

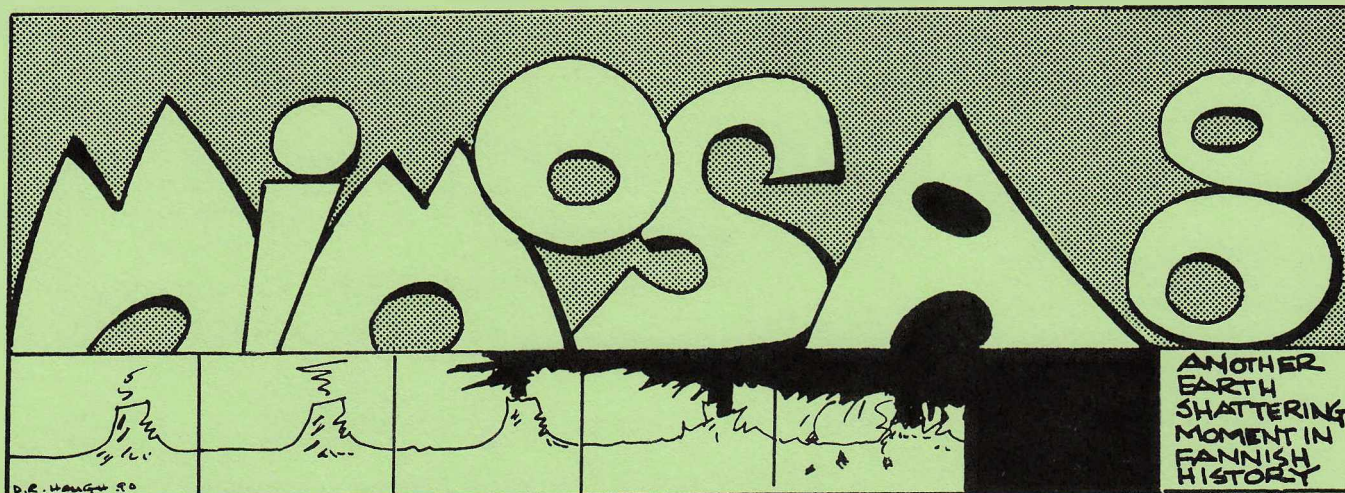
# nimosa

## 8



BIRK





from Dick & Nicki Lynch, P.O. Box 1270, Germantown, Maryland 20875, U.S.A.

This issue of *Mimosa* was published in early August, 1990, or approximately six months after the U.S. Postal Service changed our postal zip code. Please take note of the new zip code listed above. This issue is available through the aforementioned U.S.P.S. for the insignificant sum of two dollars (U.S. currency or equivalent). We'll also trade for your fanzine, or for twenty different used Canadian and/or Australian postage stamps. However, for those **really** wanting to get on our good side, a first-person anecdotal article published here about fandom or things fans do will make you a permanent fixture on our mailing list. We also welcome Letters of Comment; a LoC on this issue will bring you our heart-felt gratitude, as well as a copy of our next issue, whenever that might be (maybe by year's end, but we'll see). Take heed: opinions expressed by contributors are their own.



If this box is checked, please send us a LoC or otherwise let us know that you'd like to stay on our mailing list.

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# The Fannish Life

## Opening Comments by Nicki Lynch

When we first got into fandom in the 70s, most fans were young (in their twenties), in college or college-educated and didn't have much money for things like conventions. They were attracted to conventions by the beer and people, and usually stayed in fandom because of the people. In due time, many of them also discovered fanzines. They then produced a fanzine of their own, or did art or writing for other's fanzines. This was the fannish life.

In the 90s, most of the people we knew then are still in fandom, but fandom has changed. Gone are the days when fans would sleep in the con suite (although it's still done) and rely on room parties for food. Gone are the days when you could attend a con on 50 bucks total. Prices for hotel rooms have gone up and so have con registration fees. The WorldCon fees have also risen as have the number of attendees. But, no one seems to mind.

Conventions have now become three ring circuses, trying to represent every "fannish" taste, from videos and masquerades to role playing and dancing. Despite the changes, people still attend the cons, paying more for con registration, rooms and (gasp!) food.

The fans have changed, along with the cons. The fans from the 60s and 70s have kids now and good jobs. They no longer shoehorn into one room or rely on parties for food. They dine out at good restaurants and wear designer clothes.

Most fans over 35 also admit that they don't read much, if any, science fiction any more. The hard SF is difficult to find and the glut of fantasy just doesn't appeal to them. The kids (teens and twenties) are the ones reading the fantasy trilogies.

Like rock and roll, younger fans seem to think their "elders" don't know the genre. They forget that rock and roll started in the 50s and 60s, and SF and fantasy over a hundred years ago.

In one letterzine I'm in, a fellow in his early twenties claimed "old" fans didn't know the authors of today and listed the current authors. What he didn't understand is that many of his heroes got their start as pros in the 60s and 70s. We "elders" encouraged their writings by buying their books or magazines with their stories and inviting them to conventions as guests. I was surprised how many authors on his list were people I personally knew.

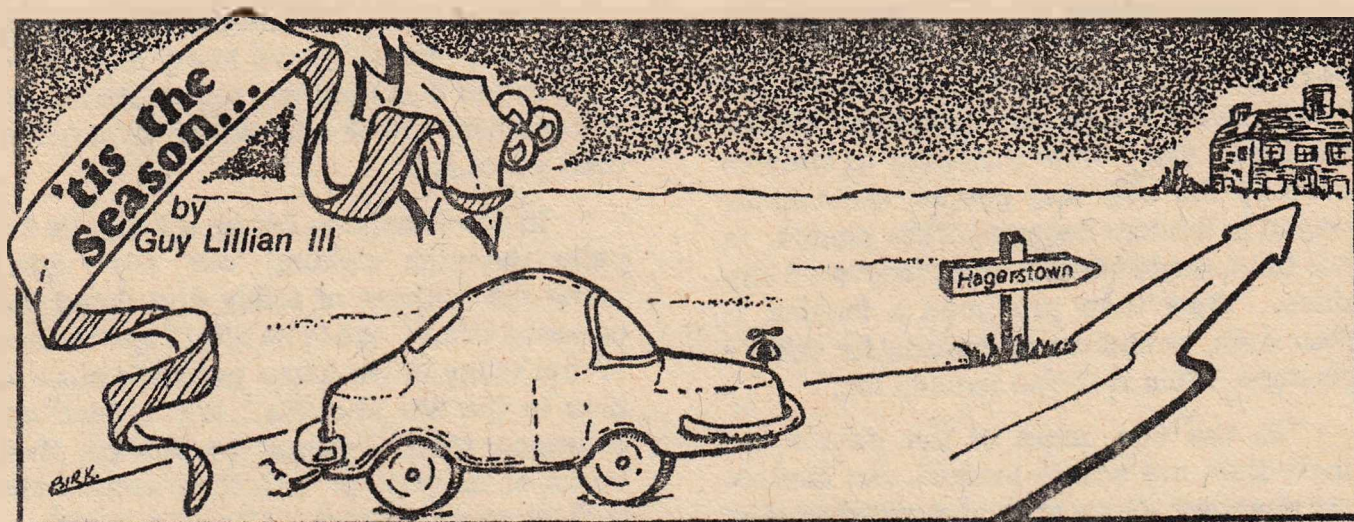
Likewise, fanzines have changed, but not as much. The content of fanzines is still the same -- we still talk about fannish experiences, conventions, books, TV and movies. The major difference is how the fanzines are now produced. Photocopying and offset has replaced, for the most part, ditto and mimeo. Unfortunately mimeo seems destined to become extinct due to the discontinuation of mimeotone and other premium paper for that form of repro. We plan to keep mimeoing as long as we can find paper, but there may come a day when there are no more dittoed or mimeoed fanzines.

With all the changes that have happened to the world, one thing about the fannish life that hasn't changed is the interest in science fiction. Everyone is still welcome at conventions, and urged to contribute to fanzines. They can find plenty of people to talk about the latest in the genre, either in print or in person. That part of the fannish life is still intact. Despite all the changes that the 90s might bring, that part I hope never changes.



{{ We don't know why, but it seems appropriate to start off our first issue of the 1990s with an article (reprinted from the apa SAPS) by Harry Warner, who was an active fan well before we

were born. That said, we'll step aside and let Guy Lillian finish this intro, with a remembrance of a Christmas Eve visit to his house some years back (from the apa SFPA). }}



The greatest span of all time lives on a quiet old street rising above Hagerstown, Maryland. It was getting late and getting colder when I stopped in that small city, but damned if I was going to pass up the chance. And how fortunate I was that the greatest apan -- not to mention the greatest letterhack -- of all sf-dom is a kindly fella who doesn't object to having his celebrated hermithood invaded.

He greeted me at the front door to his stately home on Summit Avenue, a small man in size, prone I've heard to illness, but happy it seemed to be remembered (as if anyone versed in fandom could forget him). The furniture was sparse and antique, but neat and sturdy. A blue crystal lamp stands out in memory. Against one wall a shelf full of old records -- picked up one by one over the years, not consciously collected. Against another were a manual Underwood and a desk on which two Hugos sat, the first two given for Fan Writer.

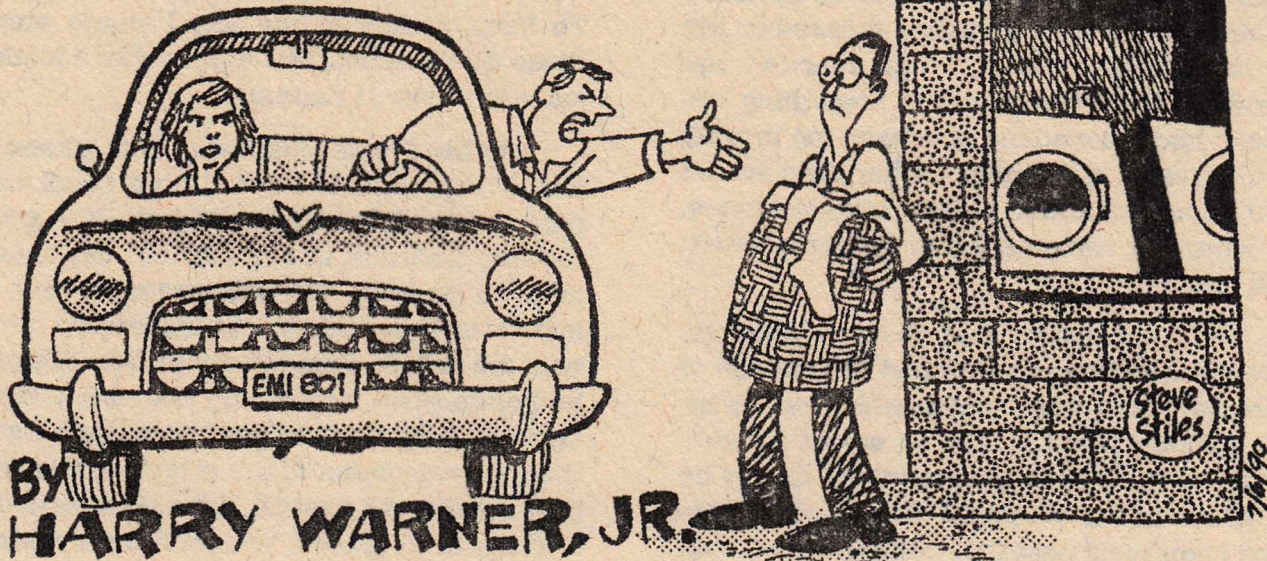
Harry, of course, is legend, along with Ackerman and Tucker the biggest of BNFs,

and certainly the shyest. He told me that his last con was the Discon of 1974, and it was so crowded that he'd had a terrible time. Harry, after all, dates back to the fandom that conducted its business by mail, which accounts for his own preferences for meeting people by the post. His letterhackery is utterly without peer, as is his commitment to the medium.

Gad, all the questions, and all I could do was ask the usual dumb stuff about his 40 year FAPA mailing string and his newspaper writing -- forgot to ask about Degler, forgot to ask about Schwartz. I just bragged on about SFPA 100 and talked, a little, about our mutual apa, the great grandfather of them all, FAPA, and why I might enjoy it. He seemed apologetic for the older members, who are too tired to do much (although Harry never fails to fill a quire of stencils every quarter for it). Fear not, I rejected the apologies; commitment and history compensate for a bit of weariness. FAPA has history to its credit. And Harry Warner, too, let's not forget.



# NOW YOU SEE THEM...



BY  
**HARRY WARNER, JR.**

A coin laundry started my suspicions that we are not the only ones around, that they, the People, are among us for vaguely known reasons.

This coin laundry is situated about half-way between my home and the center square of Hagerstown. It's on my direct path when I walk to most downtown locations, and I always passed it when I walked back and forth between my home and the newspaper plant. It is a small one, sitting a bit back from the sidewalk, and between the sidewalk and the building is a small parking lot marked off into perhaps a dozen stalls. For many years, I usually walked on the coin laundry side of the street because it simplified crossing several street intersections. And I found increasing annoyance as the years passed over the manner in which I seemed always to arrive at the coin laundry just as an auto was pulling into or out of its parking lot. (There is little or no curb the entire length of the lot, leaving pedestrians in peril for 75 feet or so.) One day, after several narrow escapes and a few bawlings out by motorists who objected to my

presence on the sidewalk, I decided I might as well change my habit, and walk henceforth on the other side of the street.

From force of habit, I found myself glancing around for vehicles entering or leaving that little parking lot as I approached it, even though I was now on the opposite sidewalk, out of their reach. Time after time when I walked on the other side of the street, I saw vehicles entering or leaving just as I passed the lot. For the first time, something I should have realized years earlier occurred to me. It seemed mathematically improbable that a motorist should be driving across the sidewalk so frequently, when the parking lot was so small and the nature of a coin laundry causes most people to spend quite a bit of time in it. If this were a 7-11 shop, I could comprehend the heavy traffic into and out of the lot. It seemed inexplicable for such a small coin laundry, until I expanded my observations in a significant way. For the first time, I began to watch that parking lot from the moment it became visible, when I was a block away, until it vanished from sight, a block away in the opposite direction.



I was astonished at what I saw. Almost never was there a vehicle pulling into or out of that parking lot while I was at a considerable distance from it. The driving activity across the sidewalk was concentrated only when I was near. I developed a tentative explanation for why a vehicle entered or left the lot before or after I had reached the sidewalk directly opposite it: something unforeseen had delayed me or caused me to walk past the spot a moment earlier than would have occurred under normal circumstances, throwing the vehicles out of synchronization with me.

So I concluded that these mysterious drivers are either programmed in advance or controlled from some out-of-sight headquarters, making them unable to adjust for last-minute deviations in my progress. And to be fair about it, I must admit that on rare occasions I can walk past that parking lot without a vehicle crossing its adjacent sidewalk. So this organization, whatever it is, is not perfect: either it has failed to keep me under sufficiently close observation to account for my every move, or its agents sometimes get sick at the last minute or lose their way or otherwise foul up.

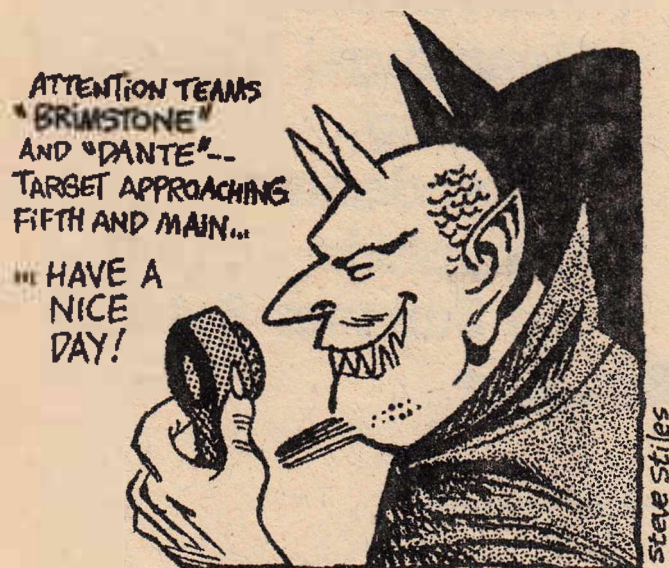
The next link in my chain of evidence involving they, the People, began from a chance remark by a bus driver. "It's the same people," he said to me in disgust as he braked abruptly. "They step right into your path in the mall and then they pull out in front of you when they drive away from the mall." He got me to thinking. I don't spend enough time in other malls to be certain, but I suspect that the mall near Hagerstown has an unusually large accumulation of those individuals the bus driver was grumbling about. I've kept mental statistics on the matter. When the mall has a normal complement of people wandering around, there will be an average of four occasions when it happens while I walk from one end of the mall to the other: someone walking in the opposite direction will suddenly swerve when about ten feet away from me in order to approach me on a collision course, or someone who has

been standing in the doorway of a store will watch me coming and stride out in front of me while I am just two or three feet away, leaving me to choose between a cowardly change of course, or a sudden halt, or a torpedoes-be-damned continuation of my course. To keep variety in my life, I rotate around those three tactics, so I don't suffer a jostle or jolt every time it happens.

