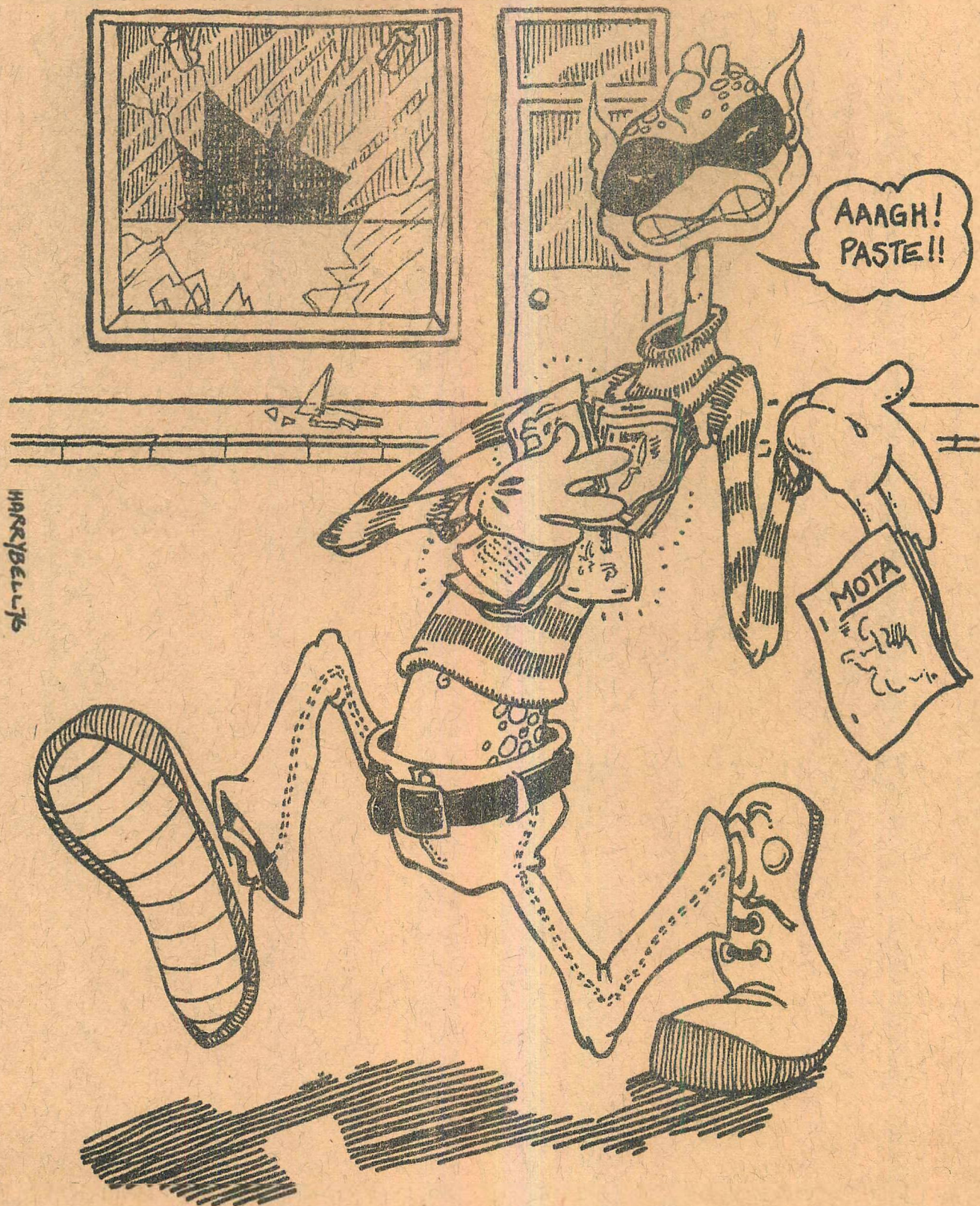


LITERARY GEMS



HARRY BELL 76



"Damn it! Missed again."

With a slight grunt caused by the physical exertion and mental reluctance involved with getting out of my comfortable reclining chair, I ambled over to pick up the crudzine I had just inaccurately tossed. With a flick of my wrist I sailed the thing three feet through the air and into the hungry maw of the fireplace. There was a brief bluish flash as the flames consumed the ink along with the paper, just as there had been with the other crudzines. Basking in the glow of other people's efforts, I sank back in my still-warm chair. I took a sip from my Bullwinkle glass as I resumed thinking about the 17th issue of MOTA, which I was trying to complete in time to hand out to the friends I knew I'd see at Disclave. There was a bit of a snag as I tried to think of a painless way to tell the dear folks on my mailing list that this was to be a Special Artists Writes Issue, so named because I was using written pieces by Grant Canfield and Dan Steffan. How could I possibly make it clear that Grant's article was footnoted by numbers set off in [brackets]? Some reader might get confused and futilely search for them in Dan's piece as well.

I drained the glass and, with my eyes tightly closed, flung an illegible fanzine from Missouri. My eyes opened only to watch the paper missile bounce off the Bose speaker and land fully two feet from the fireplace. For the moment I just let it lie where it fell. My mind was on other things, like the illustrations for those two articles. How could I possibly convince someone like Boyd Raeburn that I had done the artwork myself? He knew that I was not an artist by any stretch of the imagination despite the fact that I used to draw water from a well on my parents' farm. The only thing I had any skill at was drawing conclusions, especially ones with weak foundations. Well, why not?

I began drawing one for my skimpy editorial.

HARRY WARNER, JR.
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown, MD 21740

Congratulations on your new address. It is very
fannish, because of that word "basement". You're
too young to remember such things, but Lee Hoffman
had that very same word in her address for years
and years while she was living in the Village.

I thought Steve Beatty's idea about publishing fans' linguistic abilities was a good one. There are all sorts of fine fanzines being published in other languages which could be reaching more fans in English-speaking countries if their editors knew which ones could read them. It works in the other direction, too. What about the problem faced by a fan who finds that he will be travelling in some distant land, would like to contact fans during his trip, and doesn't know which ones might be able to answer his letters or converse with him? As far as I can determine from my less than globetrotting situation, fans in non-English speaking nations aren't as sercon as they have the reputation of being, although admittedly, Munich Roundup is the only fannish fanzine published in a non-English speaking nation which gets any real circulation around here.

Incidentally, I had an experience something like the brothel conversation Bob writes about, when I was only about twelve years old. I was walking in downtown Hagerstown when this burly man asked me where he could find a sporting house. I told him that there was a big one right in Public Square, the very center of the shopping district, which seemed to surprise him a little. Then I advised him that it was run by the coach of the local high school football team, and his eyebrows really shot up. He looked at me with new respect when I added that my father often took me there. But then I explained that I'd just bought a new fielder's glove there and was hoping that the new baseball guide would be available the next time we went there, and he said goodbye to me and left, walking in the opposite direction to the one that would have led him to the establishment I had in mind.

