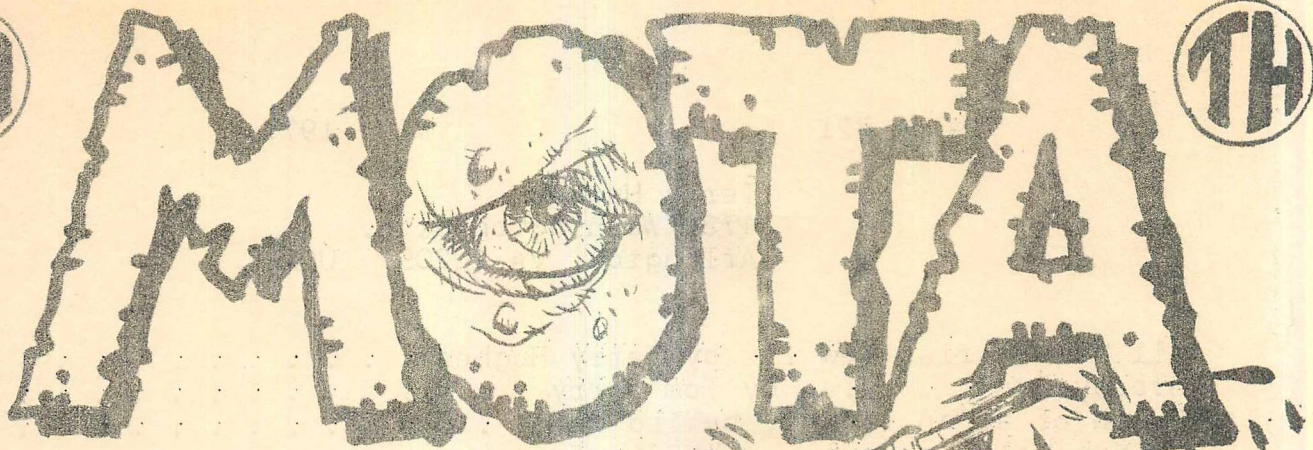




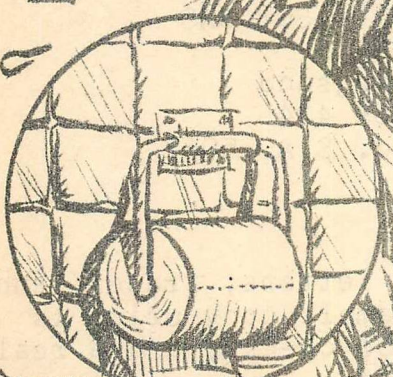
NO. 21



FEATURING



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DAN STEFFAN

GROK SPOCK



MOTA #21

MAY 1977

Terry Hughes
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Arlington, VA 22205 USA

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Copies of MOTA are available for contributions, letters, trades, and a sample for \$1.00 US. This Huge Increase in sample copy price is because of rising costs, the inconvenience of 25¢ checks, and a real bastard of an editor. Publications is unexpected.

Note: I am agent (U.S.) for Eric Bentcliffe's TRIODE and it can be had for a buck an issue.

What have I forgotten?



How would you like to become a science fiction professional? The thought brings a warm glow to your fannish mind, doesn't it? I suppose everyone has toyed with this concept at one time or another. Everyone, that is, except me.

I don't know why I never thought about it. Maybe I subconsciously classified being a sf professional along with other jobs that I just don't think about, like designing swizzle sticks or manufacturing marbles. (I certainly don't wish to demean either of these professions by likening them to writing professional science fiction -- I was merely listing professions I had never contemplated engaging in.) Then the other day (a Thursday it was) a thought came to me: Terry, why don't you find a way to make money from your interest in science fiction?

