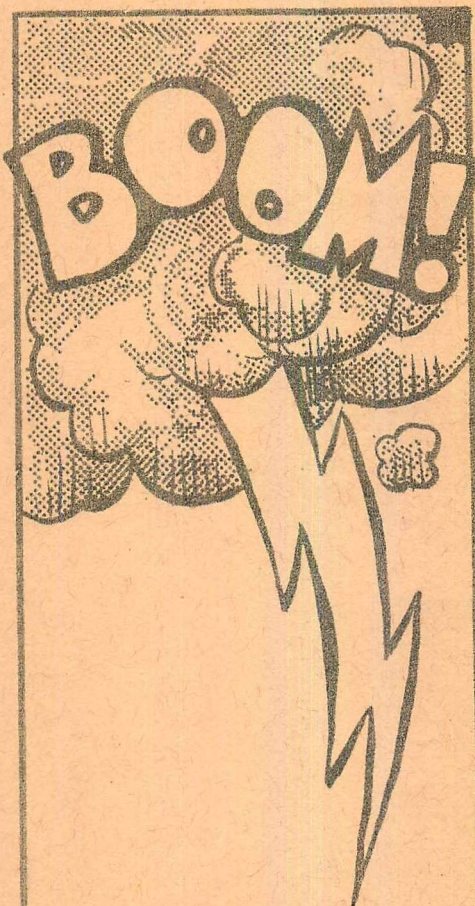
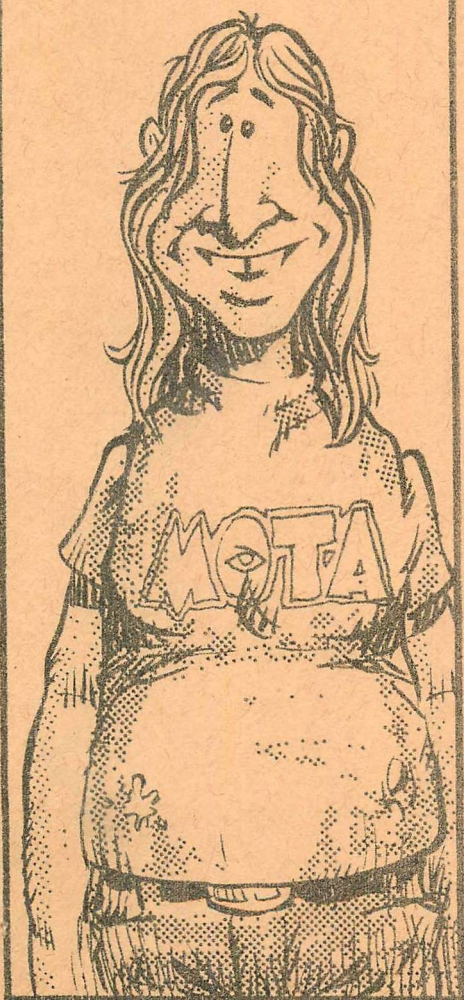
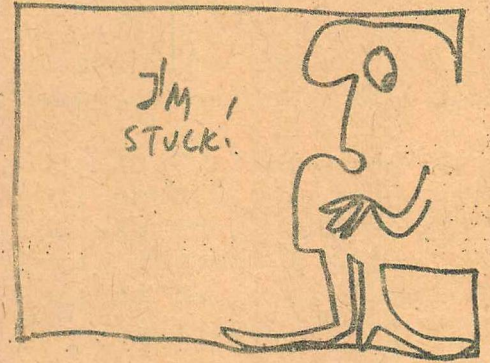


MEANWHILE IN
DOWNTOWN ARLING-
TON, A MILD
MANNERED FAN
EDITOR SPEAKS
THE MAGIC
WORD...



dan STEFFAN





The sticky quarter is no more.

Now, now don't get unstuck, I assure you that this fact was as much a surprise to me as it is to you. I cannot help but mourn its passing; it was just a few years ago, when I was between jobs (and how), that the sticky quarters coming for MOTA were the only income that I had. I wasn't publishing at that moment but I did keep track of the names and mailed copies of the next issue to all those who had sent me their coins. I cannot guess how many Cokes I've purchased from vending machines with those sticky quarters -- that is when the quarters weren't so adhesive that they stuck in the coin slot and failed to fall down the chute and trip the release lever. But those days are over now, the sticky quarter is a thing of the past.

It is always a sad thing to witness the death of a fannish tradition and sticky quarters truly are a Tradition. Years ago, back before my fannish activity began, yes, way back in His time, a copy of a fanzine could be purchased for a quarter. There were some faneds who would sell one issue for 15¢ and two for a 25¢ piece. It was common practice to mail your coins to a fanzine editor. The fans of the time, however, were well aware that the sound of loose change rattling around in an envelope might tempt a letter carrier to steal those valuable nickels, dimes and quarters. So a plan was developed: a fan would tape the coins to a sheet of paper or a piece of cardboard. This precautionary measure gave these pieces of money an unusual texture. I remember reading how the neologism "sticky quarter" came about. A fanzine editor was in a store (or post office) and overheard one of the clerks refer to him as "old sticky quarters". Such an ideal name could not fail to stick. I cannot remember where I read that story or who it was who had that experience and I have been unable to come across it in several searches. (A little while ago I gave Ted White a call and during the conversation I asked him about it since Ted has one of the best memories for fannish traditions. He said he thought the term "sticky quarter" was coined by Dean Grennell.) Whatever, it certainly is a great anecdote. Still, I can't help but wonder what the mundanes thought the fanzine editor (DAG?) was doing to those coins. It must have provided them with hours of fanciful speculation.

The demise of the sticky quarter can hardly be called unexpected, since the warning signs have been clearly present for years; I just failed to pick up on them. In a word the cause is inflation. That term, which is one we are all too familiar with, is what causes the disparity between the quarter

in 1956 and the quarter in 1976. As the costs of fanzines have zoomed upwards from 25¢ to 50¢ on up to a dollar. Quarters can no longer buy fanzines so fans have stopped making them sticky. There is no such thing as a sticky dollar because there is no damn need to tape a dollar bill to a piece of cardboard. The new fan of today has no reason to use the sticky quarter method.

For me personally, sticky quarters have always been associated with Amazing Science Fiction. When I was first doing MOTA, John Berry reviewed a copy of it in the Clubhouse column he was doing. I was asking 25¢ for a sample copy, which I thought was a fair price. Soon I was getting lots of letters with quarters taped to them. MOTA has always been available for a simple request -- I just put a 25¢ sample copy price to help cover postage costs.

I also got some letters without the enclosed quarter which was mentioned in the body of the letter. Strangely enough these all came from the same fan. I can only assume he decided to work a money-saving scheme. He would place a quarter on a piece of paper which he folded and put in an envelope. Then he would press down on the surface and remove the coin. This left the impression of a quarter quite visible and also present to the touch. This was most strange in my opinion. I never believed that a postman would endanger his job in order to swipe twenty-five cents. The fan in question must have thought (hoped) that the fanzine editors, who are quite notoriously prejudiced against the post office, would blame the mailman and send the fan a copy of the fanzine. It's not his fault if someone stole his quarter, now is it? I don't know if anyone fell for his gambit; I didn't and neither did the other two fan editors who I know got similar letters from him. He is a fan who I will never knowingly send my fanzine to.

