lose my ass at Hearts that Saturday night. And then a couple of days later I had to read a fourteen-page fanzine you wrote all about it. Son, we Old Hands don't cause a lot of ruckus when we win a big game. Makes things more embarrassing when we occasionally lose... You must learn this lesson if you are to be ready for the Big League...

JUNE 1981

For a guy who couldn't beat me at Othello, you've got a lot of balls to propose a ranking system of "Atkins, Master, Novice, Locke."

DECEMBER 1981

I read in a fanzine about your third Hearts tourney win ((ed. note: at Deep-SouthCon)). Congratulations again. I'm sorry I wasn't there to give you a run for your money (by the way, are there any stakes involved, or just the title?), but then again I haven't played Hearts since the last time I played you (remember, you published a 214-page fanzine all about it to ~~fab~~ ~~ix~~ ~~ix~~ commemorate the occasion).

I suppose I could make up some additional stuff, but my heart isn't into doing a good job of it. I mean, I was in Southern Califunny from 1968 to 1980, and

when I first met Lon he was a very respectable Hearts player. In the twelve years we resided in the same general area, Lon managed to greatly improve his game and frequently came in second-place at those matches which I attended. He learned to pass low hearts to known runners. He learned to take less than 45 seconds to decide what card to play or I would kick him in the kneecap. He learned not to do obvious Table Talk or I would pour his drink on his head. Over the course of twelve years Lon managed to learn many things about the magic game by paying attention to the way that I played it. That he lost his head at the end and published a 714 page article about my losing twice in succession, well ... everyone goes bonzo once in a while and it would be a mistake for me to throw out the baby with the bath water. Lon is a good fellow, and it would be wrong to castigate him for displaying excessive pride in being delighted at the stumbling of one of his elders. Had I stayed in Suthren Califunny, Lon would have better learned the lesson of humility and would never, in 1986, have submitted *Icepick* #6 for reprinting in *Minosa* #2.



And though I haven't played Hearts since 1980, neither has Lon played Hearts with me since 1980, which has resulted in the hampering of his natural development in the game. Considering the time which

has passed, he probably thought it safe to have this intemperate article reprinted.

What this amounts to, I suppose, is that since 1980 Lon has played a few Hearts matches with reasonable but uninspiring competition. Merely surviving, unchallenged by any real competition, he has become emboldened in the last seven years and has lost sight of what happened in the twelve years prior to those two lucky matches. I hear that, since I left L.A., Lon has not even played a match with any reasonable peer-level competition. Instead, he has been busy playing against second-level competition and involving himself with computer-simulated Hearts where he programs deliberate weaknesses into computer-simulacrums of Master Hearts Players whom he has consistently lost to

in the past. A sad affair.

Lon is a good friend and one of the best Hearts players I have ever had the opportunity to share a table with. He has produced A Hearts Primer, the best publication on Hearts to appear in either the fan or pro press. His personality has been unique at the Hearts Table. His wins, in competitions which have held a minimum of top-ranked players, have been impressive. Lon is definitely a Legend in the game, a public relations giant in the mold of Harlan Ellison, though Lon is much taller.

One of this days Lon and I will get together again. Considering everything, we should start off the first match real slow, just so we break-in easy.

Say, \$10 a point.

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One of the nice things about belonging to an APA is that quite often you come across an article or a fan

writer that you'd ordinarily never see. The following is a case in point, and recently appeared in SAPS. - D&N

The Untimely Mrs. Jones

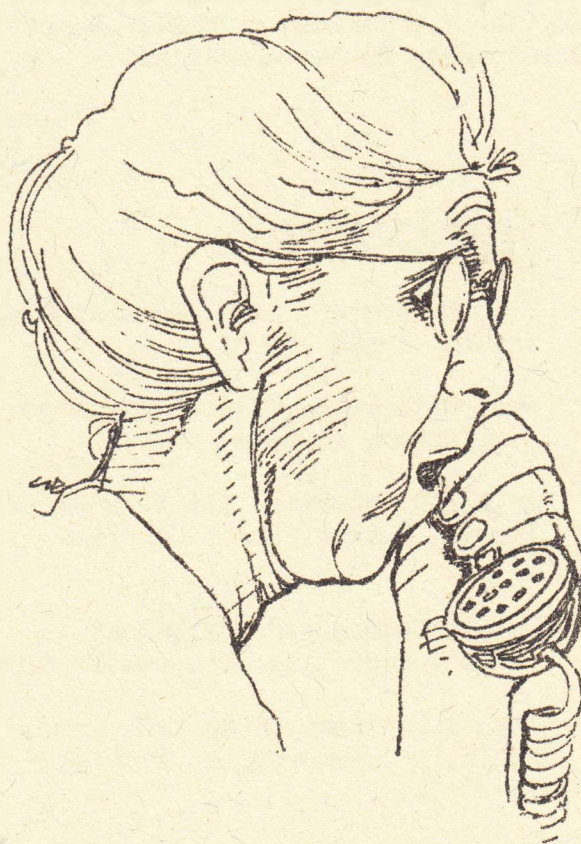
by Meg Stull

Sometimes life seems wonderfully fine, even when it's full of Life's Little Disasters. Right off the top of my head, I can't think of anything that's gone as planned recently. I'm sicker than I was three months ago. The plant where Ed works is only working a four day work week. A prolonged plague of feline distemper killed off all but one of our cats in spite of our spending a small fortune in vet bills, and we aren't even planting a garden this year. All in all, I can think of a hundred and one good solid reasons to be depressed. But somehow I'm not...

Ed and I had been planning in engaging in a little Afternoon Delight one afternoon when Mrs. Jones showed up with a tuna casserole. Now, Mrs. Jones is our closest neighbor, geographically speaking, but try as we might, we have never quite managed to make friends with her. She's as close to the stereotypical spinster school marm as you can find in real life, and she always manages to catch us in our most singular moments.

There are a lot of misunderstandings between us -- stuff like the times our mail lady left my fannish mail in Mrs. Jones' box by mistake. The first time it happened, the mail in question was a copy of *Holier Than Thou*; the next time it was a Cultic fractional entitled "Large Painful Turds". ((Ed. note: Besides being in SAPS, Meg is also member of The Cult, a rotating-editor letter apa.)) (And some fannish friends still wonder why I strongly favor mail in plain brown wrappers.) When our phone was on a party line, Mrs. Jones picked up at all the wrong moments. It took a lot of explaining before she was finally convinced that a "Cultic Seance" had nothing to do with a coven of witches gathering 'round the bubbling

brew. After all, she'd heard with her own ears that Steve had brought a new bubbling brew to the Cultic seance. Then there was the time I had a bathtub full of washing photos and Mrs. Jones heard Ed complain that he couldn't take a bath because the tub "was full of naked ladies and Michael in his jockey shorts."



But you get the general idea. I can understand why Mrs. Jones has always looked at us with a vague sense of alarm. She's really a very nice lady, and, even after nine years of this kind of nonsense, she still tries her best to be neighborly, by doing things like bringing us a tuna fish casserole when I'm sick and money is a bit tight.

Unfortunately, she has a lousy sense of timing...

When the doorbell rang I wasn't completely undressed yet so I quick threw on some clothes. Since I really want to make friends with Mrs. Jones, I invited her in for some cookies and coffee. She never stays long. I said Ed was upstairs "taking a nap," and I assumed he could hear us well enough through the open stairwell to know what was keeping me away from our eagerly anticipated entertainment. It wasn't more than two minutes after we sat down that Rufus demanded to go outside. The conversation paused while I escorted our dog to the door and Mrs. Jones perched on the edge of the sofa, politely munching an Oreo and sipping coffee.