Admittedly the fact that I am presently unemployed may have pushed the notion to the forefront of my brain, but it all seemed so obvious once I thought of it. By the next day I had already thought of one or two reasons why I should succeed as a sf professional and there are probably more where those came from. (The Rotsler cartoon above of a young fan panhandling for money to buy staples is damned accurate. I have been forced to take a part-time job as an organgrinder's monkey (and provide my own red cap and tin cup) in order to afford the staples used to hold this issue together. Yes, I've worked hard to pay for the staples which some of you on my mailing list have ridiculed and berated. Not that I would ever mention it to a soul.) In a real sense it is only right and proper -- karmic if you will -- that I now profit from science fiction since over the years I have spent a great deal of time and money in producing MOIA, a journal widely noted for its thoughtful analysis and in-depth evaluation of science fiction works. I think I have it coming.

When I look at how Andy Porter has taken his fanzine ALGOL and turned it into a top quality semi-professional magazine by doing a lot of creative planning, using attractive layout, featuring talented contributors, and

putting in a large amount of sheer hard work, I can't help but think, hey, that could be me. Dick Geis has done it. Charlie and Dena Brown have done it. Hell, it's my turn now. Of course, I do not intend to go the route of the professional journal as they have done; I want to do a genuine sf magazine. The way I look at it is that if I am going to try at all I should take my best shot. Therefore, I am taking this opportunity to announce the forthcoming publication of TERRY HUGHES' SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE.

I am serious, totally and completely serious. Afterall, Asimov isn't the only guy in the world with a funny looking nose, and many people, including my mother, think I would make an equally attractive coverboy.

I have already signed a contract and placed a deposit with the Doublecross Distribution Company. (They distribute most of the magazines you see at your local news stand, such as North American Hog Farmer Quarterly and Nixon's Guide to Sound Recording.) All that I need now is material and this is where you can come in.

NOW YOU CAN BE A PUBLISHED AUTHOR! Yes, YOU! If you have longed to sell your first science fiction story, TERRY HUGHES' SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE is the answer to your prayers and dreams. If I am going to make a professional out of myself, I can help YOU as well. THSFM will pay \$15 for each story purchased, regardless of length. Admittedly this is not a great deal of money, but don't forget this is just an initial venture into the field by a magazine without a great deal of financial backing. Please remember, despite the amount, it will still be a *professional sale* and may even entitle you to membership in the SFWA or the SPCA.

If you have faced rejection for weeks, months, or years, despair no longer. You are assured of a sale because no story is rejected here at TERRY HUGHES' SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE. Right, no story is rejected. What easier way could exist to make money from science fiction? All you have to do is mail the story submission along with the compulsory \$25 reader's fee per story and you are on your way to professional status.

Of course, the birth of a new sf magazine creates quite a stir within the field. Here are the reactions of some established authors when they first learned of TERRY HUGHES' SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE:

Wilson Tucker: "I'll drink to that."

Robert Bloch: "Have you got another bottle?"

Bob Shaw: "Built the house with my own two hands."

Lee Hoffman: "Which way to the bathroom?"

Terry Carr: "Terry who?"

Wilson Tucker: "I'll drink to that."

F.M. Busby: "With my left hand usually."

James White: "Sorry, thought you were a girl."

Robert Silverberg: "No, I live in Oakland now."

William Rotsler: "First bake the cake, then you put the girl in."

Wilson Tucker: "I'll drink to that."

- Terry Hughes -

BLOODY CON

tom perry

"There going to be any big names as this convention?" the cab driver asked.

I knew from reading "Income Taxi" by Bob Shaw that there was no reason a cabbie couldn't also be a fan, but I hadn't expected to find one in Kansas City. "Well, Robert A. Heinlein is the guest of honor."

"Who?"

It turned out his idea of a big name was an actor in pointy ears. I relaxed, mumbling "uh huh" as he recited the plots of Star Trek episodes and intermittently glancing at my watch. I had rationalized spending the money for a cab instead of the airport bus by the fact that I would be able to register tonight if I got to the hotel before ten, and that would leave Saturday and Sunday free for enjoying my first world con -- what was left of it.