When Ed Smith was doing fanzine reviews for Amazing, he wrote about a later issue of MOTA. This resulted in more letters coming to me bearing Coke money. So when rich brown, the present Clubhouse columnist, asked if he could review my fanzine [He asked because he didn't want to deluge me with unwanted requests.] I said yes but asked that he list a 25¢ sample copy price. I chose 25¢ for tradition and to cover postage and to avoid getting letters from people asking for MOTA simply because it was for free. When the issue appeared, I braced myself for an onslaught of sticky quarters.

Those sticky quarters have not materialized. Oh, I am getting lots of requests for sample copies, but the fans are sending me 25¢ checks. Yes, I said twenty-five cent checks. Such utter foolishness! I am presently collecting a large stack of them for eventual deposit in my checking account. 25¢ checks -- the cost of the check itself can run around 10¢.

Perhaps these new fans are more cunning than they look. If they don't receive a copy of MOTA quickly, they can wave the cancelled check around and send the Better Business Bureau fanzine squad after me.

Things must change and nothing can remain the same. The old ways fall into disuse as they are superseded by new trends. The process of change has finally befallen the coin of the realm. The sticky quarter is slowly dying out while 25¢ checks flutter through the mails.

It's just not the same. Sure, I can fold a 25¢ check up and insert it into a soft drink machine, but I won't hold my breath while I wait for it to produce a can of Coke in return.

+ Terry Hughes +

REJECTION JOURNAL

BY ERIC MAYER

MARCH 20 - It's the first day of spring and someone very much like me is falling into a blackhole. I watch him tumbling helmet over magnet-soled boots into the "gaping maw", his spaceship a mere "twisted needle lost amid the unwinking stars, unreachable!" I'm taking notes. It must be the warm weather. The inclination of the earth's axis. The robins on the lawn. "Horror? The universe turning upside down...inside out...starry whirlpools..." He's accelerating. He's passed the Schwarzschild radius! Complications are bound to develop!

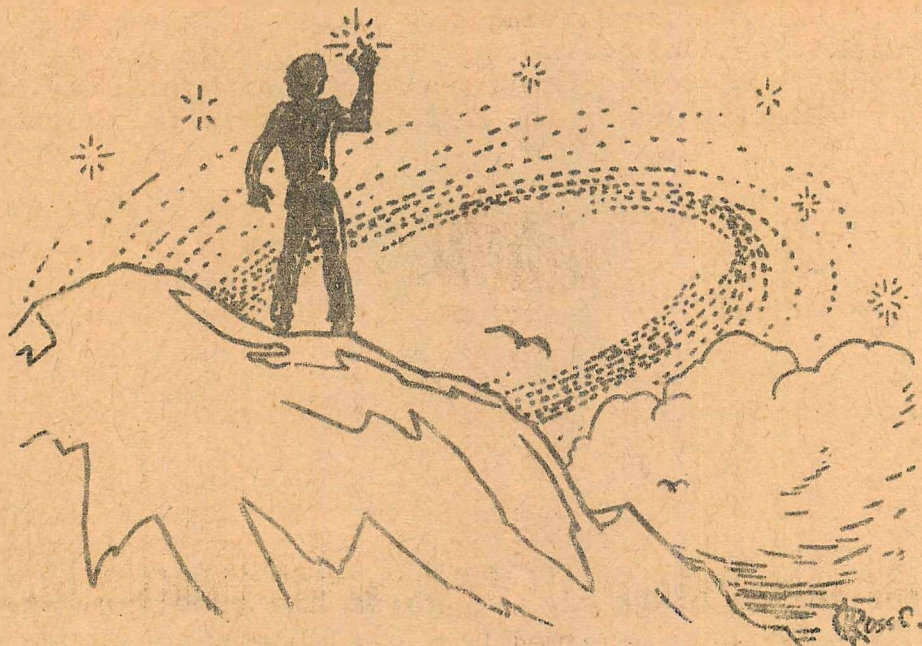
Last November I vowed never to write another word of science fiction. "Not so much as a 'zh'," I said. "That'll fix those editors. The bastards! Let 'em kick someone else around." A goony bird might as well resolve to stay away from airstrips.

Of course I never expected to come up with such a wonderful idea. Such a mind boggling concept. A plot so full of cosmic significance. I'm pacing the floor now. Composing frantically. "Event horizon rushing up...like an insane black bubble...like a black bubble of insanity...like a soap bubble of ink...like..." I pass my desk, break into a trot, round the bed, duck under the birdcage. "He can't break his descent. The universe exploding, fragmenting. Suddenly he feels - PAIN! AGONY!" I've banged my knee on the bookcase. Damn! This story is too big for my room. I head for the woods. Leg room. I've got miles of thinking to do.

MARCH 21 - My notes are finished. Page after page of scrawlings that no one but me could ever hope to decipher. I've still got some sense left. My typewriter has been pointing its carriage return lever at me all day long. "Down to work," it's telling me. But I'm not quite in the mood. I'm sure I'll be able to flesh out my remarkable ideas much more competantly tomorrow, when I'm rested.

Yesterday, I walked halfway around the mountain. My protagonist passed through the event horizon at the spring. By the time I reached the cliffs he was beyond hope. "Not even light itself, travelling at 186,000 miles per second, could escape the pit!" According to every law of the universe he was a dead man. Only I could save him.

I was winded by the time I got to the top of the ridge. Behind me the mountain sloped down sharply - a vertiginous drop. I made a mental note of the word. Useful in dealing with black holes. All the way through



the birch grove I was stumped. Then, at the far end of the mountain, it came to me. Perhaps it was the sound of the wind nosing through the pine needles, or the splashings of the creek, that put the thought into my head. NEUTRINOS! The only solution. Fast as light. Massless. Why hadn't it occurred to me sooner? For a moment I knew what a proud and lonely thing it must be to be Isaac Asimov.

If only I'd had my typewriter. I would've sat right down and started to work. Never mind the cold ground, the chattering squirrels, the prowling foxes! I would've written the story right then and there.

But by the time I raced home I was worn out. It's not a small mountain.

MARCH 22 - Last night I could hardly wait to get to sleep. I knew I'd wake up refreshed, enthusiastic, ready to leap out of bed, sprint to the typewriter and WRITE! Perhaps I was too fired with enthusiasm to sleep well. Or maybe I have a touch of the flu.

Health means nothing at a time like this however. I have to keep working, keep doing whatever I can. So I'm reading today. Charging up my depleted batteries.