(continued on page 21)

the report from point 30

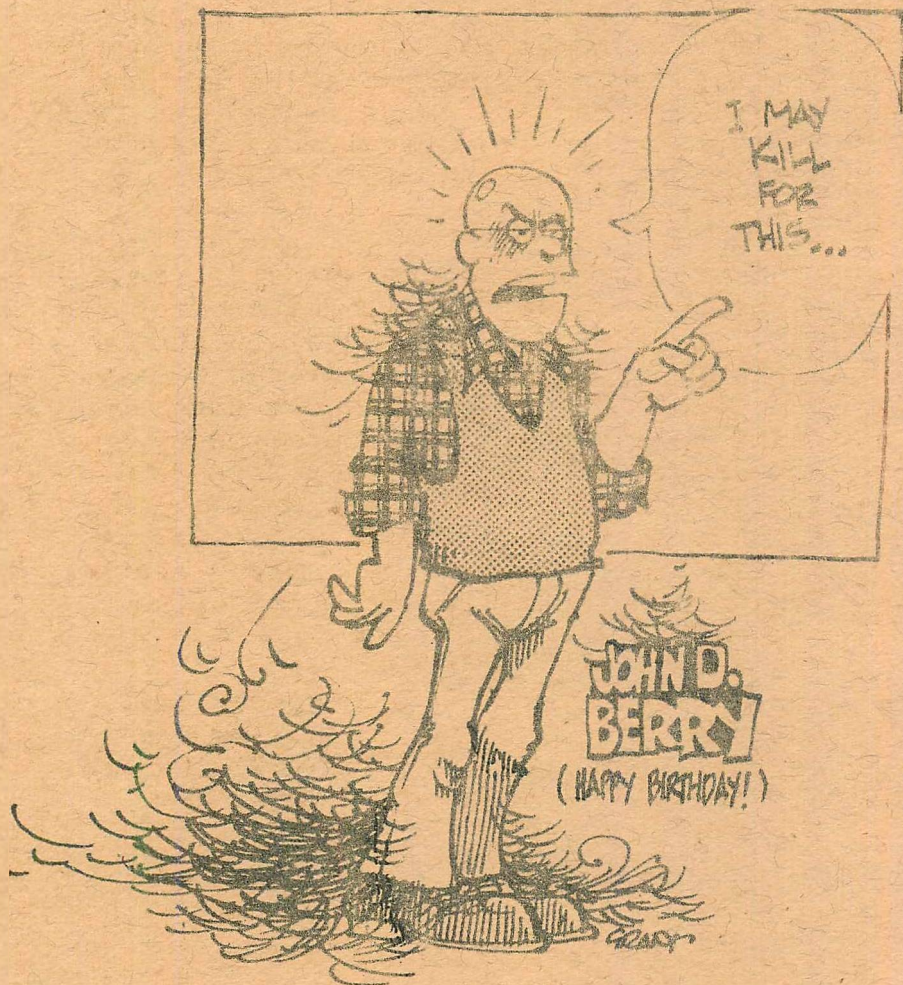
by
GRANT
CANFIELD



On my 30th birthday I drew my 501st gag cartoon. Actually, I prefer to think of it in a more elegant mode: I drew 500 gag cartoons before I turned 30.

The 30, of course, was an extremely difficult interface to cross, both emotionally and physically. As anticipated, my body went on immediate "Self-Destruct". It starts with the joints. In the Game of Life, 30 is like the refreshments at a party of penurious hippies--the joints are the first to go. When you turn 30, furthermore, a chemical trigger suddenly erupts in various predetermined neural clusters in four, sometimes six, locations in the right, central part of your midbrain, tilting you towards attitudes indicative of extreme untrustworthiness, from the rational sub-30 viewpoint. Imagine, if you can, such bizarre mental states as finding oneself in agreement with something said by William F. Buckley, Jr., for instance. Edge City, you know. Once with me it got so heavy I flashed that I agreed with something Ronald Reagan, for Christ's sake, had said. I thought I would flip over into Tachycardiac Overdrive, until the TV cut to a slide apologizing for severe electrical interference caused by massive amounts of bird guano on the transmitter.

Well, hitting 30 is Tough, I won't kid you about it. You young punks will



find out. Terry Hughes, the editor of this.... this.... whatever this is; he'll find out. He has always skipped merrily through life with mud between his toes and a tune running through his head. But when he reaches 30 in a few weeks, we'll see how merrily he skips with the former running through his latter and the latter stuck between his former.

And personally, I can hardly wait to see John D. Berry turn 30. Recent analysis of his urine, obtained by our Covert Activities Department, leads me to the inescapable conclusion that on his 30th birthday, he will go bald all over. It will happen suddenly, and in public.

It can't be helped, Terry. That's just the way it works, John.

So forget the 30, none of us like the 30 anyway,

although I understand it is often viewed rather favorably from the other side, this side, the longer one is here. This remains to be seen. Leave us now advance to our co-sponsor, the number 500, representing the total number of gag cartoons I have drawn and put into circulation at the commercial marketplace as of my 30th birthday, or Point 30 as we refer to it down at the proctologist's office.

Besides, let's face it, 500 is such an easy round-heels of a number, who could resist plumbing its depths? No self-respecting, card-carrying egotist could pass up such an opportunity deftly to dance his duo of debonair digits, a little pink Gene Kelly on the right and a little green Fred Astaire on the left (the color is the second to go), across the face of that typewriter key embossed with his favorite letter: I. What the hell, you guys are subjected to this all the time from the pro writers, this is just a cartoonist getting the same kicks...

Since I first started selling gag cartoons in 1972, I've sold 127 cartoons (or 25.4% of the First 500--not a bad rate for my first four years, perhaps) to many diverse magazine markets for amounts ranging from \$5 per cartoon (at SEX TO SEXTY, for example) to \$250 (the current rate for full-page color cartoons in PLAYGIRL).

Of the unsold remainder, 199 (or 39.8%) are in current Active circulation, in batches of 10 to 15 cartoons per batch, with return postage and all

that. For the most part, these earn me a fistful of rejection slips each month, but the few hits make it all worthwhile, it says here somewhere. An agent handles some of my earlier cartoons, a few recaptioned, but since that's out of my direct control I don't count these cartoons among my Active file. From time to time the agent sends me an odd-size check (he scrapes 30% off the top when he makes the sale) for a cartoon used in some obscure journal. This is nice, if not frequent, as it represents virtually serendipitous income; he is handling only cartoons I have absolutely given up on. Turkeys, if you will.

And naturally there will be turkeys. Some cartoons go the route, circulating to as many markets as I can find, and never make it. These are retired unceremoniously to the "Inactive" file. Often, after having circulated a particular cartoon for 3 years or so among 40 or 50 markets, I can easily begin to understand why any sensible cartoon editor would reject such an object of loathesome putridity, notwithstanding that it was Created by my own personal sweet self. Turkeys, you know. At Point 30 there are 83 cartoons (16.6% of 500) in my Inactive file. Among these are ones which actually should be classified "Dead", such as those cartoons whose gags have been returned to the gagwriters. If I can't sell a gag, maybe another cartoonist can. Win a few, lose a few. Well, actually, it's more like win a few, lose a lot.

But not all of them are turkeys, knock on masonite. A few cartoons fall under my favorite category of all, next to "Sold", namely "Awaiting Payment". At point 30, I am Awaiting Payment from GENESIS, SWANK, SEX ON SEX, MAN'S, King Features, and BOYS' LIFE, for a total of 12 cartoons. The BOYS' LIFE hit is something of a biggie, my first "respectable" sale in several months. My major markets, by far, are the raunchy "girly" magazines. After multitudinous sales to magazines like GENT, CLIMAX, DAPPER, ESCAPE, NUGGET, GALLERY, BACHELOR, FLING, CAPER, NIGHT & DAY, GENESIS, SIR!, MR., MAN'S WORLD, MEN, CAVALIER, SEX ON SEX, DUDE, and SEX TO SEXTY, my first sale to BOYS' LIFE [1] will make my father, an ex-Scoutmaster, almost as happy as he was when I made my Eagle. And that's almost as happy as my Eagle was when I made the backyard prairie dog farm.