Originally I had planned to attend the whole con. My family and I had flown over from England on Thursday, August 26, with our vacation carefully planned. It included family visits in New York, a drive west to visit other relatives and attend Midamericon, and finally a swing south-east that would let us see the Okefenokee Swamp and the Everglades, culminating in a return flight from Miami to London just in time for the children to start school.

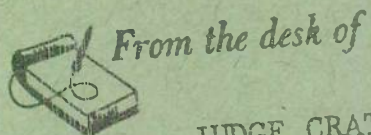
The Saturday after we arrived, my wife Alix awoke with abdominal pains. My sister-in-law gave us the name of her doctor and after negotiating with several answering services, I got her an appointment with doctor who was covering for the doctor who was covering for the doctor who was covering for him. This doctor examined Alix and sent her straight to the hospital, where another doctor, the head surgeon, arranged to remove her appendix the following day.

The operation was a success, the surgeon told me Sunday, but of course Mrs. Perry would have to stay in the hospital for a week and should stay in bed for three weeks after getting out. No, travel was out of the question.

So plans changed. Forget Miami, the Everglades, the Okefenokee. Forget visiting my parents. Forget the con.

A few items couldn't go. We still had to see our accountants about the tax returns -- incredibly complicated if you're working abroad -- and I had to pay a sentimental visit to the corporation that employs me.

I kept busy cancelling reservations and appointments and making new ones. Meanwhile I did my best to help my sister-in-law and her husband with the



JUDGE CRATER

Ethel--

I'll be off at the
WorldCon soon, seeing
old friends.

Please field all calls
and correspondence while
I'm there.

Don't be surprised if I
disappear for a few days.

JC

children. We had been lucky enough to be visiting Robin and Lee in Southern New Jersey when Alix had her attack. (Ghod knows how we would have managed if it had occurred while we were driving through the midwest or the south where doctors are scarce and nobody knew us.) They bore up like the marvelous people they are and if I hadn't known better they might have convinced me that stretching out our visit from three days to three weeks was no trouble at all.

One of the calls I made was to Terry Hughes, to tell him I probably could not meet him in Kansas City as we had planned. We also discussed what to do with the 200 "Britain Is Fine in '79" progress reports with which Leroy Kettle had entrusted me.. There wasn't time for them to get to Virginia before Terry started west with rich and Colleen Brown, so I mailed half of them to Terry care of the Muehlebach. The other hundred I kept as insurance, in case I got to Kansas City in spite of everything. Though it seemed a pretty forlorn hope.

Alix recovered rapidly. By Thursday she was faunching to get out of the hospital. As we talked over what remained of our shattered plans, she asked what about the science fiction convention. "Just one of those things," I said with an attempt at a brave smile.

"I'll bet you could catch a plane and still get there for a couple of days of it," she said.

"Well, now that you mention it, there are three direct flights from Philadelphia to Kansas City on Friday, and one coming back Monday morning."

"You'd better go," she said, like the sweet angel she is. She even managed to make it sound as if she were being selfish by adding, "I wouldn't want to live with you if you didn't get to go."

So I checked her out of the hospital Friday and took her to Robin and Lee's house, and then drove off to Philadelphia to catch a plane. And now here I was in a cab trying to get to the registration desk before it closed for the night. Somewhere along the way the cabbie had switched to SPACE: 1999 plots; now he resorted to identifying all the big name Republicans he had driven around during the con before ours. Finally he dropped me off in front of the Dixon Inn, across the street from the Muehlebach, at twenty to ten. I managed to get checked in, drop off my bags, and get over to the registration desk on the mezzanine of the main hotel by twelve before the hour, congratulating myself on my cleverness as I puffed up the stairs.

There was no one at the registration desk.

As I looked around, perplexed and angry, a man came with a dolly to wheel away some large boxes. "I thought registration was going to be open till ten," I said. "Oh, all those people left half an hour ago," said the man with the dolly.

Well, the cab ride hadn't been a total loss. I had heard all those Star Trek plots, hadn't I?