Apparently Ed heard the back door close, and assumed Mrs. Jones had left, because, seconds later, he bounded downstairs, completely naked, arms open wide, shouting, "SURPRISE! I'm ready!" (And, believe me, he was ready... How embarrassing!) Unfortunately I was just coming out of the kitchen and it was Mrs. Jones who caught the full view of my husband.

Mrs. Jones fell off the sofa and choked. I mean the lady literally *choked* on a piece of cookie, and while we were standing there stunned, she started to slowly turn blue. Ed, who is always good in a crunch, was the first to realize what was going on. He hauled her to her feet and successfully administered the Heimlich maneuver after a few unsuccessful tries. In fact, he ultimately was so successful that not only did the cookie come flying out of her mouth, so did her upper plate. I bent down and picked up her teeth, but I sure didn't know what to say. There we stood, Ed stark naked, still supporting Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Jones gasping for breath, and me standing there like an idiot, holding a set of false teeth. In high school our dorm mother always used to say that a true lady could make anyone feel comfortable, no matter *what* the circumstances -- but, damn it, she never saw *these* circumstances!

Mrs. Jones is nothing if not a lady. As soon as she caught her breath (going through some truly amazing color changes in the process) she started to giggle. And then she started to laugh. And pretty soon all three of us were laughing so hard we had to sit down. When we were done laughing, Mrs. Jones insisted that we really didn't need to take her to a hospital. If we'd let her rest while she finished her coffee and Oreos, she'd be fine. Ed excused himself to go put on a robe, and Mrs. Jones excused herself for a second to run some water over her teeth, while I got another plate of cookies. We sat around and talked small talk for about half an hour, and when she got up to leave, Mrs. Jones, hale and hearty, without a hair out of place, put a spindly arm around each of us. She gave us a gentle hug, and said, "The two of you are the most entertaining young couple I know." I think there's hope for a friendship there yet!



Here's another example of good APA writing we're happy to give new life to. This article originally appeared in SFPA more than three years ago; its author is perhaps a recognizable name for fanzine

and convention fans, and has been involved in fandom first in New Orleans and since 1978 in Phoenix, where the following events occurred. - D&N

Adventures of a Shopping Mall Santa

by Don Markstein

I don't know when I had the idea, but it was some time of the year when Christmas seems very far away. I finally got around to mentioning it to GiGi around the middle of November, and she encouraged me to call around and find out how one goes about becoming one. A week or so later, I actually reached the point of calling a local mall, which gave me the number of a Kathy McNulty, who handles such things for them.

Before I continue, the Snarling Villain in me insists I say a few cynical words about Santa Claus. Very well. Several years ago, in *FreFanzine* (the anarchist apa), Richard Onley made this observation (disclaimer: I haven't looked up his words; these are mine):

Children live in a world of terror. They are ruled by people of immense power (relative to themselves), whose rulings may not be questioned and whose motives can only be guessed at. Anger and frustration are their constant companions. But they know that at the end of the year (if they're good) a benevolent old man with a long white beard, who lives in a bright, gleaming land far, far

away, will give them everything they've ever dreamed of.

And when they grow up, they still live in a world of terror. They're still ruled by people of immense power, unquestionable rulings and unfathomable motives. Anger and frustration still abide with them. But at the end of their lives...

Richard prefaced this by stating that the Santa Claus myth is a lie, and that if lying to children is wrong then it's wrong to tell them about Santa Claus. I don't entirely share that point of view, but the parallel with the organized religion lie gives one pause, and when you put it that way, it's hard to answer.

Anyway, I called this Kathy McNulty, and on the third try found myself speaking with a personable, but very rushed woman who, for 15 years, has done Santa Claus bookings for shopping malls in seven Western states. She didn't have time to interview me properly, but there was a 15-minute period during which we could meet at a mall in the neighborhood if I could make it there at just the right time.

I was there. I took the unusual approach of telling her all the reasons nobody should ever hire me for anything, then convinced her she should anyway. Personally, I think an honest job interview should deal with the reasons the person *shouldn't* get to take the job, but this is the first time that's ever worked.

The interview ended with my asking her, just out of curiosity, what she does the rest of the year.

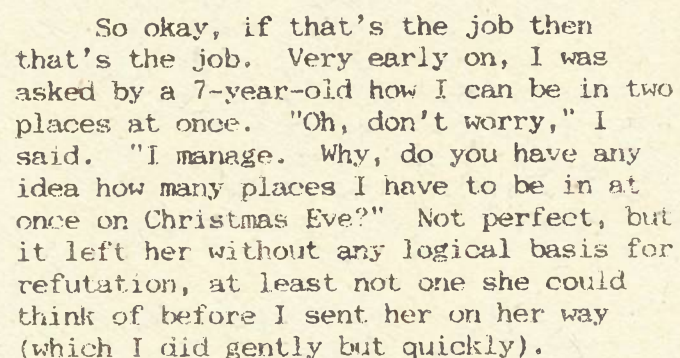
Wendy
to - ~~STAMEN~~
Mr + Mrs SANTA
Claus

one single time.)

One thing that surprised me was that we were never to admit, under any circumstances, that we were anything by the real, bonafide Santa Claus. Now, when I was a kid, that standard answer to how Santa could be in so many places at once was that these were actually just his helpers, and that the real Santa was busy at the North Pole, planning his trip and supervising the manufacture of toys. That seems okay to me, because it doesn't conflict with either that legend or the rules by which the Universe is constructed, which even a child knows. But that pat answer wasn't good enough -- the job is to convince the kid that you're the One And Only (or at least make *him* prove that you aren't).

Santa School covered about what you'd expect it to cover, if you ever gave the matter any thought at all, which I'm sure you haven't. What to tell the kids, what not to tell the kids, what the kids might tell us, how to deal with a surprising variety of problems that might come up, the names of the reindeer... It was lots of fun, but like the honest job interview, made mention of possible negative aspects of the job.

One guy there said he'd been doing it since his kids were that age, continued through the grandkids, and now has great- grandkids. He described one encounter with a reporter -- he was asked his name, questions about the mall he was in and various other things. He said he was Santa Claus and would answer only Santa Claus questions (I live at the North Pole, I bring toys to good girls and boys, I have eight reindeer and their names are...), and he simply refused to be shaken from his story.



At home, I figured it was okay to admit the truth. I explained to our daughter Kelly that I'd taken a job as Santa Claus's helper, and would be having occasional phone dealings with Santa's agent. My job would be to impersonate Santa at shopping malls.

29

Santas I talked with in the course of business, about half did the same. For some reason, at one mall it was a deep, dark secret, even from the women playing "helpers", that this was done. At the other, it was talked about by everyone. I never did figure that one out. There were other differences between the two malls in their approach to the Santa Claus operation, but that's the one that stands out the most. There are even more differences in the characters of the malls themselves.

Quiz wiz

Cabbage patch doll

~~Operation~~

~~Snoopy slipper~~

Garfield sleeping bag
AM/FM radio

~~its~~

~~book~~

~~Rechargeable~~

digital watch

Metrocenter is the biggest mall in town -- in fact, offhand I can't think of any I've ever seen that's bigger, though I'm not what you'd call an authority on the subject. Two stories, five major department stores, hundreds of little shops, alleys, byways, and of course an ice skating rink. Metrocenter is the first place in Phoenix I saw *Dragon's Lair*.