I'm perusing old issues of PLANETOID TALES. As I peruse I grind my teeth. "Horrible, terrible, semi-literate," I tell the parakeet, who looks at me quizzically, now and then emitting noises that sound rather alien. "The plot's transparent, the dialogue's wooden, the characters are unbelievable. The author's a friend of the editor. There's no other explanation!" I'm getting worked up. I can't sit still. I keep reading. Every stupid simile, every dangling participle sends me flying out of my chair as if I've been stung. "This is too much! I can't take it! That something like this...a piece of garbage...refuse...mental excrement...in print...paid for...!" I rage. I yell. I throw the miserable rag at the birdcage. I'm feeling better all the time. Nothing inspires me like incompetence. I'm almost ready to go. My confidence is overflowing. I know I can do better than these idiot hacks. Just one more putrid story. That's all I need. I race to the bookshelf. I grab a magazine. I flip the pages.

Oh no! Oh my God! Silverberg writing for this! Impossible. Turn the page. Quick. Quick! Ah...Christ...too late! I've read the first sentence. I'm done for! My confidence imploding, winking out, in an instant. I consider sleeping under the bed tonight. I'm feeling sluggish.

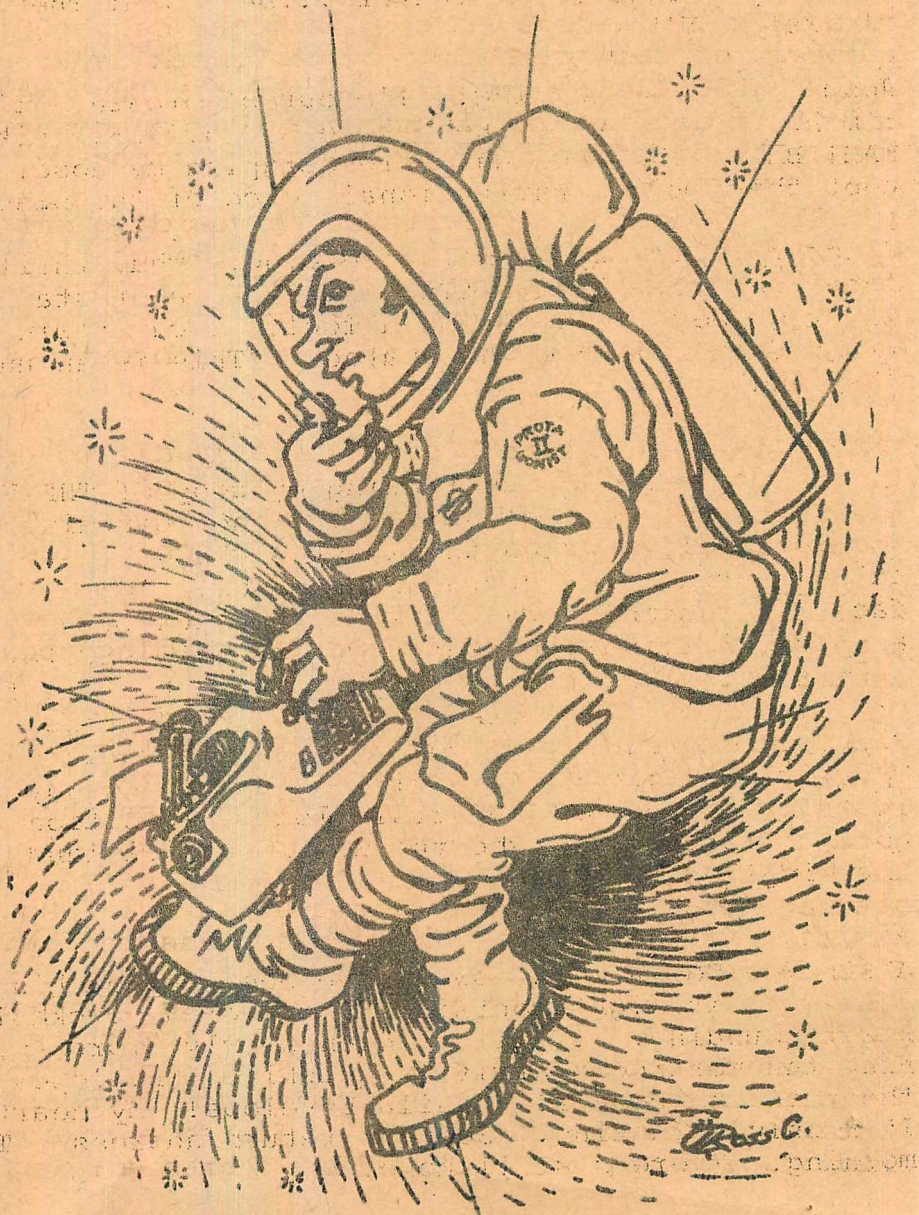
MARCH 23 - The sun rose this morning. "The hell with Silverberg," I told myself. I placed myself squarely in front of the typewriter. I put my fingers on the keys. THE VERGE I wrote, "By Eric Mayer." Not a bad start. I attacked the first sentence. Something was wrong. It wasn't there.

"I haven't named my protagonist," I cried. My parakeet, known as "the bird" or "little devil" squawked his sympathy.

I knew I'd have to find a name. Something appropriate for someone falling into a blackhole. It's been hard for me to build up much sympathy for a person referred to in my notes as X. Once upon a time, back when I had started reading sf and consequently began composing it (or was it the other way around?) all my heroes were named Rod. That would hardly do now. I'm not writing trash!

I've managed to find my battered copy of 3500 NAMES FOR BABY. Not a single one seems appropriate. "Zenos," Too weird. "John," Too boring. "Loring," "Lysander," "Dennis," "Bartholomew," No good. No good! None of them fit. It's as if the character already has a name, known perfectly well to me, that I can't quite remember. It's on the tip of my tongue! Damn!

Nothing left to do now but consult the final authority. Yes indeed. THE SPORTS ENCYCLOPEDIA: BASEBALL. Rows and rows of names. Real names. From all eras. Much better than the telephone directory. The pre-1900 names are especially good. Let's see here..."Ed Delahanty"... "Sam Thompson"... "John Clarkson". There it is! That's him: John Clarkson! Won 33 games in 1876. What could be more perfect?



Here I go! "Clarkson plunged deeper and deeper into the blackhole!!" Great. Perfect. Much better than "Rod". Now I can sympathize with the fellow. I can see his dark hair and...no, I can't. His spacesuit's in the way. No telling what he looks like. He's a mystery in fact. I realize this for the first time. I don't know a thing about him. Except that he's in a pickle, going down the deepest abyss in the universe, falling, helplessly, down, about to be squashed into a geometric point. Does he have any sexual hangups? A mustache? What are his politics, or shouldn't I ask? How can I write until I've answered these questions?

MARCH 24 - If you want to know the answers you'll have to read the story. In ANALOG. Or in THE YEAR'S BEST SF. I'm too busy to explain. I'm writing. Ripping out sentences. One after another. The typewriter keeps sticking. No way to free the carriage except to pound the top of the machine. Hard. I do it automatically. Like hitting the space bar. clickety clackety clickety BAM! clickety clickety BAM! WAM! My fist's bruised. It's bleeding all over the keys. The hell with it!