My next favorite category is "Holds". A Hold is "iffy", you see, by no means a certain Sale. Some pay-on-publication markets will hold a cartoon as inventory for future use. Other markets will sometimes hold a cartoon for further editorial consideration, ultimately rejecting it. Some-



times a Hold makes it, sometimes it does not. We do not allow our Excitement Meter to clang hysterically for a mere Hold, as such emotional display is solely reserved around here for a Sale. A Hold only rates a mild anticipatory buzz, with concomitant minor tumescence in select erectile tissues.

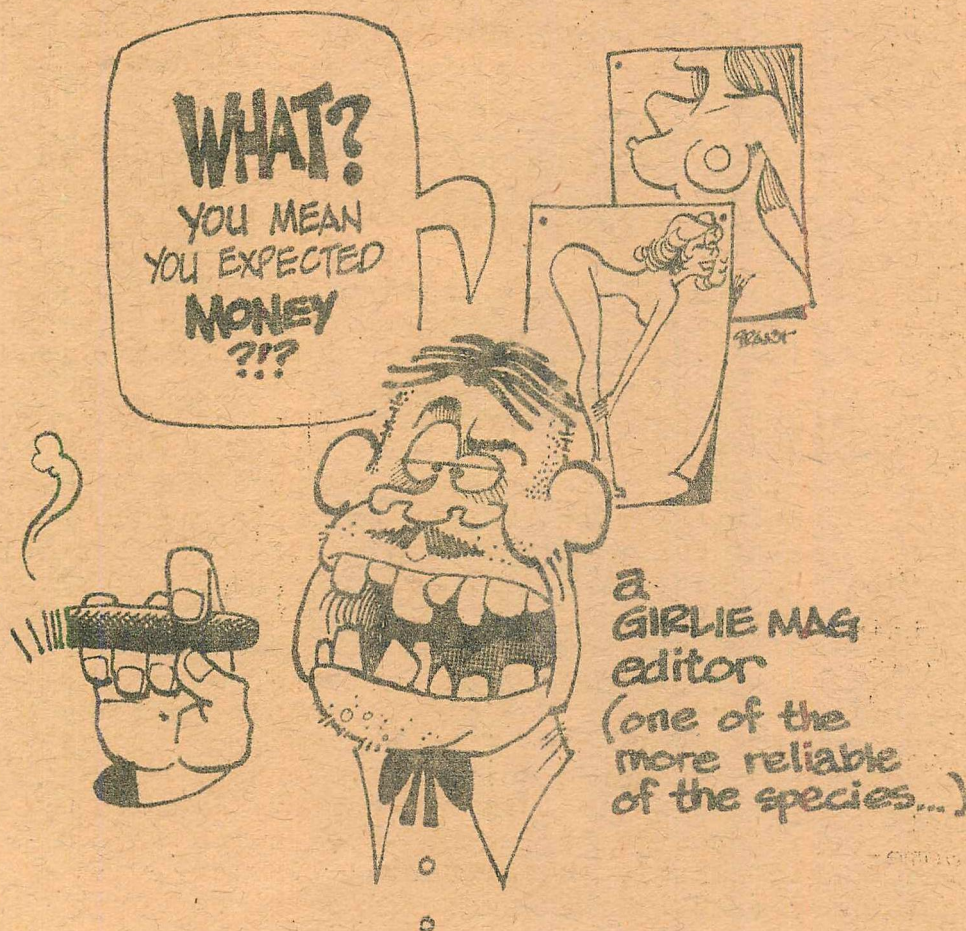
The remainder of my first 500 cartoons fall into various miscellaneous categories, such as "To Redraw", "Matted for Sale", "Queried", and "Gags to Other Cartoonists". Speaking of this category, remember the April 25, 1975, episode of the daily comic strip FRANK & ERNEST, by Bob Thaves? Sure you do. Funny as hell, right? Well, that was my gag. I sold him a cast off gag that didn't work for me but clicked with him.[2] Sometimes we cartoonists are also gagwriters; often we are even our own gagwriters. Often we use other gagwriters' gags, but more about that later, after I mention my remaining miscellaneous file category for my cartoons: "Deadbeats".

Cartoonists keep track, naturally enough, of markets which are slow to pay, or which don't pay at all. Many cartoonists call these markets "ham-hockers", but I am a traditionalist. To me, they are "deadbeats"...not to mention creeps, assholes, dirty bastards, rotten syphilitic pricks, and pus from the boil on the ass of a hemorrhoidal hyena. (Knowing that the Mailing List for this fanzine is comprised of many of the same, I hope and trust that no one takes personal offense. We are what we are.)

Although it is often like pulling shark's teeth to extract payment from a publisher, I have been lucky to manage to badger payment out of them one way or another---most of the time. Only once was I badly burned, in the

sense of ripped off. That was for 4 cartoons. As that represents only 0.8% of my first 500 cartoons, perhaps it should not bother me much. As it represented \$600 in unrealized potential income, it rankled my pretty plump tushy.

In 1973 I had hit a big new market, a new glossy mag in the PLAYBOY-imitator sweepstakes, called GALLERY. As you may recall, this particular imitation was rather more blatant than most, with the first few issues a virtual steal of PLAYBOY features, graphics, layout, editorial stance, ads, and naked



ladies. This theft extended even to such fine details as: typeface for the GALLERY logo on the cover identical to the famous PLAYBOY typeface; a contents page laid out absolutely identically to PLAYBOY's; a "GALLERY About Town" section to match "PLAYBOY After Hours"; and even an illustration by a Brad Holland analog on the Ribald Classics analog page. Carrying copyism to its logical extreme, GALLERY even located their editorial offices at 936 Michigan Avenue in Chicago, directly across the street from the PLAYBOY Building at 919 Michigan Avenue. One can only presume that they wished to be close to their source. The publisher at the start was famed criminal attorney F. Lee Bailey, but Bailey bailed out soon after take-off. Well, what the hell, a new market is a new market, and you submit your stuff. And my first hit there was for \$250, an astronomical sum for a magazine of that sort, and by far my largest single Sale to that date! They used this one expensive cartoon in a teeny-tiny, almost invisible one-column spot in the back of the magazine.

So naturally I sent them more material, at a time (as undisclosed but knowledgeable sources would later have it) when one of the top people at the magazine was apparently siphoning funds out of the corporation as fast as he could suck. Anyway, three of my cartoons were used in the July issue. Their base rates by this time had dropped to a more sensible, but still high, \$150 per black-&-white cartoon, so I billed them for \$450 for the 3 cartoons.[3] They sent a Purchase Order to sign, saying to bill them referring to that P.O. number. So I signed and returned the P.O. along with my new bill, in deference to their stated procedures. Nothing happened. I sent a query. Zero reply. I sent another query. Zilch. On September 5, 1973, three months after the date of the Purchase Order, and still not having been paid, I sent another letter, with copies to nearly everybody on their masthead, once again demanding payment and also withdrawing four cartoons being held for future use. Response: null set. On September 16, I wrote my fifth letter to GALLERY trying to extract payment, never receiving even the courtesy of a reply. In this fifth letter, I threaten 'em with legal action. Ballsy, right?

