



**MIMOSA 16**

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# MIMOSA 16

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This sixteenth issue of *Mimosa* was published in December 1994, and is available for the really inexpensive price of three dollars (U.S. currency or equivalent). Please note, however, that we'd much rather receive your fanzine in trade, instead (dollar bills aren't very fannish). Or better yet, send us a first-person article of an anecdotal nature about science fiction fandom and/or things fans do, especially if they are of fan historical interest; publication of same here will keep you on our mailing list permanently. We also welcome Letters of Comment; for the frugal, a letter or e-mail of comment on this issue (addressed to both of us, please) will bring you a copy of *M17* next year. This entire issue is ©1994 by Nicki and Richard Lynch, with individual rights reverting back to contributors after this one-time use. All opinions and versions of events expressed by contributors are their own.

☐ If this box is checked, we really need to receive a letter of comment or e-mail of comment from you to keep you on our mailing list for next issue.

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# THE CONTRACTION OF TIME AND RELATED CONUNDRAS

OPENING COMMENTS BY RICHARD LYNCH

1991 1992 1993 1994



You know, there's one thing about growing older that's as puzzling as hell to me. My subjective sense of time is starting to get distorted, and each succeeding year seems noticeably shorter than the one before. I expect that if this continues, the years will eventually seem to have zero length, and then even move into *negative* durations — I'll be able to fondly remember the year 2010 five years before it arrives!

This year, especially, has been that way — the time has literally flown by. It doesn't seem all that long since we published *Mimosa* 15, but here we are, approaching the end of the year as I write this, and we still have only one issue to show for 1994. April and *M15* were a long time ago.

I suppose I should tell you some of the things that have happened to me since you received *M15*. May was a pretty busy month, with preparations for the Corflu fanzine fans' convention taking up quite a bit of otherwise spare time (Nicki and I were two of the co-hosts of Corflu this year); also, at the end of May was the Fan-Historicon (from which the Forry Ackerman article in this issue originated). In June, I spent two weeks in Russia, a trip filled with marvelous adventures and misadventures (which you might read about soon, in a different fanzine); I returned home from that trip just in time to fly out to Cincinnati for the Midwestcon (from which the Roger Sims article in this issue originated). July featured a desperately-needed vacation trip north to Canada and New York State, including a stop-over to see Dave and Ruth Kyle (from which Dave's article in this issue originated). August saw me back in Europe again, for two weeks in Poland; at the end of the month Nicki and I flew down to Alabama for the DeepSouthCon (which did not, alas, result in an article from the visiting Bob Shaw). And in September, it was on to Winnipeg and the Worldcon...

Actually, worldcons are starting to become subjectively shorter and shorter, too. I remember that the first worldcon I ever attended, Iguanacon in 1978, seemed to go on *\*forever\**. ConAdian,

the twelfth world science fiction convention I've been to, now seems to have gone by in barely an instant — it's almost as if I'd blinked my eyes, and it was gone. I'm left with only some isolated images of the convention and host city, like...

... the Northwest Airlines connector flight in to Canada from Minneapolis. There were enough fans and writers in the waiting lounge to have a convention of our own right there in the airport.

...the utter *\*flatness\** of Winnipeg. From the upper floors of the convention hotels, I could see *\*forever\**; the lack of hills made the horizon seem lightyears away. At night, the lights of the city disappeared into the distance, twinkling like stars; sometimes there were distant thunderstorms out on the plains that would provide mesmerizing, abstract light shows, while never coming close enough for me to hear the thunder.

...the parties and socializing. All the worldcon bidders for the foreseeable future were well represented at ConAdian, but it was a party for a hoax convention that got the most renown. The "Antarctica in '99" party was a 'white' theme party, with marshmallows, popcorn and other things white for snacks; all the while, a television set in the corner of the room that was set on an empty channel showed con's entire facilities as well as the expected weather — snow!

...the Hugo night ceremonies. *Mimosa* was fortunate enough to win the Fanzine Hugo again this year, but the honor really belongs to the many fine contributors we've featured. (To get the awards home, we had to call hotel maintenance for assistance in dismantling them. And in the process, ruined a perfectly good one dollar Canadian coin, but that's another story...)

Hm... Available room for these opening essays seems to be plagued by this same spacetime shrinkage problem — I'm running out of space too quickly lately. So I'll take this opportunity to stop here, with hopes you enjoy this "sweet 16th" issue of *Mimosa*. I think we've filled it with entertaining things to read; I hope you think so, too. ☺



☞ The Winnipeg worldcon, at about 3,500 in attendance, was quite a bit smaller than some of the other annual Labor Day sf gatherings we've been to. The resulting coziness of the event was actually quite refreshing, but we missed seeing some of our friends this year who ordinarily turn up at worldcons. One person who was *not* absent, however, was Forry Ackerman, who holds the record for number of worldcons attended (the only one he's missed, due to extenuating circumstances, was the first NolaCon, in 1951). Here is his first article for us...

# Through Time and Space with Forry Ackerman (Part I)

by Forrest J. Ackerman



If I had to pick a time when I could have declared, "I am a science fiction fan!", it would have been in 1929. I was 14 years old. I had the first letter in the first letter column of *Science Wonder Quarterly*. That letter was seen by a young boy about my age named Linus Hogenmiller, of Farmington, Missouri. And it so happened that I was feeling a little under the weather and was staying home from high school, when I received his letter.

I was so thrilled to hear from a fellow science fiction fan! I had time on my hands, just sitting up in bed, so my mother got me some stationery, and I hand-wrote three letters to Linus that same day. As soon as I finished a six or seven page letter, I'd think of other things to tell him.

At that time, science fiction was still called 'scientifiction'. In correspondence with Linus, he was the first one to get a little weary of writing 'scientifiction' all the time, so he wrote 'stf'. In the beginning, we pronounced it 'ess-tce-eff', and that got a little tiresome so he cut it down to 'stef', and then merged it with 'fan'; we had 'stef-fans' for a while, then 'stfans'.

Well, about that time I created a corre-

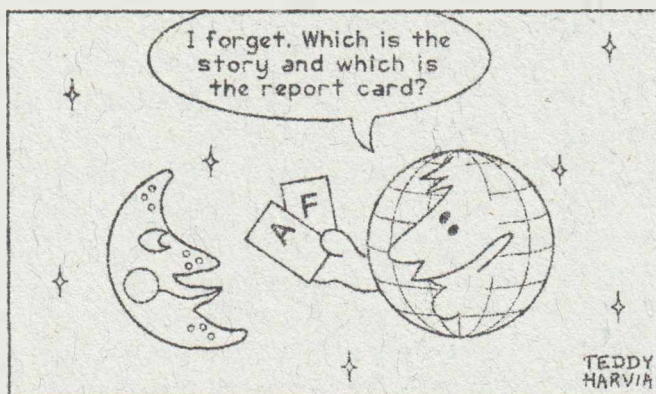
spondence club called 'The Boys Scientifiction Club'. (I had nothing against girls, but they were as rare as a unicorn's horn in the fandom of 1930.) I personally was writing to 116 science fiction fans around the world, and had a correspondent in Russia, as well as several in England and Canada. Well, the way the Boys Scientifiction Club operated was that you sent in a little snapshot of yourself. You also sent in either three issues, consecutive, of one of the magazines that had a serial in it, or a hardcover book, of which there weren't too many at the time. In return, you got to keep either three magazines or a book for a month. Pretty soon, it got to where I was staggering five or six blocks to the mailbox, just to send off the books or magazines to the members.

Anyway, this little correspondence club that I created had given me a thirst for writing. About that time, Francis Flagg, who was a well-known science fiction author of the day, was running out of ideas. I, however, had more ideas than I knew what to do with, but at age 15, I didn't have professional ability yet. So I would send him an idea and he wrote it up. In the last issue of *Wonder Stories*, April 1936, I had my first profession-



al story published, together with Francis Flagg, called "Earth's Lucky Day". And that kind of convinced me that I was going to be an author when I grew up. I *hoped* to be another H. G. Wells, Olaf Stapledon, or somebody else of considerable consequence, but when I grew up and looked around in my mind, there weren't these great book ideas — instead, everything seemed to trend more toward the O Henry type of super-short story.

I'm getting ahead of myself a little bit, but some years later, I finally wrote I guess what must be the world's shortest science fiction story — one letter of the alphabet, for which I got paid a hundred dollars. After its initial sale, I sold it four more times, so I got paid five hundred dollars for a single letter of the alphabet. Since a natural word, I think, is considered generally to have about five letters in it, I got paid at the rate of \$2,500 per word. Later, I sold it in eight translations, and of course, I retained the serialization rights... Then I confess that I did a very sneaky thing, I copyrighted the remaining letters of the alphabet, so nobody can use them but me for one-letter stories... I will reveal for posterity that letter of the alphabet. The story was called "Cosmic Report Card: Earth", suggesting that flying saucer aliens were going around checking out Mars, Venus, Jupiter, and so on. I'm afraid the Earth got an 'F'.



The 1930s was the era when Hugo Gernsback started the Science Fiction League. In Los Angeles, the fourth chapter was created, and one day in 1934, in the garage of an adult fan, there was a prelimi-

nary little meeting, but nothing happened until a year later when we finally got going. I was at the charter meeting of that club, which eventually came to be known as the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society, or LASFS. By that time, *Thrilling Wonder Stories* was sponsoring the League, I believe. A young fan named Roy Test came to the club, together with his mother Wanda Test. She became our first secretary, and the minutes were called "Thrilling Wanda Stories"...

At that time, Charles D. Hornig was a young fellow who put out a very fine professional-looking printed magazine called *The Fantasy Fan*. Gernsback, who was looking around for an associate editor, saw this publication and he asked Hornig to come and see about getting the job. Well, he was staggered when a 17-year-old boy walked into his office. I still remember that letter I got from Charlie Hornig: "Forry, can you *imagine* what's happened?!? I've become the *editor* of *Wonder Stories*!!" (When he was given the offer, he had said, "I'll have to go home and ask my mother and dad whether they will let me.")

Well, in 1939 I heard, through the pages, I guess, of *Thrilling Wonder*, there was going to be the first World Science Fiction Convention. Well, boy oh boy, gosh wow, I sure intended to be there! I trembled with every clickety-clack of the railroad track, from L.A. to New York, and when I got off the train, there was Don Wollheim and five or six fans to greet me. One of them, fifteen years old with a bit of a paunch and dribbling cigarette ashes, looked me up and down disdainfully, and said, "So *you're* the Forrest Ackerman who has been writing those *ridiculous* letters to the science fiction magazines." He introduced himself to me as Cyril Kornbluth. And then he punched me in the stomach! I thought, "Well, welcome to Fun City! For this I came three thousand miles??"

Both Wollheim and Kornbluth were among the fans who were excluded from that very first Worldcon. {{ed. note: the others were Jack Gillespie, Robert Lowndes, John Michael, and Fred Pohl}} I still have sort of a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach about it.



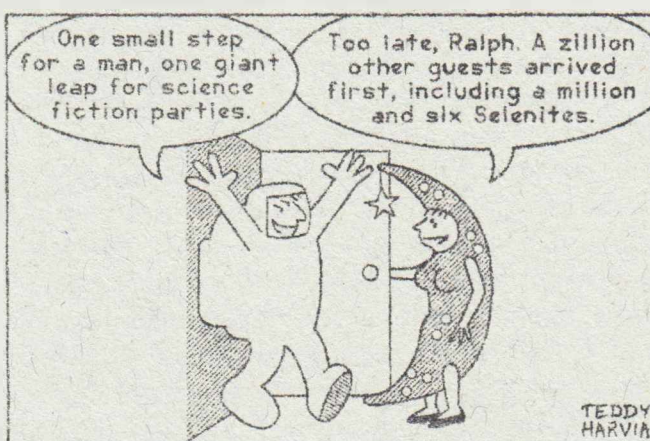
When the gavel fell, and the first World Science Fiction Convention became reality, six fans were left standing outside. I couldn't believe it!

Ray Bradbury was a member of that first Worldcon; back in 1939, he was busy getting autographs rather than giving them. My recollection to this day is that I lent him fifty bucks so he could spend three and a half days and nights on a Greyhound bus to get there. I am told that every time that Ray Bradbury tells this story, the loan keeps going up and up in value in his memory — it's gotten up to ninety-five dollars now! It took him a year or two, but he finally managed to pay it back. Ray had deliberately gone to the convention carrying a portfolio of work by Hannes Bok. I remember accompanying him later to the office of *Weird Tales*, meeting Farnsworth Wright, who was a rather emaciated-looking individual. At that time he had Parkinson's Disease — he could just barely sign an autograph for us, but he took one look at Hannes Bok's work and immediately accepted it.

Ray Cummings, the legendary author, attended the convention. We had hoped that A. Merritt might attend also, but he was busy being the Sunday section editor of *The American Weekly*. So the day after the convention, a little group of us — 6 or 8 fans — got together and visited him. Someone had phoned, and he was waiting to meet us in his office. The now-deceased fan Dale Hart was so excited he was going to meet A. Merritt that he got up and he brushed his teeth with shaving cream! He was *really* foaming at the mouth! While we were in the anteroom, waiting for Merritt, along came Virgil Finlay, who was doing work for *American Weekly* and Merritt. He had a marvelous portfolio of these originals, and our eyes were popping out of our heads to see his incredible classy work. Well, about ten minutes later, we were ushered into Merritt's office — he was a little on the deaf side, so we all clustered around. He was extremely cordial to us, and made us fans feel quite welcome.

Another event at that convention was my costume, which was based on *Things to*

*Come* and Frank R. Paul's artwork. Many people have asked me over the years, "Forry, where did you get the nerve to wear that futuristic costume on the streets of New York?" But I think it was sort of like being mild-mannered Clark Kent, going into the telephone booth and coming out as Superman. When I wore that outfit in public, little children were running in the streets of New York crying, "It's Flash Gordon! It's Buck Rogers!" I even got the nerve to go out to the Worlds Fair in it; they had a platform with a microphone, and if you were from Spain, or from Sweden or France or Germany or wherever, you could come up and greet the world in your native language. So I got this quixotic notion to go up and speak in Esperanto to the world, and say that I was a time traveler from the future, where we all spoke this language.

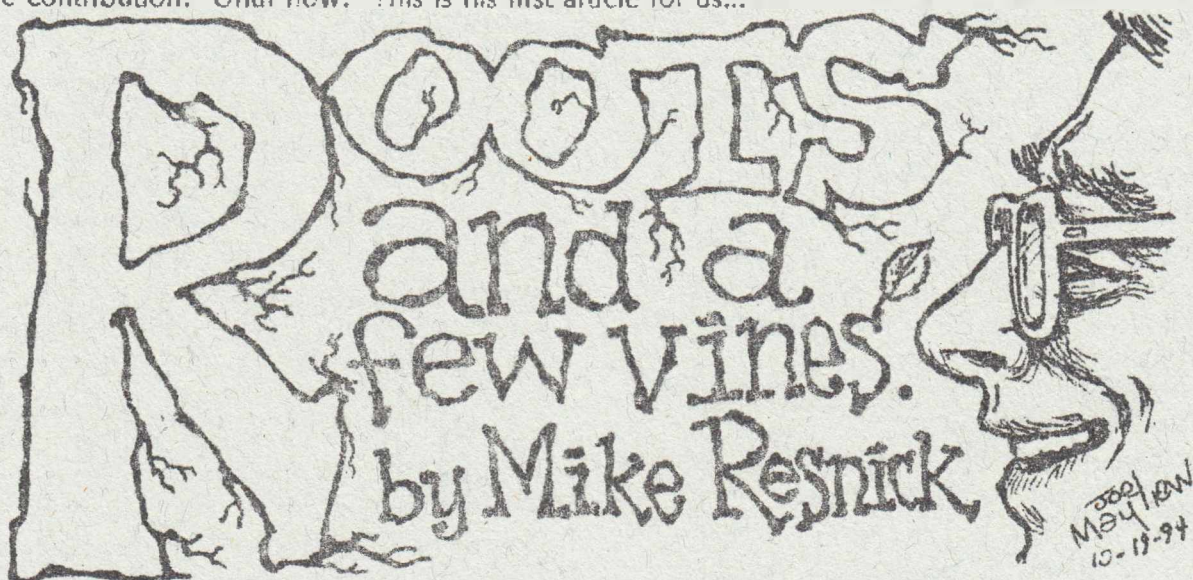


One other memory I have of that first Worldcon is that the banquet was so expensive that only 29 people could afford it. It was *one dollar a plate*! I had the good fortune to sit with Willy Ley, the great rocket expert, on the left of me, and L. Sprague de Camp on the right. One hundred and eighty-five of us were at that first World Science Fiction Convention! Several years ago, my wife entertained one hundred and eighty-six science fiction personalities in our home, including two astronauts — one more than that whole first World Science Fiction Convention! ☉

NEXT: The 1940s and 50s, Asimov, Heinlein, and more... ☉



☞ Another person who was *not* absent in Winnipeg was Mike Resnick, who (with a Hugo nomination this year) is finally gaining the recognition he deserves as an editor. (In fact, a new anthology he's edited of fan-oriented stories, *Alternate Worldcons*, debuted at ConAdian.) We are not strangers with Mike; we see him at every Midwestcon we go to, but heretofore have been too timid to ask him for a fanzine contribution. Until now! This is his first article for us...



So I'm sitting there in Winnipeg, resplendent in my tuxedo, and morbidly wondering how many fans have called me 'Mr. Resnick' instead of 'Mike' since the worldcon began three days ago.

I don't *feel* like a Mister. I feel like a fan who is cheating by sitting here with all the pros, waiting for Bob Silverberg to announce the winner of the Best Editor Hugo. He goes through the names: Datlow, Dozois, Resnick, Rusch, Schmidt.

He opens the envelope and reads off Kris Rusch's name, and suddenly I am walking up to the stage. Bob is sure I thought he called out *my* name, and looks like he is considering clutching the Hugo to his breast and running off with it (although that is actually a response common to all pros when they are in proximity to a Hugo), but finally he sighs and hands it over to me, and I start thanking Ed Ferman and all the voters.

What am I doing here, I wonder, picking up a Hugo for a lady who is half my age and has twice my talent and is drop-dead gorgeous to boot? How in blazes did I ever get to be an Elder Statesman?

\* \* \*

Well, it began in 1962, which, oddly enough, was *not* just last year, no matter how

it feels. Carol and I had met at the University of Chicago in 1960. We'd gone to the theater on our first date, and wound up in the Morrison Hotel's coffee shop, where we talked science fiction until they threw us out at 5 in the morning. It was the first time either of us realized that someone else out there read that crazy Buck Rogers stuff (though we might have guessed, since they continued to print it month after month, and two sales per title would hardly seem enough to keep the publishers in business.)

Well, 1962 rolls around, and so does a future Campbell winner named Laura...but the second biggest event of the year comes when Ace Books, under the editorship of Don Wollheim, starts pirating a bunch of Edgar Rice Burroughs novels, and a whole generation gets to learn about Tarzan and Frank Frazetta and John Carter and Roy Krenkel and David Lines all at once.

But the important thing, the thing that unquestionably shaped my adult life, was that one of the books had a little blurb on the inside front cover extolling ERB's virtues, and it was signed 'Camille Cazedessus, Editor of *ERB-dom*'. Well, you didn't have to be a genius to figure out that *ERB-dom*, at least in that context, was an obvious refer-



ence to Edgar Rice Burroughs.

A whole magazine devoted to one of my favorite writers? I could barely wait until the next morning, when I took the subway downtown and entered the Post Office News, Chicago's largest magazine store. I looked for *ERB-dom* next to *Time*, *Life*, *Look*, *Newsweek*, and *Playboy*. Wasn't there. I looked for it next to *Analog*, *Galaxy*, and *F&SF*. No dice. Wasn't anywhere near *Forbes* or *Fortune* or *Business Week* either.

So I go up to the manager and tell him I'm looking for *ERB-dom*, and he checks his catalogs and tells me there ain't no such animal.

I grab him by the arm, drag him over to the paperbacks, pull out the operative Burroughs title, turn to the inside front cover, and smite him with a mighty "Aha!"

So he promises to get cracking and find out who publishes this magazine and start stocking it, and I return to our subterranean penthouse (i.e., basement apartment) to await the Good News.

Which doesn't come.

I nag Post Office News incessantly. I nag my local bookstore. I nag the public library. I even nag my mother. (This seems counter-productive, but she has been nagging me for 26 years and fair is fair.)

Finally, I look at my watch and it is half-past 1962 and there is still no sign of *ERB-dom*, so I write to the editor, Miss Caz-edessus (so okay, until then I'd never heard of a *guy* named Camille), in care of Ace Books, and a month later the first five issues of *ERB-dom* arrive in the mail, the very first fanzines I have ever seen, along with a long, friendly letter that constantly uses the arcane word 'worldcon'.

Within two months I have written three long articles for *ERB-dom* #6 and have become its associate editor. There is a worldcon in Chicago that summer, not a 20-minute subway ride from where we live, but the future Campbell winner chooses August 17 to get herself born, and we do not go to the worldcon. When she is 8 days old I decide to forgive her and lovingly show her off to her grandparents, and she vomits down the back

of my Hawaiian shirt (which, in retrospect, could well have been an editorial comment), and it is 27 years before I willingly touch her again, but that is another story.

There is one other thing that happens in 1962. We are living at the corner of North Shore and Greenview in the Rogers Park area of Chicago, and right across street of us is this old apartment building, and on the third Saturday of every month strange-looking men and women congregate there. They have unkempt hair, and most of them are either 90 pounds overweight or 50 pounds underweight, and often they are carrying books under their arms. We decide they are members of SNCC or CORE, which are pretty popular organizations at the time, and that they are meeting there to figure out how to dodge the draft, and that the books they carry are either pacifist tracts or ledgers with the names and addresses of all the left-wing groups that have contributed money to them.

We have to go all the way to Washington D.C. a year later and attend Discon I to find out that they are not draft dodgers (well, not *primarily*, anyway) but rather Chicago fandom, and that they have been meeting 80 feet from our front door for 2 years.

\* \* \*

So I wend my way back through the audience, and I find my seat, and I hand Kris Rusch's Hugo to Carol, because I am also up for Best Short Story, and I think I've got a better chance at this, and when I run up to accept the award it will look tacky to already be carrying a Hugo. Besides, Charles Sheffield is sitting right next to us, and he is up for Best Novelette, and he is getting very nervous, and wants to stroke the Hugo for luck, or maybe is considering just walking out with it and changing the name plates at a future date. (In fact, I am convinced that if he does not win his own, neither Kris nor I will ever see *her* Hugo again. Charles will probably deny this, but never forget that Charles gets paid an inordinate amount of money to tell lies to the public at large.)

So Guy Gavriel Kay begins reading off the nominees, and suddenly I realize that I am not nervous at all, that this is becoming



very old hat to me. I have been nominated for nine Hugos in the past six years. I have actually won a pair. Worldcons are very orderly things: you show up, you sign a million autographs, you eat each meal with a different editor and line up your next year's worth of work, and then you climb into your tux and see if you win another Hugo.