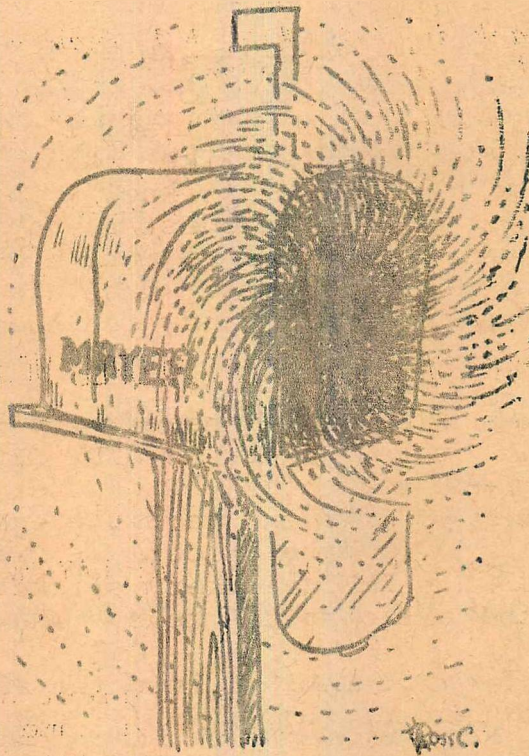
"He was being sucked down... BAM! ...into the vertiginous pit...clickety clackety...faster and faster....BAM! WAM! There was no escape! Clickety clickety BAM!"

Jesus this is exciting! I'm out of breath. I'm typing faster than light. I'm hunched over. Like a race car driver. Like a spaceship captain. BAM! WAM! BAM! The type bars are scraping my nose. I don't feel a thing. Except the "Awful gravitational force of the blackhole!"

Clickety clackety. What an ending! What thrills! What a shock! I can hardly believe I'm writing this. I can't stand it! I'm composing my Hugo winning speech. Don't be a fool. I can't win the Hugo. This is the first time I've been nominated. "This is an unexpected honor..." BAM! "the end" Collapse.

MARCH 25 - I have been reading my copy of THE VERGE. I have been reading it very closely. I am not certain how I could have managed to delude myself to such an extent. The story is not all that it could be. It has certain structural weaknesses. In fact, it is an abomination. In fact, it resembles the ravings of a lunatic. The disorganized ravings of a psychotic mind! Pathetic. Peurile! Pitiful! The parakeet looks out from his cage with curiosity. Why is the air filled with floating scraps of paper? And to think, I mailed it off this morning. To Ben Bova! Oh Christ! Oh Lord! How could I? Ben Bova is going to read this! The shame! The horror! The mail is already gone. No way to stop it. It's on its way. To Ben Bova's desk! My ridiculous composition. Maybe the mail truck'll go off a bridge. Maybe the Martians will land. Please! An atomic war! Anything!

APRIL 7 - For a week now I have been approaching my mailbox gingerly as if it might contain a bomb, or a blackhole. I sidle up to it, heart pounding. I pull it open slowly, force myself to look inside, scanning the morning's arrivals quickly. Envelopes, advertisements and... there in the corner! Manila Envelope! My heart jumps. I choke. No. Wait. It's only a fanzine. See the return address. Thank God. Not this morning. There's still hope.



Perhaps quite a bit of hope. After all. This morning I reread one of the stories in PLANETOID TALES. My third sentence was much stronger than C. K. Jarvis' third sentence. And I came up with several metaphors that make his look sick. Also, he made four grammatical errors. And I'm sure I made none at all. Besides these ---There's the mail! I heard the mailbox click shut.

No time to get my coat. The door slams behind me. What does a letter of acceptance look like? Is it blue? No. Those are utility bills. And it's not on twilltone. Maybe these yellow envelopes...What's this? Has to be a fanzine. The handwriting! It's familiar! Oh no! I don't believe it. My own handwriting!

There it is. No doubt about it. There's my story. THE VERGE. Come home to roost. The humiliation. Oh hell! Damn! Only a rejection slip. The heartless bastard! What does he know? I'll show him. I'll never write another word of science fiction. Not so much as a "zh". That'll show him. Never again! Not so long as I live. Serve 'em right. This time it's for real. I've passed the Schwarzschild radius. I'm invisible. I'm beyond hope. Never to be seen again.

JUNE 21 - It's the first day of summer and someone very much like me is falling into a quasar.

+ Eric Mayer +

"Time flies like an arrow.
Fruit flies like bananas."

-- Dan O'Neil

(Not so long ago, back in MOTA #15, Bob Tucker wrote a piece called "The Ballarat Express" that was an account of the post-Australian-worldcon outing to Ballarat. There were a number of responses to Bob's article, including a lengthy one from Mike Glicksohn. It seems that each person had gone to a Ballarat in a different dimension than any other person went to. Now JOHN J. ALDERSON, well known Australian and sheep fancier, turns the sights on his typewriter to the topic.)

ON! COOL DAYS BALLARAT PEOPLE WEAR OVERCOATS

or

WHERE THE HELL WAS THE SNOW ON THAT DAY WE WENT TO BALLARAT?

I would not normally have bothered to correct statements made by Bob Tucker (I have at last placed where I heard that name before), or Mike Glicksohn, but I feel in a way that justice has not been done to the fair city of Ballarat and that that bracing day in early spring has been libelled. It is not my intention to write an AUSSIECON report after so long a time, particularly after Mike has just issued an excellent one, apart from a few triffling errors which I shall correct as I go along. Which reminds me, Mike, my bloody hair isn't grey, it's getting onto red. Perhaps you confused me with John Bangsund who has a superficial resemblance to me except that he's a foot shorter, a foot wider, getting onto 58, has black hair (well, one can still see that it was once black) which he wears short, and doesn't know he needs glasses.

Now I am going to start at the beginning of this train trip, but before I start I want to say something. When I first got to AUSSIECON some kindly disposed person (whose name I shall not divulge) muttered, "Tucker's in the corner," so I wandered over to get something to eat and there was Eric Lindsay and several others sitting with a wizard old fellow muffled up in several pullovers and a cardigan with a scarf around his neck with the room temperature being only 73°. He was drinking from a bottle of an American brand of White Lady and saying something that suggested he was in great pain. My mind immediately went back to a passage I once read in the Bible (1 Kings, 1:1,2) and when I later discovered he was distributing cards seeking a partner for the old-fashioned gerontic cure, that he was known as "the Elderly Gentleman" and that in his report he described having a drink with Eric and myself, I have finally decided that this was the fellow I was being sent over to meet when I thought to find a table decently loaded with grub. My mistake I suppose.

Now to get back to this trip to Ballarat. I had driven out to Sunshine (that's where they make the Sunshine farm machinery of course) and caught a train back to Spenser Street (whence the country trains depart). However the usual half hour trip took an hour or so longer than usual and naturally I was in a panic thinking I would surely have missed the train. But no, they were still looking for it. But I did arrive in time to see Robin Johnson's Narcissusiphilia reach a consuming passion...he's all right now though, or was when I saw him a few days ago at BOFCON.