Then the October issue hit the stands with another one of my cartoons in it, one of those I had previously withdrawn. I billed them for another \$150, but of course nothing ever came of that either.

Eventually I contacted a lawyer in Chicago. I spilled my tragic \$600 story, but as it happened his office was already representing four other claims against GALLERY, aggregating \$9000. In a letter dated October 18, 1973, he said, "We have sued them and there is no money available. There must be at least twenty-five lawsuits. I doubt whether they will ever pay out anything to creditors." On November 18, I wistfully wrote a final letter to GALLERY, offering to accept 25¢ on the dollar, or any offer whatsoever. The letter started, "Once again I write in the preposterous hope of collecting the money GALLERY owes me for published cartoons." The letter ended, "I think GALLERY has been a shitty magazine from the beginning." I get mean when I get mad, you better believe.

Well, I was never paid a dime for any of those four cartoons, so that's the story of my Deadbeat file, but not quite the end of the GALLERY story. My wife's aunt in Chicago later sent me a clipping from the February 7, 1974, Sun-Times, reporting that the three largest creditors of GALLERY had filed in U.S. District Court to force the magazine into bankruptcy. The three largest creditors, you might be interested to learn, were the paper supplier (claiming \$439,170 in unpaid debts), the printer (\$198,184), and a public relations consultant who claimed he had rendered services worth \$13,379.

Following bankruptcy, the GALLERY title was bought by another publisher, Bookbridge Publishing in New York. Probably I would never have submitted anything to this "new" GALLERY had not the new editor turned out to be one Pat Reshen, to whom I had sold material before, and who I believed to be reliable in matters of payment. The rates dropped much lower--down to a reasonable \$50 for black-&-white--but the new GALLERY became one of my steadiest markets, even commissioning an occasional color cartoon. In fact, I have sold more cartoons to GALLERY than to any other single magazine, which shows you how funny things can work out sometimes. Yok, yok. I hesitate to interrupt such hilarity by mentioning that shortly before Point 30, GALLERY was sold yet again, this time to Montcalm Publishing Co. So I have to break in another new cartoon editor.

GALLERY has been the only magazine to burn me by publishing cartoons without payment--so far; that I know about--but mags lose cartoons in other ways from time to time. For example, I have stopped submitting material entirely to PENTHOUSE and VIVA. You might imagine that these would be good markets, slick and solvent, what with PENTHOUSE pushing PLAYBOY for prominence of the pubic pack, but such is not the case. This publisher is well-known among cartoonists as slow to reply, slow to act on holds, and slow to pay for published material. VIVA is even listed as "No Pay" by some of the warnings in the cartoonists' trade journals. PENTHOUSE "lost" 5 holds of mine, from two separate batches. Several times people have mentioned a cartoon of mine they have seen in PENTHOUSE, but the fact is I have never sold a cartoon to PENTHOUSE. (If you actually have seen one there, and can point it out for me, I'd really like to know, because this would firmly establish them as ripoff artists, as far as I'm concerned.) Now that I no longer contribute there, perhaps I never will. Until I learn they have cleaned up their act, at any rate.

An excellent way to lose cartoons is to use the United States Postal Service. Unfortunately, mail is a freelancer's only contact with his marketplace, so use it he must. Altogether, I guess I've lost something like 30 cartoons in the mail. Some of these have been redrawn and put back into circulation; some eventually will be. Some, I'm sure, are actually in the hands of rip-off editors and will be used at the earliest clandestine opportunity, possibly overseas, for no payment, with the Postal Service taking the blame for "lost" material. So perhaps the Postal Service doesn't really deserve all the abuse it gets--but is there anyone here who really believes that? Once a batch of my cartoons, burned and water-soaked, came back from PLAYGIRL in a plastic bag. An accompanying form letter from the local Director of Mail Processing read, "We regret the enclosed mail was damaged while in the custody of the United States Postal Service. There are iso-



lated instances when mail is damaged in fires, accidents involving aircraft, trains, trucks, buses, boats, and other conveyances. In this instance, a truck enroute from Los Angeles carrying this mail encountered an accident which resulted in fire to the vehicle. Postal regulations provide that the remaining mail matter be forwarded to the addressee with an explanation. We apologize for any inconvenience caused you in this instance."

A mail truck fire, no shit. In case you are interested, the Postal Service form letter reference number for notification of a fire in a mail truck enroute from L.A. is this: LPL:CFO:JM:pm 1/1. Strangely enough, several days before receiving this communique in the soggy plastic bag full of half-burnt cartoons, I had heard on the radio about a mail truck out of L.A. catching fire near Santa Barbara. Speaking with a certain prescient knowledge, rather like deja vu in reverse, I said to my wife, "My cartoons are on that truck." She said, "Oh, don't be paranoid." This merely proves, as all of us crazy people have known for years, that paranoia is the only healthy mental state for the Seventies.

Incidentally, among that batch of returned charred ex-cartoons was a note from the PLAYGIRL editor, commissioning a color finish from one of the black-&-white roughs in that batch,[4] so I guess I was lucky the Postal Service returned even the debris (the "remaining mail matter"), or I might never have known of that commission.

The bulk of my cartooning thus far has been slanted towards the "girly" field, as I said, where the current reigning controversy is: "To split or not to split, that is the beaver." The splitters are led by raunchy Larry Flynt, publisher of HUSTLER, while that aging pundit of the Sexual Revolution, Hugh Hefner, recently opted for the crown of the tasteful non-splitters. Meanwhile, a similar, in many ways identical, controversy recently raised its little pink head in magazines such as PLAYGIRL, FOXYLADY, and VIVA, which feature photo layouts of naked boys. ("Boylies"?) I refer, of course, to the uncommonly sensitive topic of tumescence. How much is too much, and how far is up? Is too far up too far out? Is all the way up absolutely out? Apparently it is, for I have yet to see any man in any of these magazines at any more than half mast.

Naturally, when one's parents ask you on the long-distance telephone how your cartooning is going, they do not want to hear about the large number of cartoons you are publishing in periodicals featuring pubic hair, male and female genitalia, naked bodies caressing, and other disgusting Communist activities. My mother is just not the sort of person to drop a bomb like, "My son has a cartoon dealing with cunnilingus in the latest issue of SMELLY TWAT," into Friday night pinochle club conversation. Fortunately, however, I have made occasional sales to respectable magazines, and have been able to cite cartoons published in PARADE, SATURDAY EVENING POST, LOS ANGELES MAGAZINE, TRUE (when it was still a "men's adventure" book; recently a new publisher took over the title and is steadily converting it to the standard hard "girly" format), NORTHLINER (an in-flight magazine for an airline), WRITER'S DIGEST, GIRL TALK, THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, NATIONAL ENQUIRER, and GOOD HOUSEKEEPING, among others. A sale to GOOD HOUSEKEEPING (\$150 for black-&-white) in 1973 got me two column inches in my parents' hometown newspaper; cartoonist son of local folks makes big time, that sort of thing. The paper, no doubt due to excessive zeal generated within the staff by the colossal impact of this mind-boggling scoop, reprinted the cartoon from GOOD HOUSEKEEPING, without bothering to ask either that magazine or me. I thought this was a commendable disregard for copyright laws; after all, it is the people's right to know.

Once I had a respectable market that seemed right up my proverbial alley, a science-fiction magazine, no less! But, alas, I blew it...