While I was pondering this phenomenon, I happened to be visiting a small shopping center at the edge of town. It is within walking distance, so sometimes I use shank's mare to go to it. On this particular day, the last store I passed on my homeward course was the A & P. Some years earlier, this store had undergone remodeling and slight expansion, causing its front wall to extend further than the remainder of the stores at this shopping center. As a result, the sidewalk in front of the A & P suffered, with only a very narrow strip surviving, not wide enough for two people to pass. I had just reached this narrow section of the sidewalk when I saw out of the corner of my eye a woman striding rapidly catercornered toward me across the parking lot. She miscalculated and by the time she was at the sidewalk's edge, I was just past her, foiling her intention to step into my path. She broke into a trot for a few steps to pull slightly ahead of me and began to step onto that narrow strip of sidewalk at an angle that would force me to stop or slow down radically to avoid a collision. I felt peeved. I didn't slow an iota. There was a soul-satisfying jolt as my right side and shoulder impacted against her. I didn't think the collision was severe enough to knock her down but after two or three strides, I looked back. She wasn't there. There was no place where she could have gone in that brief period of time when she was out of my vision. The A & P has no doors at the end of the building where the collision had occurred. There were no parked vehicles along the curb behind which she might be concealed and the nearest stationary vehicles in the parking lot were too distant for her to have reached one and climbed inside. She would have crossed my



field of vision if she'd sprinted forward after the collision and run around the approaching corner of the store, but I looked around it to make sure and she wasn't in sight. She wasn't on the sidewalk behind me. There wasn't even a small pool of loathesome ichor such as is normally left behind when an evil supernatural creature is destroyed.



During the remainder of my walk home, I pondered over the fact that they, the People, are vulnerable in certain ways. They didn't adjust properly to my change in sidewalk habit outside the coin laundry and now one who had failed to get in my path had been transported, or disintegrated, or somehow rendered invisible because of that blunder. But it wasn't until the following days and weeks that the full import of my boldness became manifest. When I went to the mall, people no longer stepped out of stores directly in front of me, no longer veered into my path when walking toward me, and I could walk from one end of the mall as often as I wished without evasive action or jostling. Here was another crumb of evidence of a conspiracy. I naively thought I was forevermore free from the nuisance, but this blissful situation lasted only a couple of months. Then the walkers reverted to their old bothersome habits. They, the People, had either forgotten my potentiality or had been juiced up enough to give them the courage to pester me regularly again.

I've talked to others about these matters and I find that I'm not alone as a sufferer. Others have different problems: telephones that ring at the worst possible moments, dogs that destroy laborious achievements in their gardens, or a pattern of failure to operate as intended by anything purchased, for instance. So they, the People, aren't after only me.

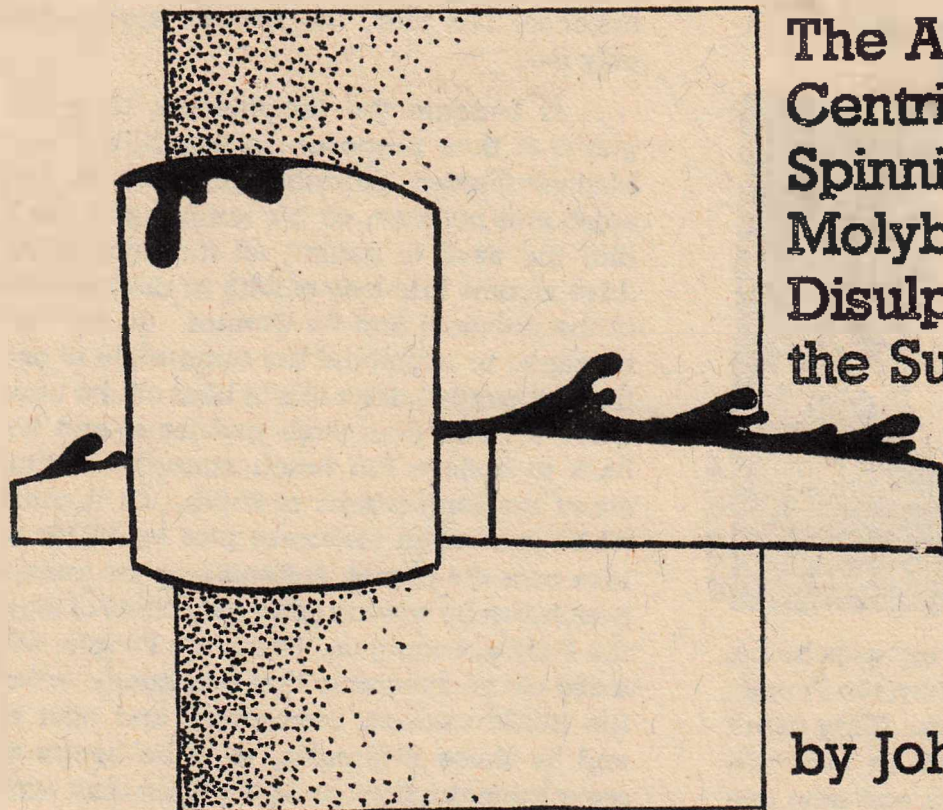
It beggars the imagination, to try to guess at their purpose. In Goethe's *Faust*, Mephistopheles describes himself as the spirit that negates, so it's tempting to think that the devil is behind all this, hoping to drive victims into loss of faith in the justness of the universe and its Creator. So far, I've managed to withstand the temptation to use the bad words I don't like to hear others utter when I suffer from such problems, and it's hard to believe I'm tough enough to withstand the temptations of Satan. Or it could all be part of an elaborate plot by BEMs to take over the planet, softening up its human population by sowing large quantities of them, the People, among us. They, the People, will make life so miserable that eventually, when the BEMs unmask themselves and offer to end all these nuisances, we'll be happy to grant them the right to do anything they wish in return for the end of their infiltration.

I'm not expert enough in philosophy to be able to guess at the third possibility's validity: that concept in the Platonic sense (like the ideal circle, which all other circles emulate) includes the concept of ideal manners, and somehow these Platonic manners have in recent years become disconnected from the real world, resulting in increasing inability of the general population to remember their manners. When was the last time you saw someone put a handkerchief to mouth before coughing or sneezing? Or say, "Excuse me," when bumping into you in a shopping mall? The local museum is offering this summer a two-day course in good manners, but its fee is \$50. I can remember when manners came free. ☹



{{ We were both glad and saddened when we received the following article in the mail back in February. We were delighted to get a humorously anecdotal article from a well-known British fan writer, but the note attached read: "I'm sure you have heard by now that Arthur (ATom) Thomson

died on 8th February 1990, and he was cremated at Streatham, London on 15th February. Quite a few fans attended, including Rob Hansen, Avedon Carol, Chuch Harris, Vince Clarke, Ethel Lindsay, my wife and myself." John included two pieces of original ATom fanart, drawn especially for the following scientific treatise... }}



## The Amazing Centrifugal Motion of Spinning Molybdenum Disulphide During the Summer Solstice

by John Berry

The use of Molybdenum Disulphide (MD) is a new innovation used by forensic scientists to reveal fingerprints on wet surfaces. MD reacts on the fatty substances in deposited sweat. Prior to its discovery as a means of revealing latent finger marks, wet cars which had been used in crime had to be removed to a police garage and permitted to thoroughly dry before fingerprint examination. With MD, the vehicle (or any other wet surface) can be examined at the scene of the crime, even in a thunderstorm, if expediency is required. (A crime examiner of my acquaintance was the first person in the world to examine a vehicle for latent fingerprints which had been dumped in a water-filled quarry. He did his examination in situ, and I intend to interview him when he is removed from Intensive Care.)

In August 1983 I was involved in the investigation of a robbery where fur coats had been stolen. The plastic bags in which the furs were kept in the store had been dumped in a river by the villains. This necessitated the use of MD on a large scale. Therefore, I prepared a large volume of the thickish black liquid, retained in a stainless steel dish measuring one yard square and six inches high. MD lapped the top edge of the container. My colleague Martin, attired in a virgin-white overall and wearing protective rubber gloves, passed the plastic bags to me one at a time, and I carefully emersed them in the liquid. I returned the dripping bags to Martin, and he clipped them in a horizontal row in a drying cabinet. It was a matter of pride to Martin that he did not despoil his starched overall with the black sludge, and



in fact, when our chore was concluded, he smiled smugly as he surveyed his nice clean overall, laundered by his wife that very morning.

"John," he smiled, "would you kindly pour the MD in the sink, as I don't want to get my overall splashed."

Personally, I do not wear an overall when performing forensic examinations, as I regard it as slackness in performance. If the examination is careful, protective over-clothing should be superfluous.

So I took a deep breath, gritted my teeth, grabbed each side of the stainless steel container with thumbs emersed, and lifted it. I moved a yard to my left and gently tilted the receptacle so that the MD would dribble from the spout and disappear down the sink outlet.

Suddenly, I was confronted by a phenomenon previously unreported in any scientific journal. Despite my powerful grip, the spout end of the receptacle started to rise and a wave of black liquid surged towards me. I shot a quick glance at Martin, and his visage will remain in my mind until my dying day. It wasn't just the tongue protruding from dry lips...it was his eyes that worried me...huge pupils...throbbing red veins shooting across the whites of his eyes...the look of a shocked and frightened man.

It is well known that I have superb initiative...quick as a flash, I lowered my left hand and raised my right hand, and the black wave, just about to engulf me, suddenly swerved to the left and returned to the spout end. I confidently expected the MD to sweep over the spout and into the sink, but even with all my considerable strength applied I could not stop the spout end from rising upwards again, and at rather an alarming speed. Once more a concerted lift to the right and the ugly rearing wave checked itself and swung viciously towards the other end.

I looked again at Martin, to see if he could add his strength to mine but he had his fingers in his mouth and his remaining hairs were splayed out like rays of the sun.

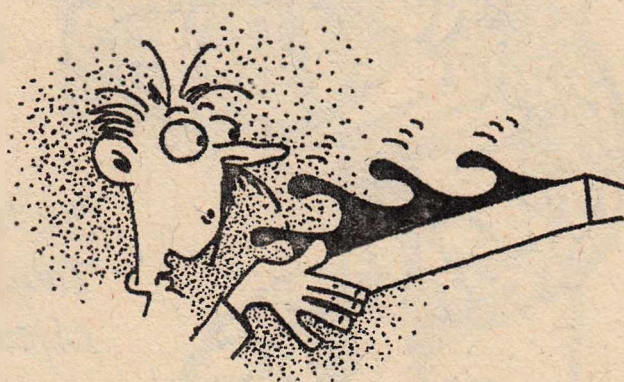
Once more towards the spout end, dear fan. But now I was a mere puny restraint in the

grip of a powerful new physical force:

"Me = M. seemed scared."

In those fleeting seconds I made the obvious decision... I wasn't wearing protective clothing, but Martin was. I must also state quite frankly that his reflexes appeared somewhat lethargic for a young man.

Irresistibly the receptacle took over my body. It refused to dip to the left... the huge menacing thunderous wave reached out for me and parted my hair as I screamed, ducked, and deftly removed my black hands from the live receptacle.



Martin uttered only two words. Indeed, if it was in his mind to express himself more volubly, he did not have sufficient time to formulate the required expletives.

All he had time to say was...

"J...o...h...n....., n...o...o...o"

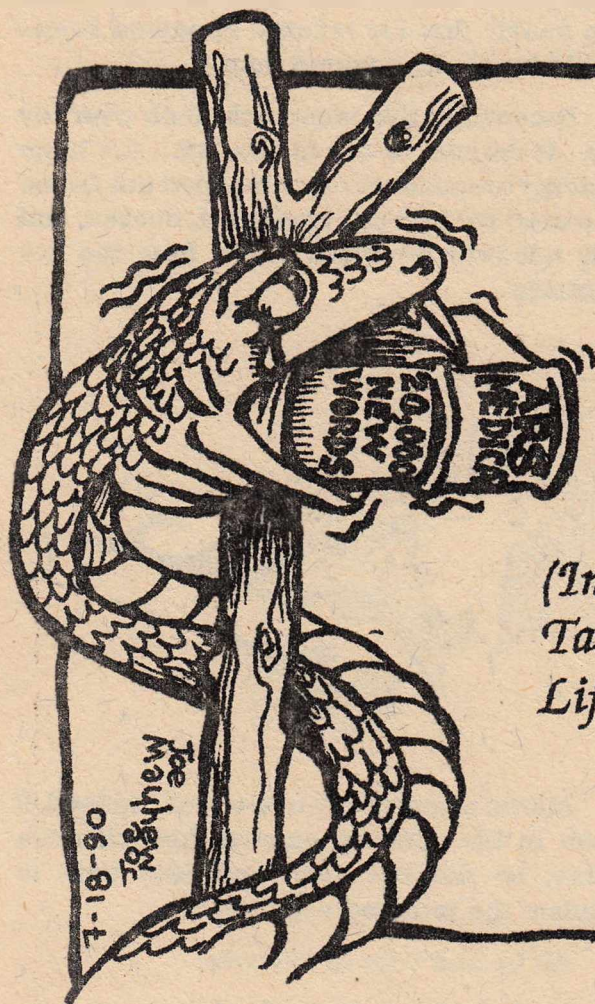
The only redeeming feature of Martin catching the full impact of the murky tidal wave was that he was standing in front of a glass-fronted cabinet containing assorted chemicals, including some extremely noxious items, and Martin taking the full charge precluded the possibility of damage to the cabinet and contents. Martin sort of stiffened, and then gradually subsided to the floor, rather like Sammy Davis, jr. making an obsequious gesture of resignation.

I am currently working on another paper recommending certain physical restraints to prevent fastidious laboratory technicians from suddenly becoming homicidal maniacs.



{{ In the previous issue of *Mimosa*, one of our letters of comment remarked that fandom has its educational side-effects. We point to this next vocabulary-building installment in Sharon Farber's "medical school" series as a case in point. We received

this article only about a month ago, and had been afraid that after three previous articles, she had run out of things to write about. "Not to worry," she tells us, "there's more on the way yet." }}



## Tales of Adventure and Medical Life, Part IV

*(In Which a Foreign Language is  
Taught, and I Run through a  
Lifetime Supply of Parentheses)*

by Sharon Farber

Our first day of medical school, we were confronted by various administrators and professors, who made various promises, such as you have been carefully preselected so, no matter who hopeless it may sometimes seem, you will get through. This was true -- so far as I know, no one flunked out of my class (though many took a very long time to graduate), and we had more suicides than dropouts.

A second promise -- or threat -- was that in our four years we would learn 20,000 new words. Now, as the average person seldom needs more than 800 words, unless involved in a technical profession (in which case 800 will often suffice anyway, as in "Hey, pass the what-

chamacallit, you know, over there next to the thingie."), this was a bit daunting. Of course, many of the words were things like *obex*, learned once for an anatomy midterm and then dumped from the files, or chemical names like *galactocerebrosidase*, again learned for a test and ever after referred to as "some enzyme or other." Many words had multiple meanings depending on context, such as cortex and medulla, which are equally at home in the brain or the kidney, or frenulum, which might be found under the tongue or under a penis.

We also learned new ways to mangle our mother tongue. We began to speak in formalized patterns, generally involving the passive



tense. "This is the first Barnes Hospital admission for this forty-two year old single white male which a chief complaint of dyspnea on exertion." We learned to use adjectives in new ways -- angry red lesions, frank psychosis. (Frank seemed to mean "hey, it ain't subtle, Jack," as in frank burns. And you thought that was just a doctor in M\*A\*S\*H.) We learned, for no particular reason to pronounce centimeter, sahn-ti-me-ter, and umbilicus, um-bi-lai-cus.

And so, after two years of having words shoved into our brains, like Japanese commuters into a rush-hour subway, we left the classroom and hit the clinics -- only to learn that, like someone moving to French after studying at Berlitz, we didn't really know the language at all.

Merde.

#

To start with, there were abbreviations. That opening sentence to a workup, a few paragraphs back ("This is the first.") would be written "1st BHA for 42 yo SWM c CC DOE." An astute resident could write an entire page without a noun. Of course, no one else might know what he was talking about (BS, for instance, was breath sounds, bowel sounds, blood sugar, or the medical student's opinion, depending on the context), but at least abbreviations were more legible than the average sleepy, rushed doctor's handwriting.

More baffling but also more fun than abbreviations was slang. Any oppressed minority -- such as medical students and house officers -- tends to develop its own language, to baffle or annoy the oppressors; once they become the oppressor, or go into private practice, doctors tend to abandon slang.

Medical slang was generally angry and bitter. Take the concept of pimping. Where I came from, pimping is generally against the law, and has to do with the promotion of solicitation. (Growing up in a major seaport, I knew about such things. When I was ten, a John Bircher's spawn called me a "radical whore." I ran home to ask Mommy what a radical was. And I was most puzzled upon first reading *Dracula*, where Jonathan Harker admits to

being a solicitor.)

Pimping is the relentless, merciless questioning of students or interns (or anyone of academic inferiority), cruelty masquerading as education. *The Journal of the American Medical Association* recently printed a hilarious article on the origins of pimping, tracing it back to the founding fathers of medicine. The only thing funnier than the article was the subsequent spate of letters from doctors who, unable to recognize satire if it bit them on the nose, wrote in to disagree with the historical references.

Luckily most of us had had some preparation for medical slang by reading *The House of God* {{ ed. note: by Samuel Shem, M.D. }}. This is probably the best book about modern medical training, though it is hideously sexist. But then, medical education and most doctors are hideously sexist, so what the hey.