It's gotten to be such a regular annual routine, you sometimes find yourself idly wondering: was it *always* like this?

Then you think back to your first worldcon, and you realize that no, it was *not* always like this...

\* \* \*

Right off the bat, we were the victims of false doctrine. Everyone we knew in fandom — all six or seven of them — told us the worldcon was held over Labor Day weekend. So we took them at their word.

The problem, of course, was the definition of 'weekend'. We took a train that pulled out of Chicago on Friday morning, and dumped us in the basement of our Washington D.C. hotel at 9:00 Saturday morning. At which time we found out that the convention was already half over.

(Things were different then. There were no times in the convention listings. In fact, there were no convention listings. Not in *Analog*, not anywhere. If you knew that worldcons even existed, you were already halfway to being a trufan.)

Caz (right: he wasn't a Miss at all) met us and showed us around. Like myself, he was dressed in a suit and tie; it was a few more worldcons before men wore shirts without jackets or ties, even during the afternoons, and every woman — they formed, at most, 10% of the attendees, and over half were writers' wives — wore a skirt. If you saw someone with a beard — a relatively rare occurrence — you knew he was either a pro writer or Bruce Pelz.

When we got to the huckster room — 20-plus dealers (and selling only books, magazines, and fanzines; none of the junk that dominates the tables today), I thought I had died and gone to heaven. The art show had work by Finlay and Freas and Emsh and

even Margaret Brundage; only J. Allen St. John was missing from among the handful of artists whose work I knew and admired.

They had an auction. It even had a little booklet telling you what items would be auctioned when, so you knew which session to attend to get what you wanted. Stan Vinson, a famous Burroughs collector who had been corresponding with me for a year, bought a Frazetta cover painting for \$70. Friends told him he was crazy; paintings were supposed to appreciate, and no one would ever pay that much for a Frazetta again. I bought a Finlay sketch for \$2.00, and an autographed Sturgeon manuscript for \$3.50.

In the afternoon we decide to go to the panels. I do not know from panels; like any neo, I take along a pencil and a notebook. The panels are not what we have these days, or at least they did not seem so to my untrained and wondrous eyes and ears.

For example, there is a panel with Willy Ley and Isaac Asimov and Fritz Leiber and L. Sprague de Camp and Ed Emsh and Leigh Brackett, and the topic is "What Should a BEM Look Like?" (I have a copy of the *Discon Proceedings*, a transcript of the entire convention published by Advent, and to this day when I need a new alien race I re-read that panel and invariably I come up with one.)





There was a panel with Fred Pohl and a tyro named Budrys and a gorgeous editor (though not as gorgeous as the one I accepted a Hugo for) named Cele Goldsmith and even ~~Mr~~ John Campbell Himself~~s~~, on how to write stories around cover paintings, which was a common practice back then, and which remains fascinating reading today.

There was a sweet old guy in a white suit who saw that we were new to all this, and moseyed over and spent half an hour with us, making us feel at home and telling us about how we were all one big family and inviting us to come to all the parties at night. Then he wandered off to accept the first-ever Hall of Fame Award from First Fandom. When they asked if he was working on anything at present, he replied that he had just delivered the manuscript to *Skylark DuQuesne*, and received the second-biggest ovation I have ever heard at a worldcon. (The biggest came 30 years later, when Andy Porter broke a 12-year losing streak and won the semi-prozine Hugo in 1993.)

Since we didn't know anyone, and were really rather shy (over the years, I have learned to over-compensate for this tendency, as almost anyone will tell you, bitterly and at length) we ate dinner alone, then watched the masquerade, which in those days was truly a masquerade ball and not a competition. There was a band, and everyone danced, and a few people showed up in costume, and every now and then one of them would march across the stage, and at the end of the ball they announced the winners.

Then there was the Bheer Blast. In those bygone days, they didn't show movies. (I think movies turned up in 1969, *not* to display the Hugo nominees or give pleasure to the cinema buffs, but to give the kids a place to sleep so they'd stop cluttering up the lobby.) They didn't give out the Hugos at night, either. (An evening banquet might run \$5.00 a head, and the concoin got enough grief for charging \$3.00 a head for rubber chicken served at 1:00 PM rather than six hours later.) They didn't have more than one track of programming. (Multiple tracks came along 8 years later, and evening pro-

grams even later than that.)

Well, with all the things they *didn't* have, they needed a way to amuse the congoers in the evening, so what happened was this: every bid committee (and they only bid a year in advance back then) treated the entire convention to a beer party on a different night. We could all fit in one room — I know the official tally for Discon I was 600, but I was there and I'll swear that there were no more than 400 or so in attendance; the other 200 must have been no-shows, or waiters, or bellboys — and the bidding committee would treat us to a small lakeful of beer, with or without pretzels, and then the next night a rival bid would do the same thing. (You voted — if you could drag yourself out of bed — on Sunday morning at the business meeting. A fan would speak for each bid, telling you how wonderful his committee was. Then a pro would speak for each bid, telling you about the quality of restaurants you would encounter. The better restaurants invariably carried the day.)

After the beer blast was over, everyone vanished. The Burroughs people, all of them straighter than Tarzan's arrows, went to bed. We remembered that Doc Smith had mentioned parties, so we began wandering down the empty, foreboding corridors of the hotel, wondering if the parties really did exist, and how to find them.

We walked all the way down one floor, took the stairs up a flight, repeated the procedure, then did it again. We were about to quit when a door opened, and a little bearded man and a tall bearded man, both with thick glasses, spotted our name badges and asked if we'd like to come in for a drink. We didn't know who the hell they were, but they had badges too, so we knew they were with the con and probably not about to mug a couple of innocents from Chicago, and we decided to join them.





Turns out they were standing in the doorway to a huge suite, and that their names were del Rey and de Camp. Inside, wearing a bowtie and looking not unlike a penguin in his black suit, was Isaac Asimov. Randy Garrett was dressed in something all-satin and not of this century. Bob Silverberg looked young and incredibly dapper. Sam Moskowitz was speaking to Ed Hamilton and Leigh Brackett in a corner; this was many years before Sam's throat surgery, and it was entirely possible, though unlikely, that no one in the basement could hear him.

*And every last one of them went out of their way to talk to us and make us feel at home!*

Later another young fan wandered in. Much younger than me. I was 21; Jack Chalker was only 19. We sat around, and discussed various things, and then something strange happened, something totally alien to my experience.

Someone asked Jack and I what we wanted to do with our lives. (No, that's not the strange part; people were always asking that.)

We each answered that we wanted to write science fiction.

And you know what? For the first time in my life, *nobody laughed*.

That's when I knew I was going to come back to worldcons for the rest of my life.

\* \* \*

So Guy Gavriel Kay reads off the list of nominees, and then he opens the envelope, and the winner is Connie Willis, and I am second to her again for the 83rd time (yeah, I know, I've only lost 76 Hugos and Nebulas to her, but it *feels* like 83), and everyone tells me I've won a moral victory because I have beat all the short stories and Connie's winner is a novelette that David Bratman, in his infinite wisdom, decided to move to the short story category, and I keep thinking that moral victories and 60 cents will get you a cup of coffee anywhere west of New York and east of California, and that I wish I didn't like Connie so much so that I could hate her just a little on Labor Day weekends, and my brain is making up slogans, modified slightly

from my youth, slogans like *Break Up Connie Willis*, which is certainly easier than breaking up the Yankees, and I am wondering if Tonya Harding will loan me her bodyguard for a few days, and then I am at the Hugo Losers Party, and suddenly it doesn't matter that I've lost a Hugo, because it is now 31 years since that first worldcon I went to, and it is my annual family reunion, and I am visiting with friends that I see once or twice or, on good years, five times per year, and we have a sense of continuity and community that goes back for almost two-thirds of my life. Hugos are very nice, and I am proud of the ones I've won, and I am even proud of the ones I've lost, but when all is said and done, they are metal objects and my friends are people, and people are what life is all about.

And I find, to my surprise, that almost everyone I am talking to, almost all the old friends I am hugging and already planning to see again at the next worldcon, are fans. Some, like me, write for a living; a few paint; most do other things. But we share a common fannish history, and a common fannish language, and common fannish interests, and I realize that I even enjoyed the business meeting this year, and you have to be pretty far gone into fandom to enjoy Ben Yalow making a point of order.

\* \* \*

A lot of pros don't go to worldcon anymore. They prefer World Fantasy Con. It's smaller, more intimate, and it's limited to 750 members — and while this is not official, there is nonetheless a 'Fans Not Wanted' sign on the door.

That's probably why I don't go. It's true that worldcons have changed, that people who read and write science fiction are probably a minority special interest group these days, that bad movies will outdraw the Hugo ceremony...but the trufans are there. It just means you have to work a little harder to hunt them up.

One of the things I have tried to do with the new writers I have helped to bring into this field, the coming superstars like Nick DiChario and Barb Delaplace and Michelle



Sagara and Jack Nimersheim and all the many others, is to not only show them how to make a good story better, or to get an editor to pick up the check for meals, but also to understand the complex and symbiotic relationship between fandom and prodom.

Some of them, like Nick, luck out and find it right away. Some, like Barb, wander into a bunch of Trekkies or Wookies or Beas-ties who won't read anything except novelizations, who are watchers rather than readers, whose only literary goal is to tell second-hand stories in a third-hand universe, and she wonders what the hell I'm talking about. Then I drag her to a CFG suite or a NESFA party and she meets the fandom I know, and suddenly she understands why we keep coming back.

\* \* \*

So I'm sitting in the airport, waiting to board the plane from Winnipeg to Minnesota. I think there are three mundanes on the flight; everyone else is coming from worldcon. Larry Niven's there, and Connie Willis, and maybe a dozen other pros, and one of the topics of conversation as we await the plane is whose names will make the cover of *Locus* if the plane crashes, and whose names will be in small print on page 37, and how many obituary issues Charlie Brown can get out of it. Then the topic turns to who you would rescue if the plane crashed: Connie and Larry and me, because you wanted more of our stories, or Scott Edelman and me, because you wanted us to be so grateful to you that we'd buy your next twenty stories. (That goes to show you the advantages of being able to do more than one thing well.)

Now, in any other group, that would be a hell of a morbid discussion, but because they were fans, and almost by definition bright and witty, it was the most delightful conversation I'd heard all weekend, and once again I found myself wondering what my life would have been like if Ace had not forwarded that letter to Caz 32 years ago.

And then I thought back to another convention, the 1967 worldcon. I was still very young, and too cynical by half, and when

Lester del Rey got up to give his Guest of Honor speech, he looked out at the tables — every worldcon until 1976 presented the GOH speech and the Hugo Awards at a banquet — and said, "Every person in the world that I care for is here tonight."

And I thought: what a feeble thing to say. What a narrow, narrow life this man has lived. What a tiny circle of friends he has.

Well, I've sold 72 books of science fiction — novels, collections, anthologies — and I've won some awards, and I've paid some dues, and I don't think it's totally unrealistic to assume that sometime before I die I will be the Guest of Honor at a worldcon.

I've done a lot with my life (all with Carol's help, to be sure). I've taken several trips to Africa. I've bred 27 champion collies. I've owned and run the second-biggest boarding kennel in the country. I've sired a daughter than any father would be proud to call his own. I've been a lot of places, done a lot of things. I don't think I've led a narrow life at all.

But when I get up to make my Guest of Honor speech, I'll look around the room just the way Lester did, and, because I'm a reasonably honest man, I won't say what he said.

But I *will* say, "With three or four exceptions, every person in the world that I care for is here tonight." ✧





☞ Unfortunately, someone who was *not* at ConAdian was Sharon Farber, who had received a Hugo nomination in the Fan Writer category. Sharon called us about a month before the convention to let us know that she would not have Labor Day weekend free this year, and "...in case hell freezes over and I win, would you accept the award for me?" Even though the world wasn't treated to the sight of demons strapping on ice skates this year, we think a rocket for Sharon won't be too far in the future. Meanwhile, here is another in her series of medical adventures.



## Tales of Adventure & Medical Life (XI)

by Sharon Farber



Nostalgia, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. I used to get nostalgic when I'd see, say, a copy of *Sgt. Fury and His Howling Commandos*. Then I'd be sun-burned on a pier, feet dangling into the Russian River, eating Cheetos and watching Nick and the boys single-handedly beat the Ratzis.

Just recently I was in an emergency room evaluating a penniless drunk who'd had an alcohol withdrawal seizure.

"Thanks," said the ER doc, who then began to apologize for asking me to come see the guy.

"Hey, no problem," I replied. "It makes me nostalgic for residency."

Somehow, when one leaves the world of training programs and charity hospitals, one thinks one's clientele will improve. No more alcoholics, wife-beaters, drug seekers, and hysterics. But one still gets them, just a bit more polished and upscale.

My first month of private practice, I really *did* think things were better. Then, one night, I met Buddy Boy Baker. (His name wasn't *really* Buddy Boy Baker, but it was just as bizarre.)

I was happily into Stage IV sleep about five a.m. when a doc called from the ER of a

small hospital in Georgia where we covered. "I've got this guy in *status epilepticus*," he said.

*Status*. That was bad. Seizures that don't stop and can fry the brain. Comatose patient in danger of dying.

"He told me he has seizures and takes dilantin and phenobarb, but his levels were zero."

Typical. The number one cause of *status epilepticus* is skipping your seizure meds — waitamin't! "He told you??"

"Yeah, he talks between these seizures."

That wasn't right. So he described the seizures to me some more.

"They sound kind of phony."

The ER doc agreed that it was pretty suspicious for pseudo-seizures. So I got dressed and drove on down. By then it was dawn, with all the marvelous scenery of rural Georgia in the August heat, namely dust and kudzu. I kept reminding myself, at least, that the guy had insurance, not that getting paid made up for losing sleep. But I was already learning that most night time emergencies in this rural hospital were to be total charity, or Georgia Medicaid, which was like total charity but with annoying paperwork.



On arrival, I was introduced to Buddy Boy, a youngish guy with a number of tattoos to help prove the diagnosis of a sociopath. He had enough sense not to try faking seizures in front of a neurologist, and instead told me his story of long-term seizures controlled only by dilantin and phenobarb.

"Gee," I told him. "I'll be happy to give you the dilantin, but I can't give you any phenobarb."

"Why not?"

I wanted to say, "because you're drug-seeking and want it," but instead I told the odd truth. "I'm new in private practice, and I don't have my DEA number yet, so I can't write controlled substances."

He immediately signed out against medical advice.

I thought I'd seen the last of Buddy Boy, but a couple of months later the bookkeeper informed me that Buddy had given us his father's insurance information, and the company was real mad and wanted a refund. I was just amazed that the dad's legal name was 'Buddy' too.

Then, many moons later, I was just hitting Stage II sleep about midnight when a medical resident from the teaching hospital called me in a state of acute anxiety. They had just got a patient from the county jail workhouse, and they couldn't stop his seizures. It wasn't my responsibility, but they'd heard I was friendly and informative, and they sure needed help with Buddy Boy Baker.

"Repeat that name," I said. I told them to stop what they were doing -- which was giving forty or so milligrams of Valium intravenously -- and got dressed and drove on down. Another night's sleep shot.

It was indeed the guy I recalled. He was gamely trying to fake seizures, except by now he was inebriated from the Valium. He had been in the workhouse, only not working because of cerebral palsy. And now with a couple days left to his sentence, he decided he'd rather be in the hospital hotel. Word was that he was going to be transferred to a jail in Georgia when Tennessee was through with him.

I explained pseudoseizures to the resi-

dents, then went home. The next day I dropped by to say hi. Buddy was holding his hand very oddly.

"What's wrong with your hand?" I asked.

"I've got cerebral palsy," he said.

"No kidding, that's amazing," I said.

"That's earthshaking. Because that's something you're born with, and you sure didn't have it last time I saw you."

Well, the residents wimped out and didn't take my advice. They let him stay, faking one symptom or the other, until his sentence was up. Then it was miraculous recovery time, and Buddy checked out.

And the very night he left the hospital, I was providentially on call again. About five a.m., I got another phone call from the little hospital in Georgia.

"We've got a guy named Buddy Boy Baker here," said the ER doc. (A different doc than the one before. These crummy jobs have high turnover.)

I started to laugh. "*Status epilepticus*, right?"

"Just left the teaching hospital," the doc agreed. "You know him?"

So I told him the story of Buddy Boy Baker and the fake seizures and the desire for phenobarb. "Need me to come in?"

"Nah, let me handle this," said the ER doc with an evil little chuckle. I learned much later what happened.

Having hung up the phone, the doc walked over to the treatment room where Buddy Boy was still vigorously shaking away, the very image of the unconscious patient in the grips of a dangerous electrical brain storm.

The ER doctor paused dramatically in the doorway, waiting until the panicking nurses looked away from their desperately ill patient and at him. Then, in a loud voice he ordered: "Don't let this man leave! I have reason to believe he's wanted in the state of Georgia!"

The comatose epileptic suddenly stopped shaking, sat up, and very earnestly said, "Oh, no, that warrant's been dismissed!"

It was, to my knowledge, a unique method of treating seizures. ☼



➡ From Winnipeg, it's on to Glasgow, Scotland, for next year's worldcon. Intersection will be the fifth worldcon that's been held in the United Kingdom, but the first outside of England. One of the people from this side of the Atlantic sure to be at Intersection will be Dave Kyle, who not only lived in England during the 1970s, but played a part in the conception of the very first British worldcon, 1957's LonCon. The following article collects some of Dave's memories of the people and events of British fandom.





# ENG & SCOT

## MY FANNISH LANDS OF LORE

by **DAVE KYLE**

10-29-94  
Joe Mayhew

Scotland and Glasgow and 1995 and "Intersection" are coming. "Intersection"? That's a funny name for a Worldcon. Where's tradition? No "con" in the name, not even "...vention"? Maybe we could think of it as "InterVention"?! (It's better than "Glascon" or "Scotvention"?)

Just think! The Worldcon will be in three different countries in three successive years, the first time that's ever happened. The remarkable 50th was in Florida in 1992. Then our next half century began in California last year, went to Manitoba, Canada this year, and reaches Glasgow, Scotland in 1995. If you thought Winnipeg was an off-beat hassle with money exchange, travel problems, and customs inspectors, you've got greater problems coming. And if you thought ConAdian was rather small, with 3,500 attendees, you might find the Scottish event even more intimate.

Intersection for me will mean another wonderful return to the United Kingdom where my family and I lived for many years, two decades ago. ConAdian has already plugged me in. Dr. Jack Cohen was there, and reminded me, "It's your fault, you know, Dave. You brought me into fandom years ago." He once scared Ruth silly by sitting

next to her with a live snake in his lap. He was the chairman of Novacon 4, in 1974, in Birmingham. The official attendance was 211 (wow!).

I hope to see a few fans at Glasgow in 1995 who were at the Kettering, England convention in the spring of 1956. I was there. What a fannish party that was! The small, intimate hotel was occupied by the U.K. forces of fandom; the bar — the central point for con camaraderie — was a crowded room filled with smoke, laughter, chatter, and the smells of English brews. The fans were the genuine stuff, youngish enthusiasts — single, engaged, or married couples — hardly stuffy English stereotypes.

It was in Kettering where I first met The Liverpool Group gang (LiG) and made many close friends for life. Once their names were synonymous with British fandom: Norman and Ina Shorrocks, John Roles, John Owen, Stanley and Marge Nuttall, Eddie Jones, and Norman Weedall. There were also, of course, those from the South (London) and the West (Cheltenham). In point of fact, as the English say, that gathering may well have been the genesis of the Ancient and Honourable Order of St. Fantony. {{ed. note: see "The Most Noble and Illustrious Order



of St. Fantony" in *Mimosa* 11 }}

Two events at Kettering are etched in my mind. There was the overwhelming fun of the unpretentious night of costumes. The show was spontaneous, hardly organized, and humorous because of the off-hand simplicity of what was worn. In the courtyard that afternoon, I saw the comical trial run of something looking like a Arthur Thomson cartoon, an uncontrollable black blob with a brave soul inside. The greatest event, however, was the most hilarious room party I have ever in my life experienced. The room was small — in fact tiny — but scores must have been packed in there. The one bed was an island supporting a half dozen survivors. I discovered two shoes sticking out from beneath the foot of the bed. Was he a victim? I sought advice. The shoes were recognized and sternly addressed. The shoes waggled back a feeble reply, and a groaning voice asked for solitude. The party carried on. The room temperature had risen dramatically and, for survival, articles of apparel were discarded. Underclothing on display seemed quite acceptable and logical, but I shed only my jacket and tie. Then, to me, the funniest climax took place: Ron Buckmaster, Pamela Bulmer's brother, had managed somehow, with great force and strain, to open the door wide enough to slip into the packed room. I saw him take in the situation with one quick glance. How he managed in the crush of bodies, I don't know, but almost in an instant he was down to trousers and undershirt — one of the revelers, no longer an outsider.



One other American was in that room, as inhibited as me — my very best friend, Dick Wilson. We had made the trip together in the bowels of the *Ile de France*. Passage was cheap, but we had squeezed our finances hard to afford it. He would be hosted by the Parisian office of Reuter's News for whom he worked in New York, while I stayed with E.J. "Ted" Carnell, fan turned professional editor of *New Worlds*. Ted and I had planned for a London worldcon bid to be made at my convention (the 14th worldcon) in New York that summer.

The success of the London bid and my subsequent honeymoon flight to London in 1957 in a chartered airplane filled entirely with fans has been told elsewhere. It was Ruth's introduction to the garden of England and the wonderful people there, which whetted her desire to return for a holiday in 1961, and to make our move there in 1970.

For nearly seven years, my wife Ruth and I, with son Arthur and daughter Kerry, lived in England. Ruth and I — and A.C. and Kerry if school permitted — attended all the Eastercons and Novacons that we could. One Eastertime at Great Yarmouth was exceptional fun. Everyone breakfasted together on the inexpensive "all-in" (all-inclusive) rates. Most memorable was the special excitement in that seaside town that weekend, not because of the sf crowd, but because of the roaring engines and squealing wheels at all hours as two itinerant gangs clashed: the rakish mods on their motorized scooters and the rival raffish bikers on their motorcycles.

Although we had many friends other than the Liverpool group, it was LiG and its circle with whom we most often exchanged visits. We had been closely knit together by a common holiday in Ibiza, a Balearic island off the east coast of Spain, which began our pilgrimage to England in January of 1970 en route to Germany for the worldcon that summer. LiG had its own club rooms in downtown Liverpool in 1956, and its walls were covered with autographs of members and visitors. (I was there later, when the club was moving out, and the walls being demolished. I suggested the wall skin be pre-



served, but I don't know if it was.) In 1965, during my excursion to Liverpool after Loncon 2, I was introduced to "another John Campbell" (John Ramsey Campbell), a young LiG fan writer, now well-known as Ramsey Campbell. He later married Jenny, the daughter of Australian writer A. Bertram Chandler. That was the year, too, when I was plugging for another worldcon, this time for "Syraccon" in Syracuse, New York (Cleveland, Ohio, eventually won the bid for the 1966 worldcon) — and Marge Denton, Stanley Nuttall's betrothed, daringly wore two orange "I'm for Syracuse" buttons on her two most prominent places.