When VERTEX first appeared on the stands, I thought, "Far out! Maybe they'll use gag cartoons." As, of course, they did. I began submitting material, and almost immediately my cartoons began appearing in the magazine, at \$15 each. Two Canfield cartoons appeared in VERTEX #3, two more in issue #4, and four in issue #5. None of my cartoons appeared in VERTEX after that, however, because in the meantime I had managed, with the aid of my regrettable compulsion to appear clever and cute, to land myself on Don Pfeil's infamous VERTEX shitlist.

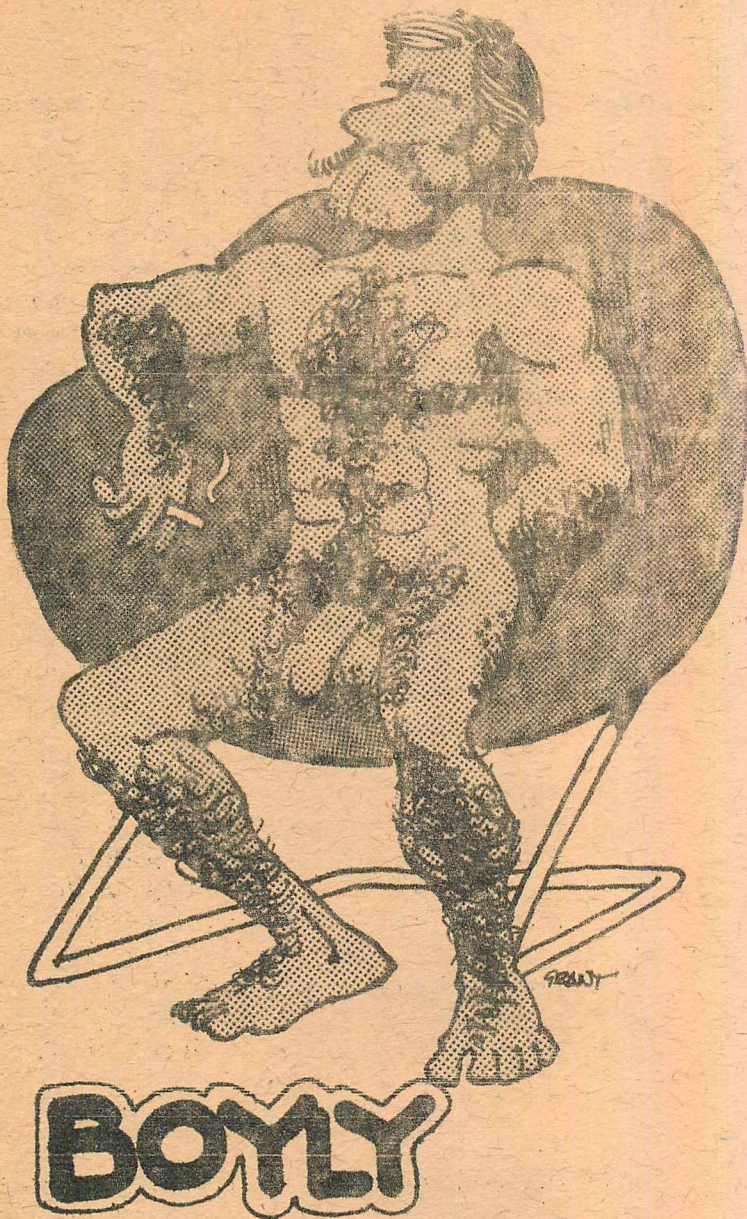


In November 1973 I had written to VERTEX

asking for the return of unaccepted cartoons. Up to that point, the only word I had ever received from VERTEX was a signed check, as nice a word as any, but I was getting rather anxious about several batches of my cartoons possibly gathering dust in some filing cabinet in Los Angeles. (I'm much more relaxed about it all these days. Valium, you know.) So then I wrote what I thought was a reasonable letter of query, asking for the return of unused or unwanted material. This letter received no reply. No reply is standard communications procedure with some editors, it seems.

Two months later, in January 1974, I wrote again, asking for the return, or notification of hold status, of 14 specific cartoons. These cartoons had been in VERTEX's possession for over nine months, so I wrote, "This is far longer than most cartoonists will allow their cartoons to be held without action, or without being returned." I further added that I enjoyed having my work appear in VERTEX, and I was therefore being rather casual about the matter.

Did I say something wrong? Apparently so, because Pfeil got pissed off. He immediately sent me back 13 of the 14 cartoons, with the following note:



Dear Mr. Canfield:

Frankly, I must say I am somewhat puzzled by your last two letters. The first, thanking us for buying your cartoons and indicating an understanding of the mechanics of magazine production and the "fill" use of cartoons until we needed them.

Your next letter, sent some sixty days later, evidences a somewhat uptight tone regarding your cartoons, demanding that we immediately either buy them or return them.

Well, it took a bit of time to retrieve them from the art department assembly line, but here they are. I wish you all the luck in selling them elsewhere. For, under the circumstances, you won't sell any of them to VERTEX again.

Donal J. Pfeil, Editor

I never did demand that he buy the cartoons immediately or else return them; at any rate, I can hardly consider a nine-month hold "immediately". Nevertheless, the important thing is that my letters of query obviously gave Pfeil the

wrong impression, so the letters were poorly written. All I actually wanted was the return of cartoons he knew he wouldn't use--or simple notification that they were being held (I enclosed prepaid pre-addressed postcards with all my query letters, for the editor's convenience in replying). Hell, never having received any verbal communication from the magazine whatsoever until the above note from Pfeil, I didn't know but what they might be throwing away material they didn't want to use--or even worse, passing it on to LASFS members for use in their fanzines! The point is, I wrote bad query letters and pissed an editor off. Poor professional practice, pissing off an editor.

I answered Pfeil's letter with one of my own, dated January 24, 1974, in an attempt, at least when I sat down at the typewriter, to set the record straight. But, as you can see, my cuteness and my dirty mouth got in the way again:

Dear Mr. Pfeil:

Thank you for returning my cartoons. I am sorry if you took umbrage at my letters. They may have had an uptight tone, but that's only because I've been ripped off a couple of times before, by other magazines, certain-

ly not VERTEX. There was no hostility intended on my part, and I apologize if I made it seem that way.

When I thanked you for purchasing my cartoons, I was referring to previous ones bought and printed in VERTEX. I do understand the "fill" use of cartoons, and I understand why a publisher would want to hold material for just such a purpose. However, most cartoonists will only allow their work to be held 3 or 4 months without payment, after which they will query. You had been holding my work for more like 8 months before I began inquiring. A couple of polite queries went unanswered before I wrote with that "uptight tone" you noticed. Finally, 9½ months after my initial submission, you return my cartoons to me with a note that's supposed to make me taste a mouthful of shit. I say, who needs you?

Again, I really intend no offense. It just kind of irks me for you to accuse me, in effect, of unprofessionalism when it's you who has been sitting on the crapper so long, as it were.

Thank you for wishing me luck in selling these cartoons elsewhere. "Under the circumstances", you say, I "won't sell any of them to VERTEX again." Frankly, I doubt if I will be submitting more material to VERTEX anyway, as long as there is this kind of editorial climate there. I suppose we're both well rid of each other.

Incidentally, my records show that you are still holding one cartoon from that first batch I submitted to you 9½ months ago. It has my code number 35... Again, if this piece is slated for use in the near future, for which I expect payment, that's fine. If not, return it to me. Thank you.