*The House of God* introduced us to the concepts of buff and turf (i.e., make the chart look complete and yourself look intelligent, and then send the patient to another service.) Turfing a difficult or obnoxious patient was something that not only gave you pleasure and relief, but also gained you the admiration of your peers (excepting only those who accepted the patient, whose admiration would be tainted with annoyance).

We at Wash U. didn't seem to buff much, but maybe that was a Harvard preoccupation, *House of God* being set there. Doctors in training move around a lot, so much of medical slang is standardized, but some terms are strictly regional. The Dude Brothers, for instance, those guys who seem to be responsible for so much mayhem, are to my knowledge found only in Missouri and Kansas City. (I called a friend once to see if he'd join me for dinner. "Sorry," he replied. "I'm in the emergency room. The whole Dude family is having a shootout.")

I recently learned that patients at Grady, the big charity hospital in Atlanta, are called rooters. This evidently comes from a group of drunks who sit outside the emergency room and cheer those entering, and boo those leaving. And then there is brady-lordy, when someone --



usually an elderly black lady - incessantly moans "lordy, lordy," for hours on end. Slow heart beat is bradycardia; I occasionally refer to the mentally deficient as The Brady Bunch. Rapid heart beat is tachycardia, and an often fatal arrhythmia is ventricular tachycardia, or v-tach. At The Jewish Hospital of St. Louis, old ladies often lay there calling "oy, oy, oy," which was, of course, oy-tach.

Terms for dying appear to have regional variations. Box, to be placed in a coffin, was the favorite at my school, as in "Where's Mr. Jones?"

"He boxed."

There was also "Turfed in Sky Clinic," or "Transferred to the Eternal Care Unit." Here in Chattanooga, the ICU nurses tend to say "He caught the bus." The first time I heard that, my jaw dropped. I couldn't figure out how my comatose patient on the ventilator had recovered and been discharge so rapidly.

People walking down the main corridor at Barnes Hospital always smiled when they passed the sign reading CURE Unit. You could almost hear their thought. "Cure unit. How wonderful, how inspiring." They were unaware that CURE stood for Clinical Unit for the Recently Expired. It was the morgue.

#

Scut seems to be a universal concept. Scutwork is that boring, time-consuming and educationally useless part of patient care that non-doctors do in non-teaching hospitals -- carry labs, transport patients, draw blood, start intravenous lines. At Barnes, those proficient in the technical skills were called scut-dogs (or, if still students, scut-puppies.) However, in other places they were called scut-monkeys, or even just beasts.

(One of my house-mates was taking a short cut down an unfamiliar hall in Children's Hospital, her first month of third-year, when a resident she'd never seem before ran out of a room, grabbed her, and dragged her inside to hold down a screaming child from whom he was attempting to draw blood. He apologized, explaining that he'd asked a nurse to hold the child, and she's refused, saying, "that's scut.

You have medical students to do scut.")

#

There were nicknames for the various specialties (surgeons liked to call themselves blades and internists fleas), but many more words were devoted to the unfortunate patients. After all, when you're working thirty-six hours in a row, always tired, always baffled, not to mention getting pimped, it's hard to be affectionate to the source of confusion. Besides, many patients during training are charity cases from socioeconomic or ethnic groups most med students are unfamiliar with. Or they are just downright gross -- drug-addicts, criminals, street-people. It is no wonder, then, that we tended to have insulting names for patients.





One night when I was resident on call, the team was discussing our new admits, all jobless, drunk, sociopathic men. Somehow, the intern's train of thought strayed from the general worthlessness of the evening's specific patients, and he began to generalize their shortcomings to the entire black race. It was one of those times where I wasn't sure if I wanted to murder an intern or just curl up my toes and box -- because the intern, leaning fervently across the table, attempting to instill his wisdom into our third-year-student, was somehow overlooking the fact that the student was black!

I'm not sure what was going on there.

#

Most doctors in training scrupulously avoid using slang before superiors, and pretend to deplore the entire concept. "How can anyone insult that dear, sweet, aged gentleman holding a knife and drooling all over?"

"Yeah, yeah," your attending replies. "Dis-arm him and bathe him twice before I go near him."

My friend Dave and I wrote a skit about this for our senior show, which took place the week before graduation, and seemed the sensible place to vent four year's accumulated spleen. Sometimes class shows did effect some changes -- I remember a game show called "What's My Molecular Weight?" in which professors were pulled out of the audience and given questions from their own tests, which they could not get (Leading, one assumes, to slightly less trivia on exams.) Several years before I started, a show entitled SCREW (Saturday Classes Ruin Every Weekend) helped end weekend lectures.

To our surprise, we had difficulty casting the slang skit. Typical with the response of our classmates was the divine Miss M, who said it contained offensive words. Now, not only was this shockingly hypocritical -- I had heard her use at least half of them -- but she did not seem to comprehend the concept of satire. (Didn't I say that about someone else a few paragraphs back?)

The skit featured some second-year stu-

dents, forced to accompany houseofficers on work rounds before physical examination class. This was a stupid, stupid idea, as they knew nothing yet about the diseases or tests being discussed, and of course didn't know the slang, and the second-year in the audience cheered us for it.

After several sentences of pure slang, the doctors depart, leaving the WUMS IIs to question the third-year student.

"Whale?" they ask, "Gome? Troll?"

"You must learn the language of medicine," the third-year replies, in a manner that out-saccharines Julie Andrews at her worst, and then begins to sing:

"Gome, a crock who's never washed;  
Troll, a dirtball tried and true  
Gork, a person without squash  
Crump, what gorks will always do.  
Shpos, subhuman piece of shit.  
Veg, add water they won't grow  
Whale, your tourniquet won't fit--  
And that brings us back to gome, gome,  
gome."

The students, now comprehending fully, sing joyously, and we fade out.

Shocking, eh?

#

Now for the translation.

Gome. Short for gomer. This is a well known bit of medical slang. Some say it derives from an Old English word for oldster. Others say it stands for "get out of my emergency room." Everyone agrees that it denotes a disgusting old person with too many medical problems. A sweet, clean polite old lady is not a gomer. I may (who can remember?) be the originator of the phrase Juvenile Onset Gomerism (akin to Juvenile onset diabetes), for a person in the presenium who has already burned out brain and body.

Crock. Okay, I admit it, the first line of the song made no sense -- but it does rhyme. A crock fakes symptoms, either because he's



crazy or malingering. The technical term for fake systems and signs is functional. When your doc says your problem is functional, he's politely calling you a crock. Probable derivation: crock of shit. A related term is serum porcelain titers, an imaginary blood test to see if a person is crazy.



Troll and dirtbag are self-explanatory. There are subtle ramifications of what makes one sleazoid a troll and another a dirtball -- trolls tend to be grungier, or more hardened criminals. Dirtball is the major insult for patients involved in anything evil; violence, child abuse, trying to scam their doctor into giving them narcotics. I assume it comes from scumbag, the time honored New York City insult, as doctors in some locals say dirtbags instead.

A gork is a comatose individual. Squash is brain. Someone once explained to me that it derived from the brain's resemblance to cauliflower; he was not pleased when I protested that 1) brain doesn't look at all like a cauliflower, and 2) cauliflower is not a member of the squash family. A stroke due to a cardiac embolus (a blood clot from a malfunctioning heart that goes straight to the brain) is called a boulder to the squash -- a bizarre but pictur-

esque mixed metaphor.

To crump, is to go sour, to become rapidly moribund, as in "He was GI bleeding, the crit dropped to 20 and he was crumping, but we started fluids and topped off the tank and now he's stable." Yay! Good work!

Shpos means just that, subhuman piece of shit. It is New York City slang. As a fourth-year on cardiology, I made the mistake of calling a prominent government figure a shpos, and the attending gave me hell. Not for my politics or my crudity, mind you, but because I'd pronounced it wrong! It seemed that I had said it shpez, which implied that I'd come from certain medical centers in Manhattan, whereas at my attending's home institution it was shpohss. Evidently you can hang out at Bellevue and tell which schools the various medical students hail from just by how they pronounce this crucial insult.

Veg. Vegetable. Some medical slang that's become part of the common tongue. It refers to a permanently comatose individual requiring life-support, from the more technical phrase "permanent vegetative state." A man once said, "Keep my wife alive, even if she's a vegetable." Before you get all sentimental here, you should know that he was living off her Social Security.

Whale. A patient beyond extreme obesity. To weight much over 300 pounds carries hazards beyond those of diabetes, heart disease, etc. You just can't properly examine a patient that fat ("The liver didn't feel enlarged but hey, I couldn't feel the liver"), and most x-ray tables have a 300 lb weight limit. Plus, some procedures are next to impossible, because you can't see or feel where you're going, and the needle probably won't be long enough. I no longer even try to do a spinal tap on patients that big, but one of my residents (when I was chief) was an expert at harpooning Moby Dick, always carrying an extra long anaesthesia needle in her pocket, just in case.

Okay, that's today's Berlitz lesson in medical slang. Don't use these words around your own docs, boys and girls. For all you know, I may have published my own version of the Monty Python phrasebook...

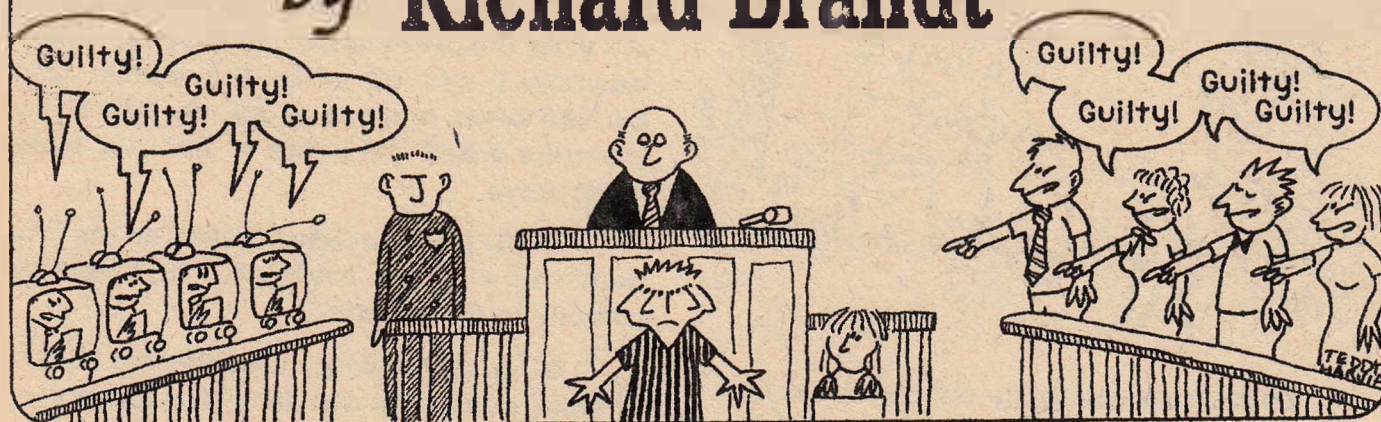


{{ Try as we might, we just weren't able to come up with a theme for this issue of *Mimosa*, other than our usual mix of first person articles about fandom and things fans do. Next up is a good

example of one of the latter, by the chairman of the 1991 Corflu fanzine fans' convention (that'll be held in El Paso, Texas, in early May). }}

# Five Years Before the Bench

by Richard Brandt



"Have compassion!" Michelle reminded me on my way out the door.

This particular morning, I was reporting to the county courts for jury selection. This duty is one of the fringe benefits of being a registered voter, so I show up at the civic center theater at pretty regular six-month intervals.

I've never actually had to sit on a jury, though. There are a number of reasons for this; for one thing, I generally tell the judge in a marijuana possession case that I have problems with the law which could interfere with my rendering an impartial verdict. Besides, Lord knows, that could be any number of my friends up there in the dock...

More often, I suspect, it's because I was a television reporter for five years at El Paso's CBS affiliate -- KDBC, Channel 4, the Big Four News Team. There's just something about a journalist which seems to make lawyers leery of us during jury selection. In addition, I had the courthouse beat for a few years, which

means I probably was chummy with the prosecutor or his adversary, or both.

I landed a job with the Big Four fresh out of college, and my facility with the equipment amazed my colleagues. Or, as they remarked, "Most of the graduates who come in here, they can't write, they can't shoot, they can't edit. But, Richard, they can drive."

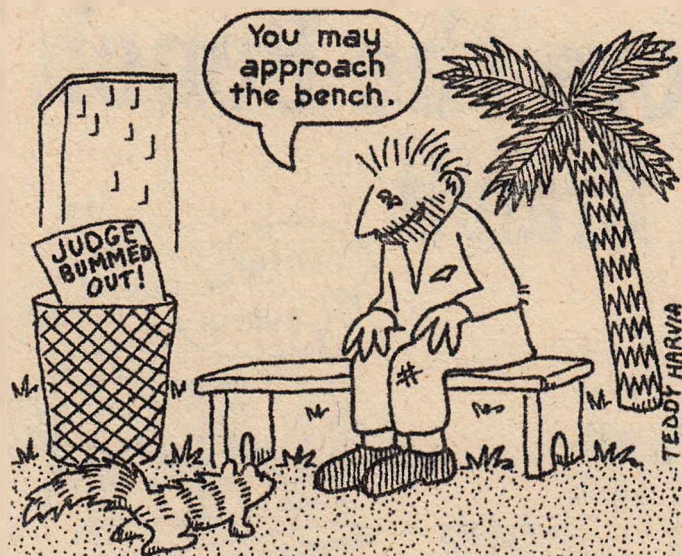
My courthouse days began the night we had a tip phoned in that a former county judge was being booked downtown for DWI. I rushed my gear down to the courthouse, ran down to the booking desk in the basement, and got plenty of shots of His Honor, grinning and winking at the camera and generally having a whale of a time.

Several years later, when the judge passed on, our staff was frantically searching through our archives looking for file footage, and this ended up being the only tape they could find on him. Be that as it may, I found myself soon after pounding the judicial beat.

The Federal and County Courthouses



are across the street from one another in El Paso; despite this wealth of jurisdictions, there's not always anything newsworthy happening. Newsworthy, according to Channel Four, being anything involving a murder or public officials. Both, if we could swing it.



Sometimes our own colleagues were tossed into the brew. The El Paso Times had to fend off a couple of libel suits, and we got a lot of mileage out of each one. One was brought by John Kerr, a U.S. Attorney who had survived an assassination attempt in San Antonio, shortly after a federal judge was gunned down in the same town. Kerr, who was in hiding under the Federal Witness Protection Program (yet still managing somehow to work as a prosecutor) contended that he and the judge were shot at because they had a reputation for being tough on drug dealers. And how did drug dealers know this? Well, they must have read about it in the paper, of course...

A jury actually decided in Kerr's favor on this one (another reason I'd hate to ever go in front of a jury), but a higher court reversed the verdict. Another libel suit was brought by a former mayor and his old buddy, a real estate developer. It seems our City Hall, which was planned to be situated next door to the federal and county buildings, somehow wound up instead on the outskirts of downtown, on land owned by the mayor's develop-

er friend. The Times got to thinking out loud whether any "hanky-panky" was involved, and the resulting lawsuit dragged on for months. The reporter who had covered the story was called in to testify; he had since resigned and joined a monastery in New Mexico.

Channel Four narrowly avoided lawsuits from time to time. I was covering a child custody case, distinguished by the father's awaiting trial for murdering the mother. His in-laws were suing for custody, but it was widely recognized that the defense was indulging in a little fishing expedition to find out what the prosecution had in store. Unfortunately, I was off when the verdict was handed down, and one of our, uh, less acute reporters called the judge to find out what went down.

"Well," said the judge, "based on the preponderance of the evidence, I'm awarding custody to the in-laws."

So, on that night's newscast, our reporter stood on camera and said, "The judge said the preponderance of the evidence showed [the defendant] murdered his wife."

She lost her job over that one. She's now working in a bigger market, but that's another story.

In one murder trial, the defense tried the time-honored ploy of shifting suspicion onto a friend of the accused. For this purpose, they enlisted the services of Jay J. Armes, renowned double-amputee private eye. Jay wired another friend of the accused's for sound, sent him to the door of their pigeon, and listened in while one tried to elicit a confession from the other. Over the objections of the prosecution, the tape recording was played in the courtroom, and turned out to be totally innocuous.

Jay sneaked us an old photo of the deceased, so I should be kind to him, but truth is, he's a major flake. He lost both hands in a childhood accident, and the resulting settlement allowed him to set himself up as a self-styled James Bond. His office is set off the street by a barricade of pointed rocks -- to



discourage truck-bomb drivers -- and the first thing one sees when the elevator doors open is a mannequin of Jay sitting on a couch, to throw off would-be assassins. His home, featuring a bronze statue of Jay on the porch, is set amidst a private menagerie, a helicopter landing pad, and an artificial lake. After years of running unsuccessfully for public office, Jay managed to get himself elected to city council, so the whole city can realize just what a flake he really is.

Murder cases were often the most interesting, of course. Our district attorney, Steve Simmons, wanted to bring a case against Henry Lee Lucas, the one-eyed drifter who confessed to hundreds of killings across the nation and later recanted. Lucas had come to El Paso to confess to the rape-murder of an elderly woman in the Lower Valley. Steve felt he could get an ironclad conviction -- which wouldn't hurt his political aspirations -- and subsequently the county spent a small fortune preparing the case. Unfortunately, little discrepancies began to plague the case, such as eyewitnesses who placed Lucas on the other side of Texas on the night of the crime. Blood and semen samples recovered from the victim failed to match Lucas's type. It also developed that the investigating officer was a nephew of the deceased, a clear violation of police department policy, especially since several other relatives were suspects. The Juarez police said the family gardener had admitted to the crime; the officer in charge on our side of the bridge discounted the confession, saying he saw it extracted with a cattle prod. A disgusted county judge finally threw out the case.