Ruth and I had a house on the Thames River, between Hampton Court Palace and Windsor Castle, and it became a custom for the Liverpool Group (as many who could make it) to come to our home for a long Whitsuntide holiday weekend. The living room became a dormitory for the men, while the women slept in the bedrooms. During the day, we picnicked in the garden and lawn-bowled or threw darts. The remarkable weather always seemed to favor us with sunny skies and gentle breezes.

Many visitors came to our home of "Two Rivers", so named because the Thames was two dozen feet away to the northeast and the Bourne crossed our back garden from the southwest, behind our small garage on the Hamm Court private road. It was right there where I.G. Wells' Martian Fighting Machines crossed toward London. We



kept a visitors' book for those years until we returned to the U.S. in 1977. That book now jogs my memory. At first, only close friends knew our whereabouts with its welcome mat. Dr. Watson Miller, now deceased, came with his charming wife Sue, who is still a member of First Fandom. H.J. "Bert" Campbell, for years editor of the British sf magazine *Authentic Science Fiction*, was an early regular because we were personal friends. Bert had been my guest in America when he came to Philcon 2 in 1953.

Other English fans at Two Rivers were Ted and Irene Carnell, Les Flood, Gerry Webb, Walter Gillings, Ramblin' Jake, Fred W. Clarke with Nora (Arthur's brother and mother), movie man Richard Aubrey, Dr. Christopher Evans, Ron West, and world traveler Trevor Hearndon. International visitors included Robin Johnson and Peter Nicholls from Australia, Waldemar Kummig from Germany, Leszek Jeczmyk from Poland, Anne McCaffrey from Ireland, and John-Henri Holmberg from Sweden. Americans who came to Two Rivers included Roy Meyers, Don and Elsie Wollheim, Banks Mebane, Jean Berman, Fred Prophet, Ron Bounds, Ed Cox, and Ian Macauley.

There were also Sam Moskowitz, Carol Pohl, Forry and Wendy Ackerman ("It's like old Thames"), Don Corbett, Verna Smith Trestrail, Florence Russell (who with her late husband Sam, had emigrated from L.A. — Sam once kindly said, "How many people can see swans on the Thames from their front door? And deserve it?"), J. Ben Stark, and Theodore Sturgeon (who thanked us all... "for this stay in your healing place").

A typical Whit Weekend (starting in 1972) included Eddie, Stan & Marge, John R., John O., Norm & Ina, and Norman (W), as he always signed himself. Keith & Wendy Freeman from Reading were practically monthly guests (they became our daughter Kerry's God Parents). Also, there were Tony & Marj Edwards and Chuck & Lynda Partington from the Midlands (Tony and Chuck were film enthusiasts; they made fannish films, one starring Harry Harrison, published many issues of *L'Incroyable Cinema*, plus

a semi-professional magazine called *Alien Worlds* and for a time owned a movie house), and Bob Shaw with his beautiful wife Sadie. One Whit weekend, Ina and Norman phoned from Ibiza to let us know they were with us in spirit. Whit weekend in England was our very best time of the year.

On June 13, 1976, our Two Rivers guest book has a page with the bold lettering across the top: **THE MARTIANS ARE COMING!** Philip José Farmer, of Peoria, Illinois, signed that page, together with all his *nom de plumes*: "Kilgore Trout, Jonathan Swift Somers III, Rod Keen, Paul Chapin, John H. Watson M.D., William Norfolk M.D., and Cordwainer Bird." This was the day Phil suggested I put a bronze plaque in the garden to mark the spot where the Martians crossed the Thames on their way to Shepparton and London. (Further details were reported in *Mimosa* 13.) And then there was Dannie Plachta from Detroit, who wrote on November 5th, 1976: "Today I waved at the River Police and they came in. Fortunately, the Novacon Guest of Honor was not arrested."

I wasn't "arrested" because only Dannie was at Two Rivers then. I was at Novacon 6 in Birmingham, the first time I had ever been a Guest of Honour (or "Honor", even) at a major convention. I have Stan Eling of the Birmingham Science Fiction Group to thank for that, along with Roger Peyton. Stan was Chairman, Rog was an ex-Chairman. Attendance was 317, officially that is, and I made my stirring speech about real science fiction being submerged by the New Wave. My big book, *A Pictorial History of Science Fiction*, had been published that summer and the British Science Fiction Association awarded me a "Special Award" trophy for it. I was generously complimented by BSFA members for the work (as also did Isaac Asimov and Robert Heinlein), but I did feel they might have been influenced by the fact that I had just been part of a rescue operation for the floundering BSFA, getting Arthur C. Clarke to be Honorary Chairman while I was Vice Chairman and Managing Director.

Memories flash across my mind like meteors...

There were the monthly meetings in London at The Globe pub where you never knew who might turn up, or what amusing or noteworthy moment might occur, like when Arthur Clarke stirred excitement by showing off his novelty, the first pocket calculator... There was the day at the Chinese Restaurant in Liverpool when Phil Rogers, the St. Fantony GrandMaster, ate everything in sight, a prodigious undertaking... I remember the time I lost my wallet going to the ThirdManCon at Manchester University. When I returned in the middle of the night from my successful search in backtracking our auto route, Ruth was awake, changing rooms — she had discovered a host of creepy-crawlies.



I salivate remembering the sf collections of "old" Ken Chapman and "young" John Egging, who helped my research on my picture books. I remember the thrill of being an important part of the H.G. Wells Society; it was exhilarating driving frequently to Feltham to work with the Hamlyn publishing staff. I recall encountering Ted Tubb unexpectedly in London as he was making his sidewalk sales pitch (outside of sf life, Ted was a salesman). My whole family remembers the great sf television shows of Intersec-tion's Guest of Honour, Gerry Anderson — *Captain Scarlet. Thunderbirds Are Go*, and the underrated *UFO*.

In 1952, Scotland got its own science fiction magazine, *Nebula*. It lasted for seven years. Peter Hamilton, Jr., was the young, dedicated editor giving intense devotion to his project. He introduced many writers into the field, including Brian Aldiss, Robert Silverberg, and Bob Shaw. Glasgow was his home. Remember him and his magazine when you get there. ☆



While speaking of Scotland and next year's worldcon, this is a good opportunity to point out that Intersection's Fan Guest of Honour will be none other than Vincent Clarke. Vinc has been a frequent, welcome contributor to *Mimosa* with his entertaining essays and letters; we are looking forward to meeting him next year. For those not totally familiar with his fannish background, Vinc is best known for his involvement in British fandom in the decade of the 1950s; the following is a tale from that era.



In 1949, full of dewy eyed neo-fannish enthusiasm, I went to share an apartment with Ken Bulmer (see *Mimosa* 10), which we named The Epicentre. Ken had edited seven or eight issues of *Star Parade*, a small fanzine distributed with the Rosenblum *Futurian War Digest* ('Fido'), way back in 1941. Now, in 1949, it appeared that the editorial fires still smouldered behind the Bulmer brow. He also wanted to experiment. For years Ken had stored away a flat-bed duplicator, which had survived the wartime blitz of a warehouse and had been given to him by the salvage men. Would it work? Just before I went to share The Epicentre, Ken produced another fanzine.

*Nirvana* No. 1, Autumn '49, was not, it must be admitted, the sort of fanzine which you grabbed from the postman's hand. It consisted of three quarto (10" x 8") sheets, duplicated in faint blue. It had a heavily symbolic cover by Arthur Williams (man holding atomic symbol in left hand, micrometer in right, background of war — soldiers in gas masks with war planes on one side, futuristic homes and rocket ships on the other), and it was termed a 'Nostalgic Publication'. This was apparently because Ken had gathered together a 1943 article on the real

value of sf by a mundane friend, a page and a bit of a barbarian-type poem ("Axes Against Akkag"), a shorter poem written by Ken while soldiering in Italy in 1945, and a poem by Jack Curtis reprinted from *Unique*, a '38 U.S. fanzine.

Truthfully, the best thing about Ken's fanzine was the title, but he launched about 50 copies on an unfeeling world, and sat back waiting for the LoCs, though we didn't call them that in those days.

And waited...

And waited...

Each day the coal-dust dappled mats of The Epicentre were scanned — in vain. It was as if *Nirvana* had dropped into some other dimension, as if it had attained the cessation of individual existence of its title.

And, at long last, a letter! Genuine evidence that the pillar-box hadn't contained a space warp. It was from Walt Willis. But Walt was the most active and respected fan in the British Isles, a sort of Harry Warner Jnr. squared. If you didn't receive a letter from Willis, you were dead and didn't know it.

Ken shrugged. He'd used up the odd remnants of wartime fanning, satisfied his curiosity about the duplicator, and quenched

his personal fanned ambitions. *Nirvana* was dead. In fact, apart from a marvellous run of a zine called *Steam* in the future OMPA {ed. note: the Offtrails Magazine Publishers Association, a British APA}}, Ken didn't edit another sf fanzine, but helped me considerably in co-editing and publishing. In later years he even distributed his TAFF trip report over various fanzines, instead of publishing it himself.

And yet...and yet... It was a lovely title. It was such a pity to scrap it.

Now, forty-five years later, I honestly can't remember who started the myth. It was probably Walter. But in correspondence, we started to refer to *Nirvana* as if it was still being published: "Have to end this letter now — got to polish up an article for *Nirvana*," and: "The *Nirvana* critic in the latest ish says..." etc.

Soon, the odd reference to *Nirvana* started to appear in fanzines. The myth started rolling: 'Why didn't you receive *Nirvana*? Well, we're sorry, but the circulation is strictly limited — the top fans and some professionals get it. We'll put your name down, and if someone dies...'

Ken and Walter also started advertising a '*Nirvana* seal of approval — send a small amount of cash and you'd receive one of the better fanzines of the day, as approved.' But not, of course, *Nirvana* itself.

*Nirvana* survived for years. It was not exactly a hoax, because it's quasi-existence was blatantly obvious, at least to hardened fans, but it was part of the accumulated myth which made '50s fandom a marvellous place in which to play. And if some neofans actually believed in it, then it would only spur them on to become bigger, more active fans, and to be included on the *Nirvana* subscription list.

It all started, as noted above, in late '49. In 1954, the second Manchester SF Convention was held, the SuperManCon, which, with the exception of the '57 London Worldcon, was the outstanding British convention of the '50s. Like most '50s cons, the committee published a combozine. This custom, borrowed (as always) from the U.S., was for

examples of their output to be solicited from all the current fan editors, and these pages were then bound with the programme and distributed to all attendees.

This was something which *Nirvana* couldn't miss. Ken and I and another fan, Dave Newman, got together and produced four pages of *Nirvana* Vol. 5 No. 4, Issue 20. It was as carefully produced as we could make it, with an index (running to page 56), an editorial ("It is with no little gratification that we can, on the eve of the publication of our 5th anniversary issue...") and three pages of contents. The latter consisted of a single page E.C. 'Ted' Tubb story and two pages from an article on Walter Willis by Bob Shaw, which it nearly broke my heart to curtail in mid-flight — in fact, mid-sentence.

There was also a boxed 'explanation'... "As a token of goodwill, the first 4 pages of this issue of *Nirvana* will therefore be duplicated in a single colour... contributions and subscriptions are by invitation only, and we regret that we cannot supply past or future copies of *Nirvana* under any other circumstances. Please do not ask us... a refusal might embarrass."

It appears in the combozine in all its right-hand-justified glory — a mighty feat in itself in those non-computerised days — and stands up well amongst *Space Times*, *Space Diversions*, *BEM*, an advert for *Femizine* (the all-female fanzine), and other outstanding fanzines of the period which had sent samples.

What I didn't know until many years later was that in the 1960s, Ted Tubb took the tiny short story he'd contributed to *Nirvana* 20, embellished it a little, and sold it — an interesting addition to that short list of fanzine stories which have seen professional publication. It also gave *Nirvana* the distinction of having 100% of its fiction in that category.

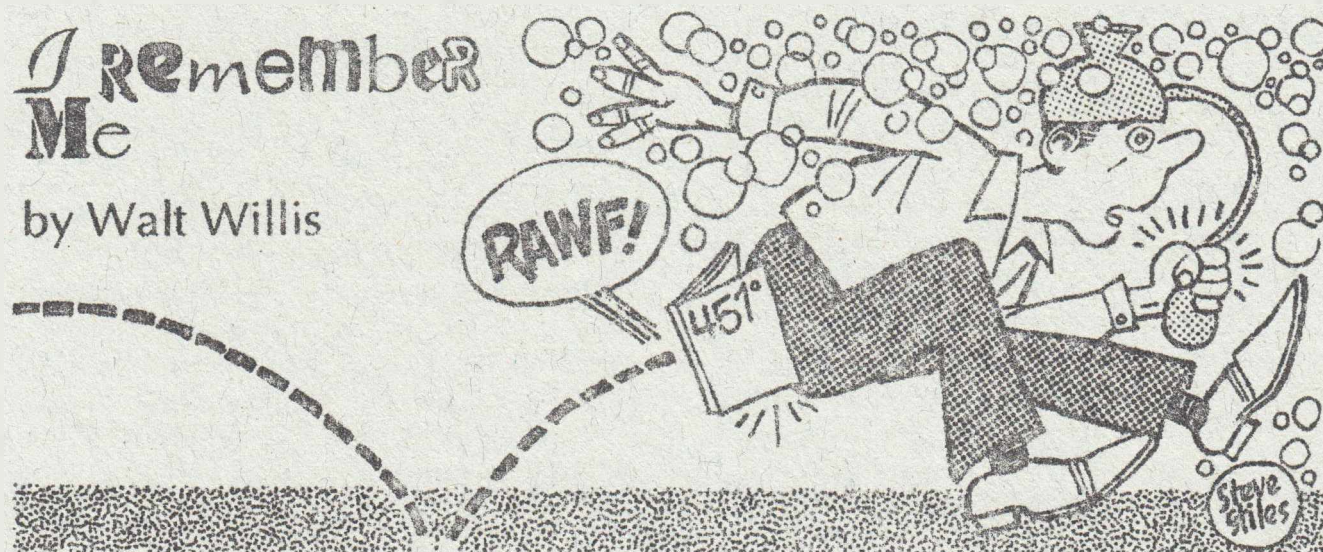
Through the later '50s, references to *Nirvana* continued to pop up here and there, until in 1959, *Fancyclopedia* 2 pricked the bubble: "It has, I hear, never previously been explicitly revealed as a hoax." ☉



⇒ Someone else we're looking forward to seeing next year, hopefully at Intersection, is Walt Willis. We last saw Walt in at the 1992 Worldcon, where *he* was the Fan Guest of Honor. This is the fifth installation here in *Mimosa* of "I Remember Me", Walt's annotated series of excerpts from his correspondence file that provides portraits of some of the people, publications, and events that made the decade of the 1950s such an interesting time; previously, the series had been compiled some years ago in Richard Bergeron's *Warhoon* no. 28, a huge, 600+ page collection of Walt's fan writings. Bergeron described the series as "...a revelation of high fannish secrets, low fannish secrets, gossip, eavesdropping, skeletons, skeleton keys, opened letters, and glimpses into machiavellian machinations..." This time, we get to learn more about damon knight, numbered fandoms, some famous fanzines, and more...

## I Remember Me

by Walt Willis



### My Life With damon knight

In my fan column in the Scottish pro-zine *Nebula* (which brought Ethel Lindsay into fandom), I instanced some of the concrete rewards that might come from fan activity. They included receiving from damon knight a device for blowing bubbles from the top of one's head. No explanation was given for this, I having assumed that the potential fans of that time would have no difficulty in seeing the advantages of such a contrivance. It consisted of a plastic cap, rather like a helicopter beanie, incorporating a little tank containing bubble-making fluid, from which a plastic tube ending in a bulb operated by the wearer produced a steady stream of large iridescent bubbles, to no little effect. The general impression produced was one of a comic book character being portrayed as Thinking.

The chain of events which led me to receive this unusual headgear started with a suggestion from Redd Boggs that it might be a good idea to send a copy of *Hyphen* to damon knight. I did so, and eventually re-

ceived this letter:

Sir,

Sorry to be so late in thanking you for *Hyphen* 8, but the truth is the little beast is so meaty I haven't finished it even yet. I keep picking it up to see if there's anything I have missed, and there always is. On the hunch that it will give out eventually, though, I'm forwarding a money order for ten shillings — a shilling for *The Enchanted Duplicator*, of which I hear great things, and the rest for a double-barreled subscription. I find I can't stand not having all the back issues.

The magazine's illegibility may be part of its charm, but it was a near thing with me. I read the easy parts, passed over the back cover as totally impossible, and shudder to think what would have happened if Jim Blish hadn't picked it up and started laughing like a maniac. What unsung genius said, "You haven't lived until you've been goosed with a copy of *Fahrenheit 451*"?



I was going to tell you what I liked, but I liked every damned thing in the magazine, even the verse. Since when has there been readable verse in fanmags? Good lord, I have been out of touch too long. What's Seventh Fandom? Does it hurt? Why aren't A. Vincent and Arthur C. the same person?

"Now about sex and smut" should have been an interlineation. So businesslike. Down Neptune! Up Uranus!

Just went back through the wilderness looking for something to deprecate and thought I had found it in the serious and constructive reviews, but struck that remark about "the practiced robot-spotter" and gave up.

Resignedly, damon knight

I find that, amazingly, I didn't answer this letter for six weeks. It seems I sent it to my co-editor, Chuck Harris, with a pencilled note asking for it to be returned as soon as copied — for the next issue, which was to be produced by him and Vince Clarke — and asking him to say that the *Fahrenheit 451* quote was overheard by our agent Terry Carr at a meeting of the Golden Gate Futurian Society.

I apologised for the delay as follows:

Believe me, I'd have replied to your first letter with such rapidity as to alarm the cablegram companies if it hadn't been for my current estivation. (At least it would be estivation if we had a summer in Ireland. I think we had better just call it hibernation.) I found the receipt of word from you as an accolade (you know accolade, Arthur C. Clarke's favourite drink) and nightly I call down blessings on the head of Redd Boggs who suggested I send you a sample copy of *Hyphen*.

The least I can do is to give you a more adequate reply to your enquiry about Seventh Fandom. Sixth Fandom flourished in 1951 and 1952, and is supposed to have centered around Lee Hoffman, Max Keasler, and myself. It reached its climax in the fall of 1952 when we all met at the Chicon and then suffered a tem-

porary eclipse. (Lee bought a horse, I caught a colt which developed into pneumonia, and Max was draughted.) Just previous to this, Bob Silverberg had written an article in *Quandry* classifying fandoms, naming the present one Sixth and speculating on what Seventh would be like. When *Quandry* suspended publication, a horde of brash young neofen arose calling themselves Seventh Fandom as if all they had to do to justify their existence was to call attention to it.

...What I would like would be some original material from you, but I haven't the nerve to ask for it.

This last arose from my request for the loan of some old copies of damon knight's fanzine *Snide*. In a later letter, which has not survived, he apparently made some comments about *TOTO*, *Hyphen's* reprint supplement. I offered to lend him copies of *Quandry*, and he replied as follows:

Ho. You brightened my morning. Kindred soul, I salute you. (I admire your puns but don't expect any back; I use them instead of story ideas.) Am sending you ten tons of stuff from my memory box... Got the damndest things in this box. Here's a sheet of paper headed...

#### **The Cosmic XXXX**

by **Chester b. Conant** and **Damon Knight**  
(The missing word was FART. It was in the typewriter when some Chelsea semi-tarts were coming up, and Cohen, who has no inhibitions at all about women except this one, pencilled it out.)

*It was mid-day in Paris when the cloud from space drifted down. People sitting at sidewalk cafes looked up, sniffed the air enquiringly, and then shrugged shoulders, turning back to their demitasses and polite banter.*

*But the smell grew stronger. It grew, at last, to an intensity that even a Parisian could not stand. With a curious mingling of odours like the amalgamation of the dregs of a thousand sewers, it settled in the chasms of the city streets and seeped through doors and windows into the inner-*

most corners and crannies of the world metropolis. Paris grew alarmed, then outraged, then frantic.

That's all. Cohen was supposed to go on from there, but all he did was correct the title.

All this is in hope of deserving your fantastic offer to lend me fanzines. You ought to be twice shy by now, but good lord, I accept! You mean to say you're going to lend me *Quandries*? You're mad! I'll guard them with my life.

...Would dearly love to write something new for *Hyphen*, but am intimidated. Nothing drearier than would-be *Hyphen*-type wit. Will eat lots of Wheaties and have a go at it.

I replied as follows, after some complimentary remarks about the copies of *Snide* he had sent me:

Your promise to try and write something for *Hyphen* fills me with awe. You really have no idea of the ... veneration I have for you, in both your fan and pro aspects ... We don't expect or want "would-be *Hyphen*-type material" — we want *damon knight*-type material, which we think is better.

His reply was swift:

Kindly cut out the goddamn veneration. Am only 32, dammit, and consider myself in the bloom of youth. Have as much hair as ever, and feel twitchier in every way. I venerate you, you bleeding genius. There, how do you like it?

No, seriously, the only thing I am tooled up to do besides fiction is the book review column, which is too serious and constructive, and probably too long as well.

On thinking it over, am more surprised than ever that you have heard of *Snide* before; one of the old guard, probably. Faintly surprised to discover, a while back, that Harry Warner was still kicking... Then there's Tucker and Ackerman, who go back to the beginning of the world. The odd thing about my generation in fandom — Joe Fortier, Geny de la Ree, and a

gaggle of others whose names I've forgotten — is that we all disappeared.

Was in a typewriter repair shop last summer, I guess it was, left to my own devices while the man's wife went to see what had become of my machine, and I read part of a mimeographed circular hanging on a nail behind the counter. It was a testimonial written by a British cigarette card fan who had been visiting in this country and had many nice things to say about American cigarette card fandom. Odd. Would it be fun to dump a bunch of these people into the next convention and see how long it took for anybody to notice the difference.

...Hallohallohallohallo. I just happened to be looking through *Hyphen* No. 5 (honest) and I see where you say, "Not that I wouldn't welcome intelligent literary criticism..." I don't see how you can weasel out of that. About how many pages per issue would you welcome?

And in a later letter:

I saw John Michel a few years ago at a showing of that Russian decapitated dog-head film down in Greenwich Village. He had got disgustingly plump and shiny. Mutterings in *Grue* to the effect that he's some part of Dean Grennell... Warner's notion of writing obituaries on people who have retired from FAPA is the most delightful thing I've heard in years. Didn't know he had it in him. Didn't have much contact with British fandom. Corresponded for a while with Bill Temple. Found him solemn, and all the Temple madness I began to read about later came as a complete surprise to me. Probably we just got off on the wrong foot and he found me solemn.

The fat bundle of *Quandries* arrived yesterday. Large bite, but I've been nibbling away at it, starting with "The Harp". Now, by god, this is marvellous stuff.