Cordially,
Grant Canfield

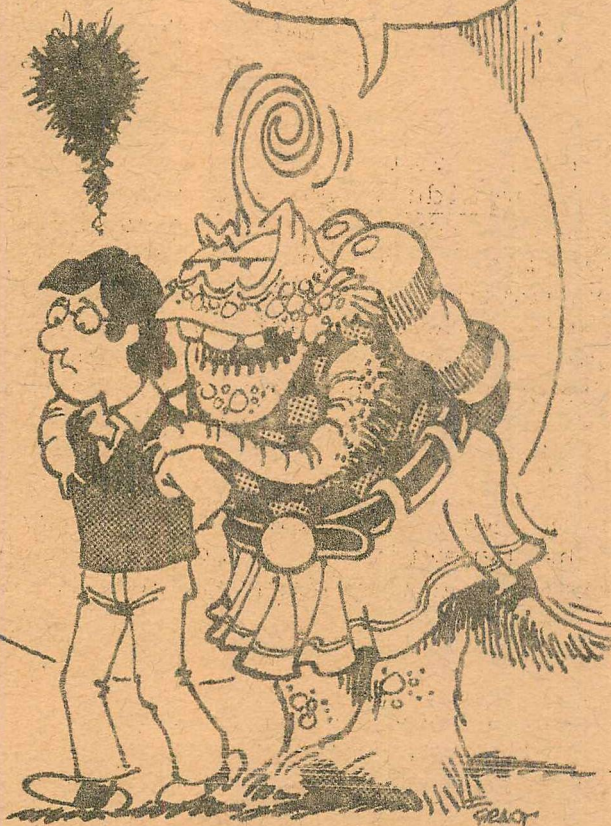
He returned number 35. It was already pasted up and ready to drop in a spot in the magazine, but Pfeil yanked it out from under the camera and returned it to me with this last word:

Mr. Canfield:

As requested, here is your cartoon #35. Please excuse the delay, but it was being processed for an issue, and it wasn't until the flats came back that I was able to retrieve it.

Somehow, in regards to your latest letter, I feel that you are deliberately misrepresenting what has gone on between you and VERTEX, but, for the life of me, I can't understand why, unless you're sending copies of your letters to someone else without indicating so. [5] What need to distort

FORGET IT, KID.
THERE'S NO
FUTURE IN
SCIENCE FICTION
THESE DAYS
ANYHOW.



facts when the only two people involved in this, you and I, both know the truth? I did not, as you put it, "sit on the crapper" with your cartoons for 9½ months. I started using them as soon as possible after you sent them, and continued using them, and paying for them, right up to the time you started getting nasty. Unless you hoped to force me into buying a quantity of cartoons in advance, something I cannot do under the standard operating procedures set for me by the publisher, I cannot understand any of the actions you have taken--again, including your most recent letter. Your letters appear logical only if one or both of two conditions were in effect. If I was holding your cartoons without using them as needed (and using them on a regular basis), or if I was using them without paying for them. Since neither of these situations were in effect, I still see no reason for your actions, nor for your most recent letter. If this is your version of "professional" behavior, I hope no one ever accuses me of being professional.

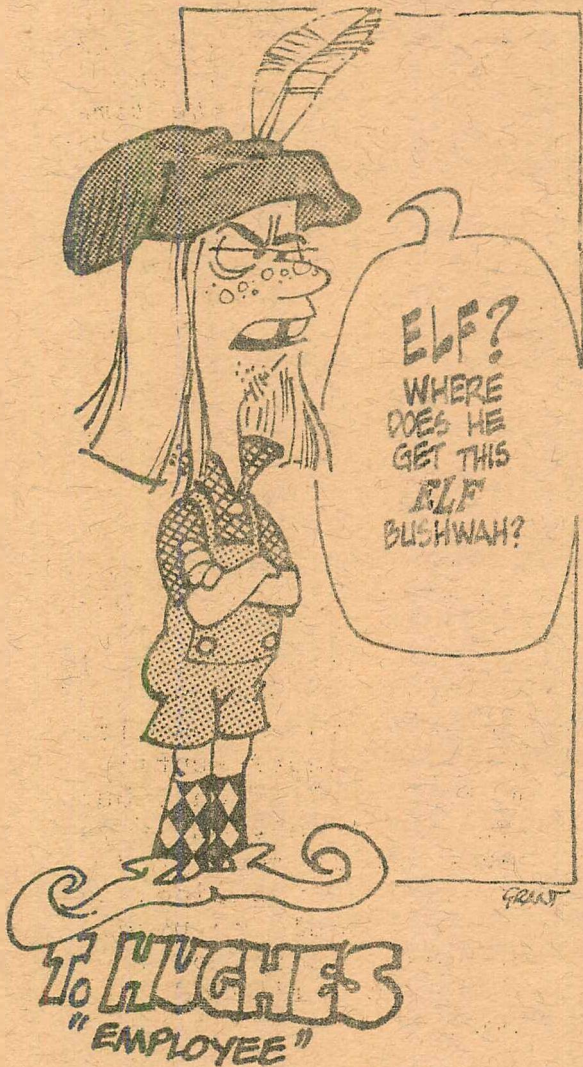
Sincerely, Donald J. Pfeil, Editor

In one respect, Pfeil was 100% correct; my letters were very unprofessional --too emotional, too smarmy, too cute. It is absolutely true that he began using my material almost immediately, and paid for it promptly. It is also true I told him he could hold my material as long as he wanted, if he expected to use it. My only beef was that I was unable to get any kind of report at all on the status of my material--were they going to use it, or were they going to return it, or had they burned it, or what?--until I "started getting nasty". The nastiness got me my reply, all right, but it also got the rug pulled out from under me. VERTEX and I went our separate ways; and if you want to know the truth, I never really regretted it. Even though I enjoyed the exposure in a science-fiction magazine, and even though I could reasonably expect more of my cartoons would be used. and even though I had corresponded stupidly and unprofessionally, by 1974 I was making regular sales in excess of \$100 a cartoon, so I figured VERTEX wasn't worth the aggravation, not at \$15 a pop.

Well, VERTEX eventually folded. Perhaps some of you may have noticed that VERTEX folded. Bit the dust, so to speak. Went under, as it were. The outcome of the whole affair, I might mention just in passing, is that VERTEX folded. The publisher, Mankind Publishing, also gave Don Pfeil himself the sack, but other than that the only result was (and I have to chuckle about this) that VERTEX folded. Me, I'm still at it though.

But, I must say, I'm not "at it" entirely alone. As I mentioned earlier, I use gagwriters. Each week I look at hundreds of gag slips from professional gagwriters, holding less than one half of one per cent of what I see. When I draw these gags up, I put them in circulation along with my other cartoons. If the cartoon sells, the gagwriter gets 25% of what I get. Among others, my current stable of regularly contributing professional gagwriters includes a retired engineer in Lincoln, Nebraska, a housewife in Phoenix, a teacher in Milwaukee, an aspiring comedy writer in San Francisco, and a retired Marine top-kick in Hawarden, Iowa, who may be the world's most prolific girly-gag writer. And once I had a gagwriter who was serving time at the Florida State Penitentiary, but he suddenly stopped sending me material. I was always afraid to ask why.