And crowds! Migod, the crowds at Metrocenter! Everybody shops there -- it's big enough to draw people from... from... well, none of you know the suburbs of Phoenix, so think of it, in New Orleans terminology, as drawing them in from LaPlace to Slidell. And if you drew people in from LaPlace to Slidell, what you'd get would be... well, let's call it a crosssection of the population. You see many different types of people at Metrocenter.

Not so at Paradise Valley Mall.

This is the only shopping mall -- and one of the few commercial enterprises of any kind -- in the Town of Paradise Valley, a suburb of low population and high per capita income. In L.A. terminology, the Town of Paradise Valley wants to be Bel Aire to Scottsdale's Beverly Hills. Paradise Valley (the mall, that is) is posh, but not as posh as Metrocenter. It's big, but there are several malls in the area that are bigger. The shops are high-end, but most are also represented elsewhere in town. Its merchandise is no less tacky, but a bit more expensive as is common in shopping malls. Altogether, it's a nice package, as malls go, but not designed to attract people far from its immediate area, at least not in a city like Phoenix.

Which means that the crowds are thin at Paradise Valley, and the people in them are well-heeled. Relatively fewer blacks, Mexicans, Indians, and other population segments that are under-represented in the Town of Paradise Valley. It's a less hectic, less tense place all-around than Metrocenter, but also less alive. Add to this the fact that I always seemed to hit Metrocenter on the busiest days -- weekends, the Friday before Christmas, never a school day -- and you will see that I found it altogether easier to maintain my Santa-like serenity in Paradise Valley than in Metrocenter. But I enjoyed visiting Metrocenter a lot more.

A week after Santa school, that is, the day after Thanksgiving, there I was

Baby doll that
cats.
Baby doll that
cries.
Barbie
Swimming
P.

at Metrocenter, sitting on a throne set in a prominent spot in the mall, smiling and waving at kids and inviting them to sit on my lap. If I behaved that way at a schoolyard, I'd be arrested... if the cops got there in time to save me from the parents.

Surprisingly (to me), that was one of the busiest days of all. I guess everybody figures to beat the crowd by rushing out as soon as the season opens. Or maybe going out that day is the only way you can get a Cabbage Patch Kid, but anyway, there was a lot of people out Christmas shopping the day after Thanksgiving.

My very first client presented a problem. She was already on her second visit -- Metro jumps the gun on the other malls by starting Santa Monday of Thanksgiving week -- and the first guy whose lap she'd sat in had told her a secret. My helper had overheard her mention it while I'd been out checking on my reindeer (which I usually did right around shift changing time), and warned me about it as I sat down.

Oh, I was so clever about it. "Didn't I tell you a secret when you were here before?" Yes. "Do you remember what it was?" And to prove she did, she repeated it to me.

I suppose I should be pretty smug about pulling myself through that one without planting any suspicions... but then I remember what Richard Onley had to say, and I wonder if using my superior adult deceptive abilities to trick information out of a child is really something to be proud of. The secret? Oh, some tawdry episode involving Rudolph, as I recall. Nothing you'd be interested in, I'm sure.

Not all of my conversations with kids were so interesting. In fact, the vast majority of them were downright boring. I'm afraid there were times when I failed to instill the conviction that this was just the most personal visit anyone had ever had with Santa Claus; and there were other times when the feeling of spontaneity and personal warmth was transmitted only by dint of superior

effort. It came to sound like broken record at times... but a jolly broken record.

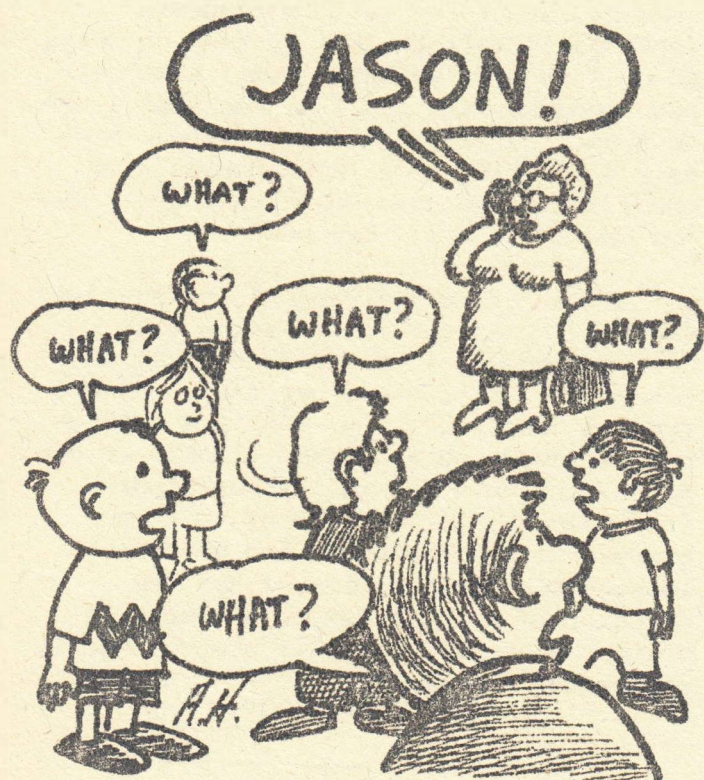
I'd usually start by asking the kid's name, especially if they were coming up more than one at a time (common when siblings visited together). Then it's "What do you want for Christmas?", listen to the list, make standard comments about the various requests (optional), tell the kid to keep on being good (I've been watching and I know he's been good so far) and I'll see what I can do about that list (never promise), here have a coloring book (some Santas give candy canes, we gave coloring books), see 'ya Christmas Eve, 'bye now.

Once, after a string of routine visits, I was starting to get a bit glassy-eyed. A little girl came up and sat on my lap, I asked her name, and she replied "Kendra." Now, that's a fairly unusual name, so I blinked, looked at her again, and sure enough, it was Kendra from down the street, one of Kelly's playmates; and there was her mother looking on. Another time, I had the daughter of a local fan on my lap. In neither case did they ever suspect who it was behind the beard.

7	Dear Santa	
8	I'm in AZ for	
9	Christmas. I'm	
10	going to leave for	
11	Chocolate for you	
12	So you won't get	
13	cold. I hope you	
14	can bring these	
15	presents. How is	
16	Miss Clause?	
17	Hopefully fine	
18	Love,	
19	Inezan	
TOTAL		

ENTER TOTAL ON THE FRONT OF THIS TICKET

Oh, by the way, don't name your kid Jennifer or Jason, at least not if you want every kid in earshot to turn around when you call the little darling. John and Mary are both out of fashion, but it seemed like every other kid was named Jennifer or Jason. Kelly is another really popular one this generation -- wish we'd known that before we named our Kelly.



If I could pick up a name from bits and pieces of overheard conversation, that was very much preferable to asking it. It's a nice touch to have Santa Claus greet the kid by name.

Of course, sometimes it would backfire. During a slow period at Paradise Valley one day, I had my feet kicked up and was busily occupied waving merrily at passers-by (I claimed to be able to get a smile out of anybody whose eye I could catch, and 9 times out of 10 I delivered). "Come on, Bob!", I heard from one side. "Santa is free right now." Next thing I knew, this guy was holding a young boy up to me.

I took the kid onto my lap, saying "Hi, aren't you Bob?" To which the father said, "I'm Bob. This is Mike." I shook his hand. "Hi, Bob! Hi, Mike!"

"I'm Santa Claus!" Well? What would you have done?

There were lots of embarrassing moments like that. Most came from questions, such as why did I have that black moustache underneath the white one?