Damon's column in *Hyphen* 11, November 1954, was well received: DR Smith, the old-time British fan, wrote: "If you and



damon knight had striven for years with the sole object of pleasing me, you could not have done better than for him to write and for you to print his comments on some aspects of present-day sf. This indeed I enjoyed. I delighted in every well-chosen phrase of it. This is the sort of thing I would aspire to produce myself had I the talent."

John Brunner said: "Liked knight's masterly exposition of the art of being rude without being impolite."

Chuck Harris wrote: "He's invaluable. Just what we needed. He's not merely picturesque, he's impossible. For years we've been needing a regular fairly serious contributor who has something to say and a smart way of saying it, and knight is truly the answer to our prayers."

I passed these comments on to damon, who himself had written a letter of comment on *Hyphen* 10, in which he said...

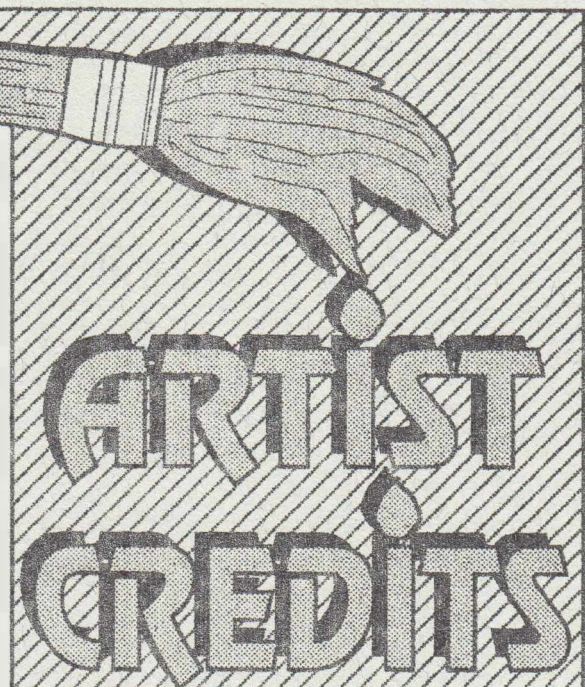
The reason *Hyphen* is so good, I take it, apart from the accidental assemblage of half a dozen geniuses in Britain, and the reason so many serious and constructive fanzines are so ghastly dull, is that the former is an original contribution, and the latter are self-consciously second-hand. I

would like you to ponder this thought though, if it hasn't already occurred to you: it's exactly the fun-loving fanzines like *Hyphen*, Bradbury's *Futura Fantasia*, and *Snide* (not a plug — the mag's 2nd and final issue was published 14 years ago) which have profoundly influenced science fiction.

This reminded me of Terry Carr's denunciation of Ed Wood for, by his own admission, destroying his copies of *Hyphen* unread, the same copies which contained the reviews by damon knight he was going to later reprint professionally. The copies of *Hyphen* were presumably sent in exchange for Wood's fmz, *The Journal of Science Fiction*.

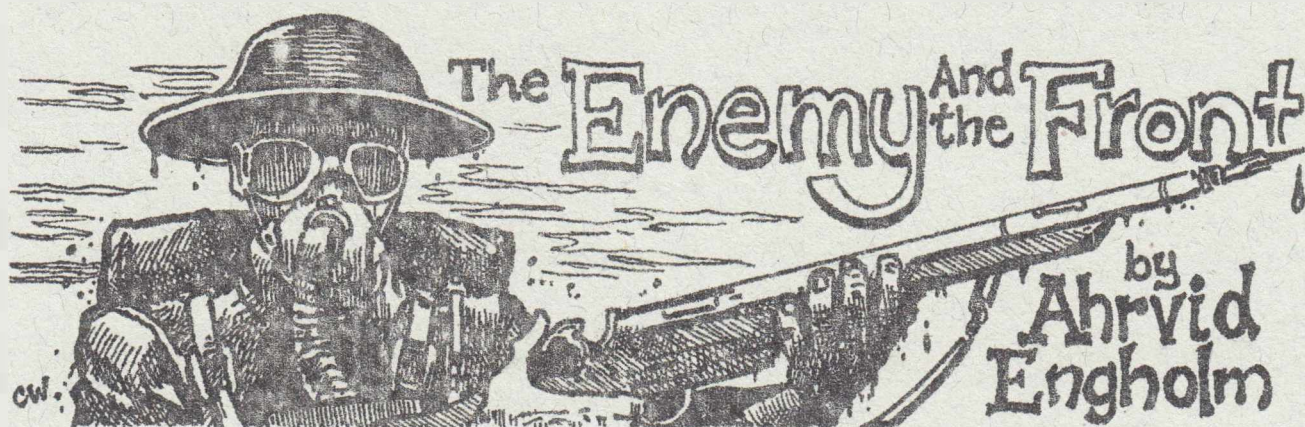
Next issue, I'll conclude the damon knight saga and also reproduce the Robert Conquest letter touched-on in the recent biography of Philip Larkin. I'll just mention now that the only complaint damon knight made about my standard of reproduction of his reviews in *Hyphen* was that I inadvertently reproduced the name of a famous publisher as 'Funk and Wagballs'. I was able to mollify damon by pointing out how much worse it could have been! ☺

Sheryl Birkhead - pages 2; 3; 24; 33; 57  
 Kurt Erichsen - pages 34; 35  
 Brad Foster - page 48  
 Alexis Gilliland - page 51  
 Teddy Harvia - pages 4; 5; 6; 47  
 Alan Hutchinson - page 31  
 Bill Kunkel - pages 42; 56  
 Joe Mayhew - pages 7; 9; 10; 12; 15; 16; 17; 18; 40; 52  
 Peggy Ranson - page 13  
 Bill Rotsler - page 41  
 Dan Steffan - front & back covers; page 19  
 Diana Stein - pages 37; 39  
 Steve Stiles - page 21  
 Steve Stiles and Bill Rotsler - page 54  
 Phil Tortorici - page 44  
 Charlie Williams - pages 25; 27; 28





It's time once again for another look into the somewhat enigmatic world of Swedish fandom. The writer of the following is another of the people we hope to meet next year in Scotland. Last issue, he described the life and death of a small but significant amateur press association. This time, he tells us more about Stockholm-area fans of the late 1970s, including the titanic struggle between...



There was a time when the world revolved around the cold war maelstrom. James Bond-like figures sneaked across the Iron Curtain and nuclear missiles threatened our very existence. But, as we'll shortly learn in this article, those mundane events were completely dwarfed by the struggle in Stockholm Fandom of 1978.

Two mighty powers battled in a fandom, divided by a Stencil Curtain, full of sophisticated espionage, intricate intrigues, secret projects, double-double bluffs and encrypted code messages.

One was I, leader of Fandom's Liberation Front ('Fandoms Befrielsefront', FBF) which we will call The Front. One was Anders Bellis, leader of the Triumvirate Your Fannish Enemy ('Triumviratet Din Fiende Fandom', TDFF) which we will call The Enemy.

Up to then we had both been mostly harmless members of fandom for two or three years. We had gone to our first conventions and were attending the book discussion circles arranged by the Scandinavian SF Association. In 1977 this Association acquired its own club house in central Stockholm, and the meeting activity skyrocketed. Many of the new attendees were very young like us and a new strain of fandom emerged as a consequence, centred around the young

neofans.

In May 1978, Bellis produced his first fanzine, *Hurkle* (named after Ted Sturgeon's "The Hurkle is a Happy Beast") and a couple of weeks later, in June 1978, I did my first: *Fanarchistic Writings*. The smell of the ink of your first very own fanzine will intoxicate and spellbind you. It is a trip more powerful than LSD. Ask me, I know! (Eh, I know about mimeo ink, I mean.)

As soon as the last sheet of your first fanzine leaves the duplicator, you know you're a fan in the true sense. You know that fandom is everything, and that you want to be a part of it. The first thing you need, then, is a group that will help you take control over fandom, so you can have it all for yourself.

It has happened before. In the late '50s, Denis Lindbohm and Sam J Lundwall fought The Fannish War, between Lindbohm's fictitious state 'The Autarchy' and Lundwall's 'Hyboria'. Their struggle soon involved all leading fannish circles and became a classic. In the mid-'60s, the fans John-Henri Holmberg, Bertil Mårtensson, and Mats D Linder formed the Witty Society Your Fannish Friend ('Witterhetssekskapet Din Vän Fandom'), that for a few years totally dominated the fanzine market and set the course for Swedish fannish fandom. (They were all

students and thought they were very witty, thus the name.)

The main players of *The Enemy vs. The Front* drama would soon make their names known (I hope I remember all ages correctly):

**Ahrvid Engholm** of *The Front* — then age 19, a not very enthusiastic student at the time, leader, fanzine publisher, living in a western suburb, Asimov fan, owner of the mimeo 'Ernst'. (Now I am a journalist.)

**Harald Berthelsen** of *The Front* — age 17, high school student, intrigue maker, fanzine publisher, a long haired anarchist with glasses, from an upper class eastern suburb. (I had met him one year earlier. He now has a family, lives in Uppsala north of Stockholm, and plays in an Irish folk music band.)

**Anders Bellis** of *The Enemy* — age 18, high school student, leader, fanzine publisher, living in downtown Stockholm, also long haired anarchist, owner of the mimeo 'TED'. (Though I prefer not to meet him these days, he works as translator.)

**Ylva Spångberg** of *The Enemy* — age 16, high school student, almost the only girl in Swedish fandom at the time, living in a southern rather far away suburb, short and blond, liked cats. (I see her off and on; she now works as a translator.)

**Leif Euren** of *The Enemy* — age 20, later student of the Royal Technical Institute where he got a civil engineering degree, living in downtown Stockholm, publisher of a rather ambitious fanzine review zine, curly dark hair and glasses. (Leif affiliated to the Stockholm Tolkien Society in 1980, where he became very active. He now works as a civil engineer and lives in a western suburb.)

**Hans X** — age 17, high school student at the time, a horror fan (especially of HP Lovecraft), interested in weapons, short and dark haired. (I meet him off and on. He works as chiropractor and post-mortem dissector, lives in a southern sub-

urb. He and his girlfriend just got a daughter.)

Bellis writes that he, in the spring of 1978, had correspondence with fans from southern Sweden which turned into a faaan-fiction of how they came to Stockholm and were annihilated by the Huckle Federation, whose... "inner brain trust was me, Ylva Spångberg and Leif Elvis Euren." He wasn't named 'Elvis'; that was a joke. He wouldn't reveal what his middle initial stood for so we invented something. Distorting people's names, even your own, and using pseudonyms was common practice and considered funny.

[A note of explanation: All facts and quotes here are from two articles in my *Fanner* No 12 and Bellis' *Hoax* 3, in the 9th mailing (November 1979) of the Cucumber APA {{note: see "The Rise and Fall of Cucumber" in *Mimosa* 15}}. These two articles (15 tightly typed pages) covered the *Enemy/ Front* wars in every detail, directly from the source material. They are, in fact, better than the source fanzines from one year earlier, since those often lied to confuse the opponent. Quotes in this article have sometimes been abridged, for reasons of length.]

Later the same spring Bellis and Ylva, at that time having a brief affair, worked out a fannish poll full of... "absolutely crazy questions of very little relevance" (questions from something later to be called 'The Church of Fictionology'). The poll was code-named 'Gizmo', so they could talk about it when others were present. Bellis wrote: "At this time I happened to sit late one night, talking with Leif and Ylva in the cellar of the Scandinavian SF Association (among other things I demonstrated that I can talk backwards, something I in fact master superbly). As we talked we mentioned Gizmo (Leif didn't know what it was) and the fannish grouping, the Brain Trust, that Ylva and I planned — all in the purpose of waging war on other fannish groups. Since Leif was mentioned as one of the Brain Trust, he insisted on being included. The Triumvirate



Your Fannish Enemy was born!" The 'triumvirate' part of the name was chosen to *a priori* exclude any other members; 'Your Fannish Enemy' was a parody of 'Your Fannish Friend'.

Meanwhile, in another part of Stockholm, I sat and typed my first fanzine. "In the same moment I sat down to write *Fanarchistic Writings* No. 1", I noted later, "Fandom's Liberation Front was born. I needed something that *Fanarchistic Writings* could be the official organ for." So I immediately started the myth about how The Front was founded. An imaginary founding father, Arne Persson, one night knocked on my window and enrolled me to publish The Front's official organ. I even invented a hierarchy of other organizations that The Front was a part of: TDFsF (a parody of TDFF), S4SF4 (a sercon sf organization), and SIFA (a one man Isaac Asimov fan club). I had invented SIFA because I wanted to spread the notion that I was a sercon fan, and Asimov was the natural symbol for seriousness and constructiveness. SIFA was a protest against the weird fannishness of Bellis, who used to send cat food in envelopes to his friends and insisted that it was fannish behaviour.



The first enemy of The Front was not Bellis, but SFF (the Swedish APA) and its founder Anders Åkerlind. It was the same for The Enemy. SFF was heavily disliked. I have often wondered why; maybe it was because we just didn't like that somebody else came up with the good idea of starting an APA.

And the pro Sam J Lundwall was also an enemy. He had some weird views that all American sf (including my hero Dr. Asimov) was rubbish. In *Fanarchistic Writings*, I published regular 'reports from the liberation war', all about how Lundwall got his ass kicked. While Bellis' inspiration was the Witty Society Your Fannish Friend, mine was The Fannish War two decades earlier.

In early July of '78, The Front stopped being a one man show. Bellis was on vacation in Greece, and one Harald Berthelsen wrote to me, wanting to join The Front and challenge The Enemy to a 'fanzine duel', to publish the most fanzine pages.

"Imagine how angry Bellis will be when he sits there in Greece and gets a letter where we declare war on The Enemy, and he has no stencils and can't do a thing about it..." Harald wrote.

"How to become a member is so complicated that I wouldn't recommend anyone to try," I had written earlier, but all obstacles were swept away for Harald — he had a stock of one thousand (!) stencils that he was willing to put to use in the coming war.

The Front was divided into 'departments'. I headed the Department of Propaganda, Harald took charge of the Department of Plots. Shortly Harald wrote: "I've made my first plot. The Front has a new member. NiBe Blomquist (his name was 'Nisse', but a German double-S is close to a 'B' so he became 'NiBe') is now General Loud-Mouthed Jackass of the Department of LMJ."

I forwarded the challenge to Bellis in Greece by mail, but added my doubts: "If you are to compete on the number of pages, what will happen with the quality and the contents of the zines? Answer: you don't give a damn!!!" Nevertheless, the starting date for the war was set to the 6th of July.

"Naturally this date was tactical. The Front 'happened' to publish 3-4 fanzines around this time," I later noted. The fanzine duel was soon forgotten, and in my estimation won by The Front — because we kept enrolling people that published fanzines, like NiBe and later Roger Sjölander and Kjell

[A language note: A number of spellings and words were quite typical of this period of Stockholm fandom. Anything beginning with an 'an-' would get an additional 'f': 'fan- other', 'fannual', etc; though it became pretty silly when words without an 'an-' got the

The drawing shows a magnifying glass held over an open dictionary. The word 'flatulent' is clearly visible under the lens. To the left, another book titled 'FAARNISH' is open, displaying a list of words in a script, with 'flatulent' also appearing in the list.

28



It wasn't a real battle between The Front and The Enemy yet. For that we needed the help of the Scandinavian SF Association. Their clubzine *Fanac* was edited by a moron, I thought, so I started a campaign to get the super-fan Bertil A G Schalén (BAGS) as editor. The campaign was called 'BAGS for *Fanac*' (BFF) and was initially supported by The Enemy. To write about the campaign, I started *BFF News* in August (with the undertitle "The Front News"), a weekly newsletter of which the first issue was hectographed. It was the first Swedish fanzine since the '50s to be produced this way — and also the last, I believe.

When John-Henri Holmberg, as chairman of the Scandinavian SF Association, came home from a vacation in the U.S. (where he reportedly had a dinner with Jack Vance) he noticed that *Fanac* was under heavy fire — and offered the editorship to Bellis! It was late in August, and the decision was to be formally taken by the board in early September.

This was a cold shower for The Front! The Enemy subsequently withdrew its support for the BFF-campaign. I wrote an angry letter to the board of the Association: "If the board is to take this decision it is mockery with the democracy in the Association. Among the members you'll find an enormous, enormous support for the notion that Bertil A G Schalén should be *Fanac* editor. TO APPOINT ANDERS BELLIS AS FANAC EDITOR IS SHAMEFUL FOR SVERIGANDOM!! If BAGS isn't appointed editor, the BFF campaign will take measures." Etc, etc. I was totally convinced the BFF movement was a force not seen since the rise of communism, and blatantly challenged the board.

But the letter gave results! When the formal decision of the board came, Bellis was appointed to do only one issue — and then BAGS would do one. This made The Enemy rather angry, of course. The war was afoot...

A stream of propaganda leaflets, in the form of *BFF News* and *TDFE Times* poured over an innocent fandom during September

and October of 1978. Bribery, threats, and espionage were only a few of the ingredients. Both *BFF News* and *TDFE Times* claimed to be newszines, but the information content was really bleak. Most important stories in each issue were some sort of attack on the opponent, if nothing else because his typography was lousy (i.e., even more lousy than your own).

The Enemy promised everyone who supported them 'favourable mentions' in Bellis' issue of *Fanac*. The Front promised all supporters free electrostencilling. The Enemy announced an 'Engholm For *Fanac*' campaign, as a parody of 'BAGS for *Fanac*'. Faked and real proxies for expressing support for one side or the other were distributed. We terrorized each other on the phone.

Bellis would, for instance, call BAGS very late at night and trick him into almost admitting that he wouldn't or couldn't do *Fanac*, and then call me in triumph. I would then call BAGS even later to get Bellis' claims denied. BAGS's mother was convinced we were absolute maniacs, I was later told.

Late one night I got a phone call from Hans X. He was mad at Bellis for something and offered to infiltrate The Enemy. A couple of days later he confirmed his offer with a letter:

"I agree with The Front in most things and want nothing more than to make the hateful Enemy tumble down. Preferably by infiltration, and by sending you the information. I know the Dog (Bellis) pretty well, and have studied its habits. It has had no thoughts of being betrayed by me and has thus revealed all its secrets. I can take any espionage missions, and other missions for that matter, no matter how risky. My only condition is that my secret must be kept an absolute secret, and all my messages must be destroyed after reading."

I didn't destroy any messages (for the benefit of future fannish history), but I did answer 'Yes, thanks', and devised an encryption system that could be used for communication. That secret code was based on the

typewriter keyboard. You shifted all characters one step to the right (and for the rightmost, to the leftmost character). Deceiving characters were inserted for spaces, and then all characters were grouped in five. Hans became known under the codename 'Colonel Griff', The Enemy was codenamed 'Gunnar', Bellis was codenamed 'George', etc.

One year later, Bellis claimed Hans X was recruited as an Enemy spy one month before The Front did. However he was so uncertain about his loyalty that he only fed him with info about false projects. I was at the same time so uncertain about Hans' status that I too only fed him with false info about our projects. Despite this, Hans managed to feed The Front with quite a bit of genuine info, and The Enemy with info about The Front. (Hans later robbed a gas station and got one year in prison. He then turned his life around and didn't repeat espionage or gas station adventures. Out of discretion I withhold his last name.)

An important part of the espionage and wars were the secret projects. Some of The Front's projects were these:

Toothbrush — The fannish game Stereopoly (a parody of Monopoly). Never left the drawing board. Purpose: egoboo for The Front.

Toilet — Plans to offer The Front's assistance as editors for an issue of the fanzine *SF Forum*. Purpose: egoboo for The Front.

Bathtub — Plans to write silly letters of comment in Bellis's name to leading fanzines. Wasn't done. Purpose: to make Bellis look like a fool.

(No Name) — A false *TDFF Times*. Purpose: to discredit the real *TDFF Times*. Wasn't done, since we thought *TDFF Times* discredited itself well enough already.

The Enemy also had its own set of projects: Some of them were these:

Artichoke — A false pro-BAGS fanzine.

Leek — A follow-up to the 'Gizmo' poll.

Blueberry — Plans to publish a fake fanzine in Ahrvid's name.

Carrot — Kjell Söderberg (a hoax fan).

So how did it end? Well, it withered away. People soon lost interest in these intrigues. The Enemy was formally dissolved towards the end of 1978. In November and December the three founders still met and took protocols from meetings where they planned new projects (none became a reality). Leif gaffiated more or less, Ylva found another boyfriend, and I went into the military service in early November. BAGS did his *Fanac* issue, though I couldn't type it out as promised due to screaming sergeant majors. *Fanac* was instead taken over by other fans, not engaged in the war.

And groups with members from both The Front and The Enemy started to get influence: the Tea Drinking Party (the party for a better tea culture), abbreviated TDP(pfebt) in Swedish, with Harald from The Front and Bellis from The Enemy as leaders, calling themselves SuperExtremeColonelGeneralPartyChairman and SuperNotQuiteAsExtremeColonelGeneralVicePartyChairman. TDP(pfebt) disliked the yellow Lipton bag-tea on common use on the meetings then, and promoted better teas. They even launched a campaign in the Swedish general election of 1979.

*TDFF Times* and *BFF News* was scrapped for a new, better newszine. At the end of December, on New Year's Eve, I and Bellis instead joined forces in the new weekly fannish newszine, *The Weeks Adventure*, which in it's own way changed Swedish fannish fandom forever.

The summer and fall of 1978 were magic months, though. If you invent something, you feel proud and happy. We invented the wheel once more: the art of fannish feuding and plotting. When you're in it, nothing feels more important. When you're outside it you roll on the floor laughing.