More germane in this context, I also occasionally use amateur gagwriters. Ever since I wrote my first plea for gag ideas from amongst the freaky phalanx of funny folk in fandom, which appeared in GRANFALLOON #15 in early 1972, I have been proud to use gags by fans. So now, because all of those fine folk deserve it, it's Mass Egoboo Time!! Yaaayyyy!!!



My list of fan gagwriters reads like the WAHF column from any recent fanzine. I've sold cartoons based on gags by Arnie Katz, Linda Bushyager, Dave Locke, Avram Davidson [6], Morris Keesan, Jay Cornell, Burt Libe, Ed Cagle, David Travis, Alexis Gilliland, Mike Gorra, Brad Balfour, and Art Spiegelman. I've sold lots of gags by the incomparable Ray Nelson, the man who invented the fanzine, the city of San Francisco, and the propellor beanie. In addition, I have cartoons in Active circulation based on gags by many of the above, plus Bob Vardeman, Jay Kinney, Richard E. Geis, Gerard E. Giannattasio, Calvin W. Demmon, Bruce Townley, Dean Grennel, and probably somebody I've missed. I won't embarrass my fan gagwriters whose gags languish in the Inactive file by naming names.

However, I must mention one more name. My all time top fan gagwriter, my bull goose loony, is none other than the elf of Arlington, the editor of This Puerile Trash, cute Terry Hughes. Terry has been sending me gags, often zany, occasionally outrageous, since that first solicitation. I have sold cartoons based on Terry Hughes' gags to more magazines than I care to mention, including the one to GOOD HOUSEKEEPING which got me into the hometown newspaper [7]. In 1973, I sold 4 Terry Hughes' gags; in 1974 I sold three. As of Point 30 in 1975 (I'm a Scorpio, if you must know, and therefore sexy and mysterious),

I've sold 5 of Terry's gags. In addition, eight more are in Active circulation; and, alas, several are Inactive. As you can see, Terry Hughes has been funny, to me, over twenty times. That alone is sufficient to qualify him for the Permanent Good Guy merit badge. Some people are naturally funny, and Terry, you would agree if you could see him, is one of these. You either have it or you don't, and Terry has it. Francis had it too. Mr. Ed had it. Trigger had it as well, but his elocution wasn't so terrific. But then, neither is Terry's.

Anyway, I take this opportunity to shout "THANK YOU!" (sound carries amazingly well in the medium of a fanzine page) to Terry and all the other fine people mentioned above. Naturally, I also thanked them individually, especially in the instance of a Sale--they got the same deal as my professional gagwriters, namely a 25% commission on the sale [8]. Would anyone care to hazard a guess how much of that gagwriting income was declared to the IRS? Aw, hell, these people are all honest, sure.

Sure. Of course.

Incidentally, my relations with my gagwriters have usually been amiable and cordial, but not always. Once a gagwriter, Who Shall Remain Nameless (a curse), determined that I was a "deranged psychopath or a borderline demented

killer." He based this judgement partially upon the large number of his gags which I rejected (singularly unfunny), and partially from the nature of those gags which I did accept and use, which were, generally speaking, of the macabre persuasion. Who knows? Perhaps his observation of me was astute, as I am occasionally, at home, on deranged. I am sane enough to know, however, that there is no possible way to get out of a paragraph gracefully after a line like that.

The guy wasn't kidding, though, he really saw me that way. Do you have any idea how startling and how sobering is the realization that no one else's image of you is exactly the same as your own? This guy represented a certain polarity to the function: his image of me was entirely out of phase with my own perceptions of self. It was such an "other" observation that I have to confess I was quite shaken.

You see, I think I'm a pussycat. Even in my wildest fantasies, I seldom go beyond "semi-deranged rapist". No, that's not quite true. Once I had an excellent "cocaine-smuggling pervert" fantasy. Mainly, I suppose I see myself as a Struggling (but actually, it ain't really so tough) Young (once you cross the 30 hump, you've lost every chance to be called "The Kid" among professional peers, unless you are, God forbid, a politician) Cartoonist. Well, no doubt about that last one, I guess. Pstruggling or Psychotic, Young or Ancient, if a Cartoonist is a person who draws cartoons, I have been one all my life, or at least since the first time I was turned loose at the comic book rack in my grandfather's pharmacy & fountain, a place in time and space which still exists at the core of the many layered onion that is me. Or maybe cabbage. Artichoke? No, onion; peel me, I'm yours.

I guess a cartoonist is what I always will be, in some form or another. Old habits die hard, as the gravedigger's apprentice said to the nun. I hope you enjoy the cartoons which accompany this text; they are here for a reason. I've been talking about my "gag" cartooning, but these examples of my "fan" cartooning are the only thing that can save us now. Only fans can blow all this hot air out of here, and mercifully end this marathon article. Fans blow, as everybody knows. Wait a minute, or is it suck? Suck or blow, one or the other, whichever you do best. Everybody start on the count of three. One...two...

+ Grant Canfield +

FOOTNOTES

- [1] One dangling possum to another: "Know what I could go for right now? A pineapple right-side-up cake!"
- [2] Frank to Ernie, on park bench: "My theology, briefly stated, is that the universe was dictated but not signed." Actually, this was not my gag line originally, but was glommed from the "Eavesdroppings" column of an old issue of EGOBOO (well, there aren't any new issues), proving once again that all humor is contained within fanzines. John D. Berry could probably tell us, if he dares, who said it first.
- [3] Gags by Bob Vardeman, Terry Hughes, and Mort Bergman. Please consider this barely compensatory egoboo, fellas.
- [4] Female rabbit (long eye-lashes) sitting on multi-colored Easter eggs in nest, to male bird (smoking cigar): "My mother warned me about these mixed marriages." This gag was by Linda and Ron Bushyager.
- [5] Not until now. -- The Phantom.
- [6] Man behind counter at general store, selling demon, in a glass bottle, to customer: "...plus, of course, a two-dollar deposit on the bottle." I sold this cartoon to (continued on page 20)

AN ESSAY ON WORDS

by DAN STEFFAN

I'm glad I'm an artist -- really I am. It scares me to think that I might have grown up having to deal with words instead of pictures. I mean, words are so unreliable. To illustrate what I mean, I shall state an example: Have you ever dropped a 10 pound concrete block on your foot? Well, the first words out of your mouth are usually something like, "Oh, Poop!" or "Cheese and Crackers!" Now, I don't know about you, but personally I always feel embarrassed when I use off color language like that. Think how these distasteful moments could be eliminated if you were an artist.

Just imagine what it would be like to be an artist and drop a concrete block on your foot. Instead of sputtering vulgarities, you would simply sit down and draw a picture. This action would cause no commotion. In fact, people tend to leave you alone if you do things like this.

In a way I have always admired the deaf/mute for having truly conquered the language problem. You could walk right up to a person who doesn't speak and stab him several times in the chest and he would never utter a word. Now that's what I call control.

At times I feel really cursed because I must communicate in vocal terms. Maybe it's because I find many words to be clumsy. In fact I find many words to be illiterate. Words, it sometimes seems, are a threat to my sanity.

Just this evening while washing my hands I noticed a blemish on my fingertip. "Shit! I've burned the piss out of my finger!" I exclaimed. Now, any well read person knows that this sentence is utter nonsense.

Let us analyze this sentence.