Simmons put on quite a show in another case, where he was questioning the father of a murder victim. He wanted the father to re-enact the discovery of the son's body, so he took on the part of the corpse.

"Now, how was he lying when you found him?"

"Uh, face down."

"Okay. Now, when you came upon his

body, what did you do?"

"I ran my hands through his scalp, looking for wounds."

"Well, go on, then."

Mostly, our job consisted of running down the corridors, chasing camera-shy suspects in order to get some video for the evening newscast. At the trial I just mentioned, I asked my cameraman if he got any shots of the father entering or leaving the courtroom.

"No," he said, "but it's okay -- I shot some pictures of him through the window in the door."

Naturally, I was aghast, as shooting in this particular courtroom was verboten. I thought we'd get away with it, though, until we got onto the same elevator with the judge hearing the case. Looking at no one in particular, he opined that anyone caught taking pictures of his courtroom would see his ass in stir.

As a rule, federal court didn't lend itself to theatrics; most of the cases involved drug runners apprehended at the border. U.S. Attorney Michael McDonald distinguished himself in one case, however, beginning his summation by casting a baleful eye over the defendant and declaring, "There is evil in this courtroom today."

I ran into Mike one night at my favorite watering hole, where he and his staff were entertaining some colleagues from Midland who were in town on a change of venue. They were also entertaining my friend Jean-Marie, who was perched atop Mike's lap.

"Richard," she inquired, "do you know who these guys are?"

"These gentlemen are prosecutors from the U.S. Attorney's office," I answered.

She threw me an exasperated look. "They told me they were gynecologists in town for a convention!"

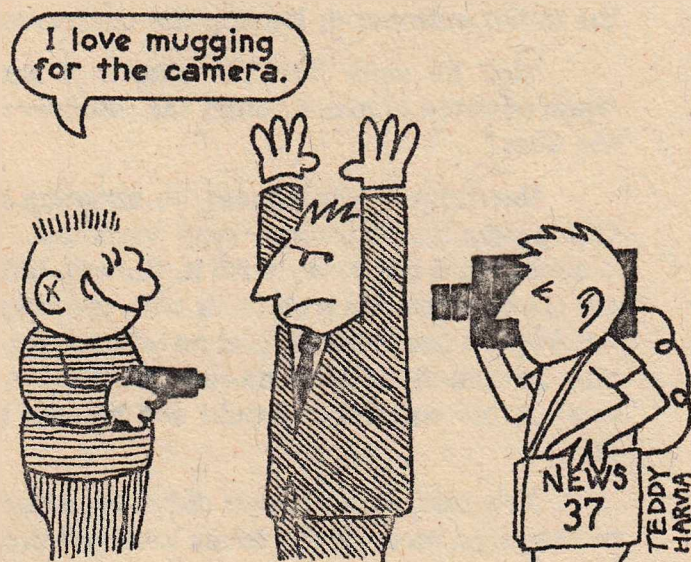
Later, Steve Fisher, a defense attorney we know, stopped by our table. Steve was



all irate that his client, an Army nurse, had just been convicted on a drug charge, while he was convinced of her innocence.

"She didn't do anything, and she's getting five years! I've defended burglars and rapists and murderers and gotten them off -- and they were guilty!"

Jean-Marie turned to me and confided, "Only Steve's innocent clients go to jail."



My favorite courtroom performance came in a manslaughter case involving a drunken driver who ran into a girl on a bicycle. The prosecutor, Bill Moody, contended the defendant was driving 80 miles an hour in a residential zone. The defense's expert witness, called upon to determine the defendant's speed by examining the crime scene, was with Sandia National Laboratories. His experience consisted of crashing trucks and freight cars into cement walls, to see what impacts could be withstood by vehicles carrying radioactive materials.

At one point, the defense attorney asked his expert what could be concluded about the speed of the car judging by the distance the victim's body was thrown. Moody promptly objected, on the grounds the witness lacked sufficient expertise.

"Your Honor," the defense countered, "this witness has over fifteen years' experi-

ence judging the impact of vehicles into objects."

Moody stared at him in disbelief.

"Into human bodies!?"

The judge allowed as, yeah, he'd have to sustain that one.

Bill Moody is a judge himself now. As for me, I got transferred off of the courthouse beat onto a desk job, when our weekend assignments editor developed ulcers. The weekend desk is a prime location for burnout, which is precisely what happened to me after a couple of years at it. As glamorous as the news business must seem to you, I found the allure didn't necessarily compensate for the pressures, and after working my way up to weekend producer, I quit for greener pastures. (Didn't join any monasteries, though.)

Not that I don't keep up with the courts still. You never know what's going to come up -- such as the case of actress Tracy Scoggins, in town to host the Miss U.S.A. Pageant, who was assailed by a would-be rapist at her hotel. The culprit was taken to night court, where he gave the magistrate a fake name, address, and place of employment. After this was discovered, it also came out that the public defender was an old buddy of his -- and the magistrate on duty was the defender's law partner.

After this display of our legal system in action, an embittered Tracy Scoggins held a press conference to explain that she wasn't going to bother coming to El Paso to testify -- which forced the prosecutor to drop charges. She was, however, suing the city and the Pageant for \$14 million, claiming her assailant singled her out because the Pageant had given her a car with the Miss U.S.A. logo on the side.

As long as he isn't being prosecuted, her alleged attacker is countersuing her for defaming his good name.

Like I said, I still enjoy following the courts; I'm just glad it's not my job to make sense of them anymore.



{{ With the 5th Chicago Worldcon now only a little more than a year away, here's a bit of fan history about the first Chicon, some 50 years ago this year. In the Noreascon Three Souvenir Book from last year's Worldcon, Forry Ackerman, in descri-

bing Chicon I wrote, "There were heroic efforts made to get to the Worldcons in those days. Dave Kyle and Dick Wilson traveled with other fans from New York in an automobile *that had 30 flat tires en route!*" Here is the tale of that adventure... }}



The "Chicon" of 1940 always reminds me of Jerome K. Jerome's very amusing century-old book, *Three Men in a Boat*, about a holiday trip up the Thames River. My adventure was an epic automobile ride to Chicago. The occasion was the second World Science Fiction Convention in Chicago over the 1940 Labor Day weekend. This remembrance could be entitled *Four Youths in a Car, Westward Ho!*, and its sequel, *Five Youths in a Car, Back to the Future!*

I've told this story, on request, from time to time at sf gatherings. Ad libbing, without notes, though, results in the recalled details fading in and out of my mind. There may have been minor inconsistencies in the telling, but the spirit was always there.

The four science fiction fans who made that glorious 1940 pilgrimage to that shifting sf temple of worship -- the Worldcon -- were Dick Wilson, Jack Gillespie, Chester Cohen, and myself. We were all bound together by the intimate brotherhood of "The Ivory Tower," a Brooklyn apartment and haven for the ex-pubescent metropolitan fannish band of young sf men. "The Ivory Tower" in September 1939 was the successor to "Futurian House" -- a short-lived

communal project of a month earlier which established the famous/infamous Futurian Society -- and the forerunner of the Futurians' "Prime Base" and other such exotic locales. *The Three Men* of 1889 had an extra companion, *Montmorency*, a dog. *The Four Youths* of 1940 also had a companion, *Jenny*, a big-square-box of a car. *Montmorency* was a rather pleasant contributor to the excitement of the boat trip; *Jenny* was very much the vexatious contributor to the excitement of our auto trip.

Although a Chicon appearance had always been in our minds, who-when-and-how ("how" meaning \$\$) had not been settled. Dick had bought a rather old but substantial car, a four-door sedan which he named *Jenny*, and had been practicing driving it. He and I hoped, somehow, to be there in Chicago on Sunday morning, the official opening for the two days. He was working in NYC and I was back in Monticello (90 miles northwest of New York), at work at the new daily paper there. We were, nevertheless, in close touch. On Friday night, August 30th, Dick and I were at the Ivory Tower to check up on the plans of others who were bound for Chicago. We were determined

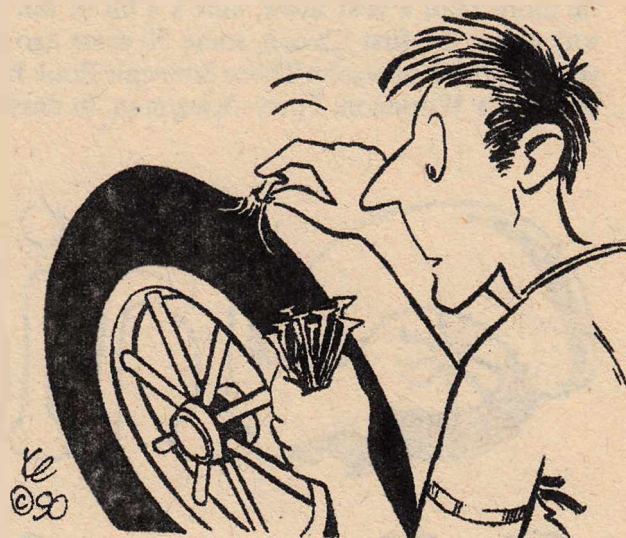


to go, but we needed passengers. The Ivory Tower was virtually deserted, as I recall. Undoubtedly Jack and Chester were there. (The wall newspaper informed all that only Don Wollheim and his affianced Elsie were making the trip, with a couple of passengers in Elsie's car.) "Who will go with us and share expenses?" we asked. Jack had only a few bucks, but that made him eligible; he'd go. Chester? Chester had no money; Chester *never* had any money. But a fourth in the party would keep one driver awake, either Dick or me, so we agreed that Chester should go. Thus was the con delegate team of four youths created.

On Saturday morning, August 31st, we assembled in Dick Wilson's family home at Richmond Hill, Long Island. The launch pad was well chosen: Jenny lived there, and furthermore that was where, before departure, we would get a substantial breakfast prepared by Felicitas K. Wilson, Dick's concerned mother -- the only real meal we might have until our return after Labor Day. We studied the maps closely, for in those days there were no Interstate superhighways. We decided to strike out due west across New Jersey towards Stroudsburg where we would pick up U.S. Route 6 for a direct run to Chicago. We figured, 800 maybe 900 miles one way. And so we ate, gassed up, kicked the four good tires, and left late in the morning. Chicon or Bust! And bust we did -- time and time again!

We expected the drive to take twenty-four hours at most. That figured to a modest pace of 45 miles per hour for less than a thousand miles, sleeping in the car and eating Mrs. Wilson's food. Our arrival, therefore, would be at the hotel early Sunday morning in plenty of time for the festivities.

The trouble began in western Pennsylvania that Saturday afternoon with our first flat tire. We had a spare wheel which rode in the well over a front fender. The spare looked to have a dubious future, but we were confident that in an emergency it would get us to the nearest gas station. And it did. We picked a few nails out of the tire's carcass, assuming one of them to be the culprit. The airless tube, already much battle-scarred with patches, was patched again and we were once more on our way.



An hour later, we had another flat. We changed to the spare. A short while later, that went half-flat. We hand pumped it up. Later, another half-flat to be pumped up again. This happened many times.

During one of those stops, some place in Pennsylvania or Ohio, we stocked up on dozens of ears of corn. I remember being parked at the side of the road with cornfields stretching out on both sides as far as the eye could see -- lush green stalks loaded with plump ears. While repairs were going on, Chester ran into the fields, disappearing into the waving greenery. We could hear him fade into the distance. And then we could hear him running back to us, accompanied by *Snap! Snap! Snap-snap!* He burst into sight with an armful of corn, threw the load onto the rear floor, and dashed back down between the rows. Again he disappeared and, with more *snap-snapping*, reappeared with more corn. When we left, two pairs of feet rested on a stock of fresh produce guaranteed to protect us from starvation.

When we reached a garage near Cleveland, we had the regular tire fixed. By then we were experiencing the same trouble with that "good" tire -- loss of air. Several times we stopped to pump it up and finally, late that evening in or around Cleveland, we found a garage where a helpful mechanic identified our problem. We learned that the tire contained a "boot," which is a pad inserted in the tire casing to cover a slash or break in the casing; this boot

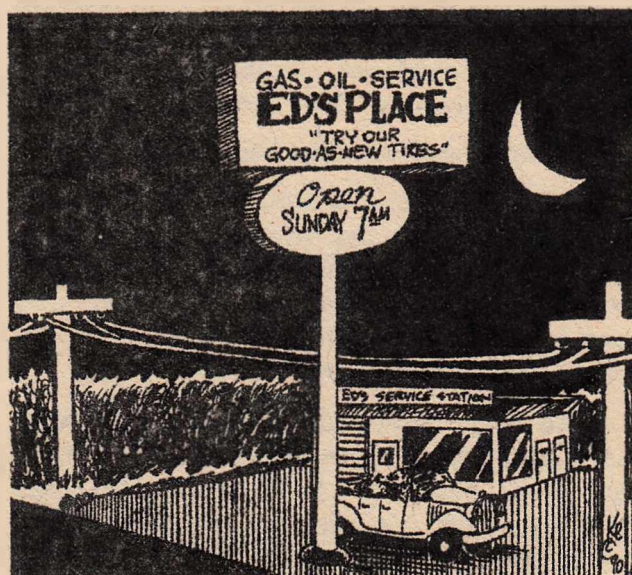


would protect the tire tube from stress against the cut inner wall of the casing. It was apparent to him that the boot was moving slowly away from the area it was supposed to protect, exposing the tube to damage. Additionally, the boot was dislodging old tube patches and causing them to leak. The obvious remedy was to buy a new tire. He could sell us one, but he had no used tires in our size. He did the best he could do -- he glued the boot in place and wished us luck.

Well, yes, come to think of it, said Dick, the week before he had hit a curb rather hard and caused a flat. The repairman had told him not to worry about the tire cut because he had fixed it up almost as good as new. To begin with, the tire already was "almost as good as new," which should have given pause for thought, but Dick hadn't questioned the evaluation. Not that it would have mattered to us, anyway.

By now it was after midnight and I was driving. The suburbs of Cleveland thinned out, and the highway became lonely flat country. We felt more confident than we had all evening that our problem was solved. In fact, we traveled for several hours before the exasperating trouble reappeared. The boot had slipped and a patch had loosened -- another flat. The spare went back on, and we repaired the regular tire while traveling. The spare lasted a while before we had to make a switch, but soon after that the regular tire was again developing a slow leak. So in the darkness, we simply stopped every so often, resigned to pumping it up the rest of the night. By now we were approaching two dozen tire failures, and we were frustrated and exhausted. Our decision was to buy another tire, second hand, of course, and as soon as possible. But it was night, and we would have to bear up the best we could until morning.

While driving sometime about dawn, near Bowling Green, Ohio (a name which will always haunt me), I spotted a used tire lot. There was a shack of an office in front of a wire-fenced enclosure, and inside were hundreds of tires. It was a treasure trove! I parked the car and dozed off, awaiting the fulfilling of a sign's promise: "Open Sunday 7 A.M."



Somewhere between Pemberville and Bowling Green, Ohio

When I was finally in the back lot, surrounded by all those tires, I felt the miracle had happened to give us good fortune at last. A number of tires were the proper size. One tire was particularly good looking, with a fine tread and a famous name. I eagerly poured the water out of the casing and confirmed that it was as cheap in price as the others; it was something like three bucks (a bargain, I thought). Also, we did the right thing and bought an almost new tube for another dollar (a bit of an extravagance, I felt, but necessary). We mounted the tire, fixed up the old one as a spare, and discarded the worthless original spare. We drove away happy, confident now that we would get to Chicago and the con by noontime. I curled up in the right rear corner of the back seat and quickly went to sleep.

I awoke, a horrible noise shattering my dreamless peace.

My befuddled mind registered an explosion, the noise reverberating over the otherwise quiet, peaceful countryside. A shuddering Jenny was staggering to a halt, half off the road. Seconds later, the clear sky was raining down bits of black rubber and bits of red rubber. We were on a straight stretch of road with widely spaced houses with pleasant lawns; bushes and flowers lined the rural highway. One moment, as my eyes focused, the only movement was the rubbery rain, then into the deserted scene rushed people from their hous-



es. Mothers and fathers and many children were out on their lawns. Faces peered out of windows. All obviously expected to view some kind of catastrophe. They didn't know that --

-- Our "new" tire had blown up!

We had come to a halt, a shuddering one, of course, half on the road and half on the shoulder. Dick had successfully fought the steering wheel for control, a relatively easy task considering the practice he and I had had during the previous twelve hours.

In those days, the front fenders were really just mud guards, and the wheels were very much exposed. It made tire changing relatively easy. It also permitted a self-destructing tire to shoot out every which way. Only two-thirds of the tire was left on the wheel rim. The rubber had quite literally disintegrated around the blowout in the center of the tread. I could now easily see that the rubber had been rotten. Huge chunks of the casing lay about on the road and ground. After examining those pieces and pulling on the remnants of the still deceptively impressive tread, I marvelled at the remarkable fact that we had actually traveled about thirty or forty miles before its spectacular demise. I was tired and I was mad. I knew that the tire dealer had known we were buying a piece of junk. Though we were practically at the Indiana state line, I decided immediately that we had to go back and fight for satisfaction. Our trip now depended on the fair play of a tire dealer. The others shrugged and agreed.