That one was easy. I dye it, and those are the black roots showing. Not particularly believable, but either they were young enough to want to believe whatever quasi-plausible story I came up with, or they were old enough not to have believed anything short of an outright admission of fraud. (So, why do I dye it? So the beard on my chin will be as white as the snow, that's why.)

I said back there that I'd make the standard comments on various parts of the kid's list. It was optional, but I always tried to do it so that I'd know I was actually listening and not just processing kids through my lap. The conversation was mostly rote, and I considered it important to make the kid feel conversed with. It wasn't hard to come up with those comments, because I came to know the toys pretty well.

For one thing, the season's expected hot sellers were covered in Santa school. It figures, right? I mean, you can't have an intelligent conversation about a toy unless you know what the toy is, eh? Of course, there wasn't much Santa School could teach a kidvid addict like me -- why, I collect toy commercials on videotape! Anyway, in visit after visit over the span of a month, I came to know some of those toys with stupefying intimacy.

Of course, there were some kids with unique requests, too. Like the kid who wanted a voodoo doll, so he could do terrible things to his parents. I sympathize, but as a parent -- and as Santa, I'm afraid -- I couldn't approve. As relieved as I acted when he admitted he was only kidding, I still felt like a turncoat inside.

For boys, top sellers were (neck and neck), Masters of the Universe and G.I. Joe. Both of these are sets of a stunning variety of separately-sold characters/figures that can be posed, moved around,

and put through a myriad of wonderful adventures. Masters of the Universe was based on a syndicated Satmorn half-hour; G.I. Joe on an overly-promoted comic book out from Marvel which features predictably militaristic assholery. For girls, well -- Cabbage Patch Kids and the Strawberry Shortcake series have made remarkable inroads, but Barbie was still Numero Uno.

When they did ask for Cabbage Patch Kids, I'd get so sad... I'd explain in this really remorseful tone of voice that my toy production facilities up at the North Pole were swamped with orders for them, and I probably wouldn't be able to fill them all, and I'd try *real hard*, but please don't be too disappointed if I can't make it. As the season progressed, I had to start giving the same spiel for Care Bears, another disgustingly popular commercial product. Most would nod understandingly, but some did so while obviously fighting back tears. I guess Santa must have been their last hope.

When I told GiGi about that routine, she suggested that I add that there are lots of other toys that they can love just as much, and I'll see what I can do (never promise) about bringing one of those. I liked that suggestion, because it put across the idea that commercial hype isn't what makes a toy good. So I started doing it, and it went over pretty well.

It was mostly the older kids -- 5 and up, approximately -- who asked for commercial products. The 3- and 4-year-olds had more of a tendency to want "trucks" and "dolls". 2-year-olds' desires were more generic yet -- most of them just wanted "toys". I got kids younger than that (all the way down to 12 days), but if they wanted anything at all they didn't say so.

Why would a kid that young want to sit on Santa's lap? Well, they didn't, actually. In fact, some of them were rather emphatic about *not* wanting to sit on Santa's lap. It was the parents who wanted a picture of it, and as I mentioned earlier, it's more what the parents want than what the kid wants that determines what the kid does.

Oh, did I mention that the helpers' main function was to take pictures and collect money? Well, it was. Disgusting, isn't it? But that's what makes the sleighbells jingle! Of course, Santa's lap was available free to those who just wanted to visit, so it was really okay.

So I got some kids who were too young to appreciate it themselves. A fair number of them were pretty reluctant to be delivered over to a pair of eyes peering out of a ball of white fuzz, and were not at all shy about saying so. (In fact, I am chagrined to report that we failed entirely to get a picture of our other daughter Rachel sitting on my lap, and got Kelly only on the second try. [I should also report that Rachel was extra-nice to me at home -- I suspect that's because she smelled Santa Claus on me.]

And I also got some people who were *entirely* too old for Santa Claus, but for whatever reason wanted pictures of themselves on his lap. They were fun. Like an actor assuming a role, I would never step out of character. (I'll get back to that idea of an actor assuming a role later on.) Like the other age groups mentioned back there, the too-old crowd had their own pattern of Christmas wishes. They tended to be quite extravagant, along the lines of cars, houses and celebrities. I took everything seriously, and would never even suggest that I might be dealing with someone who didn't believe in me.

"Oh, a Hot Wheels Corvette! Well, I might be able to manage that." "Would that be a Barbie house or a Strawberry Shortcake house?" "I could put a note in his stocking." "A real one!?! I don't know if I'll be able to fit that on my sleigh!"

Grown-ups ask for the darndest things. A few good ones were:

The granny-lady who wanted a trip to Tasmania, so she could visit her descendants instead of just sending them a photograph. I said maybe I could drop her off when I make my rounds.

The young adult who wanted a naked Tom Selleck doll. "Life-size, right?" "No, bigger."

The stoned teen-ager who wanted a bong, a couple of hash pipes and a kilo of Maui Wowie. I made it clear that Santa Claus doesn't deal in grown-up toys like that but wished her a Merry Christmas anyway.

And as they left, of course I cautioned them to be good, and that got some amusing snickers. And of course I made sure they got their coloring books, which got a good response also.

In fact, on two separate occasions, I was asked by an adult to autograph the coloring book. I was delighted to sign the name "Santa Claus". The first of them was from Scandinavia. Apparently, he couldn't bear to pass up this quaint Americanism.

Then there were the two guys who looked through the coloring book and found a picture of Santa checking his list, and -- lo and behold -- there were their first names, right together on the list. I was not slow in taking credit for the coincidence -- I had them together on my list because they were

... AND A CAMARO IROC
Z-28 WITH 5.0 LITER
H.O. ENGINE, HEAVY DUTY
RADIATOR, F-41 SUS-
PENSION, RALLY
WHEELS, SPORT
MIRRORS, AND
BODY SIDE MOLD-
ING, AND ALSO
AN NEC MODEL
DX-1000 VCR
WITH DIGITAL
NOISE REDUC-
TION, FOUR
HEADS, CABLE
READY,
AND....



friends.

I also got in some good zingers with adults who were just there because they'd been brought by their kids. Like the lady who tried to distract the kid from how scary I was by pointing out the cover of the coloring book (which showed Santa in the toy shop, wearing an apron): "Look, that's Santa when he's not working." "No," I said, "that's me when I *am* working. Today, I'm making a shopping mall appearance."

One kid screamed, pulled on the beard, and, just before being placed on my lap, shit in his diaper. Yet, the picture showed me with a jolly smile on my face. "You have the patience of a saint," his mother told me. "I *am* a saint," I reminded her.

That one reminds me -- I didn't work December 6, St. Nicholas' Day. Grrr... Another special day I didn't work was Christmas Eve.

Computers were big that year, as one might expect. Lots of 6- and 7-year-olds wanted computers, mostly for game playing but also in some cases for education. The motivation isn't important, of course -- even the most hardened game player can't help being educated if the machine has any non-game ability at all, and even if it doesn't, what the hell, video games are good for kids (a minority opinion, but one that I'll defend if need be).

Some younger kids wouldn't mind having computers, either. In fact, I took one such request from a 3-year-old (I knew she was 3 because I asked her). None of your tawdry 1200-XLs and TRS-1000's for this kid -- no, she wanted an Apple. When an acquaintance some years ago in an apa expressed as a goal the building of a computer for his personal use, I thought he was being wildly extravagant, and look at us now.