I got Terry's room number from the desk and called it on a house phone. Colleen Brown answered and told me which of the other hotels Terry was in. I walked a block to the Continental, weaving my way through about a hundred young women each of whom seemed to think I resembled the person she was waiting for, and at last I was in the presence of fans.

It was a pleasant low-key meeting of Missouri fans, and Terry turned out to be a caricature of the cartoons of him in MOTA, which tend to understate his long blond hair, big nose and friendly blue eyes. After a few disarming puns ("manifold destiny would be exhausting") he asked me about my plans now that I was back in fandom. Then he sat watching with wide-eyed innocence as I found myself spilling out my most secret desires and private ambitions. I had got well beyond the printed fanzine with a huge circulation and was just starting to talk about the secret camp in the Ozarks that would turn fans into slans when I stopped abruptly.

Terry hadn't cracked a smile though. Nor would he, I realized, if he had been listening to Degler himself. Terry is one of the greatest appreciators I have ever met; he makes fans forget their inhibitions and draw them out like no one else I know. Over the next two days I was to see him do this again and again.

About midnight the party broke up and Terry and I headed back for the Muehlebach. On the way I met Lesleigh Couch Luttrell, who with her brother Chris used to put out a fanzine named QUARK. She seemed embarrassed, having somewhere acquired the idea that I resented their using a title I had originated. I told her that a planet that can sustain two Chinas and two IRAs ought to be able to survive two fanzines named QUARK, she laughed, and a fannish friendship began.

At the Muehlebach that well known hitchhiker John D. Berry joined us and we went to watch a group called Duck's Breath put on several skits. The first, a takeoff on Conan, resembled the original in being too long and repetitious (the shorter ones later were far better) but that was all right since I used the time to chat with Ted White (whom I'd first met in 1964 when he stopped in Omaha on his way west to boycott the Pacificon) and Grant Canfield, Dan Steffan and Rich Brown, all of whom I was meeting for the first time. Rich and I had held heated exchanges back in 1964 over the FAPA blackball controversy, an exchange that had cooled down when we noticed that we were both on the same side. I had expected something different than this easy-going humorous man with the roman nose and wispy beard. What, and why? After a moment or two I realized my subconscious had supplied me with an image for Rich that actually belonged to a feisty little sportswriter named Hal Brown who had once challenged me to a fistfight over the spelling of a word. (I suggested the dictionary instead, and sure enough, he went and had a fistfight with that.) Do you ever make up images of fans you haven't met, and then have trouble getting rid of them when they don't fit?

Ted White had shaved off the beard that had made him look like a Lenin

with hair and grown a new kind that I had previously seen before only in pictures of Horace Greelyey: no hair on the face, only on the neck -- a sort of anti-beard. Later during a party in his room I pointed out the resemblance. He pointed into space like a true prozine editor and intoned, "Go high, young man!" The atmosphere at the time was definitely fannish -- you might say there was laughter in the air.

Sometime around 4 a.m. I got to bed. I was awake again by seven -- apparently my body hadn't completely switched over from British time. There was plenty of time to have a leisurely breakfast and get to the registration desk before ten. There was a place to eat right off the lobby of the Dixon, a place called the Pioneer Grill. Innocently I went in and sat down.

As if sensing my need to pass the time, the waitresses at the Pioneer Grill let me acquaint myself thoroughly with me surroundings before troubling me with a menu. Then I was given more than enough privacy to make a selection from its long list of mouth-watering dishes. Nor was there an unseemly rush about bringing the food once it was ordered. For a leisurely meal no place I know of can beat the Pioneer Grill.

In spite of all this thoughtfulness, though, it was only 9:20 when I arrived at the registration desk.

About 9:30 a man arrived and began to prepare himself for the task of registration. "Are you going to open early," I asked him, "to make up for closing early last night?"

"What do you mean, closing early? We didn't close early."

"I was here at a quarter to ten and there was no one here. Someone said everyone had left half an hour before."