Finally the train arrived which looked suspiciously like the Vinelander which nightly (atrikes excepted) passes by the foot of my paddock on its way to the vineyards of Sunraysia (where they call them "blocks"). Well we piled in and some of us admired the once polished wood, and some of us admired the lovely old sepia photographs of one-time scenic spots of Victoria, now mainly under concrete and asphalt of urban development, some of us read, and the rest drank. As I had broken my glasses the previous night, I could not read, or look at the scenery (it would be impossible to have chosen a line with duller scenery), so I endeavoured to talk.

(It is here that I must correct Mike again. Mike being a Canadian where ladies do not attack gentlemen in public completely misunderstood me having to defend myself on several occasions from Shayne McCormack, who in any case is not really a "local" femmifan -- she comes from Sydney which fortunately is a long way away and not really part of Australia at all. Everybody knows that Major Mitchell first applied the name "Australia" to the northern environs of Havelock.)

However, eventually we arrived at Ballarat about lunchtime on a fine bracing day in early spring. Workmen were busy round and about doing things in their shirt sleeves until we got a bit of a spring shower when they donned their coats for the duration (as we put it here). Whilst the rest were eating -- I seemed to have drawn one of the only two tickets for the second sitting; my companion, who because I was without my glasses was leading me about, of course, eating with me. Prior to that, however, I sat on a rail fence in the sun and ate one of Sovereign Hill's excellent pies. I must confess that to my disgust they made tea out of tea-bags.

Well, as I said, it was one of those days for which Ballarat is famous. Birds were singing merrily, those that weren't sitting on eggs, young lovers were courting on park benches and ducks happily swimming in the pools. Certainly I don't recollect seeing anyone at the swimming pool, but then as I said, I had broken my glasses. Still I challenge anyone who was there on that glorious day to produce one Ballaratian or even one native wearing an overcoat. Even the Stocks' from tropical Queensland were not in overcoats. Flakes of snow indeed, Bob Tucker! When ever has snow fallen with the thermometer at 48°! If you foreigners thought Ballarat was cold that day, then no wonder your part of the world is in such a mess.

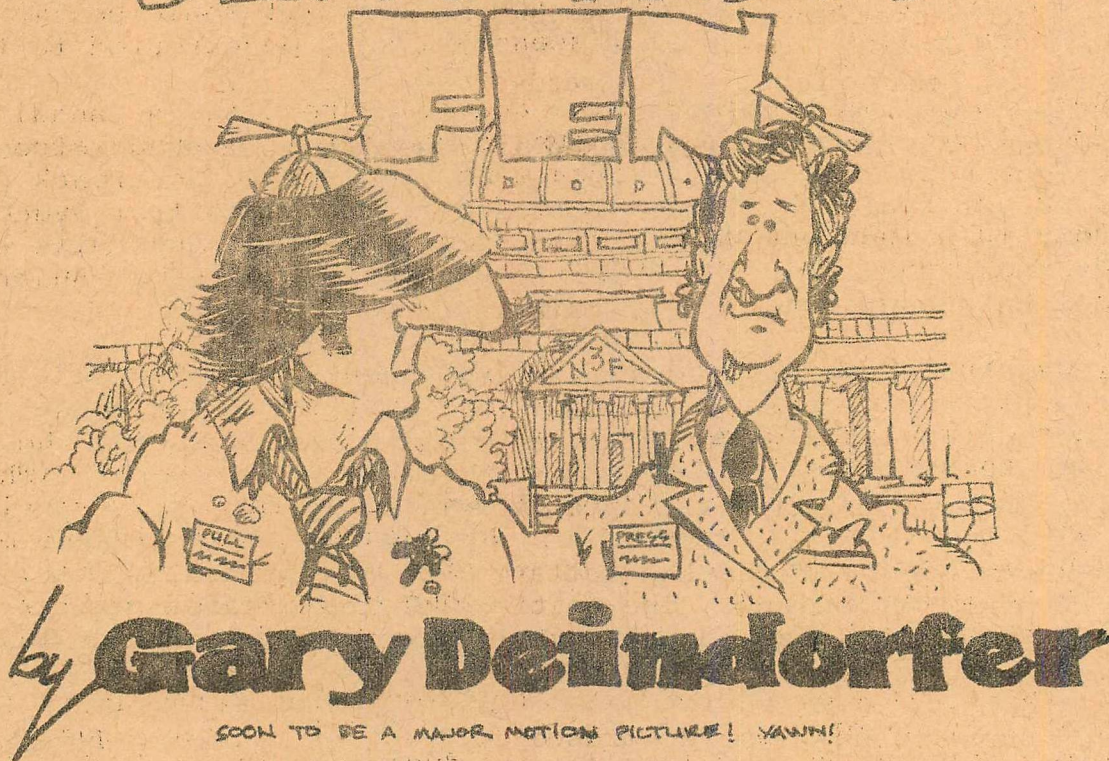
Actually, when we have a worldcon at Havelock, you'll really all get to know what it's like to have an icicle on the end of your nose.

When we got back to the train, as several writers have remarked, the carriages had been provided with foot-warmers, which they have all said were filled with hot water. Come off it boys! Didn't you all notice that those foot-warmers were completely sealed? They are not filled with hot water and I'm not going to tell you how they operate. Why should I betray my country's latest technology?

On the way back we stopped at Melton for a while. This was because the crew of the train had discovered that Dennis and Del Stocks had missed the train so they waited for them to catch up. This is quite usual practice in Victoria with the railways.

These triffling corrections are just to put the story right. I suggest the next time globe-trotting fans go to Ballarat that you follow the Scriptural advice and "pray that your flight be not in winter."

ALL THE SERCONIST'S



It was a sleepy day in September. It was Labor Day weekend. It was Worldcon weekend. Wordsworth and Bardstone lounged around the newsroom of FANDOM'S LEADING NEWSZINE, fandom's leading newszine. They were shooting spitballs at each other. "You can't write worth dogshit," said Wordsworth to Bardstone. "You can't write worth dogshit," said Bardstone to Wordsworth.

Just then the Editor-in-Chief of FANDOM'S LEADING NEWSZINE, Bradley Benjamin III, burst into the newsroom like Halley's comet 10 years early. "Alright, you cocksuckers. Get down to the N3F Hospitality Room double pronto. There's been a break-in. Find out about it, or I'll have your asses on the chopping block!"

Wordsworth and Bardstone hightailed it over to the Ritzo Hotel where the Worldcon was manifesting itself. "This could be BIG!" exclaimed Wordsworth. "Big as your cock," said Bardstone cynically, holding one finger an inch away from the other finger.

They came upon a crowd of angry fans milling around the door to the N3F Hospitality Room, holding four dark skinned men by the scruffs of their necks. The men were naked but for G-strings.