You'll see some of the requests mentioned above repro-ed here. They are all authentic, as I'm sure you've guessed. Hardly a working day went by that I didn't pick up two or three of those things, which I never failed to praise as an aid to ol' Santa's memory

and always was careful to bring home (a very common practice among Santas). And it wasn't just letters, either. The kids would draw pictures, tear out ads in magazines, all sorts of stuff. I had one kid give me an apple and another a cookie. There were several little perks like that to the job.

My favorite is one that I consider a reward for service above and beyond. On one of my highly-cherished days off, during which I had the usual innumerable things both business and personal that had to get done, I got a call from the Santa Supervisor at Metrocenter. The guy who was supposed to go on was suddenly so sick he was swooning, and a whole kindergarten class was waiting.

I rushed over, got dressed, and was bouncing kids on my knee within 20 minutes of getting the message. A couple of hours later, his system was purged and he was feeling well enough to finish the shift. But during the time I was there, I received from a very young child the list below. Santa Claus, at least, should have no trouble reading it, though you poor mortals may see nothing there.



I don't want to convey the impres-

sion that it was all sweetness and light. Santa has his dark side, of course. As a matter of fact, on two or three occasions, I actually went so far as to threaten to bring someone a lump of coal, which is absolutely the nastiest thing Santa Claus can do. This threat was reserved for hecklers, usually in the low-to-middle teenage bracket, but once I went so far as to make the threat to a 9-year-old who was trying to pull my beard off. He didn't act impressed at the threat, but he *did* stop pulling the beard.

I said something back there about telling the "truth" at home. Yeah, I told Kelly that I went in to the shopping mall and impersonated Santa, but it didn't seem to have been clear in her mind what I was doing. We suspect that she thought that in some mystical way I actually became Santa Claus. In a sense, she was more right than you'd be if you said I just put on a suit. Somebody made an apt analogy to a story that came from the set of one of the Superman movies. Christopher Reeve and Margot Kidder are sitting around in costume. Kidder needs assistance with some minor thing, and calls out "Help!" Instantly, Reeve is on his feet, strutting over to render aid. Whether the cameras are rolling or not, whether it's in the script or not -- if Lois Lane needs help, you can bet that Superman is on his way.

Many actors report the same phenomenon. When they assume a role, they act like that character whether they're reciting a script or not. And it's the same with playing Santa Claus. I was an actor assuming a role, and I talked, acted and thought like Santa while I was behind that beard.

And like any actor, I loved my applause. I can hear an instance of it ringing in my ear right now. The voice is that of a 4-year-old, talking excitedly to her Mom just after visiting me: "Mommy! Mommy! That was the real Santa Claus!"

*Dear Santa Claus,
How- are you I am fine*

Mimosa Letters

J. R. Madden, P.O. Box 18610-A, University Station, Baton Rouge, LA 70893

Your editorial regarding various and conditions of five years past when *Mimosa* first appeared ((*"The Passage of Time"* - D&N)) got me thinking about my own status at that time: I had been married for about one year to Daphne Grady. I had only two videocassette recorders. No personal computer. The large addition to the house which would be my crowded office/library and which I cannot imagine functioning without these days had not even been conceived. Now, five years have passed, Dick still has more hair than I. I have a son, Paul Grady Madden, almost three. And I still have yet to "pub an ish" of my very own.

Bob Tucker's article on "The Bad Old Days of Science Fiction" raps as my favorite out of the whole ish, mostly from my interest in the history of science fiction and fandom. Sometimes, I feel like I have missed out on the "golden era" of fandom by not having gotten involved until the mid-seventies. But, through the efforts of folks like Joe Siclari and Harry Warner, Jr., I am able to enjoy almost as well those "golden" days. Along that line, I would like to recommend to your readers Archie Mercer's *The Meadows of Fantasy*, a self-published zine about British fandom in the sixties available from LOCUS PRESS for \$5 plus shipping; it is a most enjoyable read and, for the truly fannish sort, captures a mood of fandom that we can seldom experience these days.

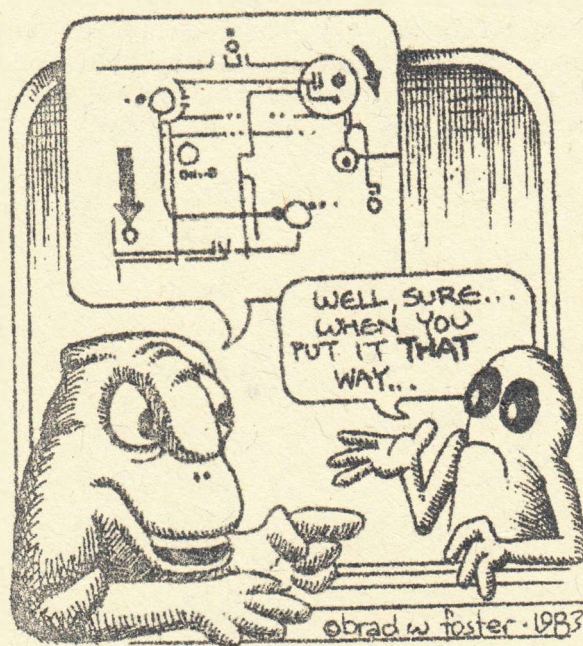
((If it were only possible, Dick would challenge you to a hair growing contest; no matter what happened, there wouldn't be a loser. But on to your comments on fan history... Would we have been happy to be part of fandom 50 years ago? Hard to say -- fandom was a lot closer-knit then, but there were also some vicious feuds that make any of today's fan feuds seem mild in comparison. In any event, fandom is still quite young, and many of its founding fathers are still around and attending conventions. Since we can't

relive the past, there's still time to at least archive it; we'll try to do our part by printing something of historical interest each issue. - D&N))

Walt Willis, 32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, N. Ireland BT21 OPD United Kingdom

Many thanks for *Mimosa* #2. Ignoring an unworthy weakness for Troll Bridges, my favourite item was Tucker's "Bad Old Days of Science Fiction." It had all the surface simplicity and underlying subtlety, adding up to memorability, that have made him perhaps the best fan writer of all time. It's wonderful to see him still going strong; I hope I'll be the same at his age...

((As do we all. - D&N))



Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, MI 48224

I was happy to see Bob Tucker's speech in print. It's nice to know the good ol' days weren't so good, though I marvel at the thought of WorldCons without membership fees. And while I think Bob is being vain to claim to have

invented the crudzine, someone had to, and why not the same man who discovered sex and humor? Or was that humorous sex?

((We think the crudzine is like the wheel -- people keep re-inventing it. - D&N))

Carth Spencer, 1296 Richardson St.,
Victoria, BC V8V 3E1 Canada

This issue was a hoot, particularly Bob Tucker's description of the Tucker Hotel and the Joe Celko piece ("Porno Wars" - D&N)). Maybe Celko ought to hold panels at WorldCons -- "Urban Survival and WorldCon Applications", "How to Spot Mafiosi and Offer a Deal They Can Accept", and "Self-Defense Orientation: This Hurts You and Doesn't Bother Me In the Least".

((Sounds like these would go over better at WeaponsCon than at WorldCon. - D&N))

George Inzer, 582 Ashville Road, Montevallo, AL 35115

Mimosa #2 was chock full of good ol' Southern fan lore. The story of how Guy's goat was got ("It Was a Dull and Stormy Night (or) How Guy's Goat Was Got" by John Guidry and Justin Winston - D&N)) has got to be the latest legend. Like Tucker's, this will undoubtedly grow in the re-telling. I can't wait to embellish it myself, and I wasn't even there!