One of the men, looking as though he was dressed for church and who had come out to view our stricken Jenny, wanted very much to help. It was obvious that we wouldn't get very far on our poor, old, worn-out spare. If it also died, out on the empty highway, we would really be in trouble. He offered us the best help possible. He went to his flower bed in the center of his lawn and there, embracing a mass of flowers, was a discarded tire, a typical old-fashion garden improvisation. He urged us to take it: "It might help out you boys." "It's the wrong size," I said, knowing that it could even be as rotten as the one we'd bought. "Well," he said, "take it anyhow, it might somehow help," and before we could object more strenuously, he had pulled it up and carried it to our car. Meanwhile, our spare tire was back on the front

wheel and when the man (I remember him as a farmer) put his old tire in the tire well, we were ready to go. We drove away, with pieces of the mangled tire on the back floor as evidence and the garden tire reincarnated as part of Jenny, and we had some living flowers as good luck charms waving in the bottom of that farmer's old tire.

When we pulled up in front of the tire store, our grim faces must have been obvious. No argument was necessary. All I said was that the tire we had just bought had blown up, and the man simply told us to pick out another one. Not entirely mollified, I complained that our tire tube was also destroyed. Well, pick out a used tube too, he said. No charge. And that was that. We were on our way once more. At the scene of our earlier explosion, the farmer's tire, having been out in the world for a brief adventure, was returned -- once again, I imagine, to embrace the bed of flowers.

We had no further trouble. The saga of *Four Youths in a Car* ended at the afternoon session of Chicon. What happened there, when I met Doc Smith for the first time, and won an *Amazing Stories* cover original for wearing a "Ming the Merciless" costume (a Worldcon first), and paraded to a newspaper office as part of Forry Ackerman's idea to get con publicity, has been told in other reports. The costume, incidentally, was made by Leslie Perri, later to become Dick Wilson's wife. She made it for Don Wollheim, but he considered it too undignified so I wore it instead. Don and Elsie brought the costume to Chicago. And, oh yes, they had their own car troubles. En route they had an accident, but fortunately were not injured and, although delayed, pushed on.

Okay, we were in Chicago, but our budget, really insufficient to start with, could not be stretched to get us back East. We had spent a very modest amount for a flop house (definitely not The Chicagoan, site of the con meeting room), where the walls and doors were thin and the stairs squeaked all night with comings and goings. Our toughest question was whether or not to pay for the "banquet," an inexpensive meal (and our only one in days), or to husband our funds for gasoline. If we had no extra expenses on the way back, we concluded, we would have enough money to get us, tired and



hungry, halfway through Ohio. But halfway, obviously, wasn't good enough. So, being logical, we decided to eat for the moment and worry later.

The money solution was easier than we could imagine -- we found a mark. He was Elmer Perdue, a well-known fan from California. Elmer was going on to New York from Chicago and had a transcontinental train ticket. Oh, my, we sympathized with him, he ought to be traveling by car with us and see the country. In fact, we even had room for him! He would save lots of money by cashing in part of his train ticket because we would share the expenses. We were very persuasive, perhaps desperately persuasive, and Elmer agreed. So, when we left Chicago, Dick and I were in the front seat and Elmer was comfortably squeezed between Chester and Jack in the back seat. At our first gas stop on the outskirts of Chicago, we nonchalantly spent our entire fortune on a tank of gas, carefully noted down the statistics, and headed for Indiana.

The day was still bright, although evening was coming on, when we had to stop for more gasoline. Now came the harsh reality of the situation for us all -- Elmer was about to learn the horrible truth. As the gas was being pumped, I turned to Dick and asked for some money. Dick informed me that there was none left in the kitty. Did Jack have any money? Jack pointed out that he had earlier put all his money in the kitty. I looked at Chester. Dick looked at Chester. Jack looked at Chester. "Don't look at me, guys!" Chester objected. "You know I didn't have any money when we started this trip!" So we all looked at Elmer. Elmer simply looked bewildered.

It took a moment for the truth to sink in -- Elmer was our banker. Now that his inescapably vital role was established, we reassured him. He'd pay for all the gas and oil, and when we finally arrived we would "draw money out of the bank," tally up the pro-rated cost, and pay him. Elmer, of course, went along with the idea -- he had no other choice! Out came his pocket purse; he unsnapped it and doled out the funds. At first there was that slow, hesitant, reluctant response by our banker, but with each passing occasion, Elmer became less inhibited. Fortunately, his money supply seemed inexhaustible.

Feeding Jenny, however, didn't mean feeding us. We still had a bag of canned foods brought along for the trip, and we were still eating from that dwindling pantry (with our corn supply in reserve). We offered to share with Elmer, but Elmer preferred for us to stop and buy more traditional meals. We explained that we certainly would stop for him to get things but weren't in a position to join him. As a result, Elmer was resigned at first to eating alone at a counter stool. After that initial experience, he would buy a bag of things he wanted and generously offer to share his supply with us. We nobly declined at first -- but not for long.

The truly devastating experience, which was the worst blow to Elmer, came when Jenny had her mechanical breakdown. We had driven through Indiana and Ohio for most of the night and had stopped when there was concern that we would run out of gas while no gas stations were open. Also, this gave us a few hours sleep. We had no more flat tires, the facts about which we hadn't wanted to trouble Elmer, and our expectation was to be home by the end of that day. Outside the crowded heart of Cleveland, Jenny began the long climb up the hill in Cleveland Heights. Jenny was really struggling upward, slowly losing power, when suddenly there was a clunk and a halt, and we started rolling backward. The brake held us in place, but the accelerator would only race the motor and the rear wheels were powerless. By now, the sun was high, perhaps eight in the morning, and traffic was light. Using gravity and muscle power, we turned Jenny around and coasted back down the hill to reach, by another minor miracle, an open garage at the bottom of the hill.

Jenny had a broken rear axle.

The part was available, the mechanic was available, the time was available and the repair could be done that day. Not available, however, was the money. The price was a bargain and Elmer would have loaned us the money, but even he wasn't that affluent. Trusting once more in Providence, we ordered the repair -- then phoned for extra funds, explaining our delay.

We spent a half day at a nearby CCC picnic grounds, a fine place to cook our corn. (The Depression-bred Civilian Conservation



Corps had made picnic grounds in various parts of the country.) Under a fire, we attempted roasted corn. Over the flames, we heated a pot of canned spaghetti mixed with corn kernels cut from the cobs. (Two disasters! The pot of porridge became a disgusting, inedible, scorched mess. Within the charred corn husks, the ears were still raw.) Other supplies assuaged our hunger, but oh, the humiliation -- plus the waste of spaghetti! However, the day, filled with trees and grass and blue skies and a stream, was beautiful and the car repairs were being made, and we were young, so the memory is a funny and pleasant one.

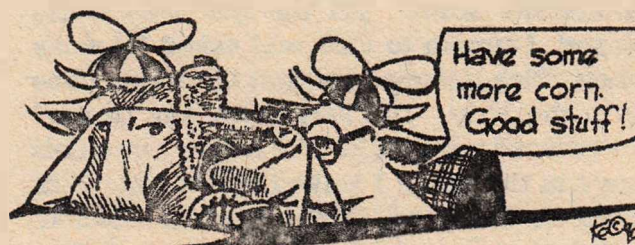
The money arrived with ten dollars extra, I believe, which was fortunate because it just covered the legitimate extra expense to ransom Jenny. We drove onward with optimism. Elmer, in recognition of our meager larder, bought a bag of groceries for the five of us to share. His properly frugal behavior was about to give way utterly. On the second morning, at an early breakfast time, Elmer felt compelled to have a real meal. We stopped at a roadside restaurant and all went in to sit, with dignity, at a table and be served. The four of us could have stayed in the car and eaten the rolls we had, but there was a need to be near cooked food and to enjoy the ambiance of the place. Elmer ordered a full, genuinely American breakfast, from juice to the extra cup of coffee, or whatever it was that his craving for genuine food demanded. And we pretended to be satisfied with a cold glass of water in a sensuously pleasing, thick restaurant glass. Elmer's food came and he began to eat, and we chattered among ourselves, struggling not to watch. Then Elmer cracked. "Look, fellows," he said, "order what you want. The treat's on me. You deserve at least one decent meal today before we get to New York." We half-heartedly protested, but we were really hungry. We accepted and had four orders of what Elmer was eating. And when his purse appeared, and he unclicked it, the sound was friendly.

Within the hour the bad luck returned -- the "new" tire had a blowout, and the new string of flats began. They happened, I suppose, because thin and deteriorated rubber couldn't prevent punctures. We'd had maybe two dozen deflated tires going west. By the sixth change of wheels on the return trip, we

were fed up and ready for a drastic solution. Elmer suggested we buy a new tire, a really new tire! The cost would go into our little account book as a loan. We did so in Scranton, I believe, at a discount tire store. And that was the last of all our troubles.

Our agonies were over. A few hours later, Jenny took me to the door of my Monticello home. The ears of corn which lined the floor of the back seat, mixed with our tire changing tools and smeared with oil, were thoughtfully unloaded and put on the back porch of my house for my mother. Then I was transported to work (a day late), borrowed some money to rebuild the kitty, and said my goodbyes. Jenny got Elmer to New York with no further adventures.

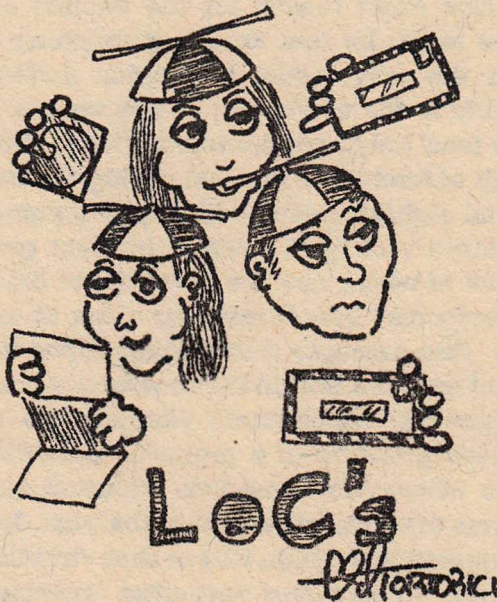
That evening when I came home for supper, I expected to have fresh corn. No, it had been thrown in the trash. I argued that the motor oil hadn't penetrated the husks, that the corn was still edible. My father, a lawyer who had been raised on a farm, explained. "You had field corn. Field corn is grown for cattle feed, not for humans." Well, nevertheless, if we'd cooked it properly I know I would have enjoyed it on our unscheduled picnic outside Cleveland.



As a postscript, I should mention that Dick Wilson went on to win a Nebula Award, and died in 1987. Jack Gillespie married my former girl friend Lois, who was "Miss Science Fiction of 1949," and disappeared into Pennsylvania. Chester Cohen, I heard, had some tough times. About once a decade I saw Elmer, wearing his notoriously garish ties. I wish I could recall more of the details of that unique Chicago trip. I wonder if old fanzines might have had reports about it. Maybe somebody knows or remembers more than I have just told or can correct me on my dimly remembered facts. If so, I'd love to have them drag my thoughts back to that time of the Chicon a half a century ago.



## Mimosa Letters



{{ The response from *Mimosa 7* brought us several hours of pleasant reading, plus several days of work editing and preparing this letter column. We appreciate all the comments we receive (whether or not they're printed in our lettercol), and we do pass them along to the contributors. Of the four articles from last issue, there wasn't a clear winner in terms of reader response. This is actually good news, because it tells us the issue was fairly even in content and quality. First up are some representative comments about Skel's article about fanzines and fanzine fandom... }}

Jeanne Mealy, 4157 Lyndale Ave S,  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55409

Skel's view of what fanzines do and how they've changed {{ "No Way to Stand Kansas" }} seems pretty accurate to me. It's possible to present a well-thought-out argument or discussion when there's time to ponder and polish the final product. It's also a place to play around -- to be child-like, as Skel says. But too many folks are getting Serious about the playground, eh? True, I haven't seen that many really humorous and fanciful things in zines lately. They're full of renditions of what fans did in various situations, how-to instructions (Moving, sharing a room at a con, which con to choose), reviews (books, movies, TV, cons).

Now, I happen to find all of these things fascinating -- the fannish viewpoint is very entertaining when expressed well. Reminds me of the time at work when someone asked me what I was thinking about. I had been mentally rambling between thought of that night, the weekend, and upcoming trips to cons. I was tempted to answer that I'd been time-traveling, but realized how long it'd take to explain to a non-fan and instead replied that I'd been generally thinking about upcoming plans. How entertaining just plain Life can be presented depends on the fan writing about it -- I'd wager that a large number of us are Walter Mitty types, full of fanciful daydreams and creatively misheard words and phrases...

Skel is disappointed that the fanzine picture seems to have switched back to black-and-white Kansas, yet his writing is some of the most colorful and imaginative in zines these days.

I disagree that fanzine fandom can't exist on its own without being a subsidiary of Social Fandom. Granted, I greatly appreciate the times I get to meet other zine fans in person -- but I accept that I can't afford to visit everyone, and there are a lot of people, whose written presence I can accept better than their three-dimensional self.

Dale Speirs, Box 6830, Stn D, Calgary,  
Alberta T2P 2E7, Canada

Despite Skel's disclaimers, I remain unconvinced that fanzines are not what they used to be. We are all of us convinced that the newer generation isn't as exciting as we were. I am shocked that many kids these days never heard of Canned Heat or Pink Floyd, and would rather listen to the garbage that passes for rock music. They in turn are amazed that I have never listened to Paula Abdul or INXS. So it goes with fanzines. Skel would rather live in Oz instead of Kansas, but Oz wasn't all it appeared to be on the surface.

{{ What we're afraid will happen is that future fans will look back on this era as "Oz." }}



Joseph Nicholas, 5A Frinton Road,  
Stamford Hill, London N15 6NH, United  
Kingdom

Of all the items in *Mimosa* 7, my attention was particularly caught by Paul Skelton's "No Way To Stand Kansas," bemoaning the dearth of fanzines being published these days and suggesting that fanzine fandom had changed so much that there was little to differentiate it from the rest of fandom. (I paraphrase, naturally.) To which I say: absolutely -- because growth and decay are an inevitable part of the process of historical change, and it would be foolish to expect that fanzine fandom should somehow remain isolated from it.

Paul states that "whatever it is or was, fanzine fandom is no longer serving the same sort of function," and I would agree unhesitatingly. But for different reasons: he has it as a form of intellectual play, whereas I would argue that it was a product of the social and economic conditions that prevailed until relatively recently -- to wit, that the opportunities for travel were limited and expensive, that there were very few conventions for fans to attend, and that fans themselves were not exactly rolling in wealth. People published fanzines because that was the only way in which they could afford to communicate with each other. To compare the hey-days of fifties and seventies fanzine production with the present, however, is to notice immediately the greater affluence of the majority of fans, the greater number of conventions for them to attend, and the vastly more extensive and relatively cheaper travel opportunities available. In the past, a weekend trip to Paris would have been a major undertaking requiring months of planning -- but now I can book a flight to the other side of the world simply by quoting my credit card number over the phone (itself a demonstration of the effects of technology upon society). With such greatly enhanced opportunities for face-to-face personal interaction, the need to publish fanzines is consequently much reduced -- and although I wasn't at Rubicon, I can well understand the views advanced during the panel discussions on which Skelton quotes Mal Ashworth's later comments. I haven't read those comments; but from the portion excerpted it seems as though Ashworth

might be ignoring the change of function outlined above.

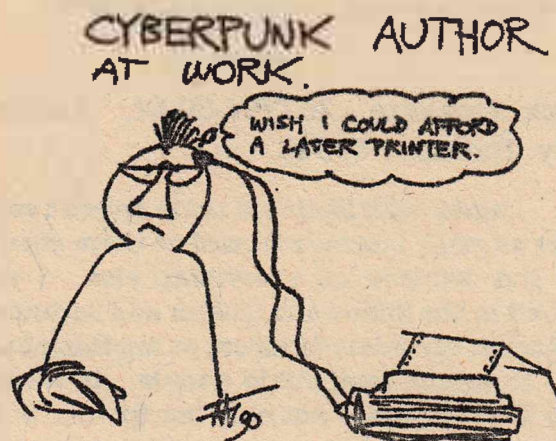
One other reason for the decline of the fanzine might be that fanzine publishing is no longer the only model of fannish endeavour available to the newcomer. Once upon a time, it was fans' only participatory activity -- but the growth of fandom in general during the seventies and eighties has resulted in its fragmentation into a variety of discrete interest groups, any one of which has the potential to draw off the newcomer into something other than fanzines. One example that springs immediately to mind as far as Britain is concerned is convention-running, which once seemed the near-exclusive preserve of a group of "established" fans to whose ranks one was admitted only after years of effort, yet which in the past decade has boomed to such an extent that virtually the first thing a newcomer does after entering fandom is set up and chair a bidding committee. The British convention calendar is now so full that one could attend a different one virtually every other weekend; peanuts in American terms, yet a huge change from the four or five conventions available each year in the late seventies. That is where the action is; and so that is where newcomers go.