"Press," said Wordsworth and Bardstone, pencils and notepads in action position. "Shoot!"

A fan spokesman for the group declaimed, "We caught these guys in the N3F Hospitality Room with paper bags full of cockroaches. They were letting them loose. They were bugging the place."

"Hey, let's arraign these guys right here," said one head. "It'll be a Head Arraignment."

"Who are you?" asked the fans.

"We uns be....Patagonians," they said shyly.

"Hey, do you guys really sleep naked in freezing weather?" asked Wordsworth.

"That's irrelevant," observed Bardstone.

"Why were you bugging the N3F Hospitality Room?" asked Wordsworth.

"We was told to," said the Patagonians.

"By whom?" asked the two crusading reporters in unison.

"We can't say, mans," said the Patagonians.

Just then Bardstone noticed the letters "F.I.B." stencilled on the G-strings of the Patagonians. The initials of the dreaded secret police agency of the mysterious and malevolent Serconist, The Fan Infiltration Bureau.

"You don't have to say," said Wordsworth.

"Race you back to the office!" yelled Bardstone.

"They're Patagonians and we can link them up with the F.I.B.," said the intrepid duo to Bradley Benjamin III.

"Jeezus Crystals! This could be the biggest thing since Kate Smith's asshole!" exclaimed Benjamin.

"You sure do have a way with words," said the two relentlessly investigative fan reporters.

"Write the story and write it pronto or I'll have your asses on the chopping block!" yelled Bradley Benjamin III.

"Yes sir!" yelled back the fearless twosome as stirring music welled up in the background.

The story read:

This afternoon at the Ritzo Hotel four Patagonians did a nasty, nasty thing. They tried to bug the N3F Hospitality Room at the Worldcon. They were apprehended by some outraged head fans, or fan "heads". They were discovered to have links with the dreaded Fan Infiltration Bureau.

Bradley Benjamin III read the story aloud to his 25 co-editors. "This sucks!" he screamed at Wordsworth and Bardstone. "I want sources! Get me sources or I'll have your asses on the chopping block!"

Hours later, the moon floated drunkenly in a Ripple sky. Little birdies twittered and twirped as they stood on twigs growing on trees. This is known as setting a mood.

"What have you two fuckups got for me?" asked Bradley Benjamin III in his inimitably caustic, yet warm hearted, manner.

"Worcestershire," said Bardstone.

"Roguefort," said Wordsworth.

"A-1," said Bardstone.

"Blue cheese," said Wordsworth.

"I said get me sources, you ninnies! Not sauces, sources!" exploded Benjamin cinematically.

Wordsworth and Bardstone sat around the newsroom of FANDOM'S LEADING NEWS-ZINE, fandom's leading newszine. Shooting spitballs at each other.

"Can you think of anybody?" asked Bardstone.

"I don't know anybody," said Wordsworth.

"Me neither," said Bardstone.

"It's hard to do investigative reporting without sources," said Wordsworth.

"Even harder than without sauces," said Bardstone.

Then a lightbulb lit up above Wordsworth's head. "Hey! Unless...unless.."

"Yes? YES?" panted Bardstone expectantly in a Dustin Hoffmanesque way.

"Well," confided Wordsworth in a Robert Redfordesque manner, "Don't tell anybody I told you, but I used to shoot pool once in a while with a guy who is in the innermost circle of the Serconist's cabal. And yet he's a real nice guy, a regular Joe. He told me what a creep the Serconist is. He leaked impressive hints to me now and then, but he said never to quote him. He said to keep him on deep background, as us reporters call it. He always looked like he was ready to catch forty winks, so I have picturesquely named him to myself Deep Sleep. However, others will pick up on this apt nickname."

"Get in touch with him, man! Get on it! Otherwise...all fandom will be plunged into war!" screamed Bardstone, going cinematically manic.

Wordsworth got in touch with Deep Sleep, letting his fingers to the walking through the Yellow Pages. They worked out an arrangement. Whenever Wordsworth wanted to talk to Deep Sleep, he hung an anchovy pizza from his mailbox. Then he walked fifty blocks and stood and waited in an alleyway between a Chinese laundry and a massage parlor.

Deep Sleep arrived an hour later, dressed in a sealskin suit, a paper-bag over his head. "That pizza was really good, Wordsworth. Okay, what do you want to know."

"Let's get down to brass tacks," said Wordsworth. "Did the Patagonians really work for F.I.B.?"

"I could say yes, I could say no," replied Deep Sleep in his maddening, elliptical way.

"Animal, vegetable, or mineral?" asked Wordsworth.

"Vegetable. The biggest vegetable of them all," said Deep Sleep.

"Then that means...that means..." whispered Wordsworth, aghast.

"Goes to the very top," replied Deep Sleep, falling asleep in the alleyway.

Wordsworth and Bardstone sat in Bradley Benjamin III's sanctum sanctorum, surrounded by his 25 co-editors. "We have it on deep and sleepy authority that it goes to...the very top," they said in faultless unison.

"Jesus Rice Crispies! I'll be a bugged chicken," exclaimed Benjamin. "You mean the Serconist himself! Goodness gracious. My oh my oh my. Can you prove it?"

"You bet your hairy ass, as we news-people like to say, indicating we're 'regular fellows'," replied Wordsworth and Bardstone.



Everybody in Benjamin's innermost office leaned back in their chairs and imagined it. The Serconist himself, the most sercon creature in the world, he of the weird hairline and the 5 o'clock shadow and the two hands held aloft in the "V" signal. Once the Secret Master of Fandom had been a droll, warmhearted, immaculately faanish fellow. But a Darkness had fallen upon the microcosm. The Evil One came out of his hiding place in Mordor. Fandom fell under the loathsome influence of the new Secret Master, who, it was hinted, had disposed of the good Secret Master. The mysterious Serconist, surrounded by his flunkies.

"We've got the goods on him now," said Bradley Benjamin III. "Caught with his hands in the toilet."

"Hoist by his own jockstrap," said the intrepid reportorial twosome.

"It'll make a great lead story," said a co-editor.

"And a better book," said another co-editor.

"And a better paperback," said another co-editor.

"And a helluva fucking good movie," said Bradley Benjamin III. "Get out there and nail him, boys, or I'll have your asses on the chopping block!"

Wordsworth and Bardstone ran out into the mystical embracing night, their hair blowing brave in the wind. They would tell the whole story, the Serconist would leave in abject shame for San Clemente, and faanishness would return to the land.

+ Gary Deindorfer +

BRITAIN IS FINE IN '79

changes of address:

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Eric Mayer, 175 Congress St., #5-F, Brooklyn, NY 11201
Peter Roberts, 18 Westwood, Cofton, Starcross, Nr. Dawlish, Devon, U.K.

Please note that Peter Roberts has taken over the British newszine, CHECKPOINT, which is available for 6/\$1 airmail, and is highly recommended to everyone.

PETER ROBERTS FOR TAFF!