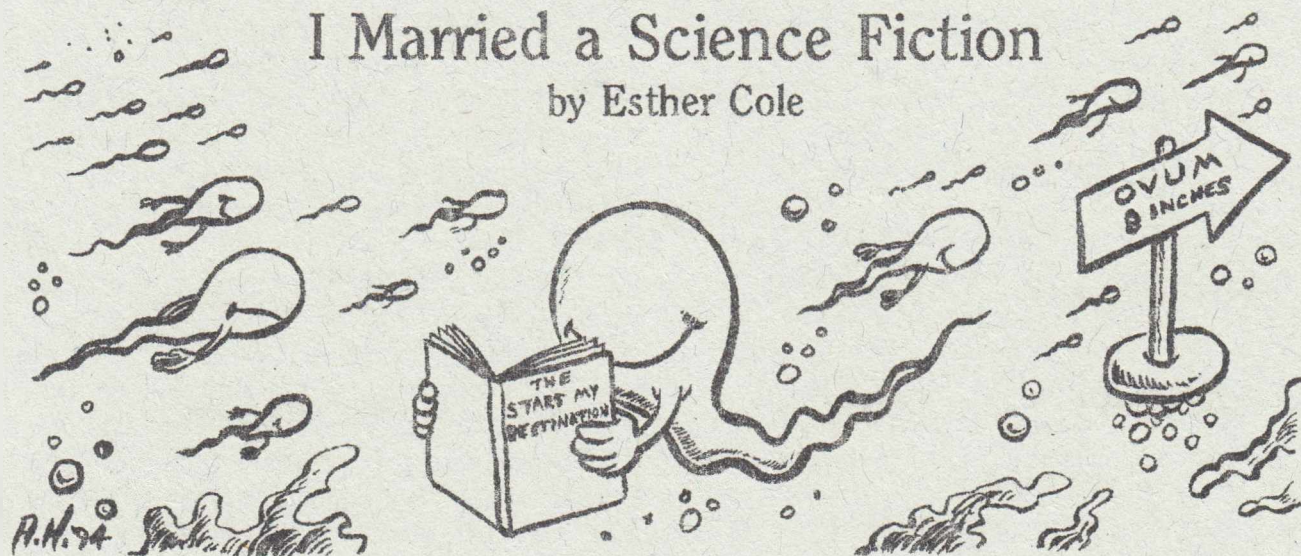
Ah, sweet idiocy! ☺



☞ In this issue, we've spent some time both describing this year's worldcon and looking forward to next year's worldcon, but now it's time to look back at some of the worldcon's of decades past. We met the writer and the subject of the following article at ConFrancisco, the 1993 Worldcon. Besides being co-chairs of the 1954 Worldcon (San Francisco's SFCOn), they were also very active in the Bay Area fandom of the 1950s. Here are some recollections of that time.

## I Married a Science Fiction

by Esther Cole



### 1944

Science fiction came to me in the form of a man — a large-sized visionary. I was interested in his mind, and Les was interested in my big b-----, er, best interests. Sf has been defined as the extrapolation of science and fact projected into time and space. This is as good a definition of Les as any.

If this projection stretches fact or exaggerates science, the result is fantasy. Frequently, the line between sf and fantasy is indistinguishable, and sometimes, too, it's difficult to know if Les is real or imaginary.

Les came a-wooing with a copy of *The Black Flame*. In it, the protagonist wears a gown of Alexandrites, so when Les told me Alexandrites sold for \$10,000 a carat and promised to drape me in them, my answer was YES YES YES YES YES (exactly like Sally to Harry).

For years, Les talked to me in science fiction, but football and finals jammed my receiver. But one day, an impressive mushroom filled the sky above Hiroshima, and sf became fact.

The world of sf, as you all know, is a

crazy, mixed-up business. There's much that Bill Lundigan, ZIV, and *The Twilight Zoners* are keeping from the public. The conventions, for instance. These conclaves attract the entire gamut — fen, pros, publishers, editors, child geniuses, and the lunatic fringes. Where the legitimate attendees stop and the lunatic fringe begins, puts us right back to where sf ends and fantasy begins. No easy distinction.

A popular topic at conventions is 'How Old I Was When I Started Reading SF'. For a long time, the champion was Les, who claimed to have started at minus four months. He was a well-read fetus. Then, Ron Hubbard and Dianetics showed memory could travel back through the originating sperm and ova. (Thus explaining split personalities and science fiction writers.)

Les was writing sf for almost as long as he read it. He first wrote to editors. His published letters filled several scrapbooks, and he developed a certain reputation (mostly unprintable). After we married, Les generously included my name, too, and a rumor spread we were 15-year-old twin brothers.

Les's letters attracted a character

named Lee Jacobs -- who wouldn't drink coffee and liked macaroni/cheese casseroles made with chocolate milk. He convinced us to co-publish a fanzine, and we named it *Orgasm*. The title was symbolic, but other fanziners found it lewd and offensive. (Anyone who finds orgasms lewd and offensive, please stand up.) So we shortened it to *The Big O*. We had competition from Oasis Cigarettes. (Anybody out there remember Oasis Cigarettes?)

Having tasted fame and poverty -- our entire income went into paper and postage -- we decided to attend the upcoming sf convention in New Orleans (1951). We thought if we exposed ourselves, folks might see we weren't 15-year-old twin brothers. I loved New Orleans and hated the cooking. Nine months later, we knew why -- Dana Cole, permanent sf convention souvenir.

In 1952, Les wanted to show the world his reputation as a crackpot was unfounded...so he claimed a hunk of the moon. He really just wanted to be an altruist; the theory went like this: Les claims a hunk of the moon, applying to the United Nations. The UN denies the claim, but in doing so establishes itself as the moon's governing body, thus making our solar system safe for democracy. Unfortunately, they didn't get it.

The 'moon claim' project was as legal and scientific as Les could make it: a graduate student of astronomy surveyed the area; an attorney wrote the legalese; an ad expert laid out the campaign; contacts in the newspaper underground were alerted to assure front-page coverage. The news releases were slanted to match each local paper's personality. The result came off as smoothly as chicken fat on chopped liver. For three days, Les answered the phone as I clipped newspapers. The 'moon claim' story was printed in every one of the Bay Area newspapers; it went out on the wire services and appeared in newspapers around the U.S., Europe, South America, and Australia. Scrap books were filling up like crazy.

Besides 'moon claim' scrapbooks, there was another one that contained rejection slips. Les was told that when he started

receiving personalized notes as rejection slips, he'd be just around the corner from selling. That corner lasted six years, but the rejection slips made great reading: Boucher, Campbell, and Horace Gold -- the best of the best. His first published story went to a British sf mag, and he was paid in ha'pennies. That's what Les's share came to after the agent got his fee. A first sale is portent of wondrous things to come, and we were prepared to fill another scrapbook -- with checks.

In 1952, the World Science Fiction Convention was in Chicago. Sf had become a way of life with us (which we were fortunate enough to outgrow), so Les quit his job and together with four month old Dana and two friends, we drove non-stop to the convention. For three days (along with six other 'Little Men') we lived high, thirty-two floors up in the \$100-a-day penthouse suite, noshing on hot dogs and wondering what we would live on when we got back to Berkeley.

In October 1953, Lance Cole arrived, and wanted to go to an sf convention like his brother Dana. So we gave him one. Les and I got a chance to put on the SFCon in San Francisco, in 1954. We had expert help from other amateurs. For a year, we prepared publicity, brochures, and programs. We included an sf art exhibit at the California Palace of the Legion of Honor (original oil Bonestells, among others), and a chamber opera of a Bradbury story, Tony Boucher narrating. We combined the Westercon with the Worldcon to make it a four day convention, and we doubled the registration fee from one dollar to two dollars!

Strange things happen to sf convention committees, after the affair, members of the committee are never seen nor heard from again. It wasn't until last year (1993), again in San Francisco, that Les and I surfaced again, prodded by Dave Aronovitz and nurtured by Dick Lynch. (Incidentally, Dave Aronovitz now owns all the Cole scrapbooks and all other of our sf memorabilia.)

The crowning moment of my life with a science fiction came at two o'clock in the morning in Altadena, in 1956. The phone



rang, and Alvarez of the New York Post wanted to talk with Lester Cole. I shook Les awake, and he started to rehearse his acceptance speech for a Pulitzer prize.

"Hello," greeted the cheerful voice long distance. "We want to know what you've been doing for the past ten years since the House Un-American Activities investigations forced you underground..."

"No, no," Les cried in frustration.

"That's the *other* guy!"

"But aren't you a writer?"

"Yes."

"And aren't you Lester Cole?"

"Yes. But you're thinking of the other

Lester Cole. I write science fiction."

We finally got back to bed. Les eventually convinced Alvarez that there was another Lester Cole — one of the Hollywood Ten — but I lay awake longer, unconvinced. I know how many other Les-es I've been living with all these years!

# # #

1993

Half a century has passed, and I'm still finding new Les-es: he's a 15-year-old twin brother, a novelist, a grandfather, and a sex object. I'm still not sure if he's science fact or fiction... ☼

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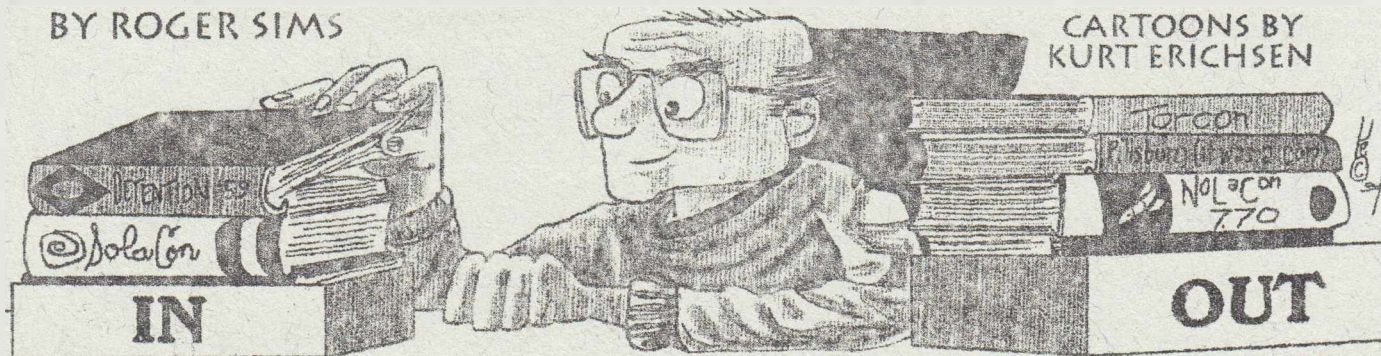
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☞ From the mid-1950s, we move forward about five years, and east about two thousand miles, to the Detroit worldcon of 1959. That worldcon was notable for a number of reasons — Irish fan John Berry was in attendance (due to a special fan fund to bring him to the U.S.), it was the first worldcon to use a preliminary nominating ballot for Hugo Award selection, and the convention began with the apparent corpse of Howard DeVore being dragged across the stage (Howard had said there would be a worldcon in Detroit over his dead body). There's more yet...

## BUT, AGAIN, THAT'S ANOTHER STORY

BY ROGER SIMS

CARTOONS BY  
KURT ERICHSEN



In the 15th (April '94) issue of *Mimesa*, I told a story about Big Bill Donaho and his catered dinners. {{☞ ed. note: "The Politics of a Dinner" }} If I remember correctly, I ended that story with the above title. So lets begin from there! Well... before we do, maybe we best state a few 'ancient and honorable' facts to bring some of you reading this up to speed, so to speak.

1. I was born on a dark-dreary-hot June day sometime during 1930. ((No, that's going back too far.))
2. In 1949, upon returning from the Navy, I discovered Fandom. ((Well, now we're getting some place — we're only a little too far back.))
3. At the 1951 NoLaCon, my second worldcon, I joined with Detroit's Best (read: fans) in their quest to win a worldcon. The others had entered into the bidding wars at Torcon I in 1948. It was at the NoLaCon that I shared a room — Room 770 (!) — with three of them. ((Now we're cooking!))
4. Early in the summer of 1958, George Young's sister, Mae, came to the Big Apple, where I was then employed, and asked that I show her the sights. Well, one thing led to another, and before we could say "this can't be," we were in

love; well, at least I was. ((I'll soon be up to speed!))

5. Some time between Mae leaving me to return to Detroit and my leaving for the 1958 Worldcon, SolaCon, I was fired from Pillsbury Mills, where I had had the pleasure of billing flour to several exotic foreign markets. It was a ghastly job. But it did pay \$60 a week. ((Almost there!))
6. At SolaCon in 1958, just a short ten years after entering the bidding wars, Detroit finally won its bid to host a worldcon. We decided to name our 1959 Worldcon the 'Detention'. ((Ok, enough facts. We're finally up to speed!))

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Greetings and Good Wishes from Australia and Roger Dard. I am hoping to see you in Pittsburgh in 60. So Vote PITTSBURGH.

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Shortly, after returning to New York from SolaCon, I called Fred Prophet and said, "I'm ready to come home. Get Jim and come get me." Several days passed. Finally late one Saturday evening we, with the loaded car, embarked on the journey back to Detroit and my future first wife. On the way, a friendly state trooper invited me to follow him to the home of his very good



friend. An hour later and some \$20 poorer (not me, I had no money — Jim Broderick ponied up a tenspot, as did Fred), we were again on our way home, with the advice that we ease up on the gas pedal. (Many years later, finding myself driving on the Pennsylvania turnpike, I became almost ill when I realized the speed with which we took some of the tight curves on that trip.)

The next afternoon, I called Mae and began courting. Soon we were engaged. At this point, some of you will remember that I was now involved in putting on a worldcon. This means many, many loooong meetings, and lots of work.

[In case the reader is interested in a list of the Committee, they were: Chairmen: Fred Prophet and Roger Sims; Secretary: Mary Young; Treasurer: Jim Broderick; Public Relations: George Young; Publicity: Howard DeVore, Elliott Broderick and Dean McLaughlin. Howard arranged for fan panelists and Dean coordinated the involvement of the pros. (That was it! The whole committee for a worldcon!)]

Teddybear Says Washington is the One and I Can Spel it, I think, it is Speled right, Isn't it Dean?

Worldcons of the fifties were somewhat looser than worldcons of today. Back then, the Masque was a Masquerade Ball with live music, and without judges or awards for best whatever. However, just because the contests were not codified does not mean that there were no contests. At the Detention, the one for Most Beautiful was madly contested by Olga Ley, a Hollywood designer (and wife of Willy Ley), and Karen Anderson,

the wife of our Guest of Honor. Both, especially Karen, were highly miffed when all attendees only talked about Bill Donaho's beautiful red monk costume.

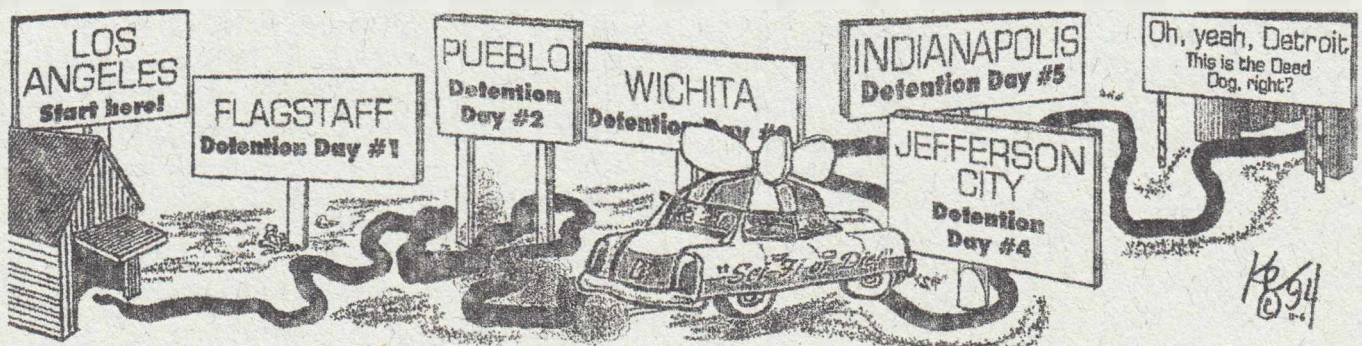
"I am not now and never have been a member of the Michigan Science Fantasy Society."

— Howard DeVore.

The banquet was the 'biggie', because it contained the Fan and Pro Guests of Honor speeches, as well as the announcement and presentation of the Hugos. The festivities were ably handled by our Toastmaster, Isaac Asimov. His response to the request to be our TM was an awful look, which changed to a wide smile upon being told that it was his show. Robert Bloch handed out the Hugos with the exception of the one for short story. When this category came up, Isaac took the envelope from Bob and with a flourish as only he can flourish, gave the Hugo to Bob for his story "That Hell-Bound Train". For possibly the only time in any one's memory, Bob was speechless for what seemed like several minutes.

"I don't care what Howard says as long as he pays his club dues." — Fred Prophet  
Vote PittWashPhilly in '60 — I'm Impartial

Bjo Wells came to the Detention with a crew and material for what I believe was the first Art Show. They had traveled caravan-style across the country from Los Angeles to Detroit, and Thursday night was spent in our treasurer's back yard. This voyage was organized because, the year before, several fans from several cities had caravanned starting in



New York City all the way out to South Gate, California, for SolaCon. I was one of those fans, But That's Another Story.

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TRAVELCON to the DETENTION — a different city every day. TravelCon plans are starting to shape up. Latest report from Bjo is that about 20 L.A. fans are already making plans to attend the Detention. Fans in the Berkeley area are organizing a group to join up with the Travel Con In L.A. For information and details, contact Betty Jo Wells, 2548 West 12th, Los Angeles 6, California.

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The biggest job of putting on the Con was assembling the material about the Con and making the ads readable for the program book. A committee member found a store which had an IBM typer with a paper carbon ribbon, which they allowed us to use. It is believed that they had the misguided concept that we might buy it! (They were wrong.)

Since I was at the time living on unemployment compensation, I was elected to type all copy on this wonderful machine. While it did produce proper copy for repro, it can only be described as the devil's own machine. After each fourth line the ribbon would break and one's fingers then would become ink-infested re-running the ribbon back onto the take-up reel.

About three weeks before the Con was to begin, Mae went up north to spend a weekend with her parents. That same weekend, the crew began assembling the convention's Program Booklet, starting the minute I returned from taking Mae to the bus station on Friday evening. We finished sometime around 10 p.m. Sunday, *long* after Mae had returned back to that bus station. Needless to say, she was upset! The next evening, I spent more time than I want to remember, talking her back into our engagement. (I never *did* find out how she got home.)

With the program book finished and off to the printers, all was in readiness for the proceedings except one small detail. About a week before the Con, a box arrived from the artist, Morris Scott Dollens. Unpacking it, we found that it contained 40 of his very

finest 16" by 20" astronomical paintings. We decided that this would make a most interesting focal point somewhere on the stage for the Con's program. (In those by-gone years, programming was a single track.)

"George," we all said in unison, "Do something with these paintings!" Under the theory that nothing should be done before its time, George Young started building the scaffold for the paintings sometime after he got up Saturday morning. By 1 pm, the scheduled time for the formal beginning of Detention, only half the job was completed. At 1:30 pm, I looked at the angry fans at the door, went into the hall and said to George, "I'm opening the doors in three minutes. Prepare yourself for your part in the opening."

George stammered, "But, we're not ready!" But I did not hear him because I was already opening the doors to the thundering herd.

Because the Con started late, the panel of fan editors entitled "Staples, Ink, and Mimeo Paper, the Lives & Times of Fan Publishers" (with Bjo Wells as Moderator, and panelists Ron Ellik, Ted White and John Berry), which had been scheduled for Saturday afternoon, was moved to late Sunday evening after a slide show of astronomical scenes by Morris Scott Dollens. Shortly after that panel finally began, the bheer party opened for business. While there is no known truth to the claim that the flow of bheer caused the words to flow long after the scheduled hour had lapsed, it *is* known that the panel lasted long after the bheer was exhausted. The story of just how this happened deserves to be told again, But That's Another Story. ☼

# # #

#### Afterword:

Although the Convention was a success, my marriage to Mae was not. But all worked out for the best; for as a result of the divorce, I was able to marry Pat Oswalt on August 16, 1964 (8-16-64) — a date that has some interesting base two properties.

[NOTE: All of the interlineations in this article were taken from publications of the 1959 WorldCon, Detention.] ☼



☞ To close things out for this Worldcon theme issue, it's time now for something we haven't featured in a while, a three-way conversation between some of the better known personalities from previous eras of fandom. This one was recorded in Cincinnati, at the 1991 Midwestcon, and features stories about the people and events of the earliest Midwestcons, and its predecessor, the great Cincinnati Worldcon of 1949.



**Bob Tucker:** Before you can talk about the 1949 convention, you have to back up to 1948. The Worldcon was in Toronto that year, and back then, there was a smoke filled room where all the SMOFs of that day got together and decided, 'Where shall we go next year?' They didn't even know where they *wanted* to go.

**Rusty Hevelin:** We knew where we *didn't* want to go, though. The reason we really got together in a smoke-filled room is that we didn't want the Worldcon to return to New York City. So we did a lot of talking, which ended up with a phone call to Cincinnati, and we got a commitment from Charlie Tanner, who was the head honcho here in Cincinnati at that time. He would head up the convention. So we took it in the next day, and won the bid for Cincinnati.

**Tucker:** There was a bunch of us in the room that day: Doc Barrett, Don Ford, Erle Korshak, Rusty, myself — maybe a dozen of us altogether — hashing around where we did *not* want to go. And at that time, New York City was a dirty word in convention bidding, shall we say, because of things that had happened earlier. As I recall, Doc Barrett said, "Hey, how about Cincinnati? Let me make a phone call home." So he called Charlie Tanner in Cincinnati, and of course, you could easily twist Charlie's arm. Don

Ford and Doc Barrett were the two that convinced Charlie Tanner that he wanted to be Chairman the next year. And that's how we threw it to Cincinnati. I don't remember what the opposition votes were, but we easily overwhelmed them.

**Roy Lavender:** I was part of the committee for the '49 convention. When that call came through, it was at a Cincinnati Fantasy Group meeting — I had hitchhiked down from Delaware, Ohio for it — and I think Charlie accepted before anybody there woke up to the fact that something had happened.

**Tucker:** Did you know that the 1949 Convention was the first time fandom had ever been on TV? A local television station sent somebody down to the convention; they picked up five or six of us, took us downtown to the studio, and put us on camera. *One* camera, and there were five of us. If you started talking, the cameraman would slowly come around to you, and by the time he got there, you were done — somebody else was talking. It turned out that the youngest person of the five of us there was an ordinary young fan who had spent about two hundred dollars for a painting. We all marveled at the fact that, of all of us there, including dirty old pros, only that fan had money enough to buy a painting. That got a big laugh on the air!

**Lavender:** My wife Deedee and I were corresponding secretary for that convention, and we wrote to every author who had appeared in an American English-language science fiction magazine. We got a lot of pseudonyms and house names, but we also reached about thirty people. Our message was quite simple: 'Please come to our convention, pay your own way, and be prepared to appear on a panel'. We used a rather fancy letterhead, and amazingly, it worked!

**Hevelin:** The Fan Guest that year was Ted Carnell, who was over from England. U.S. fans had been trying for several years to bring somebody over from Britain; Carnell's appearance was due to the Big Pond Fund that Forry Ackerman had started years before.

**Lavender:** The committee did not get to visit with Ted because we were busy running the con. Afterwards, Ted went through Chicago on business, then was back with Doc at his cottage up at Indian Lake the next weekend. Doc invited the con committee up there for a chance to visit with Ted, and that was so much fun, we decided we should do it some more. So the following spring was the first Midwestcon, and they've been going on every year since. The first two were held in Doc's clinic in Bellefontaine; we fans stayed in nearby motels. But Doc's wife had enough of fans after those two, so we moved out to Beatley's on the Lake Hotel. That worked fine; Beatley's opened their place one week early in order to accommodate the convention, which is how Midwestcon arrived at its current date of one week before the 4th of July. But it was just the older lady, Mrs. Beatley, and her son to run the place, and eventually they decided no more. So we moved back to Bellefontaine to the hotels there, and when we just plain outgrew those, we moved down to Cincinnati.