There is also another reason for the decline of fanzine fandom, which Paul doesn't appear to consider yet is implicit in his notion of fanzines as play. And that is that we are all a lot older than we used to be; and as we grow older so our priorities and attitudes change. When I first entered (British) fandom, in the mid-seventies, I thought it was heaven on earth and that I would never leave -- but in the eighties I got married, I became involved in political activism (mainly against Your Man Ron's cruise missiles), I discovered the enjoyment to be gained from foreign travel, I took several steps back from fandom and at one point almost dropped out entirely. Fifteen years on, I am hardly the same person I was in the mid-seventies; and neither, it's likely, is Paul. Nor are many other fans of my generation -- people who were there and active in 1975 but have since got married, bought houses, had children, placed greater emphasis on their professional careers, and if they gather in pubs to chat with each other (as some groups still do)



are more likely to be arranging a court for next week's squash match than discussing fanzines. For them, and for me, fandom has ceased to constitute the whole of our lives, and has become instead just part of it. And the fanzines we publish reflect that; less play, and far more of the real world.

{{ See Dick's closing comments for his view of the state of fanzine fandom. }}



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

Skel's article, as expected, was a delight to read, beautifully crafted and very thought-provoking. In many areas he says far more eloquently things I've tried to say myself but I don't think I agree with him one hundred percent. My guess would be that I'm less disenchanted with fanzine fandom as it currently exists than Skel is and yet I think I have changed in my reactions to fanzines. It strikes me as odd that I can admit to finding some of the sheen to have worn off the way I feel about fanzine fandom and yet I'm having a very good time in it while Paul says he hasn't changed his feelings yet is disenchanted with the modern scene. Hell, fanzine fandom was always a large chunk of Kansas with a smaller subsection of Oz and I don't expect that's altered all that much in the last 20 years. But as with many experiences -- sex, food, drugs, etc. -- what excites us when it's all new may not continue to produce the same intensity of reaction when it becomes more familiar. I believe it would be impossible to maintain the initial sense of wonderful discovery some of us feel when we

first get involved in fanzine fandom even if the fanzines themselves remained at the same level. Fanzines could actually get better and we might still feel some vague sense of loss just because that wondrous First Contact had worn off.

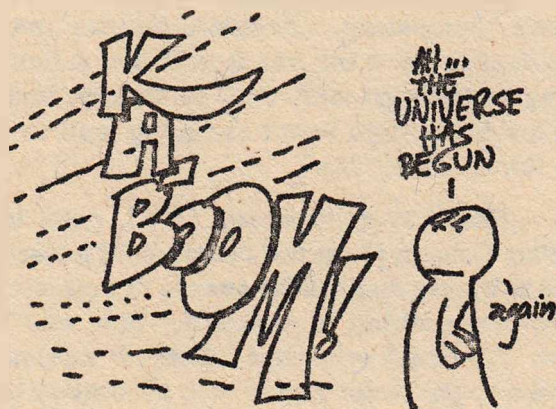
I recently received a list of fanzines and small press publications and was quite astonished at just how many publications it mentioned. There must have been over three hundred, of which I received no more than 15 percent. So there are lots of people out there publishing. They're just not publishing the sort of thing I'm interested in being a part of. And yet despite the waning of that intense first burst of excitement about the more idea of a fanzine, I still enjoy the zines I get today, and I'd be the first to admit there are some good zines around. If they aren't as involving as were the fanzines I began my career in, perhaps that says more about me (and Paul) than it says about the zines themselves. Besides, Kansas may be lightening up a bit but it still has a hell of a long way to go and who is to say that the Ochre Brick Road won't someday lead us back to the Emerald City?

Skel's lengthy essay {{ ed. note: in the Letter Column }} on the rationale of letterhacking is interesting but he seems to suggest that I said something to contradict him, and I did not. All I said was that whatever egoboo accrued to the letter writer was secondary to the egoboo disseminated to the contributors. I stand by that statement while fully agreeing with what Skel said. Of course, we try to make our locs interesting enough to print and most of us hope that faneds will publish what we send them, so that we can both be seen to be passing out egoboo and can pick up a little for ourselves in doing so. My statement that a lettercol is vital to a healthy regular fanzine should make it obvious that I support the idea of publishing rather than merely passing on good letters. (Oddly enough, I find the *Mimosa* lettercol somewhat flat. It's edited in a manner and to a degree that tends to render it less prone to contain comment hooks for me than many other such columns. Perhaps you do this intentionally to prevent the locs running away with the fanzine as they have with publications such as *FOSFAX*.) And in that light I'll obviously do my



best to send a letter you'll consider using in the next issue. But if I fail in that attempt, and you WAHF me, I won't mind so long as you pass on my comments, since that is the primary purpose of this loc.

{{ Consider it done. By the way, we don't edit the letters received so as to intentionally produce a "flat" lettercol, but we try not to let the lettercol take up much more than about one-third of the issue. Much more than that produces more comments on the letters received than on the essays and articles that make up the rest of the issue (FOSEAr is an example of this), and would therefore seem to be a disservice to the authors of those articles. We don't mind (and do reprint) readers' comments on our lettercol (as you can see from this and previous issues); there are some discussions that deserve to be continued for more than one issue, and those discussions we'll keep alive. }}



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

I do agree with Skel's view of the function of the letter column. All too often my LoCs are in fact no more than thank you notes to the editor. Health and other commitments permitting, I do try to send (at least once a year) to each zine I care about a letter that can be (if the editor wishes) a contribution. I had perceived another function of zines, that of being a medium for getting to know people. To a certain extent that was a false perception. After a while one can build up an image of regular editors and contributors but letter writers and occasional contributors are another matter. An

entertaining piece of writing may well reveal little of the writer other than his or her opinion on the subject matter at hand. That same writer may appear months later, in a different zine, with a different ambience, debating a different subject and their name, alas, won't even ring a bell in my mind. The process of getting to know people through zines takes many years and a great deal of zine activity. Mind, zines are a wonderful way of keeping in touch with people once you have got to know them.

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

I agree with Skel that there doesn't seem to be as many fanzines around as there used to be, and disagree on everything else. I was around in the Fifties and Sixties and Seventies, and never considered fandom as anything but a way to locate compatible people. It worked very well for that; I not only got friends, but a wife and, somewhat more surprising, a niece. (More surprising because both Juanita and I were 'only' children.) I certainly never idealized it; there were just as many half-assed jerks, nerds, and lackwits around then as there are now. (Some of them are still around.) The beauty of fandom and fanzines was that you didn't have to put up with anybody you didn't like. I told several fans to get lost, and they did, and a few told me the same thing and I don't even remember their names any more. I still feel that getting acquainted by mail is the best way to do it. I eventually did meet most of my friends, but it could be postponed until we were sure of one another. When one grows up in a town of 470 people, finding friends is not all that easy, and I'm still amazed that from 2 or 3 friends I had when I discovered fandom, Juanita's and my Christmas card list burgeoned to 140 people one year. Before fandom, I hadn't thought that there were that many people in the world that I'd ever like. Also, fan friends don't disappear just because you or they move to a different locality, that's what fanzines and letters are for. But some vague idealization? No way.

I disagreed with Skel's letter, too, but then I have an offensively strong ego. I enjoy



being appreciated, but why should I care whether it's in public or private? Quite often it's better in private; if my own writing doesn't convince people that I'm wonderful, then having a third party tell me that I am won't do much good, and might even create envy. Skel needs to cultivate self-assurance...

You certainly got a lot of response to Kyle's Exclusion Act {{ "The Great Exclusion Act of 1939," in *Mimosa* 6 }} It seems to prove that while the major participants are willing to forget past disagreements -- I noticed Wollheim and Moskowitz at the Atlanta WorldCon, talking and laughing together in a hotel lobby -- people with less personal interest are always ready to keep the arguments alive. Not to mention taking what I assumed to be a joking comment about forgiveness with deadly seriousness. Of course, I've never been involved in barring anyone from a con, but one fan did accuse me of running him out of Indiana. (The major response I got from that came in the form of congratulations from other Indiana fans -- undeserved, but pleasant.)

{{ As we mentioned last issue, we saw SaM, Dave Kyle, Fred Pohl, and Don Wollheim on a fan history panel at the Atlanta WorldCon, and everyone seemed to be getting along just fine. By the way, since our previous issue, SaM's 10-page letter in response to Dave's "Exclusion Act" article (of which we reprinted only the first page in the *Mimosa* 7 lettercol) has been reprinted in its entirety, in the fanzine *CFS Review*. Anyone with a completist interest in fan history (or a morbid curiosity) should send a buck to Norm Metcalf (P.O. Box 1368, Boulder, Colorado 80306) for a copy. }}

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

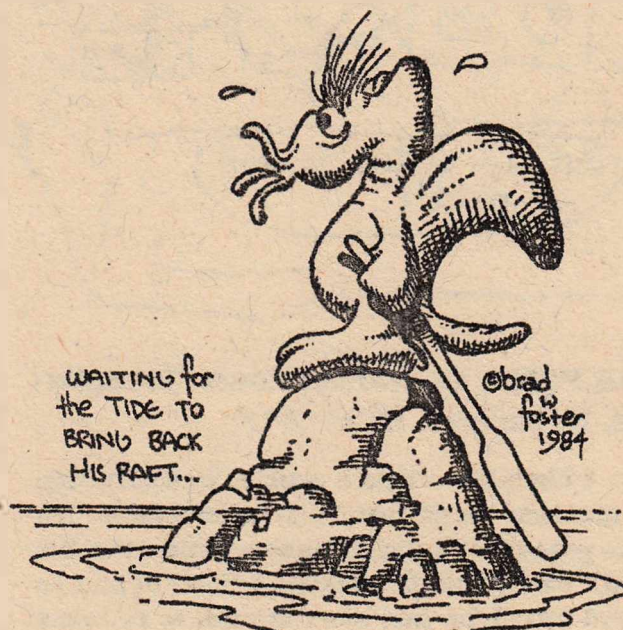
I don't know whether Skel and I inhabit the same sub-sub-section of the fannish universe, but I'd invite him to jump across to the sub-sub-section in which Robert Lichtman enjoys his days. In the recent *Trapdoor*, Robert lists some fifty-odd American fanzines, slightly more British ones, and I think twelve Australian and a few "other," all received in the last year. Gasp. When I saw that list I did not know

what had hit me -- a bad case of "Kansas," perhaps.

Depressing as it may be, it doesn't really matter if some people, or indeed most people, opine that there's no point in doing fanzines apart from the social motive. It's also fairly irrelevant, whether or not 'fanzine fandom' is considered to be a minority concern. So what?

The point is, is there enough 'Oz' (as opposed to 'Kansas') going around to satisfy you? Robert Lichtman has declared himself to be well satisfied, and well he might be. It doesn't matter how we ended up in whatever sort of sub-sub-section backwater we're in, does it? Already we receive excellent fanzines such as *Trapdoor* and *Mimosa*, so let's ask Robert for addresses of some of those fanzine-producing fans -- whether they're in Dodge City or Dahomey -- and let's enjoy the fruits of people's labours that, apparently, are around and waiting to be had!

{{ Thanks for the compliment. We tend to agree with Robert that there are lots of fanzines around, but (as Dick mentions in his Closing Comments) many if not most of them appear to be aimed at very specific readerships. We won't get into quantity vs. quality issues here, but at least one of Skel's observations -- that legendary, faanish fanzines like *Hyphen* and *Le Zombie* just aren't being published anymore -- seems valid. }}



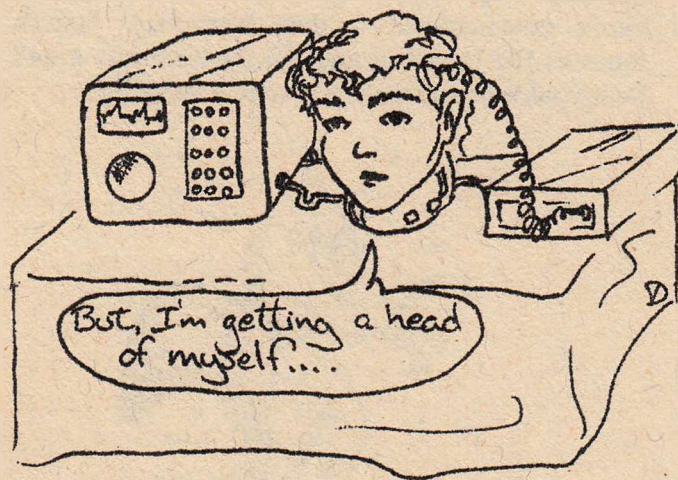


Richard Brandt, 4740 N. Mesa #111, El Paso, Texas 79912

Thanks for *Mimosa 7*, another beautiful production, marked by plenty of good art, old and new.

Dave Kyle's experiences at being a near-miss Gernsback publishee {{ "A Hugo Gernsback Author" }} must strike a chord with many of us. I didn't make much of an attempt to sell to the prozines, but I was quite the letterhack once, and there was one last bastion I was determined to crack -- *Analog*. I got as far as receiving two nice letters back from Ben Bova -- one in which he apologized for not printing my letter, saying he had planned to but a surfeit of letters had pushed mine out and enclosed the response he had planned to run after my letter! So pass the minor glories...

The durability of a fifty-year-old fan feud may surprise some, but not me. My more recent experience has been that these resentments continue to fester and affect fan's relationships for years, and I fully expect fans in 2034 to be set frothing at the mention of events five decades earlier.



Walt Willis, 32 Warren Road, Donaghadee, N. Ireland BT21 0PD

I liked Dave Kyle's article, for apart from its intrinsic merit which is considerable, his mere presence in the magazine makes me feel good. Partly this is because I think of him as an old friend; he has been around at so many important times in my life, always in a helpful

role. I have a photo of him with his head stuck in a luggage rack during a party the night I arrived at Chicon II. He helped us get compensation for our lost luggage after Chicon III. And when I re-entered fandom in 1976 by attending the English Eastercon, there he was at Manchester Airport with a car. Of even more symbolic significance is the fact that when I first arrived in the United States, at Hoboken docks in 1952, in the trip which was the precursor to TAFF, he was the first to greet me, having finagled his way into the customs shed with a press pass. It was only later I realised how typical this was; at the time I knew him only as a character in *The Immortal Storm*. I was tremendously impressed at his appearance on my scene, straight out of legend.

While I was still marvelling at this miracle, Dave revealed that there was a rival welcoming party trying to get into the shed, led by the equally legendary Will Sykora. This was almost too much. I had become part of the Great New York Feud!

This is the same thrill which you have imparted to your readers by printing Dave's article and Sam's reply. There may be some who regard all this old stuff as a waste of time. But this is to think of fandom as something to be made use of for some ulterior purpose. I think of fandom as valuable in itself. It is an alternative universe which we can visit at will to lead another life. The more rich and complex and finely detailed that alternative universe, the more valuable it is. Everything and everyone in it matters. Chuck Harris put this aspect of fandom's appeal very well in a recent letter to me: "I find fandom as fascinating as a huge unfinished jigsaw puzzle, and every little phrase or snippet of information helps fill in another hole in the Big Picture. I love these people and although I am occasionally surprised, I am never hurt, shocked or horrified."

Of the rest of your excellent contents, I think I liked Skel's thoughtful piece best, though it was nice to see Bob Tucker and his Lez-ettes again. And, in answer to Michael Waite's question in the letter column, I can't hear the ocean through a stethoscope, but aorta.

{{ Where was that line when we needed it? }}



Mark Manning, 1400 East Mercer #19,  
Seattle, Washington 98112

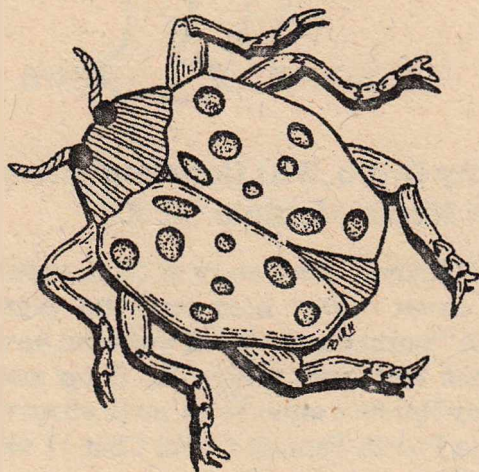
The Gernsback story by Dave Kyle was an interesting way to start things out in *Mimosa* 7. Since entering fandom in a big way a couple of years ago, I haven't seen him write an account of the Worldcon (Nycon II, wasn't it?) where the immortal phrase, "Dave Kyle says you can't sit here" came into the microcosm. Perhaps in an upcoming *Mimosa*...

{{ Consider the hint passed along. }}

I was slightly disappointed by your decision not to print all of SaM's letter recording his version of the events (*The Immortal Storm* reprint costs how much?). Then you could have run a Dave Kyle final statement afterwards, and introduced the whole gemisch by writing, "And here they are, those Atlantic recording artists, Sam and Dave!" Just a thought.

Other than that, I've just got one question: Did you explain all those damned ladybugs when I wasn't paying attention?