((Thus are new legends created. We first heard the story directly from John Guidry, outside the New Orleans suite during their victory party at Confederation. It's the type of story that comes across better by telling than by reading, so we'll be interested to see if it eventually does become a lesser fan legend. - D&N))

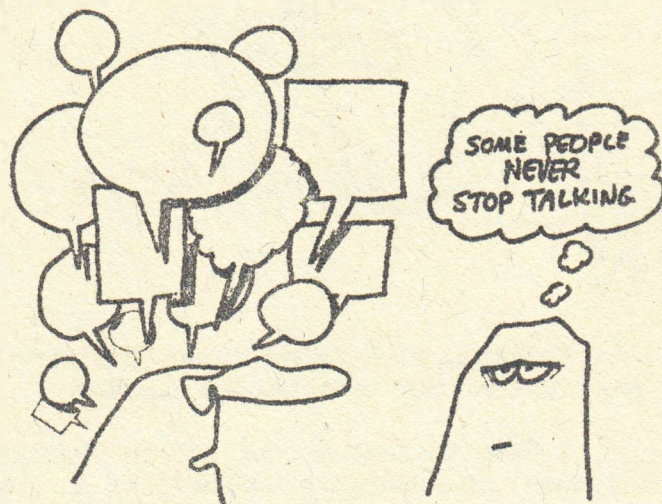
Milt Stevens, 7234 Capps Avenue, Reseda, CA 91335

The cover on Mimosa #2 looks familiar. It may be the fifties style

space helmet that brings back memories of another era. I guess Mark Maxwell may have used that style to promote nostalgia and old time sense of wonder.

Killing both Dave Locke and Guy Lillian in a single issue is some sort of an accomplishment. It's a good thing that you revived both of them or you could become known as the most dangerous fan publishers in the country.

((Well, Dave gets His Turn in this issue. As for Guy, his response to last issue's Guidry/Winston article was "All lies, of course. False in bold face. I didn't get down on my knees to listen through the bathroom door -- I could hear better standing up." - D&N))



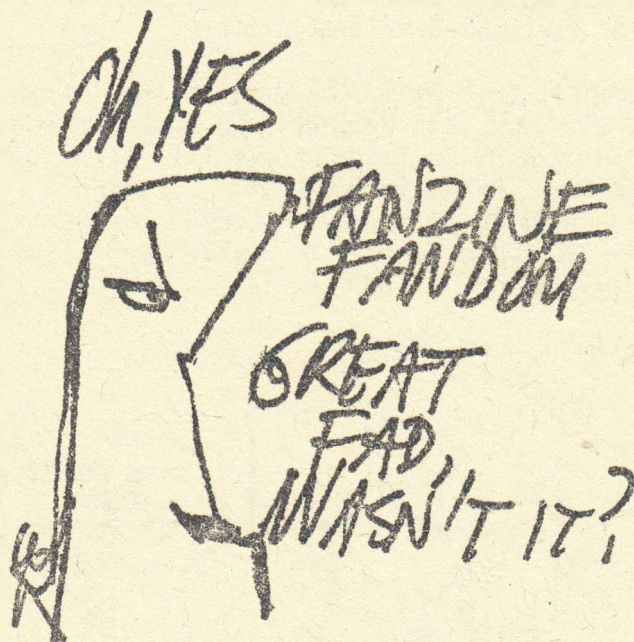
Pamela J. Boal, 4 Westfield Way, Charlton Heights, Wantage, Oxon. OX12 7EW United Kingdom

I greatly enjoyed your nicely presented zine, though to be honest some of the repro was a bit faint and on coloured paper that is difficult for my poor eyesight. The work of Charlie Williams is excellent.

Concerning "Troll Bridges in America": At certain times of the year the roads in Cyprus have notices warning 'Drive Carefully - Roads Slippery, Grape Juice'. I wonder what Lan would make of that?

((Thanks for the compliments to us and Charlie. Both we and he came back from retirement in Mimosa #2, and plan to be a

little more active from now on. In fact, the long layoff might have been one cause of the faint repro last time -- we were long out of practice in using both the electrostencil machine and mimeo! Since then, the old e-stencil machine died and we bought a new one, so we're hoping faint repro won't be a problem this time. - D&N))



Dave Collins, 21 Exleigh Close, Bitterne, Southampton SO2 5FB United Kingdom

I have to take my hat off to Charlie Williams; the bloke is one hell of a talent. He seems to be at home doing either serious full page drawings or smaller, humourous pieces. I could rave on and on about Charlie's stuff, but the easiest way to explain my adoration is to say that out of all his pieces in *Mimosa* 2, I couldn't pick my ten favourite let alone my outright favourite. My one fear is that as the dates on Charlie's illustrations are from the late '70s and early '80s, Charlie may not be doing much if any fanart these days -- please prove these fears groundless.

Less seriously, I love the idea of a fan-owned travelling con hotel. If Bob Tucker could have it set on a rotation device so every room would be guaranteed a good view, the idea would be perfect. Mind you, the rotation would have to be in the same direction and at the same speed as people's rooms spin after a good drinking session.

((A mutual friend introduced us to Charlie about ten years ago; as far as we know, we were the first to publish his art and illustrations in a fanzine. A lot of his work appeared in our earlier fanzine *Chat*, a clubzine/newszine that ran for 40 issues in the late '70s and early '80s. Maybe we'll reprint some of the best of *Chat* in a future *Mimosa*. Anyway, as you can see, Charlie's back again this issue. - D&N))

Lloyd Penney, 412-22 Riverwood Parkway, Toronto, Ontario M3Y 4E1 Canada

The Tucker speech reprint was great. I hear references to fandom's good old days, and I've read Sam Moskowitz's book on fan history in the first years. I would, however, like to find more books on fandom's genesis and its history in later ages. It seems fans expect you to know fannish history, while there aren't many sources to explore to find the info. Many of us date back only to the '60s and '70s, so we need the battalion of fanhistorians out there to stop wearing the title, and start earning it.

((Another good book to read about the early days of fandom is Harry Warner's *A Wealth of Fable*. Fandom has grown enormously in the past 30 years, and it may no longer be possible to write a definitive history of it. Still, we'd like to see someone attempt one, even if it isn't all encompassing. - D&N))

Steve Stiles, 3003 Ellerslie Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21218

Concerning Tucker's "Bad Old Days": unable to resist the Old Fart temptation to wallow in time-binding, I'll mention that at my first convention, Lumacon '59, artwork by the likes of Cartier, Emsh and Freas were being auctioned off at prices that averaged under five dollars. I had already squandered my five buck budget on old fanzines and prozines, and was in high mental agony when I realized what was slipping past me. All I had left was fifty cents for subway fare and that's what I bid -- over and over again.

Fortunately, the auctioneer, bless her, had a strong streak of mercy and let me close a bid at my half buck for a double page Wally Wood illustration from *Galaxy*. I had to walk the two miles home, of course, but insomuch as I was floating for most of the trip, considerable shoe leather was saved.

By the way, Tucker didn't mention one feature of the Tucker Hotel. To my mind it's one of the most important essentials to any good convention hotel -- the nets on the roof to catch unsullied neofen after they meet their "hero" pros, and the springboard to help those same pros to clear the nets after meeting their readers.