**Tucker:** You might mention the some of the incidents that got us kicked out of Beatley's.

**Lavender:** They didn't get us kicked out. Beatley's was used to incidents — they had the American Legion in there at times. But

those incidents did cause a certain amount of uproar. One involved Randall Garrett and a lady from Cincinnati — he was climbing on the dresser and leaping into bed, yelling 'Geronimo!' And then the bed gave out and collapsed. Mrs. Beatley's son, who was on night duty, came up to see what had happened, and in the ensuing discussion, the whole thing moved out into the hallway. The lady came out, wrapped in a blanket. Somebody stepped on the blanket, and when she ran down the hall, the blanket stayed behind. And in the ensuing discussion, Mrs. Beatley's son cold-cocked Randall, but he hurt his hand in doing so. So the next day, at the banquet, we presented him with a blackjack.

**Tucker:** I remember Randall Garrett and his lady well, because my room was right across the hall; I was in bed, but not asleep, if you follow me. So when I heard the noise, I got up, opened my door, walked out and watched the whole damn thing.

**Hevelin:** This Midwestcon location went down in fannish history under a different name: 'Beatley's-on-the-Bayou'.

**Lavender:** After the convention went back to Bellefontaine, there was another incident, involving the Door...

**Tucker:** It was at the Hotel Ingalls. Jim Harmon and Harlan Ellison were involved. And also Doc Barrett, who kept Harlan out of jail. Harlan was up on the second floor, dropping paper bags of water out on passers-by on the sidewalk below. Everything went well until Jim Harmon strolled by; Jim was a muscular young man in his early twenties, with a hair-trigger temper. All of a sudden, here came a paper bag down \*bang\* on his forehead. He looked up, saw Harlan, shook his fist and said, "You (expletive)! I'm coming up there!" So he raced up the stairs to get him, but Harlan had locked the door to the room. Jim banged on the door, but it didn't open, so he knocked it in. By that time, he had made so much noise that the hotel management was right behind him. Doc Barrett kept the both of them out of jail



by passing a hat; we collected enough money to replace the door. It was a *memorable* weekend!

**Hevelin:** There was one other story that happened in Cincinnati fandom, about the time of the Cinvention. It had to do with Bob Tucker and a check he was expecting in the mail...

**Tucker:** You mean the 'Big Mail' story? Conveniently, I've forgotten every detail...

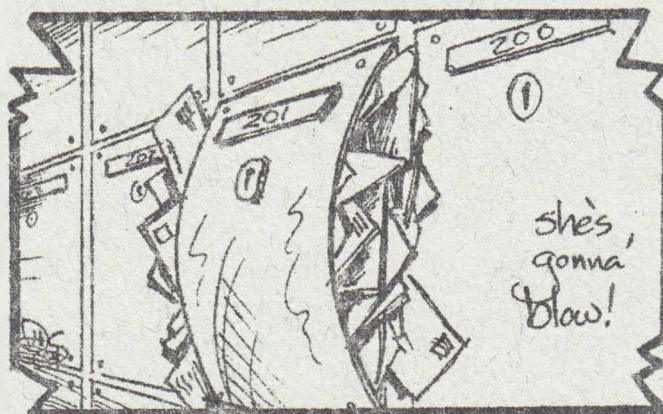
**Lavender:** I haven't, though! The convention committee received a letter from Bob before the '49 Cinvention. In it, he said that he was expecting a check for I think it was fifteen hundred dollars, for the movie rights to something he had written. When Charlie Tanner read that letter at a Cincinnati Fantasy Group meeting, he mentioned how lonesome he thought that check would be in Bob's post office box. This gave us all the same idea. Doc Barrett was at that particular meeting of the CFG, and he said, "I'll donate fifteen dollars!" So we bought some penny postcards with the money.

We used those postcards to 'help' Bob answer some ads in trade magazines like *Billboard*. *Billboard*, of course, is the magazine of the entertainment industry, which included carnivals. We found an ad for giveaway plastic dolls which, in the trade, are called 'slough'. They're purchased by the ton, and every free sample is rather generous. There was also a somewhat scummy publication called *Whispers* magazine, which had free samples of sex aids and things like that. Of course, a free sample is often the last gasp of some little business, and if they're out of business the postcard is going to be returned. But we didn't want the postmarks to indicate where they had originated, so Charlie Tanner, who knew some bus drivers, had them distribute the cards all the way across the country. An amazing collection of postmarks came back to Tucker!

I was working at Battelle Memorial Institute at the time, which had probably the largest technical library in the country. There was also another fan who was a librar-

ian there, so I got all the information request cards out of all the technical journals. The library also had the big catalog from the U.S. Government Printing Office — we didn't bother with these little 36-page reports on hog cholera, we went for the 800-page reports on conditions in women's penal institutions. Also, Bob is not an ordinary individual; he's Arthur Wilson "Bob" Tucker, alias Hoy Ping Pong. We had a lot of names to work with. So if a free product sample looked good, we got him several. Back then, he was also TuckeResearch, so we reproduced his letterhead for those things you could get only if you wrote using your company letterhead.

**Tucker:** I don't know how many thousands of pieces of mail I got within several months, but every kind of offer *imaginable* came in! And I only had a tiny post office box.



**Lavender:** Through correspondence, the Los Angeles fan club LASFS got involved, too. And then some LASFSian who was going to the Colorado School of Mines mentioned this project to his fraternity, and they helped. Bob might have to correct me on this, but Ben Singer claimed that Bob had to take the rear seat out of his car and make two trips a day to the post office.

**Tucker:** To find *one* check.

**Lavender:** There's one other part of it. At the Cinvention, Ted Carnell introduced Tucker as 'the man who will tell us how to get Big Mail'. Bob just sat there and didn't say a word! Now *that's* something you don't see very often! ☺

# MIMOSA LETTERS

{{☞ Thanks once again to everyone who sent up a letter (or e-mail) of comment. We're gratified by the response; receiving your letters of comment really **does** motivate us to keep publishing. Please be assured, too, that **all** of your comments on the articles in *Mimosa* (whether or not they see print in the Letters Column) will find their way back to our contributors, which provides additional motivation to *them* as well.

Perhaps surprisingly, the article that generated the most response this time was Allyson and David Dyar's "Eatin' With the Force" essay about different local delicacies they encountered in various parts of call with the military. We'll get to those comments shortly, but first we'll open with a letter by someone we haven't heard from in a while. }}

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

Your special theme issue should probably have been called the 'food and dining' issue, since I spotted little mention of my favourite topic: drinking. In all honesty, 'food' is not a topic I'm too qualified to write about or comment on. I eat, of course, better than ever since marrying Susan, but despite

the fact that I love to go to restaurants and enjoy many different types of food, I still somehow consider eating a necessary evil rather than a source of inspiration for fanzine articles.

I might have done a tad better on 'drink' if I'd been a lot more active just after *M14* appeared, but on the other hand, most of the interesting tales (the Spayed Gerbil saga, the bug-infested scotches I inadvertently consumed, etc.) have already been written up for fanzines. (And one of the problems about the amusing, interesting, poignant, or unusual stories one generates while drinking is that most of them are totally forgotten afterwards.)

Anyway, I know of few foods that cause such intense devotion among fannish eaters as ribs. For my money, the best ribs in North America are served in Ribs King in Cincinnati, but I know of many other rib places throughout the U.S. that have their own passionately devoted, albeit obviously misguided, supporters. Somewhere, sometime, some convention with overlapping coffers is going to have to arrange for ribs to be flown in from half a dozen of these famed locations to see if some sort of agreement can be reached. (Oh, silly me: did I say 'agreement' in talking about fans and food? Obviously I've been gaffed far too long!)



**Tom Feller, P.O. Box 13626, Jackson, Mississippi 39236**

I read with interest Nicki's opening comments { "A Portrait of the Fan Editor as a Child, Part 1" }. Like Nicki, I grew up on a farm, although my parents were more modern than her grandparents. Rather than grow most of their own food, they got in their car and drove to a supermarket. Nicki does describe meals that were very much like those of my grandparents. I spent a day with them around Christmas last year, and they still eat that way. Unfortunately, they still expect me to eat as much as I did when I was a growing boy. (I'm still growing, just horizontally.) They also retain the custom of calling the noon meal dinner and the evening one supper. Lunch is for urban dwellers.

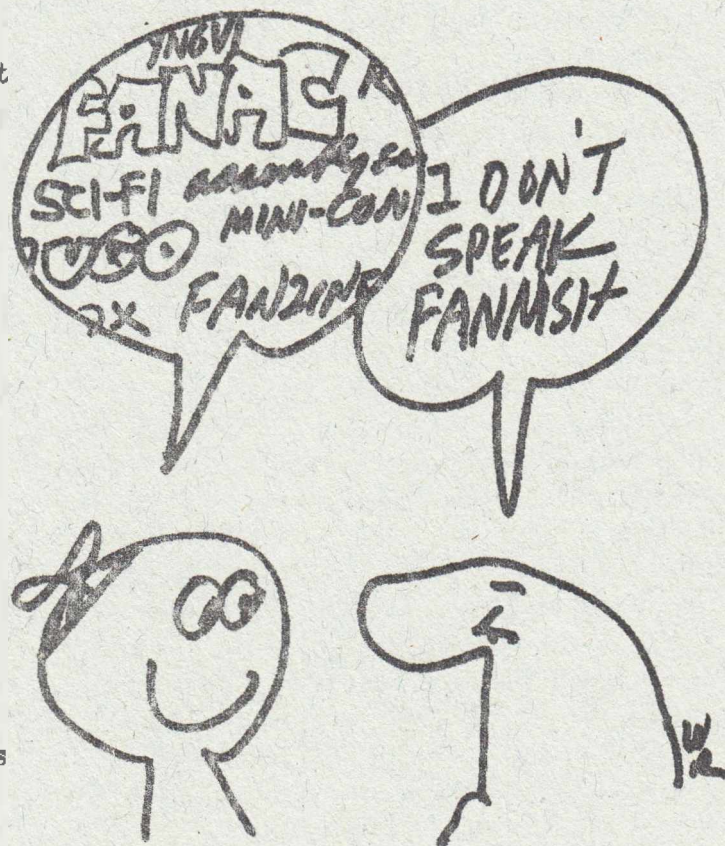
**Catherine Mintz, 1810 South Rittenhouse Square #1708, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-5837**

While I enjoyed issue number fifteen of *Mimosa*, you could have subtitled a substantial portion of it 'Tales of Horror from the Table'.

You would not know it from Dafydd Dyar's encounter in the Upper Peninsula, but pasties have a long and honorable history as the pre-Lord Sandwich answer to a portable lunch. The original was a hash of vegetables with meat wrapped in a pastry crust, baked in covered pan in the ashes of a dying fire, then swathed in a handkerchief and tucked into a pocket for breakfast or lunch. While modern versions tend to be heavy on the potatoes and turnips, the original had no potatoes, since they postdate the pasty in Europe; and it may not have had turnips either, since they were fed to the stock. Pasties are best eaten fairly soon after they are baked — you don't want the crust and the filling to become too well acquainted. The version I'm familiar with comes from Wales, where they were the traditional food of miners going down into the pits. Given that both hash and pastry are pretty much as good as the cook making them, some pasties are excellent and others disgusting.

I'd bet Dafydd was eating mutton more often than he thought in Turkey. Even in fancy restaurants, what appear to be enormous roast haunches of lamb are usually slices of young mutton interspersed with slices of fat, the whole elaborately seasoned and formed into a cylinder on a meter-long spit which is rotated upright in front of a wall of burning charcoal. The heat can be so intense that it crisps the end of the cook's hair and leaves his mustache frosty with ash. The outer layer of the roast is carved off in thin slices, and every slice has a crust of cooked juices and a inner layer of rarer meat. Then the whole thing is left to cook some more, so more servings can be carved.

Do continue to report on both Chat and the Dire Wolf. Although they have distinct ecological niches and feed on different prey populations, it might be interesting to have them discuss some of the more ambiguous cases. This guy DiChario wrote a fine fan-nish piece, where would they place him? As a pro or a fan? Perhaps on a platter if they were feeling very formal. A blood-thirsty pair, indeed.



**Ruth Judkowitz, 9352 Thompson Lane, Chatsworth, California 91311**

I'm surprised the Dyars couldn't find more to say about cuisine on Guam. Spam, the meat of choice for many on Guam, is on the menu of every coffee shop on the island. In fact, the Atkins-Kroll Toyota dealership would advertise that they would fill up the back of any newly purchased pickup truck with cases of Spam. Some incentive, huh? It must have worked, as they were the top-selling dealership on Guam.

Also, I wouldn't want to slight the island's ubiquitous sauce — Tabasco. There is a bottle on every table and no ketchup in sight. In 1989, Guam had the highest per capita rate of Tabasco consumption in the U.S. The Dyars were right on the mark with their description of 'boonie peppers', quite possibly the hottest pepper on earth. But they didn't mention my favorite Chamorro dish — chicken or fish *kelaguen*, a mixture of raw coconut, lime juice, those hot li'l boonie peppers, onion, and chicken or fish (raw fish or cooked-enough-to-be-nearly-raw chicken) all ground up together.

**Ben Zuhl, 2239 Highland Avenue, Falls Church, Virginia 22046**

"Eatin' with the Force" was familiar. We go through many of the same problems and experiments in the Foreign Service. Serving in Krakow, Poland during Martial Law was fascinating but foodwise left much to be desired. Going to a restaurant, we would look at an extensive menu but always have to ask the code question of the waiter, "What is good today?" His answer would tell us what was actually *available*, regardless of its taste. Cooking at home was an adventure since 'night soil' was used to fertilize crops. This forced us to have to clean the veggies in Clorox before using them. The water in the Vistula River was so polluted that industries couldn't use it. This was our drinking water! To use it we had to boil it and then filter it in a large water purifier we called the Blue Nun due to its size and shade.

When we served in Manila, the Embassy name for the Filipino delicacy Balut was 'Eggs with Legs'. The one time I had it the Balut had no odor, and the taste was drowned in the salt that was customarily poured over it. It was reputed among Filipinos to increase sexual staying power. The only thing I thought it would increase was the blood pressure. Also in Manila there were Lechon stands all over the place. In these three-sided huts, there was a roaring fire with between one and three whole pigs being slowly turned over it. Then the skin and fat were sliced off and sold by the piece, or whole lechon were sold and served at special functions. There *were* many places to buy cats and dogs already butchered. For this reason Americans with pets were advised to get tags showing they had their rabies shots. This was supposed to make them less likely to be stolen and eaten since the shots were supposed to make the animals poisonous. We had friends whose relatives owned a prawn farm. At harvest time we would go there and live for a weekend in a hut on stilts over the water. Each meal was shrimp prepared in a variety of ways. It was worth the 3 hour drive and the 45 minutes in a tiny barka (canoe with one outrigger) to get there.



THE ORIGINAL HARRY WARNER FORM LOC



**Patrick McGuire, 7541-D Weather  
Worn Way, Columbia, Maryland  
21046**

David Dyar mentions 'pasties' in Upper Peninsula, Michigan. My father's home town was on the southern edge of the U.P., safely out of pasty country. For a number of years in my childhood, however, every summer we drove from suburban Chicago up to my father's home town to visit relatives, then across the U.P. and down into the 'mitten' part of Michigan, to visit more relatives. I remember seeing all the signs for pasties, but we never stopped, and as far as I can remember, I've never tasted a pasty. Maybe my father already knew better.

And so on to the Worldcon... I had a good time in Winnipeg, and in fact everybody I've talked to, or whose con report I've so far read, had a good time there. But I'm a little puzzled and disturbed that turnout had dropped so much from other recent North American worldcons, and in particular that so many writers and editors were conspicuous by their absence. If nothing else, it seems rather insulting to Canada and Canadian fandom and prodcon on the occasion of the first worldcon there in twenty-one years. True, Winnipeg was a little off the beaten path for most North American fans and pros, but so was Orlando in 1992. True, low airline competition meant that Winnipeg was more expensive to get to by plane than Orlando had been, but the already-low hotel rates plus the current strength of the U.S. dollar meant that, from the Baltiwash area and presumably the whole mid-Atlantic, and probably from many other points in North America, a fan would have more than saved on hotel expenses what the fan spent on extra airfare. I wonder how much Bicoastal snobbery had to do with it. On the other hand, reportedly the publishing industry is retrenching. Maybe the editors had less travel money and less interest in making deals, and maybe those pros who con-go only for business stayed away because they knew of the relatively poor chances of finding editors there. Oh, well. A good time was had

by all who did attend, and maybe it was just as well to shake off some of the fakefans and purely mercenary pros and editors.

Oh, yes, on another topic. If memory serves, in the letters column Harry Warner somewhere says that the word 'fandom' is a fannish coinage. In the recent *Baseball* documentary on PBS, however, it occurs, with reference to baseball fans, in a quote from a sports reporter writing in 1910 or so.

**Art Rapp, 282 Grovania Drive,  
Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania 17815**

I am green with envy (or perhaps an unfortunate episode of experimental cuisine) after reading Allyson M.W. Dyar's account of strange sustenance offered in various foreign climes where she and her husband were stationed. I, too, ate my way through 20 years of Army chow in various exotic locations (Germany, Italy, Korea, Texas, Japan, Iceland, and probably a few others I've mercifully forgotten). Of course, there was the Guardhouse mess hall at Fort Sam Houston (I was on the staff, not an involuntary inmate) where all of our cooks were natives of Louisiana bayou country, and any unsuspecting diner who put a few drops of their home-brewed hot sauce on his food would clutch his throat in horror, drop his tableware, and dash madly for the water fountain. (The cooks themselves poured the sauce on their vittles like ketchup.) Aside from the two assigned cooks, the kitchen staff was recruited from the prisoner population, but since that was shortly after WWII when a lot of old Regular Army noncoms were still around, trying hard but unsuccessfully to keep sober long enough to earn their retirement, we turned up a lot of extra help with culinary know-how. (And, behind bars, they unwillingly remained sober, which isn't denying that shakedowns of the cellblocks frequently turned up jars of various unidentified liquids which would have equalled anything fandom produced in the name of Blog, if allowed to ferment a few more days.)

Dave Thayer's article on Army chow {{"Army Chow and Other War Atrocities" }} (and it has the ring of truth) indicates that

he had a lot tougher time with the Food Service branch of the military than I did. In Korea we dined outdoors during the winter of '51-'52, sitting on GI cans or squatting in the snow trying to empty our messkits before the food froze to them. After three months or so, someone got around to erecting a dining hall for us: a square tent with waist-high narrow plank tables so we could set our mess kits down and use both hands, bellying up to the tables like cowboys in a movie Western bar. But the food was hot and also the wash line (which isn't always true in field cookery, GI style), and since it was far enough back from the front lines that no one was shooting at us, it was no worse than basic training (where an old Platoon Sergeant gathered a crowd of us loudly complaining trainees one day at the rifle range when lunch was late, and advised us, "Now in civilian life you guys may have lived to eat, but I'm telling you, in the Army you eat to live." Good advice, which I remembered all through my military life and long afterward.)

Have I mentioned military ice cream? The stuff comes in little slabs, about 4-by-5 inches and a half-inch thick, wrapped in a band of thin paper, and usually in any flavor you can imagine, if all you can imagine is vanilla. Since, outside the US, it is usually made with powdered milk, its flavor is guaranteed not to enchant you, but it's tolerable on hot summer days. The most memorable thing about GI ice cream bars is that if you get it at all, you get it in generous quantities, so that anyone who cares for more than the initial serving will find dozens of further helpings available after everyone has finished dining. These, regrettably, are *always* plain vanilla.

**Harry Andruschak, P.O. Box 5309, Torrance, California 90510**

The article in *M15* dearest to my heart was from David Thayer. Not that I ate C-Rations in the army. I was in the US Navy between 1963 and 1973, and it was the opinion of the Navy that we had the best food of all the services. "The Navy gets the gravy while the Army gets the beans."

And it probably was. Of course, like all institutional food...armed forces, hospitals, airplanes, anything that has to be mass-produced, there was a certain blandness. The Navy went along with SAD, Standard American Diet, and it was adequate.

Another legacy of my years in the Navy is that I am a fast eater. Not in the sense of gulping or bolting my food. More like what Isaac Asimov wrote about in his autobiography. If you remember, he mentioned how his own early training made him a faster eater than average, and on the rubber chicken circuit he was always the first to finish.

In some respects, that is me. Even after all these years I find it hard to break the habit of sitting down and eating, non-stop, no distractions and no conversation, as if I still had only 15 minutes to eat before I had to relieve the watch. Woe unto any sailor late in relieving the watch!

**Ken Bulmer, Flat 5, 20 Frant Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 5SN, England**

Concerning Thayer's piece about Army food, I can only say that I served for a time with the U.S. 15th Air Force in Italy. Here I think it was that I first came across peanut butter which these days I eat regularly. At the time I was amazed at blokes putting peanut butter and jam (jelly?) on the same piece of bread. Strange. The U.S. food we found rather too sloppy without anything to get your teeth into, although that may simply have been an idiosyncrasy of the base. We were most of us, I remember, glad to get back to bully beef and biscuits and real food. During the war a myth grew up that we soldiers ate everything with our spoons. When my mother asked if this was true I said only when I was with the Yanks.





**David Bratman, 1161 Huntingdon Drive, San Jose, California 95129**

A special issue of *Mimosa* on food was a brilliant idea: you've gotten some of the most compulsively readable articles you've ever published. David Thayer's on army food in Vietnam and Sharon Farber's on hospital food are perhaps the most outstanding, in their black-humorous combinations of death and/or violence with bad food. David's was particularly interesting at this moment, as it covered an important subject virtually untouched in any of the famous Vietnam War movies I watched in a recent video orgy. I think it was in *Platoon* that a soldier crossing a waist-deep river dipped his canteen into the water and was about to take a drink until a buddy suggested that malaria was not something one should want to pick up. And aside from a few torchings of the natives' farms, that's just about the only reference to food that I saw in three films. It's probably a good thing that the films were equally circumspect about how soldiers do in the woods what bears proverbially also do there, but perhaps David will have the courage and humor to take up this equally urgent subject sometime.

David and Allyson Dyar's piece on truly international dining was also quite interesting. I've only visited half a dozen countries, none of them particularly exotic, but I've picked up a few useful pieces of wisdom the hard way: Do not order hamburgers anywhere outside the U.S., even in Canada. In England, Mexican food is gourmet exotica (something unbelievable to Californians) and therefore expensive: go for the Indian instead. In Scotland, eat a haggis. Go on, I dare you. In Holland, eat pancakes three times a day: they're exotic and wonderful. In Germany, the sauerkraut is actually edible, something I've never experienced at home.

Nicholas DiChario's first fanzine article {{☞ "Breathing Water" }} was of particular interest to me, seeing as I was the person who got to call him up in the first place to tell him he was nominated for the Hugo and

the Campbell. So I feel in a way responsible for his visit to San Francisco, and his Rochester-eye view of my home town was an interesting one.