{{ Unfortunately, there just wasn't enough room to print a 10-page letter of comment in its entirety, and SaM refused to condense it. The whole thing is now available in a fanzine from Norm Metcalf, though. As for Teddy Harvia's and Peggy Ranson's "Bugs In Space" cover for *Mimosa* 7 -- you weren't the only one who asked us about it. And while we're able to explain Teddy's *Mimosa* 6 cover as a fannish allegorical comparison of Tennessee and the Washington suburbs, we confess we don't have the foggiest idea of the meaning of the ladybugs cover. }}



Terry Broome, 101 Malham Drive, Lakeside Park, Lincoln, LINC's LN6 0XD, England

Dave Kyle's article this time I found enthralling. Maybe it's because he brings the subject alive, and because it's personal rather than political, which makes me like some fanhistory writings and dislike others. It'd be great to have all the fanhistory articles written and collected in several volumes, so you could get a chronological biographical history of the development of sf and fandom.

{{ Not a bad idea, but it would present problems trying to collect them all to say nothing about organizing them in some coherent order. Maybe some test project would be in order, like a history of the WorldCon through the ages, as seen through the eyes of fans who attended. }}

---

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

Statistics seem to bear out the notion that there aren't as many non-apa fanzines nowadays as there used to be. Both Robert Lichtman and I have made rough tabulations from our records of fanzines received currently and in the past and have come up with similar findings, that there are fewer. However, I think the decline in fanzine publishing might seem worse than it really is because there is a particular scarcity today of general-purpose fanzines like *Mimosa* that contain formal articles on a variety of topics. So many of today's fanzines are either official organs of local clubs that publish mostly reviews and locs, or highly specialized theme-zines or fanzines whose loc section almost swallows up everything. The lack of idealism that Skel writes about in today's fanzine fandom must be connected to some extent to the determinedly pessimistic, downbeat, doom & gloom orientation of the contemporary media and most mundane periodicals.

Dave Kyle's article is yet another valuable addition to the remarkable outpouring of recent materials about *Wonder Stories* during the Hornig editorship. I can sympathize with the elation and letdown he suffered over that first apparent sale of a story, because much the



same thing happened to me a long time back: a non-fiction book manuscript of mine had been accepted by one of the good publishing firms, which then proceeded to drop its juveniles department before publication and as luck would have it, the manuscript I got back was intended for the juvenile market. Stupidly, I was so disgusted I never submitted it elsewhere. Incidentally, I wonder if other sets of page proofs still exist for other stories that had been readied for publication before *Wonder Stories* changed ownership? If they do, conceivably it may be possible to assemble enough of them to make possible publication of one more issue of the Gernsback-Hornig *Wonder Stories*, more than a half-century late.

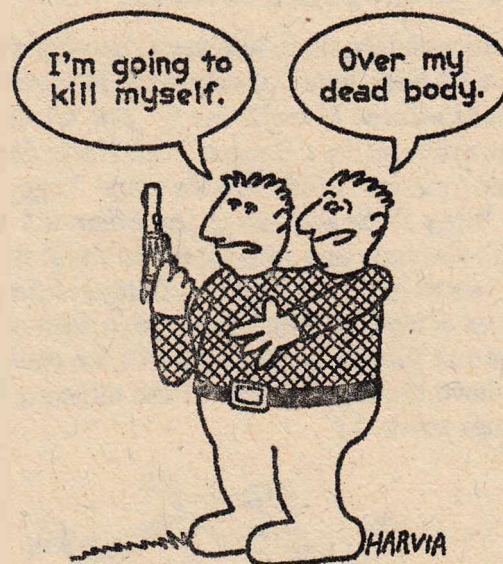
Your overview of *Chat* {{ "Visit to a Small Fanzine..." }} is the kind of article that should be written about every fanzine that has had a substantial life and some success. In the absence of updated fanzine indexes and the scarcity of public sources of fanzine collections, articles like this one can inspire the collector and can inform the neofan. Besides, such articles solve one of the biggest headaches for researchers, that of figuring out when a given fanzine published its last issue.

In the letters section, you're right about the failure of the first Worldcon fuss to have major effects on fandom in general. It could conceivably be considered more significant on the professional side of science fiction than on its fandom, since the enmities resulting from the Exclusion Act seem to have affected the choice of materials for prozines that were later edited by several of the principals. I was already active in fandom at the time of that first Worldcon, and I'm sure I didn't allow the fuss to govern my editorial decisions for my fanzines or my good relations with those on both sides of the dispute. A few years later, problems like the rise of Claude Degler and Fran Laney's exposé of Los Angeles fandom shook up fandom in general much more thoroughly than the Exclusion Act had done. The coincidence that several individuals in the middle of it later wrote books about old days in fandom has helped to make it seem more prominent in fandom's history than it really was.

Lloyd Penney, 4 Lisa Street #412,  
Brampton, Ontario L6T 4B6, CANADA

Bravo to all of those people who have bravo'd you for your articles on fannish history. I've said it in other fanzines, but I often find it difficult to get publications that contain accounts of fannish history. Having read *The Immortal Storm*, and having *All Our Yesterdays*, *The Way the Future Was*, and *Years of Light* (I've read them, too) just isn't enough. Many articles on fan history appear in fanzines long out of date. Not only do we need a database of fanhistory publications, but we need someone willing to cull out all these articles and put them together for all fans to see.

{{ Sounds like the ultimate Fanthology. Again, this seems like a worthwhile idea, but it would take someone of single-mindedness, deep pockets, and great persistence to make it happen. Another project for a Worldcon committee with lots of leftover money... }}



Cathy Doyle, 26D Copeland Lane, Newport News, Virginia 23601

Enjoyed the history of *Chat*, especially all the clever covers from over the years. And while I normally don't roll over and howl about stories with cute terms like dhog and bheer, Teddy Harvia's story {{ ed. note: about the origin of the Fourth Fannish Ghod, *Chat* }} was quite amusing.



David Thayer, P.O. Box 905, Euless,  
Texas 76039

I had forgotten about my nonsensical explanation of the origin of that Chat character. All these years I've thought that I stole the idea from somebody else (a tradition among cartoonists). A cartoonist having an original thought is scarier than any image of a saber-toothed tiger. I guess subconsciously I just didn't want to accept the blame for all those cats in your mail.

Your history of the clubzine *Chat* is history that repeats itself. Many local SF club members strangely see no reason in communicating with the outside world.

Sheryl Birkhead's interior ladybug illustrations complement well the "Bugs in Flight" and "Bugs in Space" cover art that Peggy Ranson and I drew. Having a responsive local artist to draw on allows intelligent editors to give their publication visual continuity. Although letting an artist inside your head sometimes produces strange images.

I enjoyed the art from your more distant contributors, too, especially Alexis Gilliland's typeface from hell and Kurt Erichsen's illustration for Bob Tucker's and Robert Bloch's sibling rivalry.

---

Geri Sullivan, 3444 Blaisdell Avenue S.,  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408-4315

Peggy Ranson and Teddy Harvia are regular Toad Hall visitors this week. *Pirate Jenny* #4 {{ ed. note: which also had a Harvia/Ranson cover }} arrived yesterday. Today, "Bugs in Space" *Mimosa* #7, plus the True Secret Origin of Chat, who I've seen pop-up from time to time, but never fully understood.

Fan history is one of my interests, too, and *Mimosa* #7 is a delightful and thought-provoking taste of yesteryear. Lez-ettes, especially, caught my fancy. Maybe it was Bob Tucker's comment about fandom refusing to take itself too seriously, or perhaps the delight of discovering an artform invented by the original Slan Shack gang (I grew up in Battle Creek, Michigan, alas, *after* the Slan Shack was no more, but I know its neighborhood. My great-

aunts ran a toy factory nearby). Whatever; in attempting to write a Lez-ette, I quickly discovered the difference between a headline and a story.

Chapter One:  
Minneapolis

Chapter Two:  
Fans

Chapter Three:  
Party

To my eye, it reads too much like a headline. Also, the climax in chapter three is lacking, simply by its predictability.

Chapter One:  
Macintosh

Chapter Two:  
Mimeo

Chapter Three:  
Fanzine

Again, it's predictable. And it leaves out the E-stenciller, but it does tell what I hope to be doing in the near future.

{{ We'll be looking forward to your next issue. We also received "Lez-ettes" from a few other people, among them Michael Waite of Ypsilanti, Michigan, who sent us these:

Chapter One:  
Sneeze

Chapter Two:  
Breeze

Chapter Three:  
Disease

---

Chapter One:  
Niece

Chapter Two:  
Piece

Chapter Three:  
Police

Plus four others, all of which were amusing. Michael wrote us that "... Lez-ettes are more fun than an underwater camera in a bathtub." Maybe we'll have a couple of pages of illustrated Lez-ettes in a future issue. }}



Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield,  
Detroit, Michigan 48224

There is much that I agree with in Skel's article. In many ways it does seem true that fanzines are currently seen as part of an extended socialization activity, and that the more one sees one's friends the less incentive there is to produce a new issue. But there are things one can do in a fanzine that one can't do in social conversation. One can organize one's thoughts, and expand at length on a subject without fear of boring one's listener. More importantly, it's possible to discuss things that don't go over well in social situations, like talking about a new book, philosophical conundrums, and so on.

Every few years there appears a fanzine that attracts the attention of a lot of fans, revels in an active lettercol, and seems to be more "alive" than most of the other zines of the time. I remember *Shadow of the Monolith* and *Title*, Fred Haskell's *Rune*, and *Chat* like that. Today *FOSFAX* seems to have that ineffable quality.

I'm not sure what all goes into making one of these zines. Monthly publication was part of it. A rapid turnaround of ideas and comments. But also a large and open lettercol that made everyone feel welcome and appreciated.

All of those zines were doomed to an early death because of the demands on the editors and the growth of feuds all lead to burn-out. That many of these zines were financed by clubs and club politics adds another burden to the zine's editor.

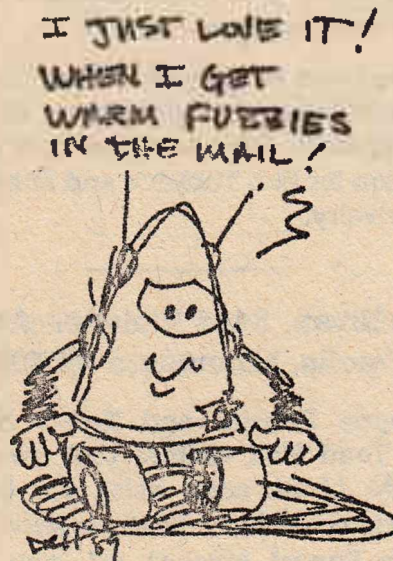
Of all of those fast, frequent fanzines, I'd have to say that I still like *Chat* the best. It wasn't burdened with the political debates the way *FOSFAX* is, had more meat than I remember *Shadow* had with a good selection of articles and, yes, Charlie Williams' wonderful drawings.

I enjoyed reading through your article(s) about and from *Chat*. The cover reproductions brought back a lot of memories. I'm glad you did this.

{{ Well, we felt it was something that Had To Be Done, especially in the wake of the *Mimosa* 6 covers. With all the encapsulated reprints, that

article (at 16 pages) was the longest thing we've yet run in *Mimosa*. And yet, there was so much more we could have included, but we didn't want that article to fill the entire issue. Anyway, we suspect you may be elevating *Chat* a little too high in comparison with those other fine zines, but we appreciate the kind words. }}

Your answer to Kev McVeigh's question {{ ed. note: on why so few Socialist political candidates achieve success in the U.S. }} misses a salient point. The Democrats co-opted a lot of Socialist programs during the New Deal, thus making it hard for a Socialist party to gain the distinction necessary to overcome the inertia of two-party politics. Unless one is able to offer a political agenda that's different from the Democrats and Republicans, it's hard to get people interested in that new party. As a result of the New Deal, the only people who still insisted on calling themselves Socialists were doctrinaire extremists, anarchists, and professional revolutionaries.



R Lauraine Tutihasi, 5876 Bowcroft St.,  
#4, Los Angeles, CA 90016-4910

In the letters section, your analysis of this country's political climate in your reply to the letter from Kev McVeigh was good, but I think there is an aspect that you neglected to mention. Our country is basically a two-party system. I don't think there are any viable national third parties. I don't pay much attention to third parties. Third parties get protest votes and rarely win.

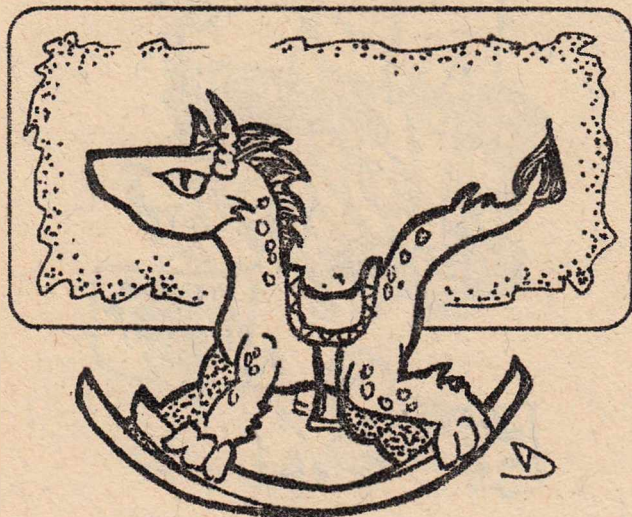


Taras Wolansky, 100 Montgomery St.,  
#24-H, Jersey City, New Jersey 07302

I guess I must be an SF history buff; I really enjoyed Dave Kyle's curious footnote to that history, in *Mimosa* 7. Too bad Charles Schneeman's striking illustration to Kyle's story was never published. The image of a man, staring avidly into a mirror as he injects himself in the forehead, is still shocking after all these years. This should have become one of those classic illustrations that are reprinted in histories of SF art.

Perhaps I've attended more fan history panels than you guys, in spite of your many more years in fandom. At any rate, I'm not at all surprised that surviving participants in the Exclusion Act controversy of 1939 are still sensitive about it. I remember once remarking, in a con report, that it was kind of amusing to see these gentlemen still squabbling after 50 years. On one side there is perhaps the uneasy feeling that they may have overreacted to provocation; on the other, a certain embarrassment over ever having espoused a bankrupt ideology.

Speaking of bankrupt ideologies, an "Ing-soc" wonders why Socialists haven't had more political success in the U.S. Actually they did, early in this century, until the major parties co-opted them by adopted their more popular positions. And in fact the far left wing of the Democratic Party is Socialist in all but name. Considering what's been happening in Eastern Europe lately, we should be glad the socialists here were largely unsuccessful!



Todd Mason, 7535-G Lee Highway,  
Falls Church, Virginia 22042-2818

Alas, alas... Anarchism, democratic socialism, communism (Leninism, Trotskyism, Stalinism as opposed to Kropotkin's true of anarchist communism), and even home-grown variations like single-taxism all flourished in the U.S. from about the 1870's through the early 1900s. McCarthy and his fellow thugs were just the last of a long line of powerful enemies of political diversity. The FBI, recently exposed for its concerted efforts to infiltrate and destroy our largest Trot group, the Socialist Workers Party, throughout the 1960's and '70's...presumably because of the SWP's connections to the early '60s Fair Play for Cuba Committee and subsequent Cuba-boosting...this same FBI served as an agency of provocateurs throughout the '30s and '40s, with other police forces taking up the slack beforehand. Anarchist Emma Goldman spoke to crowds of tens of thousands throughout the U.S. in the '10s, '20s and '30s, and she was only the most prominent and famous of dozens of widely-hailed anarchist speakers, organizers and activists. Socialist Party co-founded Eugene Debs polled over 900,000 votes in his 1912 bid for the presidency. As undiluted a social-democrat as Debs picking up about 6-7% of the vote in a country with no accepted (that is, publicly admitted and understood) hereditary class structure, 1/15 of the electorate was pretty good, in a time when most of the poorest could be kept from voting with sex discrimination (no national women's suffrage until 1920), poll taxes, literacy tests, grandfather clauses (African-Americans whose grandfathers were slaves could be kept from voting in many places) and other games. In 1924, the Progressive-Socialists fusion ticket headed by Robert LaFollette picked up nearly five million votes, vs. winner Calvin Coolidge's nearly 16 million (Democrat J.W. Davis got about 8.5). In 1928, by the way, SF writer Mack Reynolds's father, Verne Reynolds, stood for the first of two presidential elections as the candidate of the Socialists Labor Party, a Marxist party so doctrinaire that founder Daniel DeLeon criticized Marx's own deviations, as KM backed off from some of his less gradualist positions in the 1870 (they were contemporaries, and the SLP remains with us, as our fourth-oldest political party, after the



Democrats, the Prohibitionists, and the Republicans).

Throughout the same 1920s, the "Palmer Raids" against "foreign-born" trouble-makers (usually anarchist or any uncaptalist labor organizers) led to a lot of people being shot dead or deported, including some "native-born" citizens. Intentional misrepresentation of anarchists, particularly, was grist for the mills of the mainstream press, owned by the rich and slanted in favor of those who accepted the status quo.