"Oh, well, yes, we did move the registration desk," he said. I stared at him, then down the length of the tables joined end to end that said REGISTRATION. And back at him. He was the only component of the scene that had been absent last night. Obviously this man was under the delusion that he was the registration desk. "I suppose," he was saying thoughtfully, "that we really should have left a sign saying where we'd moved it to."

"Yes, yes, that might have been wise," I murmured, edging away lest he turn violent.

"But I'm not opening early," Registration Desk added quietly. Was that a fleck of foam at his lips?

"No, no, of course not," I said, gibbering with fear. I put several people between me and him, all of whom immediately turned into fans wanting to register when he finally did open at ten past ten.

Registering was like entering jail: a nameband was placed around one wrist and you were burdened with a huge heavy weight to keep you from running. This turned out to be a graphic-arts maniac's version of a program book -- 166 pages bound in hard covers and crammed with illos, articles, movie reviews, ads, bibliographies, biographies, histories, even a story by Harlan Ellison. Buried in all this was a page devoted to the program, but since the Midamericon Program Book was too bulky and heavy to carry around, a pocket-sized program was provided too. The Pocket Program was all you really needed for the con. I dumped the two-pound Midamericon Program Book

in my room and didn't look at it again until the con was long over.

Since it was impractical for its intended purpose, what the hell was this program book for? To satisfy, I believe, the same sort of urge that caused the committee to advocate formal dress at the banquet and the Hugo awards -- the urge to impress someone. This is on a par with the "Miss Science Fiction" stunts that were being held back in the fifties to get science fiction a few inches of space in the newspapers.

I wonder how many copies of this klunker the committee could have sold at six dollars each if they hadn't had a captive buyership?

When I finally did look through it, back in England, I did find a few items worth commenting upon. Perhaps I can justify inserting those comments here, since this manifestation of the worldcon is all those with non-attending memberships will see. (If indeed they ever do. When I visited the States again in December, non-attending members still hadn't received their copies.)

The George Barr cover depicts "a boy and his dog," the boy dreaming of several fabulous creatures which as it happens do not appear in the Heinlein book on the grass beside him, which is Orphans of the Sky. Could Barr have intended this as a subtle criticism of Heinlein? If so it is offset by the element I judge least likely to occur in such a boy's dreams: a vision of Heinlein himself, bald and garbed in what must be the dress uniform of an admiral in the Galactic Space Navy, replete with braid and ribbons and stripes and insignia and a presumably ornamental sidearm.

Inside, on pages 11 through 13, appear photos of Heinlein. The recent ones show him in black tie, accepting a Nebula award and embracing Isaac Asimov. Another dates from the second world war and depicts what I think of as "the other Heinlein" -- the one who wrote the books I like, the one who knew frustration and failure, the one who disclaimed any ability to prophesy the future. Beneath this picture appears a reminiscence of that other Heinlein written by Asimov, unfortunately annotated by the present-day Heinlein.

Unfortunately, but revealingly. Asimov tells how in 1942 Heinlein got him to come to work on Yom Kippur on grounds that not being religious he wasn't going to temple. "Bob stayed home at Christmas, of course," Asimov adds.

The Heinlein footnote contradicts him: "I did not stay home Friday 25 December 1942. During '42-'45 I held two assignments, one public and one classified. I don't think Isaac knew this." So there you are. He doesn't actually say that on Christmas he was out working at his secret job -- just that he didn't stay home -- but you can think what you like.

The footnote continues, "As for Yom Kippur '42, I excused any employee who stated that he-she firmly intended to go to temple service that day -- no proof required, simply an oral statement to me." There is no mention of asking gentiles whether they firmly intended to attend church on Christmas.

But back to Kansas City. The hundred "Britain Is Fine in '79" progress reports I had mailed to Terry never appeared. I delivered the other hundred, the ones I had brought, to Tony Lewis in the huckster room and then in wandering around happened across Terry, with rich brown's wife Colleen and their daughter Alicia. I tagged along, and in a matter of moments there I was again, in the Pioneer Grill, waiting for a second breakfast.