Buck Coulson, 2677W-500N, Hartford City,
IN 47348

I don't remember as far back as Tucker; my first convention was in 1952. But there are a few things about the "Bad Old Days" he left out. Convention hotels with one bathroom per floor and bats in the lobby. Conventions with the con suite in the hotel basement. Walk out the far door and you were in this concrete tunnel leading to the boiler room. (That's where the filksing was -- in the tunnel.) Convention hotels where guests were charged extra for a poolside room, when the pool was outdoors and had snow on it. (To borrow a quote from Anna Russell, "I'm not making any of this up, you know.") Conventions where fans were trapped in the hotel basement for hours before being eventually rescued. Matter of fact, I believe Tucker was present at all these marvelous events.

By the way, I almost forgot to comment on Celko's "Porno Wars," and it's one of the best things I've seen in a fanzine in quite some time.

((Not much we can add to your and Steve Stiles reflections on fandom's "Bad Old Days"; we're sorry that they were before our time, but not that sorry. As for "Porno Wars", most of the comments in letters we received were complimentary, like yours. In fact, there was only one fan who had negative things to say about

it at all, and that was about the subject material and not the article itself. Coming up next is a letter which has the reaction to it we hoped most people would have. - D&N))

Lon Atkins, 1101 Valley Circle, Costa
Mesa, CA 92627

It's a pleasure to see *Mimosa's* return. You've assembled a nice line-up of faanish stuff. Joe Celko's "Porno Wars" was a funny piece. It brings back those days of Freedom of Expression vividly. I recall that half of Ellay fandom was publishing smut with Essex House, and that half of those books were full of fannish references. There was also the *Victorian Digest* (VD), a local pornographic apa devoted to playful character assassination. Crazy days of naughty innocence.

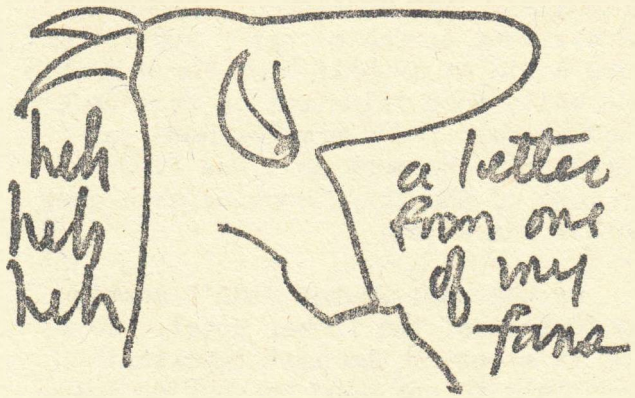
Also, allow me to clarify Reinhardt's Theorem ((from Lon's article on *Hearts* last issue - D&N)) by quoting from the glossary of *A Hearts Primer*: "Reinhardt's Theorem: A method of predicting the outcome of the game to come by examining the skills of the players. It goes thusly... 'No fish; good game. One fish; poor fish. Two fish; too much chance. Three fish; utter chaos.' Reinhardt uses this theorem to explain his poor results."

((Thanks for the clarification; maybe we can rename what we thought might be Reinhardt's Theorem as the Lynch Corollary. Lon's fanzine *A Hearts Primer*, by the way, is recommended reading for anyone wanting to learn more about the strategy and tactics of the game. - D&N))

Mike Glicksohn, 508 Windermere Ave.,
Toronto, Ontario M6S 3L6 Canada

Dave Locke is one of the people I like and admire most in fandom and one of the two or three people I enjoy sitting down to drink and talk with the most. Over the years we've devoted quite a few pages, a number of minutes, and several brain cells to ridiculing and insulting

each other in print, the way good friends often do. So nothing could please me more than to read this article about him falling on his face (only a short distance as those who know Dave will attest) heartswise. Strangely enough I've never played Hearts with Dave despite the fact that I quite like the game. I imagine this has to do with the fact that when we get together the table is so cluttered with bottles of whiskey, glasses, and beer cans that there's never room to deal out the hands. But it does not surprise me that Dave is/was somewhat of a maven of the game. His mind definitely works that way. This, of course, makes Lon's "Great Hearts Shootout" article all the more delicious and enjoyable.



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

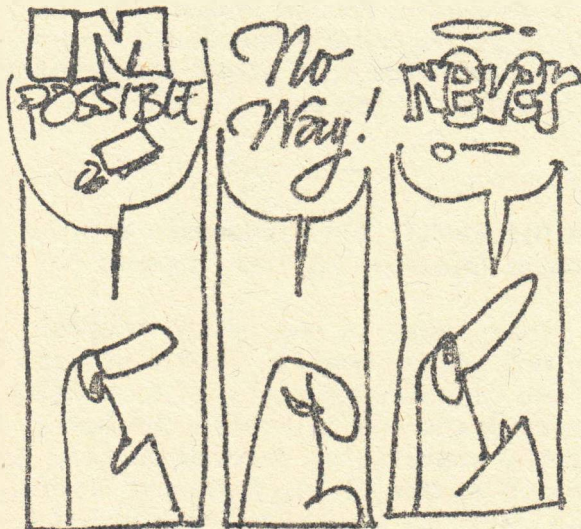
((We were wondering how many readers would be familiar enough with the game of Hearts to comment on the article. Perhaps surprisingly, many were and did. Southern fandom has claimed Hearts as its official pastime; maybe we'll have to concede it to fandom as a whole. - D&N))

I wish I could have heard Bob Tucker deliver that speech. Reading it was pleasant, of course, and encountering it in printed rather than oral form provided me with a chance to think of other ways in which the bad old days contrast with today. I can't imagine a fan who goes to a con in 1987 travelling by riding the rods (hanging onto the undercarriage of a car on a freight train), the transportation method of a few fans for the first WorldCon or two. And how many of today's fans have ever exploded a flash bulb to take a photograph of another fan or pro? Today many fans can use existing light without flash for their picture taking, and those who can't utilize electronic flash tubes. But in the late 1930s and early 1940s, each flash picture involved the immolation of a separate flash bulb, whose cadaver then needed to be disposed of somehow before another drunken fan mistook it for a radish and ate it.

G. Patrick Molloy, P.O. Box 9135,
Huntsville, AL 35812-0135

An opinion here that is strictly personal, and will probably be disputed by much of Southern fandom -- the only thing more boring than playing Hearts is reading a four-page story about someone else playing hearts. (Now if you want to talk poker...)

((It's a good thing that WorldCons were always within the continental United States back then; we're afraid to even guess what the analogy of riding the rods is for a Boeing 747. - D&N))



Roger Weddall, P.O. Box 273, Fitzroy
3065, Australia

In the beginning, I suppose, I was surprised to find a regular trickle of foreign fanzines across my desk. In the end I had no other explanation but to put it down to the fact that I was editor or co-editor of the Australian newszine

Thyme. People must have read reviews of it, or maybe even just had it as one of the few fannish addresses in Australia, bearing in mind that this was in the years leading up to the Australian WorldCon in '85...

I can't say I minded receiving all these foreign fanzines -- and in fact I was at that time sending an average of 80-100 copies of the pseudo-monthly *Thyme* overseas, so some of the response was expected -- and if something arrived from Portugal in Portuguese, well then that was a good part of the fun. I've had hours of enjoyment leafing through Swedish zines such as *Fanyth* ("Fanews") with my dictionary in one hand, wistfully remembering the days when my Swedish was up to par.

The American zines were something different, however. Okay, by the time I'd been at this business for a year, I was pretty much up with the general run of fannish affairs in the U.S., although grossly ignorant in spots (as I still am). But as most Americans seem unaware of aspects of U.S. fandom (e.g., non-Southerners of Southern fandom), this wasn't a great problem. And I was getting to know names.