A literal translation of the sentence comes out something like: "Fecal Matter! I've fried the urine out of my digit!" Either there was someone in the room with me named "Fecal Matter", or I was momentarily incoherent. Realistically I can see no proper or necessary reason for this exclamation to appear at the beginning of the sentence. For a while I considered the notion that I was afraid to tell myself of the burn, and I said "shit!" to sort of beat around the bush. But I have decided that I was not afraid

of such news, thereby destroying that reasoning. Frankly I'm baffled. I am unable to figure out why the word appears where it does. Perhaps it's a Communist plot.

The second word, "I've", is relatively self explanatory so I won't go into it here. (For those of you who are unfamiliar with "I've", you are either Stupid or a deaf/mute [if this is the case, congratulations!]. Contrary to common belief, the word has nothing to do with New England universities.)

The third word is "fried" and is used in the wrong context. I've (see above) always thought of "fried" as a word with positive connotations. I mean, who ever heard of someone accidentally frying an egg? It is to laugh! In fact, as part of my initiation to become a Hippie, I actually "fried" my brains! They tell me I had a good time, so "fried" must be a positive word.

The fourth word, "urine", is the brand name of an eyewash and has no business in this sentence.

Now we skip ahead to "digit". This is a puzzling word. Perhaps it's some kind of code. Let us ask ourselves what a "digit" is. A "digit" is a number, and an example of a number would be: 7. Which is ridiculous. You can't burn a "seven". Well, you could if it was made out of wood. In fact, I once knew a southern mathematician who was in reality the head of the Split Beaver, Georgia, chapter of the Klu Klux Klan. He said that they sometimes burned 4's instead of crosses, but I never heard him mention



anything about burning 7's.

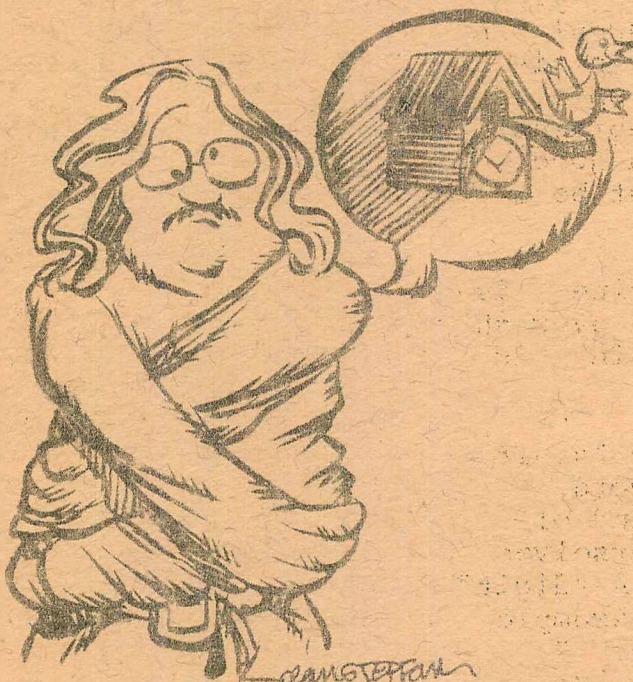
Let us go back to the original phrase. Perhaps the word really is "finger", afterall; "digit" can also mean "finger". If this is the case, we might assume the word is saying, "Fuck you!", in which case I would leave the room. But that would be assuming that words have feelings, and we all know how stupid an idea that is. Besides that, although a "digit" can be a number and a "digit" can be a "finger", can a "finger" be a number? Obviously not. Therefore, the word serves no purpose except to confuse us.

If you are wondering what became of "out", "of" and "my", it seems they stepped out for a sandwich and never came back.

After analysis of the sentence in question, I find the conclusion painfully clear. There can be no other answer. I mean, it's obvious that, if I speak in sentences like the one just analyzed, I must be speaking gibberish. And as everyone knows, speaking gibberish is a sure sign of insanity, as is hairy palms.

Or are those things caused by masterbation? I never can keep the two straight.

+ Dan Steffan +



POINT 30 footnotes, continued from page 17.

TRUE for \$100. Avram's 25% commission works out to about \$2.50 a word. I wonder if he gets rates like that anywhere else.

[7] Giant panda bear in doorway of child's bedroom, to boy in bed with little panda bear: "Goodnight, son."

[8] If you do send me gag suggestions, please remember that I see a great deal of gags these days, and therefore have to be rather more selective than in the past. Also, if I do hold a gag, please remember that it could be years, if at all, before the cartoon sells. No promises are made. And finally, please, please, please include return postage, preferably a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Thank you.

- - - - - end -
(letter column continued from page 4)

This is another MAYA reprint, right, Terry? I suspect a sinister plot on the part of you and Rob Jackson. First your fanzines have almost the same title, now you have interlocking contributors. Just what are you guys up to?

Your editorial reveals your basic insecurity. Why else would you be slamming a fellow fan for undertaking a project of such intrinsic worth as a directory of fans who are bilingual? Why, this is just what fandom has been needing for lo these many years. I think we should all write to Steve Beatty at once listing our many linguistic accomplishments. I'd be doing that now if you had published his address.

CURT STUBBS
940 E. 8th Ave.
Mesa, AZ 85204

Bruce D. Arthurs got his copy of Mota a couple days before I did, and was chortling over the Lee Hoffman piece, telling me how great it was, how funny it was, but not offering to loan his copy, and I, of course, was gnashing my teeth. "Has he dropped me from his mailing list? Should I send him money to get a copy? Should I steal Bruce's copy? I gotta read that piece." It was worth the three days of indigestion waiting for Mota to come to read the article. I snickered. I giggled. I laughed out loud. I rolled on the floor. I lost control of my bladder. Great stuff. But you owe me a new pair of pants.

JIM MEADOWS III
31 Apple Court
Park Forest, IL 60466

I'm happy to see that you're getting a better grade of artists for your zine. The local illos by Pinky Lee was nothing short of excellent. However, if that Vince Van Gogh fella is going to continue to do his work directly on stencil, you're just going to have to work on your mimeo work. Ray Nelson illos show up more clearly than that starry night picture did.

I'm thinking of a scheme to get more space in your lettercol, but haven't come up with anything yet. I figure I could either give you lines and lines of witty fannish writing, or offer to buy ad space. Which do you think would work best?

(At the going rate of \$2.50 per word, Jim, you now owe me....)

I also heard from: Andy Porter, Dave Rowe, Bob Tucker, Kevin Easthope, Bernie Peek, Dave Piper, M. K. Digre, Cathy McGuire, Karen Pearlston, Tim Marion, Charles Burbee, Carl Bennett, Dave Romm, and John Thiel -- who sent me a poem of praise about MOTA, the first such that I've ever received and it's not even obscene. Next issue I'm setting aside lots of space for letters so be sure to send me your zany comments. ### I have a new phone number: (703) 524-4158, and Dan Steffan has my old address: 866 N. Frederick St., Arlington, VA 22205 so change your address cards. Woo Woo!

MOTA #17, done in time for the 1976 Disclave (I hope), comes to you from Terry Hughes, 4739 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia 22205 U.S.A. May-June 1976 but more June than May. A contribution, a letter of comment, and some fanzines in trade will put you on my mailing list.

MOTA is (*circle one*)

- a. published daily.
- b. published every six weeks.
- c. hello.
- d. the fanzine which thinks it can swipe a gag from Monty Python and fool all of Cleveland, Ohio, fandom.

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Editorial by Terry Hughes
with a cartoon by
Alexis Gilliland on page 3

Letters are scattered throughout.

Terry Hughes
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