My only food expedition to North Beach during ConFrancisco went to The Stinking Rose, an Italian restaurant expressly designed for garlic lovers. Of course there are problems with eating there. About noon the next day I ran into ConAdian chairman John Mansfield. "You ate at The Stinking Rose last night, didn't you?" he observed.

{{☞ We also visited The Stinking Rose during our ConFrancisco trip (on the night after we had won our second Hugo Award), and were bemused when a table of local Washington fans (who had arrived there before us) greeted us with applause as we walked through the restaurant to our table. The hostess looked at us curiously as if we might be celebrities she should recognize. }}

**Mike McInerny, 83 Shakespeare Street, Daly City, California 94014**

"Breathing Water" by Nick DiChario was well-written, entertaining and conveyed neofannish enthusiasm, but contained a few errors. The sign says 'South San Francisco, The Industrial City'. Actually, South City (as they call themselves who live there) is mostly famous for that sign and nothing else. Also, if the cab driver cruised from the airport past Fisherman's Wharf through Chinatown to get to a hotel near ConFrancisco, then Nick was really being taken for a ride, far and wide of where he wanted to go!

Roger Sims's article {{☞ "The Politics of a Dinner" }} was also interesting. Like Roger, when I lived in New York City I found that club fandom was really scattered — there was ESFA in Newark, New Jersey, the Lunarians in the Bronx, and the Fanoclasts in Brooklyn. I think I may have been the only fan to regularly go to all of them. I started FISTFA in Manhattan (1963-1969) to try to form a bridge for all fans to meet. After every ESFA meeting we went out to

eat at a local cafeteria; after Fanoclasts, we stopped at a White Castle, where burgers were always 4 for a dollar, and had fried onions on them. At Lunarians there was usually coffee and cake or cookies, and a wild card game of Hearts with Charlie Brown, Frank Dietz, Walt Cole, Ted White, and myself. At FISTFA, it was mostly BYOB, and we usually waited until very late at night for those who didn't approve to leave before we smoked any pot. Fans who didn't get stoned (like Ted White) would go, then we who stayed would listen to music until dawn.

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### **Richard Brandt, 4740 North Mesa #111, El Paso, Texas 79912**

This issue was an especially pleasant treat as I began reading it while sitting in a hotel restaurant in Midland, Texas, waiting both for my meal to be served and for the rest of my entourage to arrive the next day for a customer meeting, and as Nicki implies, no fan should have to eat alone...

Anyway, Bruno Ogorelec's tales {{☞ "The Schoonerburger and Other Stories" }} evoked memories of my 'starving student' days. When I was an undergraduate living on campus, along with our tuition we were compelled to buy meal tickets redeemable in the cafeteria, which fell short of providing three square's worth a day for an entire semester. To stretch out this allowance as far as possible, I resorted to no-cost supplements wherever possible. With Thousand Island dressing, which Sharon Farber so reviles, I found I could easily double the bulk of the lowest-price item on the menu, a single-scoop serving of tuna salad. Similarly, the canisters of grated parmesan cheese placed at no charge on each table could pump up a serving of spaghetti and meat sauce.

Eventually I found both quarters and employment off campus, and was able to provide myself with more substantial home-cooked fare (my *piece de resistance*: macaroni and fish). When one of my two roommates moved out of the two-story house we were renting, I had to fall back on such stratagems as seeing how far a man could go on a sack of potatoes, a tub of sour cream, a block of

margarine, and a shaker of garlic salt for flavor.

Ian Gunn's article {{☞ "Air Fare, Train Fare" }} also reminds me of the meal that Michelle and I shared with Ed, a fan we met at Westercon. I had promised Michelle we wouldn't have to buy *every* meal with a credit card at the Texaco station across the street, but even though there were also a Carl's Jr. and a perfectly good Denny's on the same street, who wanted other alternatives? Ed was also hanging around late in the day Monday, and someone suggested we try the Marriott next door, which had *three* restaurants. Ed thought Marriotts were pretty reliable, so off we went.

We chose the more moderately-priced of the places, and sat down to order a lavish repast: steak for Ed, prime rib for Michelle, chicken for myself. Ed made a joke about a place in L.A. that offered your meal free if any employee of the restaurant asked you "Is everything all right?" This joke lost some of its humor as the evening wore on and we scanned the horizon in vain for our waiter, whose existence could only be inferred from observing a trail of surliness that was left in his wake.

As for the food, Ed took one bite of his steak, grimaced painfully, then fighting obvious reluctance, reached for a bottle of ketchup and did the nigh-unthinkable. Our other selections were of the same caliber. Ed was also supposed to get onion rings instead of french fries, but the waiter took such precipitous flight after dropping off our dishes that Ed didn't have time to mention it. After the passage of sufficient time for a volume of Proust, said functionary actually appeared at our table to ask how our food was, but literally took off running before we could answer. Ed insisted we should leave a two-cent tip, but even we, marginal as we were, could not muster sufficient heartlessness. We left two nickels instead.

Finally, Nick DiChario's article was wonderfully written. If he keeps at it, the kid could become a halfway decent fan writer someday...



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

The thing that most impressed me about this collection of food pieces plus a fakefood item or two is how far superior the Walt Willis reprint {{☞ "Foot and Drink" }} is to everything else as far as sheer writing ability is concerned. Nobody in fandom today can achieve such writing over the course of several pages, although a few contemporary fans may get out a paragraph here and there that is superior, and thus sticks out conspicuously among the more routine remainder of the piece. I don't mean that other contributors in this issue aren't interesting, and amusing, and informative. But none of them lets off the verbal fireworks in a continuous barrage like these pages from "The Harp Stateside."

**Steve Jeffery, 44 White Way, Kidlington, Oxon OX5 2XA, United Kingdom**

I was reading Walt Willis's article, and almost immediately I bumped into another of his terrible puns, the 'Sundae Observance Society'. For that, Walt, you fully deserve the demon Burger With Everything On It. God, aren't American portions impressive

(and sometimes oppressive) in their sheer quantity? There were several times while I was in Texas that we felt like going back to a restaurant and skipping the entree, so we'd have a fighting chance at the sweet trolley. Or at least asking for child's portions, with the humble apologetic explanation that we were British, and thus unused to steaks that weighed in at several pounds rather than ounces.

Of that visit, to the Mexican border of Texas, I have strong memories of the food: the absolute delight of a first encounter with Dunkin' Donuts, fajitas, the never ending cup of coffee (a most worthy American tradition) and, with more mixed reaction, a seemingly ubiquitous and endless supply of guacamole, pico and the meat soup at a Mexican trucker's cafe.

{{☞ Well, being in Texas explains it; everything is bigger in Texas! You apparently never ran into that Americanism, Nouvelle Cuisine, which stresses presentation (artsy) over portion size (puny). You might be familiar with parodies of Nouvelle Cuisine, where the waiter serves the diner a main course consisting of a pea, a small carrot, and an inch-square piece of steak. In truth, it's a bit more food than that, but the portions are *not*

## CHAT, the 4th Fannish Ghod

By TEDDY HARVIA



very large. While it seemed popular in some areas of California, it (thankfully) has never caught on in the rest of the country. }}

**Joseph T. Major, 4701 Taylor Boulevard #8, Louisville, Kentucky 40215-2342**

If Walt Willis ever reprises his fabled 1952 visit (perhaps we can accelerate the semi-centennial), he can visit one of the many top-it-yourself hamburger palaces that have come to be in the past few years. Here in Louisville we have two such: Flakey Jake's, a large chain, and W. W. Cousin's, a local chain. Then the only person he can disappoint by not finishing the Ultimate Hamburger With Absolutely Everything is himself.

Looking at the unshaven Mayhew drawing (Joe Mayhew himself is pretty unshaven at that, but a truce to compliments) illustrating David Thayer's daymares of Army food, I was reminded of one use for K-Ration peanut butter: it makes an acceptable shaving cream surrogate. However, confessing to a war crime, namely giving C-Rations to innocent Vietnamese who might have mistaken them for food, is hardly likely to win him respect no matter how much he regrets it. (I know what they called ham and lima beans, and Oedipus should have felt insulted by the comparison.)

**Terry Jeeves, 5G Red Scar Drive, Newby, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 5RQ, United Kingdom**

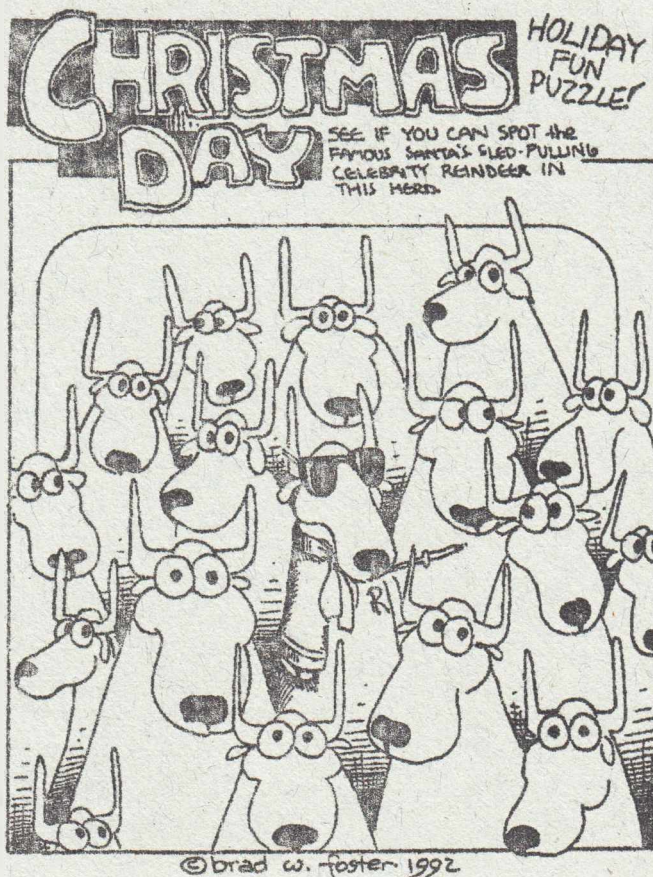
An 'all food' issue is a change and your opening comment caused me to think back to a few memorable incidents in India. In Bombay, I tried a 'chicken pie' and was amazed to find when it arrived, the pie crust was simply a mass of potato crisps. Up the coast at Juhu, I was once served a bottle of lemonade with a thumb-sized insect floating inside. When I pointed it out, the barman offered to fish it out for me! Walt's excellent Stateside piece reminded me of a sign in Boston: 'Chi-

nese Spaghetti House'.

In David Thayer's piece, I thought the idea of throwing food into the fire in front of starving Vietnamese, or taunting them by throwing empty cans off a lorry was disgusting. Ogorelec showed us the other side of the coin in relating (without moaning about it) the hardships experienced by those living in places where rampant inflation reigns supreme, where on payday one runs to spend the lolly before its value is halved overnight. Engholm chose a no-no subject for me {{☹ "The Rise and Fall of Cucumber" }}, as cucumbers are not on my list of favorite fruit — so even an amateur press association named Cucumber scares me away!

Excellent LoCs, and I must put in another plug for the superb illustrations by Ranson, Mayhew, and one or two names which I couldn't make out — why not give an artist's credit list?

{{☹ We do! And always have. The one in M15 is on page 25; the one for this issue is on page 24. }}





**Norm Metcalf, P.O. Box 1368,  
Boulder, Colorado 80306**

Dave Rike's article {{☞ "The Tower" }} is an interesting account of the pseudofannish legend of building a tower of beer cans to the Moon. In it, Dave speculates about the origins of the idea. In 1962, Pat Fetta pointed out that the idea had been swiped from a San Francisco Bay Area disk jockey name Red Blanchard, who on his show had been promoting a tower of beer cans.

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**Ahrvid Engholm, Renstiernas  
Gata 29, 116 81 Stockholm,  
Sweden**

I had read Willis's story before (in *Warhoon* 28) but I hadn't really got the grip of the real story of the bbeer can moon tower (Dave Rike's article). We've heard the myth in Sweden too and would sometimes build small bbeer can towers ourselves. It was when I came to the Brighton Worldcon in 1979 that I got really impressed with the myth. At Seacon's dead dog party, they made a triangular bbeer can tower along one wall, with full bbeer cans paid for by the convention. The party room must have had 4-5 metres to the ceiling, and the cans were free for the taking. When you had drunk one you were supposed to start a new tower along the opposite wall with the empty cans. I don't remember what happened with the new tower, because I did my very best to contribute to it.

The strangest thing happened after I had finished the article about Cucumber. I had re-read all those old *Crochet* Supplements in Cucumber and, well, got a bit inspired — so I relaunched *Crochet*. This time I did it as an electronic fanzine (with a very small photocopied print run beside) and since October last year I have published them almost weekly (26 issues, No 20 to 45). If you read Swedish, send a note to ahrvid@stacken.kth.se and I'll put you on the list. And that's not all: I've also founded a new, small APA, though it is not secret this time. It's called SKAPA, like an earlier APA that was secret.

There were some comments on my hoax article in the LoCol. For the record it should be noted that the article was true. (Those suggesting that I am a hoax could be of great help if they wrote to the Intersection committee in Glasgow and promoted this notion. That way I wouldn't have to pay the convention fee, which like all con fees seems to skyrocket. A non-existent person should be let in for free, shouldn't he?)

Anyway, Vincent Clarke noted in his letter that we in Sweden "more or less modelled (our) fandom on what (we'd) read," just like British fandom modelled itself from what they read in American fanzines. This is basically true, but it should be noted that there was a considerable shortage of foreign fanzines in Sweden. The best ones, the classics from the 50s and 60s, existed in maybe only 1-2 copies here. We could get occasional copies (sometimes we could borrow from older fans), but we couldn't follow complete threads of myths and events. There were major gaps in the fannish education — and we had to invent things to fill those gaps. For instance, when the divinity of Roscoe was introduced here, we had to improve the Roscoe theology, like all the details of the Perfect Fandom that Roscoe would take all trufans to. Entirely new concepts were added, like the Fannish Raw Power that comes from Roscoe.

The most valuable sources were books, like Harry Warner, Jr.'s *All Our Yesterdays*, Moskowitz's *The Immortal Storm*, knight's *The Futurians*, Hell's *Cartographers* (six autobiographies, most by Futurians), and of course *The Enchanted Duplicator* (which we first found serialized in *Amazing* — Ted White did a good thing by publishing that). People who want to interest others in fandom's history should remember to try to make the most valuable information available in book form. Books survive.

These days I guess the easiest thing is to make fanhistorical information available electronically. Things on the net, like printed books, will probably survive. Dave Langford is making all his *Ansibles* available that way. When I logged into the *Ansible* FTP.

site I also found Rob Hansen's ca. 1 megabyte-long history of British fandom. I've myself made some texts available electronically and will continue doing it. (I'm thinking of doing a draft translation into English of my Swedish fancyclopedia, the *Fandbook*, as long as I don't have to do it manually. The translations programs available now aren't too good, but maybe in a couple of year's time...)

We also need some technical development, so we could publish some old fanzines electronically. OCR is barely usable for printed texts. Mimeographed text is probably an OCR nightmare — maybe texts could be published as picture files instead?

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**Pär Nilsson, Guldringen 13, 302  
59 Halmstad, Sweden**

In reply to Ving Clarke's letter of comment about the origins of Swedish fandom, I would like to say that fandom in Sweden is modeled on '50s American fandom rather than '50s British fandom. The Tower to the Moon Made From Empty Bheer Cans is a well-known part of our fannish mythology, and the Carl Brandon hoax was duplicated by John-Henri Holmberg (as 'Carl Brandon, Jr.'), just to name two examples. I'd heard of people like Terry Carr, Boob Stewart, Ted White, and Dave Rike before I heard of Walt Willis (or indeed, Ving Clarke).

Anyway, I thought the best things in M15 were by Thayer, Larber, Hooper and Ogorelec (words), and by Harvia, Stiles, Stefan and Erichsen (illos). Pass the praise on!

{{☞ Consider it done! We have been fortunate to be able to feature some wonderful art to complement the fine essays we've published. We've been fortunate enough to win awards, but it's the contributors who really deserve the honor. }}

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**Joseph Nicholas, 15 Jansons  
Road, South Tottenham, London  
N15 4JU, United Kingdom**

I was interested to read Ahrvid Engholm's history of the secret Swedish APA

'Cucumber', albeit that I don't see why its members felt it necessary to keep its existence quite such a deadly secret. After all, apas are pretty exclusivist publications anyway, in that they are distributed only to a select group of people. So why go to the length of developing an apa which is intended only for distribution to the select of the select?

This question aside, Engholm refers to a game in which participants name stations in the Stockholm underground system until... "the one who says 'Stora Mossen' first wins." He gives no date for the invention of this game, although from his context it must have been developed in 1980 or 1981. If so, then it is not original to him, but would have been inspired by a very similar game invented by Kevin Smith, based on the London Underground system and called 'Finchley Central'. As explained in a late 1970s issue of his fanzine *Dot*, he invented the game (with Allan Scott) while waiting for a train home following a monthly One Tun meeting. Victory in the game was achieved by being the first to say 'Finchley Central'; finesse or style was shown by managing to say 'Finchley Central' *immediately before* your opponents. (Lack of finesse, of course, would be demonstrated by saying 'Finchley Central' at the very start of a game — Engholm's example of a 'bad game' is almost identical to *Dot's*.) Kevin threatened (in jest) to produce an expensive three-volume set of rules with awful illustrations, without which the game could not be played at all.

-----  
**Martin Morse Wooster, P.O. Box  
8093, Silver Spring, Maryland  
20907**

Alan Stewart's article {{☞ "When the Fans Hit the Eats" }} is a bit unfair towards American fans when he thinks it is a 'national eating out habit' to take out the calculators and determine individual bills and tips to the penny. I've been in a lot of fannish dinner expeditions (I've even led a local sf dining group that has met 101 times since 1985), and I've *never* seen this sort of behav-



ior. Most of the time, American fans are as laid back as Australian ones about dining, except our surpluses are usually given to the waiter rather than to charity. (Not much different, actually, given how low waiters' wages are these days.)

One topic I wish Alan Stewart or Ah-vid Engholm had addressed is what fans in other countries like to eat when they dine. I recall that when I first read British fanzines in the 1970's, their pages were full of stories about fans having a few pints, then dining on extremely hot vindaloo curry, then running to the bathroom screaming, then going back to the con and downing five or six more pints. Is this still a British habit? What do Swedish fans like to eat when they go out? Around here, fans like to eat Chinese and Italian food; they tend to balk at more adventurous cuisines, such as Ethiopian, West African, or Central American.

Dave Kyle's reference to *Fandom's Cookbook* {{☞ in "Tales of Bheer and Raven's Cake" }} leads me to faunch after this long-lost item. If anyone decides to reprint this cookbook, please let me know, because I collect cookbooks by sf fans and pros. Like fanthologies and fanwriter collections, they tell me quite a bit about fandoms of the past.

{{☞ Martin provided a listing of fannish cookbooks in his letter, ranging from the relatively obscure (*Fanfare*, published by two Chicago fans in 1979) to the relatively well-known (*The Bakery Men Don't See*, which was a Hugo Award nominee in 1992). We know of a fannish cookbook that was published by a fan group in Nashville about 6 years ago (Nicki had a recipe in it). There are undoubtedly others. People who know of any others, or who are interested in the topic of fannish cookbooks should contact Martin directly. }}

In the letters column, Harry Warner should explain why non-sf amateur publications are "...incorrectly called fanzines." Why aren't they fanzines? They aren't published for a profit; their primary purpose is for people to communicate with each other;

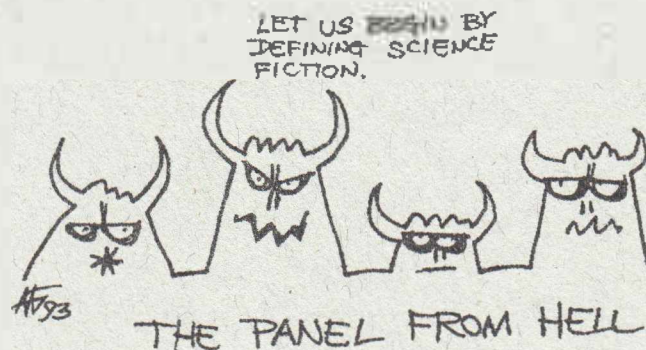
and they may not have any connection with science fiction, but then fannish fanzines aren't supposed to be about sf. Moreover, some of the underground's writers, like Candi Strecker and Anni Ackner, have been showing up in fanthologies — and are better and funnier writers than most traditional fanzine writers.

## David Thayer, 701 Regency Drive, Hurst, Texas 76054

Andy Hooper's article {{☞ "I Fried A Thousand Times" }} about hot and fast food left me in a cold sweat. I partially paid my way through college working one summer in a hot dog chain. Had the minimum wage labor not been mind-deadening enough, at the end of August a teenager, his eyes dilated by drugs, appeared at the take-out window with a silver-plated revolver. The district manager missed the point when he offered me a raise the next day not to quit.

In response to Richard Dengrove's question in the letters column about reliving Vietnam, the behavior for a veteran is not unlike that of a child facing the monsters in the dark. A child cannot dispel the nightmares until he proves to himself that they are not real. Adults are no different. Only that the nightmares were once real and harder to dispel.

I take exception to Harry Warner, Jr., stating that Mike Gunderloy incorrectly called alternative press publications 'fanzines'. Mike was merely one of the first. The term now applies to a myriad of diverse publications. Language lives and dies by its ability to change, both in words and definitions. Harry just can't grok it.



**Ben Yalow, 3242 Tibbett Avenue,  
Bronx, New York 10463**

I was interested in your comments on Martin Morse Wooster's LoC. I agree (some-what) with his comments about the difficulty of storing electronic fanzines, although setting up electronic archives is fairly common now. Also, since there are a number of archives available of *all* of Usenet, then any postings (like the *Ansible* ones), will be around forever.

Also, the comments about "...no room on the net for illos..." are no longer true. With tools like Mosaic around, you can not only have the illos, you could even have more complicated stuff (for example, audio/video of the stories being told) as part of the documents. It's not common yet, but it is certainly available even with current technology.

Where do dragons get hoardes?



**John Foyster, P.O. Box 3086,  
Grenfell Street, Adelaide, South  
Australia 5000, Australia**

I wish I could be as comforted as R Laurraine Tutihasi is (in the letters column) about library and their collections of fanzines. In Australia libraries tend to be quite keen to collect stuff like this (and there are a couple of libraries in Australia which collect fanzines), but they also tend not to bother too much about them, and allow them to fall into disuse (or dispose of them) too lightly. Only this week one of the Australian newspapers carried a pretty sad story about a university faculty disposing of its specialist library at prices of \$.50 to \$3 a volume — and by 'specialist' I mean the kind of library with autographed first editions. In many cases (and this could apply to science fiction and fanzine collections) vast amount of effort which have gone into the collection are tossed away casually. I believe there is a much stronger case for those who have collections to make sure that they stay in private hands, with people who really care.