ADELAIDE IN '83



BOB TUCKER
34 Greenbriar Dr.
Jacksonville, IL 62650

For the past many issues of your sterling "fanzine" I have been reading strange letters from a certain Mr. "Chuch Harris" of Daventry (he used to live at Rainham) concerning his yearning for a space ship to be named after him. And although the matter isn't too clear to me, he may also want a horse to be named after him.

This strikes me as most odd. I had been told that these bloody colonials were strange blokes but I never imagined one of them wanting his name painted on a spaceship, or even a horse.

In the interest of international relations, I have done something about the matter. Unless a certain Mr. "Ben Bova" loses the manuscript, or sets fire to it, some future issue of a little fanzine called "Analog" will publish a short story entitled "The Near-Zero Crime Rate on JJ Avenue." That story lacks a space ship but it does contain a robot, a horse off-stage acting as a spear carrier, and a few human characters doing plotty things with the plot. Very dramatic, sensitive and probing, and all that.

Mr. "Chuch Harris" of Daventry (he used to live at Rainham) will be both pleased and surprised -- mostly surprised -- when he reads it. Perhaps we will hear no more about space ships. Or horses.

Meanwhile if his very charming wife (a most lovely lady!) will forward her given name and her secret mail address, she will learn something to her advantage. I was very touched by her recommendation in the 19th edition of your "fanzine", and am now doing the preliminary research on this winter's book.

GARY DEINDORFER
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Thanks for MOTA #19. And we start off with some more fine cover art by Dan Steffan. Dan seems to continue to hone his artwork to a higher and higher degree of stylistic inimitability. He's my favorite fan cartoonist. And I look forward to the

doubtlessly zany illustrations he should supply to accompany my forthcoming MOTAstchick.

I see that the happy drinker on the cover has a glass with a moose stencilled on it. Moose jokes seem to be in the air in fanzines lately. I am in

the dark concerning their origin and point. As in the dark as I was last year this time over the MOTA nose jokes. This is where fans who attend club meetings and cons have an advantage over fans like me who mainly just read fanzines and whose fan friends they do visit (such as the Garbers) are no more up on those moose and nose jokes than they (me) are (is) (am).

To confess to miss the point of an ingroup joke is to be fannishly out of it, of course. I can see myself showing up at some fanclub meeting and asking, "Hey, what are these moose jokes about?" And ten fans fall down on the floor laughing themselves silly: "You don't know what...hahahaha!... you don't know...hawhawhawchokeshpumpff...what the moose jokes mean..... chokesplutterkaffkaffkaff...." And like that.

(Dave Piper made a similar inquiry about the "mini-moose" on last issue's cover. Frankly it is not surprising that you and Dave and the others who remained silent did not realize the Important Moose Figure. Only those fans who have visited the Hughes Underground Fanzine Factory can truly appreciate the humor of it. The moose on the glass is Bulwinkle, the well known American television cartoon character. For a while a store near me was giving away free glasses with every 29¢ coke purchased. Since I drink a lot of coke, I ended up with a Vast Quantity of 16 oz. glasses with cartoon characters on them. Besides Bullwinkle, there are also glasses with Rocky the Flying Squirrel, Boris Badenoff the Evil Spy, and Natasha the Assistant Evil Spy. Thus the Miniture Moose Mystery is solved. Of course, mine is not the only moose mythos: there is also the Minneapolis Moose, who actually lives in Connecticut. However, that is another story. Tune in next issue.)

LESLEIGH LUTTRELL
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Tom Perry's "Mein Con" is one of the best things I have read in a fanzine in a long time. It is not only one of the most personal, honest, con reports I have ever read, but it seems to say all the important things there are to say about that

particular convention, about conventions in general and about fandom. What a beautiful combination of fan history, personal revelation and report on current happenings in fandom! What did you ever do to deserve getting such a fine piece? (That's a rhetorical question; I know how you get people like Tom back into fandom. Persistence.) After all, I was one of the people who published 'the other Quark'. I think what I like most about the article is the picture it presents of the continuity of fandom. No one who was ever a fan is really forgotten. Names of fans and fanzines stay around in fannish memory forever, perhaps merely to haunt people with the idea that someone somewhere still remembers their adolescent follies, but more importantly, it means that you can always come back to fandom and find someone that remembers you, someone who has heard of your fanzine, some new fans who think you are a living legend.

Reading a piece like this makes me wonder what a sociologist would make of fandom. Certainly there is no simple hierarchy. Willis is a legendary BNF to us all, of course, but perhaps more so to Tom Perry than most. Tom Perry is a legendary BNF to some of us; obviously he is one to you and those of your readership who are really interested in fanzines and fan history. Terry Hughes is a legendary BNF to some fans now, for printing things like this. But things aren't that simple. You were introducing Tom Perry to all the people you thought he might want to meet at the Mid-americon; were a sort of card of entrance for him back into fandom, yet in a simple hierarchy he surely would rank higher than you! Well, fandom isn't simple; it's just a system that provides us with the best friends anyone can hope to have.

ROB JACKSON
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United Kingdom

Fascinating and very personalised conreport by Tom Perry. Truly a personal view, more so than most of the "What-I-did-on-my-holidays-at-the-Con" type convention reports so common nowadays both in the States and the U.K. Tom really described superbly the changes in attitude he went through -- he has a very clear perception of himself and his feelings, which few have and even fewer use as well as him.

Tom got one or two facts wrong about the football match. He says the team captains were Peter Roberts and Harry Bell, but they were in fact Malcolm Edwards and myself -- we should know: we had the onerous task of getting two bunches of anarchic fans organised to be all at one place only twenty minutes late. And on the field of play, things were different again. Each team tended to take orders from the most talented player on their side -- Roy Kettle for the Rats and Kev Williams for the Gannets. Also, despite Tom's delightful description of the result as a piece of aerial bombardment -- "Flyers Shit on Rats" -- the eventual result of the main match was a two-all draw.

I don't think our football match was any less chaotic than John Berry's. I particularly like John's technique of describing his total fear and trepidation then just mentioning in passing that he happened, by accident apparently, to score the first two goals in the match. This technique of appearing to run himself down while actually indulging in an orgy of self-congratulation was very charming and well-done -- a sort of backhanded self-denigration, like throwing oneself in a dungheap and coming out smelling of roses.

John's wasn't the only football match where confusion arose over which side someone should play for. Ian Maule began life as a Gannetfan, but moved to London, joined the Rats, also attends Kitten meetings and is a fully paid up Birmingham Group member. He is thus a Rat Gannet Kitten Brummie. This is something like a chicken duck cat, except that instead of going Cluck Quack Meeuw when accidentally trodden on, it squeaks "Checkpoint" at infrequent intervals.

BUZ BUSBY
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The Fugghead One-Way Exchange Program (FOWEP) was in a sense anticipated some years ago with the suggestion of "Half-TAFF". The term was not precise, since the idea was to take the recipient of the *honor* halfway to England. Then, after the British convention in question, the recipient would presumably be picked up and returned to the U, S, and A. Or maybe not. The prime candidate, as I recall, was G M Carr.