Some progress came in leaps and bounds. Unbidden, such treasures as *Trapdoor* would come my way, and these were like diamonds in the coal to me, brief flashes of brilliance from American fandom. On the other hand, there was the coal, the stock-in-trade fanzine that was -- to be fair -- interesting in its own way. A fanzine doesn't have to be of the first water to hold my interest, or make me want to keep in touch with the people, but when it comes to American fanzines, there's been an odd phenomenon -- purely from the point of view of an outsider -- that others apart from myself have noticed and commented on...

When I received my first copy of Bill Bowers' *Outworlds*, I was overjoyed (well, pretty happy, anyway). Here was a zine I'd heard much about years ago, and it was beautifully produced, well laid out, and it was all rather encouraging, except for the fact that it dealt almost exclusively with a set of concerns that

were not mine. Bill had, long ago, settled upon the sort of fanzine he wanted to produce, and he and much of his audience went back a ways, had shared experiences and conversations in common, and everyone was pretty comfortable with the arrangement. It sort of left me looking around at the scenery, if you get my meaning.

Now it happens I think this all rather praiseworthy -- the fact that Bill & friends & audience all get on pretty well and keep in touch, and understand one another. When I get around to doing a proper fanzine myself, that's probably the sort of zine I'll produce also. And if it could be half as well-done as *Outworlds* I'd be very pleased.

But there isn't much in *Outworlds* that I've ever been able to identify with. I've been more than happy to receive it, but I've never felt there's anything I could contribute to it that would much relate to its contents. I've said as much to Bill, as have others not from America. I mention Bill & *Outworlds* as the best example to hand of a classy midwest fanzine that has little emotional appeal for me. And as I continued doing *Thyme*, that trickle of fanzines I mentioned earlier turned into a slow-moving, broad-banked river. My reaction would often as not be, upon opening an envelope and seeing an American fanzine I'd not heard of, "Oh, that's nice (I guess), another American fanzine with a nice cover and good production values and probably nothing inside that I can relate to."

I stress now that this is something I see as completely inadvertent and to an extent unavoidable, and I don't feel I've been left out on purpose. It's nobody's fault that I come from around the other side of the world, and I don't think that anyone should change what they're doing to make it easier or more fun for me. That would be as silly as me trying to change who I am to fit in with those fanzines.

Having said that, then, you can imagine my initial reaction upon opening up the envelope and finding *Mimosa*. Instead... what a surprise!

I was very impressed by *Mimosa* #2. Before it arrived in the P.O. box I'd heard neither of you nor it, and had no high expectations. But almost from page one you had me sucked in, and I read the thing straight through. The artwork was delightful -- hats off to Charlie Williams, Mark Maxwell for his cover, John Mayer and the rest -- and the articles were great. One of the things that surprised me was the way that, when an article just ran one into the next page, another article would follow on seemingly without effort, on and on 'til the last page of credits and addresses (which I'd already checked out a few times because I wanted to see who was doing the artwork).

Mind you, as I said before, if I hadn't particularly enjoyed the pieces, then much of the layout would have counted for naught, but the Tucker piece was a delight, Laskowski's puns were acceptably horrible, and Charlie Williams' NorthAmerican con report...

I was glancing through the issue again and realized that I hadn't commented on it specifically. I know I've already generally praised Williams' work, but this piece of his really does bear further mention as it was not only interesting and entertaining, but instructional. I say instructional, because I found that the cartoons helped make what was probably just an ordinary run-of-the-mill report an entertaining article to read and see. What could be shown in one cartoon or caricature would have needed many, many words to describe, and would have been very hard to write in a way that would be interesting. I refer, for example, to the skeleton-outside-the-lift panel -- a typical WorldCon complaint, normally not worth mentioning, but here made into an interesting and funny observation. Excellent stuff.

What a zippy little fanzine you two have put together!

((Basking in positive feedback like this is going to spoil us! Seriously, this was by far the longest LoC we'd received on either issue of *Mimosa*. There was so much of interest in it, we decided to publish it just about intact. We won't

be surprised if we get as many comments on this letter as some of the articles in this issue. So is fanzine fandom becoming too in-groupish? Like you, we get a lot of fanzines, and manage to write LoCs on only a very few. The fanzines are usually interesting to read, but quite often difficult to comment on. And as a result, we've undoubtedly left some fan editors with a bad impression due to our non-response. And it's not because we're not interested; we're just not close enough to the material or the writers to be able to offer more than a quick once-over type of LoC that serves little except to gain mention in the 'We Also Heard From' column. - D&N))

We Also Heard From: Eve Ackerman, Harry Andruschak, Sheryl Birkhead, Bill Bowers, Richard Brandt, Brad W. Foster, Wade Gilbreath, M. E. Gray (formerly Tyrell), Joan Hanke-Woods, Teddy Harvia, Lynn Hickman, JoAnn Montalbano, Marc Ortlieb, David Palter, Curt Phillips, Sarah S. Prince, Vicki Rosenzweig, Rickey Sheppard, and Sheila Strickland. Thanks, also to everyone who sent fanzines (we're still digging out from under them) - D&N.



COMFORTING
THOUGHTS

Where Have You Gone, Vernon J. Schryver

Closing Comments by Dick Lynch

You know, some of the *nicest* people are the people you never meet.

Take book collectors, for instance. Nicki and I are both avid readers of science fiction, and over the past decade or so we've amassed a considerable collection of SF paperbacks and magazines. It's gotten big enough lately that it's even defied attempts to prune out lesser-read paperbacks for the used book shops. It wasn't unusual, for instance, for us to take in an armful of books for trade and after a half-hour or so of browsing, leave with an armful-and-a-half of new material. It's gotten so bad lately that our 'to-be-read' stack is becoming a good sized SF library in itself.

For the past year or so, though, we've noticed something unusual about many of the volumes we were bringing home from the Book Racks and other bargain bookstores. For one thing, many of them had the look of true collectibles -- Ace Doubles and Ballantine SF from the '60s were turning up regularly. Also, just about *all* of these paperbacks had been owned by one Vernon J. Schryver of Boulder, Colorado, who had thoughtfully printed his name on the title page of each book.

We were grateful to get them, but I couldn't help wondering who this Mr. Schryver was, and why he was gutting an obviously well cared-for twenty year old SF collection. Not to mention how his books found their way from Boulder, Colorado to this corner of the world. We still haven't a clue.

But this brings me, in a round-about fashion, to our own personal Bob Shaw story.

One of the reasons we went to Rivercon this past July was to record BoSh's speech for reprint here. As you can see, we got it, and it's wonderful as usual. But, being the collector that I am, I had sifted through some of our SF

collection before we drove north, and had grabbed five or six BoSh books to have them autographed. We were fortunate when we got there to be invited to BoSh's room for a room party with him and some of our friends, and were able to get all of them signed. But when he got to the copy of *The Two-Timers*, he opened the book and there, staring back at him were the words 'Vernon J. Schryver.' "Schryver?", said BoSh, "Who is Vernon J. Schryver?" At which point I related, in somewhat abridged form, the first part of this essay.

Well, BoSh is nothing if not a good sport. I was afraid he'd be offended by being asked to sign some hand-me-down the current owner had been too cheap to buy new. Anyway, here's how he signed:

With best wishes,
from
Vernon J.
Schryver
+
Bob Shaw

Everyone in the room got a laugh when they saw, and the story made the rounds the rest of the convention. So thanks, Bob; you made this year's Rivercon truly memorable for us. And thanks to you too, Vernon, wherever you are.



DEBBIE HUGHES ©87