**Janice M. Eisen, 123B Lauretta  
Lane, Johnstown, Pennsylvania  
15904**

Great, I thought. A special issue of *Mimosa* when I've just discovered that I've gained five pounds. However, after reading David Thayer's, Sharon Farber's, and Andy Hooper's articles, I've decided you should try marketing the ish as a diet aid.

With respect to Andy's article, I don't know what it is about Pepsico's fast-food chains. I've avoided Pizza Hut assiduously after reading an article in *Harper's* several years ago which talked about the propensity for ground glass and machine parts to find their way into the pizzas. Now Andy Hooper gives us reasons (as if the atrocious food wasn't enough) to avoid Taco Bell. I think it may be time to quit patronizing Kentucky Fried Chicken.

I have this theory that all conversations at conventions eventually come to the subject of Harlan Ellison. Actually, I usually say



"deteriorate into discussions of Harlan," but I can't use that phrasing for Ted White's entertaining and fascinating anecdotes. Admittedly, "The Girl" is only peripherally about Harlan, but his personality and other people's reactions to it manage to dominate the story. Ted's ability to sketch people and events is unparalleled.

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**Michael Shannon, 1508 Southport #124, Austin, Texas 78704**

I enjoyed the fact that Ted White's "The Girl" gave us a somewhat positive view of Harlan Ellison's relations with the world; that seems to be a rare feat.

Also, Andy Hooper's "I Fried A Thousand Times" made an excellent closure. I had heard some of the stories from Andy when he and I both lived in Madison, Wisconsin, and I was hoping they would see print. It reminded me of my days as a dishwasher at a Country Kitchen restaurant; I, too, was there long enough to see the start and finish of most of the staff.

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**Ted White, 1014 N. Tuckahoe Street, Falls Church, Virginia 22046**

So Harlan calls me up on the phone, not long after the most recent issue of *Mimosa* has appeared with my story "The Girl" in it.

"Ted, Ted, Ted..." he says with mock sorrow. "When *will* you let me vet these things for you, so that you don't make all these amazing mistakes?"

He tells me that he is in fact referring to "The Girl." I ask him what mistakes I made.

"Well, for openers, Dona S----- is still very much alive," Harlan says. "And all those credits she gave you? She wasn't making them up, Ted." It seems that it was her *mother* who recently died of cancer. "She took over her parents' garment business," Harlan tells me, "and she's doing very well with it." He remains in contact with her, and she and his wife Susan are friends.

That seems to have been the major

error on my part. Harlan also says that he didn't get his Austin Healy from Bill Hamling — I have no idea why I retain such a clear memory of him telling me otherwise at the time, but perhaps Bill figured in a different car story and I confused them.

Harlan also confirms my supposition that he and Dona had not been 'intimate', as we say, in those golden years of yore. He considered her to be too young. He enjoyed her company in public.

In any event, I am pleased that Dona is still alive after all, and happy to convey this information to your readers.

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**Brian Earl Brown, 11675 Beaconsfield, Detroit, Michigan 48224**

Overall, I found that I just couldn't get into the 'food' theme of M15. We all like to eat, some more than others, but alas, I have few food preferences (to my wife's despair whenever she asks me, "What do you want for supper?"). Outside of nothing too spicy, nothing too messy, and nothing that looks like something alive, I'll eat about *anything*. How boring.

Nonetheless, there were several very enjoyable articles in this issue, including Sharon Farber's always delightful (and disturbing) tour of doctoring {{∞ "Tales of Adventure and Medical Life" }}, David Thayer's C-Ration memoirs, Andy Hooper's Fry-ghtmare from Taco Hell, and Ted White's "The Girl." Ian Gunn and Alan Stewart both mentioned the American policy of tipping waiters, which they contrast to the Australian policy of paying waiters a decent wage to begin with. I agree there's something cruel about making a person's livelihood dependent on offhand generosity of strangers, the way restaurants do when they make the bulk of a waiter's income come out of tips.

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**Darrell Schweitzer, 113 Deepdale Road, Strafford, Pennsylvania 19087**

I'm glad to see that Dave Rowe (in the letters column) has coined (or uses) the

handy term "hoax-hoax". We've needed something like that for a long time, for cases where someone starts out as a real person (or at least convinced of their own reality) and ends up a hoax after all. In the pages of *Energumen*, 20 years ago or so, there was some discussion of whether or not a Canadian fan named Will Straw was or was not a hoax. I chimed in, suggesting that he was not, because the hoax had no apparent agenda, quite unlike, I added offhandedly, the David Hulvey hoax, which Robert Whitaker and I had perpetrated to parody fannish fandom. Hulvey was a militantly fannish fan of the early '70s, derived from such then topical sources as Firesign Theatre. He was so stridently anti-sercon that, well, one was tempted to have a little fun with him. My one off-hand reference took off. I got several inquiries about it. Years later, I was astonished when someone who I thought had actually known Hulvey asked me, "How much of him were you?"

There I was re-inventing the wheel. The hoax-hoax. Hulvey probably believed in his own reality. By the time we were done with him, it wasn't so certain.

**Lloyd Penney, 412-4 Lisa Street,  
Brampton, Ontario L6T 4B6,  
Canada**

Concerning the theme of M15, food and drink are popular topics in fandom, in spite of the fact that many of us are the *victims* of food and drink. By that, I mean that food and drink are the main reasons conventions don't sell t-shirts in sizes small and medium anymore.

As for hoaxing, it is far and wide in fandom. However, hoaxes are usually started by people who only see names in fanzines, but never the faces connected with them. Dale Speirs told me at ConAdian that people would see his name in print, but they'd never see him. Eventually, word got around that Dale Speirs was a hoax, and that the name was simply one of Garth Spencer's pseudonyms. It took several appearances at conventions in Alberta and British Columbia for

Dale to convince others that he really *did* exist.

**Maia Cowan, 1306 Cherokee,  
Royal Oak, Michigan 48067-3386**

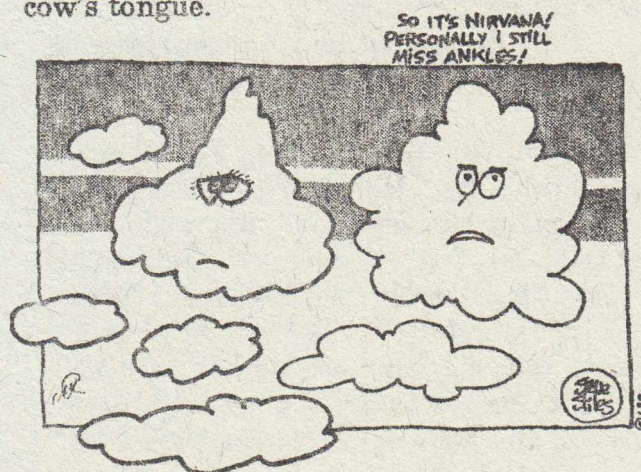
I had hoped to contribute a family heirloom to your Food issue, but for some reason none of my sisters preserved our father's recipe for pickled tongue. Actually, I know the reason: all of us hated the smell. The recipe's appearance on our kitchen table was our cue to go visit our grandparents for several days. We could never understand how we could be related to a man who would actually eat such a disgusting thing.

I do remember that the list of ingredients included a bottle of sherry. The sherry had nothing to do with pickling the tongue, at least not directly. The instructions began, "Take a swig of the sherry, because you have to pick up the damned tongue." This bit of advice is repeated at suitable points in the process. The recipe concludes, "The tongue is pickled, and so is the cook."

I never learned where my father got the recipe. He may well have written it himself. He was, after all, the one who dubbed my aunt's delicious egg noodles, "Aunt Ann's Ancient Secret Family Recipe For Homemade Egg Noodles, Also Good For Patching Plastic Swimming Pools."

Life was entertaining around our house, even when we weren't cooking.

Mimosa 15 was also entertaining, even when your contributors were writing about food even less appetizing than a pickled cow's tongue.





**Gary Brown, P.O. Box 1501, Bradenton, Florida 34206-1501**

It's hard to think of many 'fan' subjects that have been ignored by 'historians' like food. Conventions, discussions, and friendships in fandom usually all revolve around a meal, snacks, or something having to do with food. Great idea.

I had to laugh at Dick's experience with the whipped cream can {{☞ "A Portrait of the Fan Editor as a Child, Part 2" }}. A few days ago, I saw a Reddi-Whip commercial hitting on the 'nostalgia' of good whipped cream from a can. I remembered the good-tasting whipped cream from my younger days, so when the boys came here for a day, I bought a can of Reddi-Whip and lectured them on the joys of the 'finer things' in life. Needless to say, the can didn't work and we had to take it back. Grrrr. Dad as goofball, exposes himself again.

{{☞ Thanks for the compliment, but the idea for the 'food and drink' theme issue was mostly Teddy Harvia's. Anyway, you're right that food is one of the fundamental forces in the fan universe. The response to our call for submissions was even greater than we had hoped for, and even provided a few unexpected morsels like the following mini-article... }}

**Malgorzata Wilk, ul. Locci 7, 02-928 Warszawa, Poland**

I first joined the fandom in September 1987 (well, at least it was the first time I was at a convention; a couple of weeks later I became a member of the SF Lovers Society of Poland). It was a Thursday morning and the annual Polcon (this time in Warsaw, my home city) was about to begin. I registered, got the information sheets, checked the programme, and went to the movie room. I watched 2½ movies and then nothing; there was a gap in the programme, with nothing to do. How glad I was when I became friends with an equally lonely and somewhat confused girl. Later, we watched more movies together and she shared her sandwiches with me. She definitely saved me from starving to

death, not that I would have noticed it, hypnotised by the small tv screen. I think that there was nothing to eat at this students club where everything took place. With something around a 1,000 attendants it was probably the biggest con in Poland and probably the first one where not only club members were allowed, also simple people from the street who saw the advertisement. Well, not everybody did buy a subscription for food along with the attending membership. At that time nobody would ever think of capitalism in Poland, and of food that actually was easily digestible and wouldn't get one sick.

That first day all I had to eat was one small sandwich. But I didn't notice; I saw five or six movies and I don't remember how I came home. The next days were similar — home made sandwiches and movies. That was my first convention. Later on I joined two clubs — one was fortunately situated in a students cafe so we could drink coca-cola (or Siberian tonic — with vodka) and eat cheese toast with mushrooms and ketchup. Just imagine a semi-long parisian bun cut longways covered sparsely with cheese with here and there small dark spots — the mushrooms. At that time on every corner in Warsaw they sold such toasts directly from tiny caravans, 2 square meters small; private enterprise, the first signs of capitalism. Fast food a la Poland.

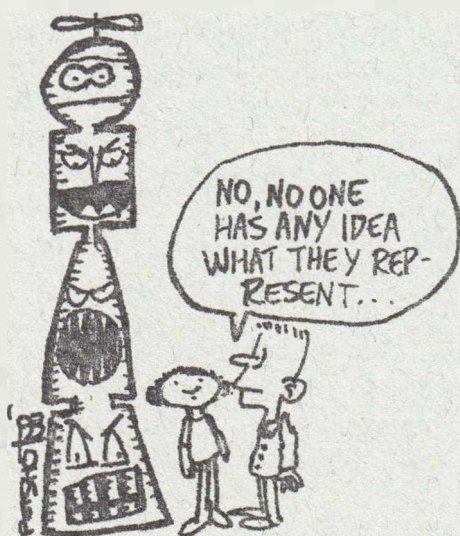
The next year I and my friend Agata (whom I met at the Warsaw Polcon) went south to Chorzow for the fourth Polcon. We took a room at a youth hostel for the three nights and didn't bother about organized meals; we went to town for shopping and made our own sandwiches. Mmmm, I still remember those with the luncheon meat, you used the fat from the can as butter. And this time we also had a bottle, one of the plastic type that you buy good Scotch whisky in at airports. We poured cold tea in it, and added lots of lemon juice and sugar. We caught many longing views from the other participants, who questioned: 'Is it real?'

Then in May 1991, a very important convention took place; the Eurocon in Cracow. This time *everything* went wrong; no-

body knew where and when something was going to happen. I think the person responsible for the organization is still on the Black List of Fandom. The only thing that was OK was the town itself with all its famous restaurants. I didn't bother very much preparing anything to eat. One day I went for lunch with James P. Hogan, James Walker, a Belgian and a Polish fan; the next day I joined a group of united German fans for dinner at a Chinese restaurant. But still we prepared most of our meals in the hotel rooms.

Then in December 1991, I went with another friend to the Nordcon, organized by the Gdańsk SF Club. It was fun, too. First of all I got drafted; to the OKP (a citizens parliamentary club of Solidarity), SS, and KGB. This OKP was a preparing camp of the SS (Special Forces) and the KGB (Cosmic Group of Safety). We arrived again early Thursday morning (Polish cons always last four days, from Thursday till Sunday) at Gdansk central station. In great conspiracy we had to go to a newspaper stand and whisper something to get instructions how to get to the place where the Imperial Space Shuttle was waiting for us to get us to the top secret Camp. It was fun, with lots of instant soup and luncheon meat sandwiches. I guess I did lose some weight; I definitely like conventions.

Today everything is different; after five years of capitalism the quality of food has



very much improved. There are numerous restaurants for the wealthier fans. The conventions are occupied by younger fans playing role-playing-games, not knowing of the problems we, the older ones, had to cope with. They can buy all the books we could only dream about — we had to read them in horrible translations, published on newsprint by so-called pirates in a gigantic edition of one hundred (!) pieces (which was of course highly illegal). We also had more time and will back then to meet and talk. One must also not forget *why* we met — to buy the newest books and watch the newest video film, as not many of us possessed a video recorder.

I will miss those times...

### David Levine, 1905 SE 43rd Street, Portland, Oregon 97215

Thanks for *Mimosa 15*. It's keen. I especially liked the cover and bacover, which I found terrible witty. Then I suddenly realized: The vegetable 'graveyard' on the bacover is actually where plants start, while the 'nursery' (harvest scene) is where plants end. Whoa!

### We Also Heard From:

Chaz Baden; Harry Bell; Pamela Boal; Ned Brooks; G. M. Carr; Russ Chauvenet; Vincent Clarke; Chester Cuthbert; Buck Coulson; John Dallman; Richard Dengrove; Allyson Dyar; Sharon Farber; George Flynn; Brad Foster; Meade Frierson III; Tim Gatewood; Kim Hainsworth; Irwin Hirsh; Binker Hughes; Steve Hughes; Tom Jackson; Irv Koch; Ken Lake; Dave Langford; Rodney Leighton; Fred Liddle; Eric Lindsay; Ethel Lindsay; Sam Long; Adrienne Losin; Kev McVeigh; Murray Moore; Richard Newsome; Marc Ortlieb; Karen Pender-Gunn; Derek Pickles; Dave Rowe; Robert Sabella; Tom Sedler; Ron Salomon; Skel; Steve Sneyd; Garth Spencer; Alan Stewart; Mark Strickert; Jürgen Thomann; R Lorraine Tutihasi; Roger Waddington; Michael Waite; Taral Wayne; Henry Welch; Tom Whitmore; and Walt Willis. Thanks to one and all !!



# WINNIPEG MEMORIES

Closing Comments by Nicki Lynch

It was a chilly November evening, the kind of mid-Autumn night in Washington that reminds me of Northern New York. You could tell that winter was not all that far away, but still enjoy the coolness without worrying about the possibility of snow. Richard and I were beginning the drive home from the Third Friday WSFA meeting in Maryland, and had just turned onto the entrance ramp that connects U.S. Route 1 into the Washington Beltway when it happened. Out of the darkness to the left, something large struck the car with a deafening \*whump\* before there was even time to react (or be frightened, for that matter). We screeched to a stop, the impact hard enough to rattle the fillings in our teeth and leave our heads ringing from the noise.

It had been a deer, a very large 10-point buck. At the moment of impact, I saw a startled deer's head on the driver's side of the windshield. Then it vanished. The impact of the collision left a huge dent in the front fender and smashed the driver side mirror into a million pieces. Richard got a better view of it than I, and saw it charge down the ramp and become airborne, jumping a fence and disappearing into a dense thicket alongside the highway. The whole thing was over so quickly it's hard to believe anything did happen, until I looked at Richard's car.

Worldcons are also over very quickly, except they are a far better experience than playing bumper cars with a 400 pound ruminant. The most recent world-con, in Winnipeg, bore that out — it seemed to be over in almost a blink-of-an-eye. But there's a shiny rocket ship this fanzine was honored with sitting on our mantle to remind us that we actually were there.

By now, you've probably read reviews of Con-Adian, of how cozy and pleasant it was. I don't have the space (or the inclination) to add to those, but I do want to write a little about the city of Winnipeg itself. As Richard mentioned in his Opening Comments, that part of Canada is very flat, and the horizon seems to go on forever. Once the sun sets, the city lights seem to extend into infinity. It really was an eerily beautiful sight to watch storms at the night light up the sky in the far distance in silence. We were too far away to hear the thunder.

But there is more to the city than just its flatness. Winnipeg is more than 100 miles north of Grand Forks, North Dakota, and yes, it gets \*cold\* there in the winter. One person who had driven to the convention told me he realized this city was different when he noticed each space in his parking garage had an electrical outlet. These are used in the winter for electrical heaters in each car that keep the fluids in the engines

from turning into frozen sludge while the owners are away.

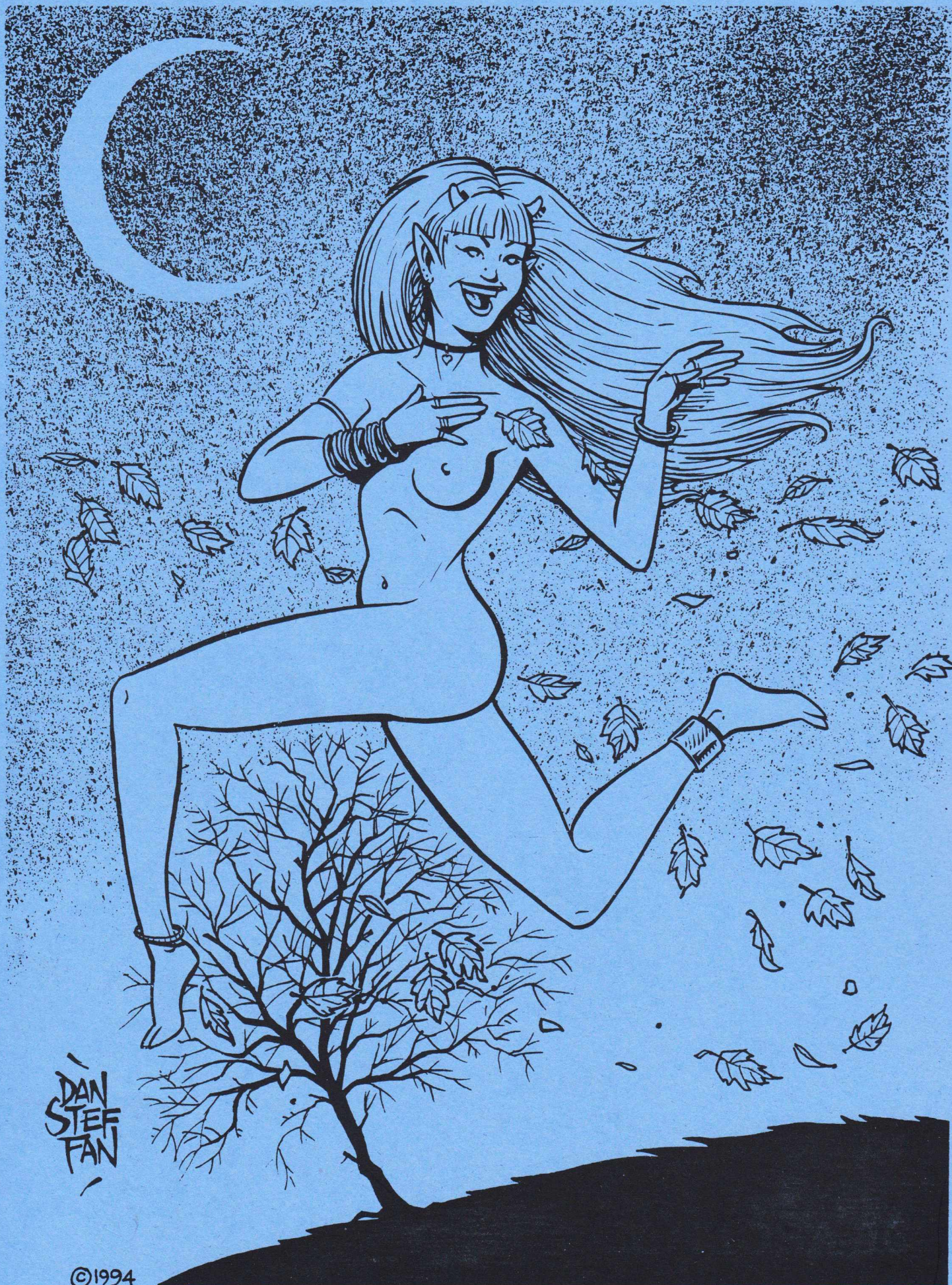
Downtown Winnipeg was the usual assortment of tall buildings among the older, lower ones, but as in most cities that experience long, cold winters, Winnipeg has a series of buildings interconnected by overhead walkways. One of these walkways was right across the street from the convention hotel we were staying in, and it linked several shopping malls. One morning, I wandered through all of them, ending up near the University of Winnipeg. While in the malls, I discovered a true character of the city: every few feet there was a little bake shop that sold... muffins! All sorts of wonderful muffins, heaven for a muffin lover such as myself. A close second to the muffins were cinnamon rolls, another favorite of mine.

Such foods are not unusual in Winnipeg. While so many cities in the U.S. seem to advertise themselves as a "city of churches," Winnipeg should call itself the "city of restaurants and hospitality." We certainly found this the case in every foray out for a meal. On our first dinner outing, we crossed the river to the off-beat part of town and a terrific little Italian restaurant that featured great garlic dishes. It even had a great SF name, too — Bradbury's. Later on, we had a fun fannish dinner at Mother Tucker's, an old Masonic Temple that had been converted into a restaurant. Being downtown, breakfast was the hardest meal to find once the holiday weekend started. My wonderful finds of muffin heaven were not open during Sunday and Labour Day, and we had to make do at the breakfast kiosk in the hotel.

Lest you think that the only thing I did was eat in Winnipeg, I was invited along to tour the Royal Canadian Mint with two other fans. The Mint, an impressive angular glass building, was a short taxi-ride outside Winnipeg, in the middle of a well-cared campus. The tour of the mint was very interesting, but a bit distant: we observed the machines and people at work from about two stories above them. There was even a movie on the special commemorative Canadian 25-cent coins (one for each province) that featured art selected in a nation-wide contest. It all seemed very fannish, and in fact, we fans outnumbered the mundanes on the tour.

Anyway, one of the reasons we had wanted to come to Winnipeg was that we had never been there before, and were not likely to have a reason to go there again. I'm glad we did. For those who had never experienced a non-U.S. WorldCon, Winnipeg was a wonderful introduction. For those who skipped it, we'll see YOU in Scotland! ☼





DAN  
STEFFAN

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