I do dig MOTA a lot -- in a sea of serconism, of zines dedicated to higher criticism and semi-pro market reports and even the printing of amateur fiction, MOTA shines as a pristine isle of fannish joy. (For Sale, Cheap -- Mixed Metaphors.) I don't have anything against Sercon as an expression of interest in the SF field -- I mean, I get paid *money* for writing the stuff and I hope people take it seriously. But to find all the fanzines full of it -- that's like going on vacation to talk Shop, and the hell with it. So thanks be to MOTA.

Tom Perry's ConRep in #19 is absolutely beautiful. I particularly enjoy the coincidence that he bitches (and rightly) against the very same aspects

of Campus Cons that bug the living hell out of me personally. Like no effing telephones, f'CRY'sakes! (However, I intend to enjoy the upcoming Westercon at UBC in Vancouver, BC, Canada, anyway. We slans can move mountains when we put our tendrils to it.) And I loved the conversational tidbits after Tom did get with the Good People.

(The idea of putting on a Campus Convention has to be very tempting to any university science fiction group, but the realities of such a con will almost certainly fall far short of their dreams. Dormitories are simply not enjoyable living quarters.

While visiting with me, Darroll and Rosemary Pardoe surprised me by saying that most British fans do not have telephones. Now I realize that telephones are probably more common here in the US than in any other country, but I still cannot help but wonder whether or not they were pulling my leg. I am a sucker for such things. After all, when Leigh Edmonds won DUFF he told me that Australians never put any sort of dressing on their salads. I firmly believed this stocking-capped fan until someone told me I was being put on.)

TED WHITE
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Tom Perry's "Mein Con" is in most respects a superior con report, indeed a model to other would-be authors of con reports in its use of narrative and anecdote, but I was taken aback by a few of Tom's observations.

For instance, at one point Tom says, paranthetically, "Yes, that's how long ago it was -- back when the prozines had fanzine review columns." How long ago was that? Last week? AMAZING has had a fanzine review column since 1969 (in its current incarnation, that is); it's currently being written by Rich Brown. And GALAXY runs Dick Geis' column in which he reviews fanzines, among other things. Tom would have been better advised to ask his readers if they remember when prozines didn't have fanzine review columns -- as, for the most part, they didn't in the sixties.

I rose in a moment of shocked wrath when Tom quoted Willis saying "'For instance, if I had said, 'Dave Kyle says we can sit here,' I wonder how many people would have noticed,'" and adds, "I had to scan my memory banks for a full minute before this allusion to the Chicon in 1952 registered with me."

Wrong. Completely wrong. Bloody well totally wrong.

This is where Tom (whom I remember well as "Thom" in an earlier incarnation) falls down completely in his effort to be the well-rounded time-binder. It was not Chicago in 1952, but New York in 1956 at which the classic line, "Dave Kyle says you can't sit here" was born and entered into fannish legend. I know; I was one of perhaps a dozen or more people to whom it was said.

The 1956 NyCon2 was Dave Kyle's convention. And at the Banquet Dave had arranged for Al Capp to be a special guest speaker. In honor of that occasion, the banquet tickets were priced at \$7.50 or so -- in an era of three and four-dollar banquets (the Good Old Days before the current wave of inflation). A number of us figured we could get a better meal in a local restaurant at half the price and catch the speeches after the banquet. What we did not reckon upon was the fact that Dave had over-guaranteed the banquet to the hotel (plunging the convention some \$700 into the

red thereby -- a situation which subsequently required various people like Lester del Rey to pass the hat for the convention's sake) (doesn't that seem ridiculous in this day and age of worldcons which gross between \$50000 and \$100,000?) and was pretty uptight about the situation. There wasn't a lot he could do -- except to take out his anger on those of us who had not purchased banquet tickets.

After we'd eaten and returned to the hotel we began congregating outside the ballroom (in which the banquet was being held) in an area which resembled a foyer and which was separated from the ballroom by glass doors. These doors were closed and guarded imperiously by Kyle's minions, but the sight of us, well-fed and happy, was apparently still galling to Kyle. In due time he dispatched word to us: "Dave Kyle says you can't sit here." We moved a bit. Word came again: "Dave Kyle says you can't sit here, either." We were roused several times before we were finally allowed to go up to the balcony in time to hear Arthur C. Clarke, but too late for Al Capp. Capp's speech was for paying attendees, not the rabble.

We became known as the Balcony Insurgents. We numbered among us both Bob Tucker and Lee Hoffman. Others included Larry Shaw, Walt Leibscher, and, if I remember correctly, Boyd Raeburn, Jean and Andy Young, Larry Stark, and half a dozen more. "Dave Kyle says you can't sit here" became a catchword to us -- it so stung us that we elevated it to an ingroup joke, leaving the message on toilet seats and other appropriate places.

In 1967 I put on the NyCon3. Several fans who'd not yet discovered fandom in 1956 but who considered the phrase (by then fannish legend) somehow a part of New York worldcons, began leaving signs scattered about saying "Ted White says you can't sit here." I was not very amused; to me it was rather like someone who had been born after 1950 telling a WW2 refugee how funny concentration camps were.

(Considering that 1956 was 20 years ago and that Tom Perry was not involved in the event and that Tom had been gafia for some years, it really is not so surprising that his "memory banks" came up with the wrong response to that catchphrase. However, I do want to thank you for telling the story because I, for one, had never heard the background to "Dave Kyle says you can't sit here" before. It was always one of Those Mysteries.)

JOHN BROSAN
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I'd love to know who the fellow was that Perry mistook for Willis. "A look of smug arrogance..." Could be any British fan. I know it wasn't me -- I couldn't wear a look of smug arrogance, drink a pint of ale, smoke a cigarette and prop my feet up on a chair all at the same time. I'd fall over.

Greg Shaw's letter about Harlan Ellison was interesting -- The Portobello Hotel is obviously not your run-of-the-mill hotel. The night I met Harlan at a dinner party he went back there to find one of the porters reading a copy of my latest book, The Horror People (available for a small fortune from any book store). He turned out to be a horror freak and when Harlan invited him to his publisher's party, he arrived wearing a see-through shirt and covered in fake blood.

(Out of space again. I also got letters from: John Piggott, Frank Balazs, Gary Hubbard, Paul Anderson, Karen Pearlston, Dave Cockfield, Aljo Svoboda, Dave Rowe, Kevin Easthope, Harry Warner, Jr., Rick Stoker, Dave Langford, Dave Piper, Alan Bostick, Alan Lankin, John Purcell, Neil Ballantyne, Tom Perry, Alexei Panshin, Victoria Vayne, and maybe even Others.)

MOTA #20

December 1976

MOTA is available wherever feminine hygiene products are sold, or from Terry Hughes, 4739 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia 22205, USA, in exchange for contributions (written or drawn), letters of comment, interesting fanzines, and/or easily abused gambits (Leroy Kettle, please note).

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Tom Perry, British stamp-licker
Colleen Brown, confused



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