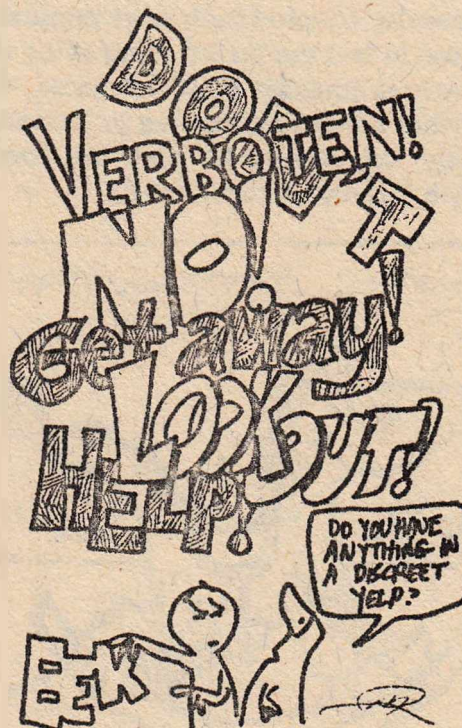
The Lynches suggest that this country is built on individualism, and I would amend that this way: most of the people in this country cherish romanticized notions of individualism, and talk a good game, but luck be with genuine individualists. This country was founded on land grabbed in various ways from nations like the Cherokee and the Iroquois by people who were criminals with few other options, desperately-poor indentured servants with no better options, venture capitalists who used the previous two groups, and religious zealots seeking freedom to oppress in their own ways (if you think that too strong, re-examine the early history of New England). Eventually, by the time of our War of Independence, some genuinely democratic radicals (like Thomas Paine, and to a much lesser extent Thomas Jefferson) had enough support throughout the society (particularly among the Colonists as wealthy as any good Whig but without the Whig's privileges) to partake in the successful war. Here's the U.S.A., land of democracy for literate, property-holding, almost-necessarily white, men above the age of 21. Whig heaven, albeit we had our Tories (such as Alexander Hamilton) in positions of power as well. Took about fifty years to get rid of the property-holding bit, longer for about everything else. The basic premise, to keep power in the hands of the wealthy and/or corruptible, still applies.

But we don't have formal hereditary class distinctions, just practical, informal ones...so even Canada and Australia have that much over the U.S. in terms of pointing to obvious injustices. Unfortunately, though, even the greatest potential for diversity in Britain and the Commonwealth countries doesn't mean that Money

doesn't rule, and the necessities of remaining in office doesn't come before any given program or philosophy, whether it be Labour's, or the New Democrats' (of Canada), or the current supposedly socialist administration of Burlington, Vermont. Or any other party, of any other stripe. We can hope for no better in Eastern Europe or elsewhere. Look how the Greens are copping out, where power struggles aren't destroying them, throughout the world.

Never have most Americans lived on frontiers, and most of the frontiers people were maligned and alienated misfits. Makes a hell of a mythos, though. Most Americans are taught that if they're suffering, it's their own fault, not the fault of unjust fate that put them in a suffering class. Hard to keep social justice movements going under such conditions.

{{ Interesting discourse on the chronology of Socialism in the U.S. Neither of us can claim much background in Political Science, so we're not in a position to either agree with or dispute your conclusions. However, your views would appear to be the minority view, based on what we've seen and the people we've met in our travels across the country in search of the Perfect MidwestCon; we expect that most Americans would probably say that Socialism is something going on elsewhere in the world, but not here. }}



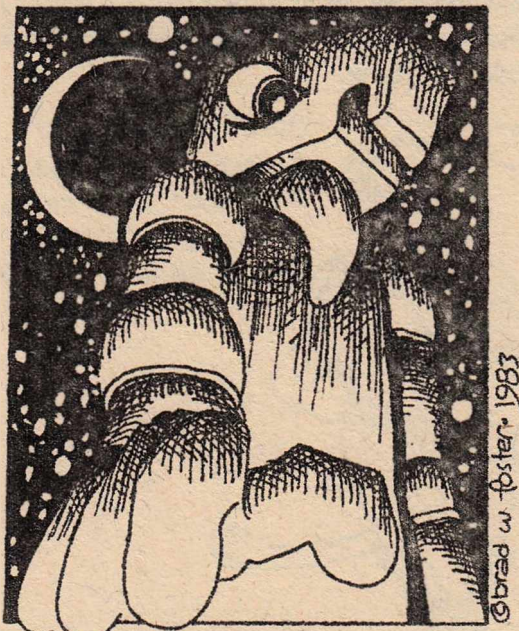


David Rowe (address withheld by request)

Dave Kyle's article was interesting, Skel was... Skel, but the honors this time go to Sharon Farber's article {{ "Tales of Adventure and Medical Life (Part III)" }}.

I worked for a psychiatric hospital for over a decade and as Sharon suggests, there are a myriad of tales to tell, such as our one well-dressed patient (who had everything short of a tux and top hat). This guy was living proof that clothes maketh a man... one day he went up to some road work contractors at the hospital and sacked the lot of them. They dutifully went up to the accounts department and had their cards made out and it wasn't till one of the staff asked who had sacked them that the truth was realised.

But the one patient I'll always remember was Fred. He looked just like a cartoon version of a lunatic -- big build, dangling ape-like arms, Marty Feldman eyes, and a permanent smile. One day he came up to me with his usual cheery attitude and said, "Consider this: I'm here for life. I've got a warm bed and I get three hot meals a day. I can practically do as I please -- I've got no bills, no taxes, and no worries. And you think I'm mad."



SCENE FROM THE "SCI-FI" CLASSIC:  
"INVASION OF A WHOLE  
BUNCH OF BIG ROBOTS"

Ruth Judkowitz, 203 Crandall, NAV-HOSP, FPO San Francisco, CA 96630

*Mimosa 7* was greatly enjoyed. I have especially liked all the articles by Dr. Sharon Farber and have been sharing tidbits with my next-door neighbor who is a surgeon at the Naval Hospital here {{ ed. note: in Guam }}. He enjoys them, too, and has a slew of stories about his intern and residency days.

One I remember in particular. At a hospital in Philadelphia there were a number of people who were "regulars" in the Emergency Room. One guy (obviously a little off-kilter) was always doing injury to himself -- sometimes cuts, sometimes bruises. One day, he came into the ER and said he had screws in his penis. They didn't believe him but took X-rays, and sure enough, this guy had 7(!) inside him. (My neighbor says this man wasn't considered ill enough for a mental hospital because he could perform basic tasks like getting his shoes on over his socks.) My neighbor, thinking that after the first screw, the pain alone would be too much to handle inserting another, just had to ask how this guy got those screws inside. The guy very calmly answered, "with a screwdriver." Owwww!

As a birthday joke gift for my neighbor, I bought the horror anthology *Intensive Scare* and, going through the acknowledgements, saw that Dr. Farber had suggested the title! How's that for synchronicity?

{{ Ouch is right! Sharon's "Medical School" series has resulted in quite a few stories like these. Here's one more, based on Buck Coulson's hospital horror story recounted in his LoC last issue, from a fan who is also a paramedic. }}

Terry Bohman, Box 14, East Thetford, Vermont 05043-0014

If there's any loc-damping going on, it's simply because the range and grip of your material tends to be a bit overwhelming. I can't explain why exactly arguments over an obscure incident in the fannish pre-Cambrian should be so involving. Part of it, I guess, is simply that these are stories of people, and their interests,



memories, and passions have a certain universality, but only part: there is a certain mythic quality to the whole affair. I don't know what's next. Either a sprig of greenery's gonna hit me in the eye, or I'll be told that resistance is useless as I'm tossed out the airlock.

Buck's loc and your reply remind me of a case I took part in, once. I was riding an ambulance into a local hospital -- I'm stretching the meaning of "local" just a bit, but this was really the nearest hospital and the only one with any pretenses as a medical center. Beside me in the ambulance was the patient we were delivering, an elderly farmer who had misstepped on the ice in her own back yard and twisted her leg, breaking tibia and fibula. She was in wry humor, making a string of comments on the damnable Vermont weather this year ("Worst than last year, but nuthin' like the winter of '38"), the appearance of her leg ("Pretty discutin, uh yuh"), and how inconvenient this turn of events was ("Kinda nice to see you folks gettin out, though"). Pretty routine case, in other words.

We unloaded the patient at the hospital and wheeled her through the door to the emergency department. A nurse at the nursing station was labeling vials of blood samples. She pointed down the hall toward S2, one of the surgical evaluation rooms. About half way there was a large knot of people clustered about a room in the cardiac bay. One of them was Stuart, a hospital cardiac tech, who after delivering his electrocardiogram to the attending doc, pulled me aside and told me what he just did up in intensive care.

Stuart had been called to the Cardiac Care Unit to do an emergency electrocardiogram, an ECG. The patient was elderly, obese, and in some pain. Stuart wheeled his little ECG cart into the room and looked for a place to plug it in. The room, as usual, was full of implements and devices making various beeps, gleeps, buzzes, and ugh-floops and, again as usual, there was not a single unused electrical outlet. Well, Stuart knew that everything of any importance in CCU -- IV pumps, monitors, whatever -- has a battery backup and an alarm which beeps and flashes whenever the battery gets low. At the foot of the patient's bed was a

large chest-shaped machine with blinking lights, the sound of a washing machine full of tennis shoes, and an electrical cord as big around as his big toe. And since it was plugged into the wall right next to his ECG cart, Stuart bent over and unplugged it, and plugged in his machine. The big machine at the foot of the bed simply stopped -- no blinking lights, no washing machine noise, nothing. Stuart took his ECG, unplugged his cart, and plugged in the big machine again, which immediately started blinking and making with the ka-whoosh-ka-whoosh noises again. It was only as Stuart was leaving that he noticed the plate of the machine that labeled it as a Something-Something Ventricular Balloon. For three or four minutes, Stuart had left unplugged the device which was augmenting the patient's heartbeat.

"Did it hurt him?" I asked.

"I don't know!" he said. "I don't know!"

"Are you going to tell anyone?"

"I don't know."

"Did anyone notice anything?"

"I don't think so. But they sure were interested in his cardiogram."

You may be both right and wrong. Things may really be worse than we think... and it may not matter nearly so much as we believe. Damned if I know.



**POLTERGEIST, HAH!**

**I ONCE LOST A ARMORED  
REGIMENT IN A TV SET!**

**IT WAS A 26-INCH  
SCREEN, OF COURSE.**



Guy H. Lillian III, 4217-E Fountainbleau,  
New Orleans, LA 70125

*Mimosa* is outstanding as ever; Sharon Farber's medical series continues to move, amuse, and gratify, particularly when I think of how horrible it would be if law required internship as does medicine. Tucker, patron saint of *Chat*, provides a terrific interview and a funny article, but I fear he's wrong about losing the first Best Novel Hugo to *The Demolished Man*; yes, Bester's book won the award, but there was no nominating ballot that year, so unless he knows something we don't (quite likely, actually) no one knows if his book placed second or not. The *Chat* history is good fannish reading, and it's always a delight to see Charlie Williams illos -- rare, rare, all too rare these days.

Heidi Lyshol, Sandakervn. 81, N-0483  
Oslo 4, Norway

I'm very grateful that you sent me *Mimosa*. Lately, I've been receiving loads of English

zines from very young fans -- after all their film reviews, plotworn short stories and bad photocopying it's such a RELIEF to read something like *Mimosa*, reminding one of the traditions of fandom, and also reminding myself of the possibility of an active fan life, even after marriage. The next time my Kjetill asks me, I'll say yes.

#### WE ALSO HEARD FROM:

Harry Andruschak; Lon Atkins; Martha Beck; Sheryl Birkhead; Robert Bloch; Ned Brooks; G.M. Carr; Russell Chauvenet; Richard Dengrove; Carolyn Doyle; George Flynn; Diane Fox; Richard Gilliam; Lee Griner; John Guidry; Mike Gunderloy; Gay Haldeman; David Haugh; Marty Helgeson; Craig Hilton; Arthur Hlavaty; Kim Huett; Lucy Huntzinger; Ben Indick; George Inzer; Irvin Koch; Robert Lichtman; Eric Lindsay; Mark Linneman; Ed Meskys; Debi Metcalf; Janice Murray; David Palter; M. Shane Reynolds; Yvonne Rousseau; Alexander R. Slate; Els Somers; Milt Stevens; Alan J. Sullivan; Phil Tortorici; Michael Waite; Jean Weber; Owen Whiteoak; Joe Zimny. And this doesn't even count fanzines received! Thanks again to everyone who wrote or sent a fanzine.

### Artist Credits

Sheryl Birkhead - Front & Back covers; Pages 4; 31

Kurt Erichsen - Pages 19; 20; 21; 24

Brad W. Foster - Pages 29; 37

Alexis Gilliland - Pages 27; 38

David Haugh - Pages 2; 34; 39

Teddy Harvia - Pages 15; 16; 18; 32

Joe Mayhew - Pages 10; 12; 14

William Rotsler - Pages 28; 36

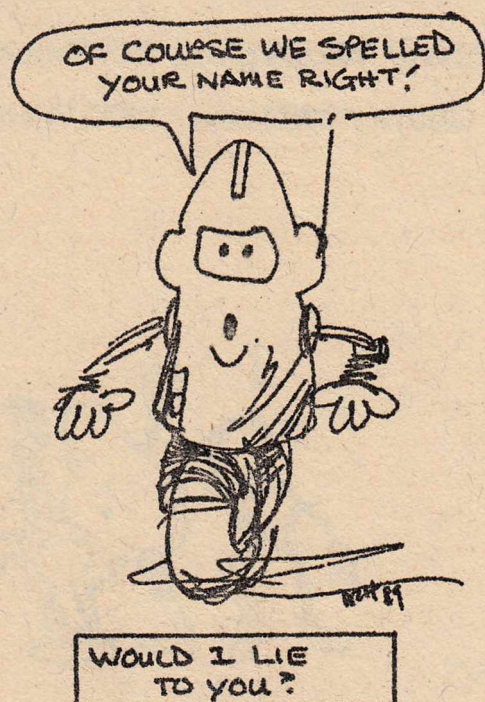
Diana Stein - Pages 30; 35

Steve Stiles - Pages 5; 7

Arthur Thomson - Pages 8; 9

Phil Tortorici - Page 25

Charlie Williams - Page 40





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

Charlie Williams, 1200 Woodcrest Drive, Knoxville, Tennessee 37918



metamorphosis  
CZ: [signature]



## A Tennessee Yankee in Prince George's County

### Closing Comments by Dick Lynch

"Oh, look," I said, sorting through the day's mail, "here's another fanzine addressed to our new Maine Coon Cat."

Nicki looked up briefly, then went back to what she had been doing. "Very funny," was all she said. *Mimosa* (the Maine Coon Cat, not the fanzine) had already decided that watching birds through the window as they swooped around outside catching insects was far more entertaining than helping me sort through the mail could ever be.

Feeble attempts at humor notwithstanding, receiving fanzines in the mail has gotten to be a common (and welcome) occurrence for us. We get about 70 different fanzine titles in trade for *Mimosa* (the fanzine, not the Maine Coon Cat). In addition, we get from 50 to 70 letters of comment each issue, some from people who weren't on our mailing list but happened to run across the issue somewhere in their travels. All in all, we're more than pleased with this combined response from each issue; we're averaging about two responses for every five issues we send out. Other friends of ours who publish fanzines tell us they also receive about this level of response, and as with us, it's the energy source that keeps them publishing. From this, it's awfully tempting to conclude that fanzine fandom is alive and well, if not thriving.

But I don't think it is. In fact, I think it's barely hanging on. Of all the fanzines we receive, many of them, such as clubzines, are aimed at special interest audiences, have limited readerships and very limited circulations. It used to be you could count on "major" fan centers (whatever that means) to be the foundation for one or more large circulation general interest fanzines. Not so anymore. An example of this is the local fan organization, the Washington Science Fiction Association. WSFA is a fairly large fan organization, much larger than the club we helped found when we lived in Tennessee -- WSFA meeting attendance (and it meets twice a month) is usually about 40 people. WSFA also publishes a monthly clubzine called the *WSFA Journal*, which does an adequate job of listing meeting minutes and other information of interest to the club. It's a pretty bare bones publication, though; there's nothing much there to elicit letters of comment, or, for that matter, a LoC column to print them if there

were. However, it hasn't always been this way.

A few months ago, I got to see some issues of the old, "classic" *WSFA Journal* that were published in the 1960s. Back then, the *Journal* was a true genzine -- besides covering WSFA business, it had fan articles and lots of artwork, plus a long well-edited lettercol that from some of the well-known fans and pros who wrote LoCs, tells me that the *Journal* saw a much wider circulation than it does now. And, it was a much, much better fanzine then than it is now; the present *Journal* unfortunately pales in comparison.

This is not meant to be a criticism of WSFA; it's a fun club to belong to, and the twice-monthly meetings have the atmosphere and many of the trappings of a small scale MidWestCon. But it's pretty clear that WSFA's interests lie other than in fanzine publishing. The party atmosphere of club meetings is conducive to convention fans; from my viewpoint it is conventions, most notably the WSFA-sponsored DisClave each Memorial Day weekend, that now seem to be the club's central focus.

The most recent DisClave (held about an hour's drive around the Beltway from here, over in Prince George's County), in fact, was a clear indication that Times Have Changed for fanzine fandom -- I was disappointed that there wasn't even a smidgeon of fan programming related to fanzines. When I asked the Programming Department Head about it, he said that nobody (on the committee, presumably) was interested in it, so there wasn't any.

So, maybe it remains for fanzine fans like you and us to hang on for a while and see if the pendulum eventually starts to swing the other way. The response we've gotten from *Mimosa* shows that there are significant numbers of fanzine readers out there, but we're starting to get lost in the dozens of other flavors of fandom that have grown in popularity over the past decade or so.

I'm about out of room, and there's no cute ending to the column this time, except to say that we appreciate your letters and fanzines, and look forward to your responses on this issue. And we'll see you about year's end with our next issue.