The waiting wasn't as bad in pleasant company. Colleen is a beautiful wo-

man from the part of Ireland known as Hong Kong (must check my maps for that) and works for a rival computer company, and Alicia is a delightful child of nine or so who can tell you the plot of every SF film she's ever seen, and will if you're not careful.

After a while though we began to glance around expectantly for our food. I'm sure the staff of the Pioneer Grill don't even contemplate preparing your meal until you betray this symptom of distress. Simultaneously we began to realize we had time on our hands.

Time enough for a research project, in fact, which is how we came to piece together the history of the place. Superficially the Pioneer Grill resembles any other greasy spoon that grows up in the canyons of a city to offer food during the odd hours when there's nowhere better to go. But such is not the case. After scraping away a century's accumulation of blueberry syrup from the isinglass cover of the Dead Sea scroll that serves as the menu, we learned the truth.

It was in 1854 when the Missouri Compromise was enacted. Covered wagons were piling up on the east bank of the Missouri River because the settlers were afeard to take their wives and young'uns across into the hostile territory, where John Brown was performing his unspeakable Kansas-Nebraska Act, which all too graphically depicted the union of two states. The federal government seized the dilemma by its horns and invited the settlers to a huge conference on the present site of Kansas City, beguiling them with the slogan "Missouri loves company." When asked about provisions, the government agents would smile, twirl their mustaches, and promise plenty of grub. (They spoke of course in the time-honored language of all governments, the Forked tongue.) Meanwhile a special detachment of the Seventh Cavalry was constructing the government's secret weapon: the Pioneer Grill.

Throughout the first morning of the conference, the settlers were addressed by the editor of the New York Tribune, who bore an uncanny resemblance to the editor of Amazing Science Fiction. At last, tired and hoarse, Greeley stopped inveighing them to "Go west and grow up with the country," and his even more weary listeners were allowed their first meal of the day.

Allowed to order it, that is. The sun was hot and the service slow and the only thing on the menu was apple pancakes with blueberry syrup. After each settler had resigned himself to ordering this abomination, the incredibly ugly women serving as waitresses would disappear never to be seen again. (They were actually not women at all but the joint chiefs of the Kiowa Indian nation, which was being moved from the rich farmland in the north to the Oklahoma Indian territory.) Only one table got their order, to set an example, and when the other settlers heard the wails of the widows they realized they'd been tricked. There was only one way out -- to cross the river in a shallow place known as the Gerald Ford, where ancient Indian legend held that it was impossible to fart and chew gum at the same time.

Only a trickle crossed at first, and then more and more, until all the settlers were on their way away from the Pioneer Grill.

All, that is, except one. W.W. Corrigan had spent his waiting time devising a plan. He turned the wheels on his Conestoga around, persuaded his ox to walk backwards and drove eastward out of the trap, waving his hat and yelling "Howdy!" as he passed the puzzled soldiers. As soon as he was out of sight he sped back to St. Louis, sold his wagon and went into the wholesale grocery business. His great-grandson later became the famous flier.

As it happened it was Corrigan's wagon that the motion-picture industry purchased early in the next century when they started filming western epics, and it was used as the model for all the Conestogas that roamed the backlots around Hollywood. The used wagon dealer hadn't been able to sell it to actual settlers; no matter how low a price he put on it, none of them would have it once they noticed that the wheels went around the wrong way.

The settlers that had died were buried on the spot beneath a statue of Greeley adorned with the slogan: "He put them out of their Missouri." Greeley was convinced of his great persuasive powers and continued to capitalize on his "Go west" speech. He later ran for president against the widely traveled Ulysses Grant but was defeated because Grant knew how to grow a beard.

--*

Sometime Saturday afternoon I ran into Paul Williams. I had last known him as a precocious 14-year-old in Boston publishing an excellent fanzine named WITHIN. He had dropped out of fandom and into the hippie movement (he wrote "The Death of Hippie" for the Village Voice in 1967), created Crawdaddy magazine and sold it, and was at the con as a reporter for Rolling Stone; Heinlein had refused him an interview.

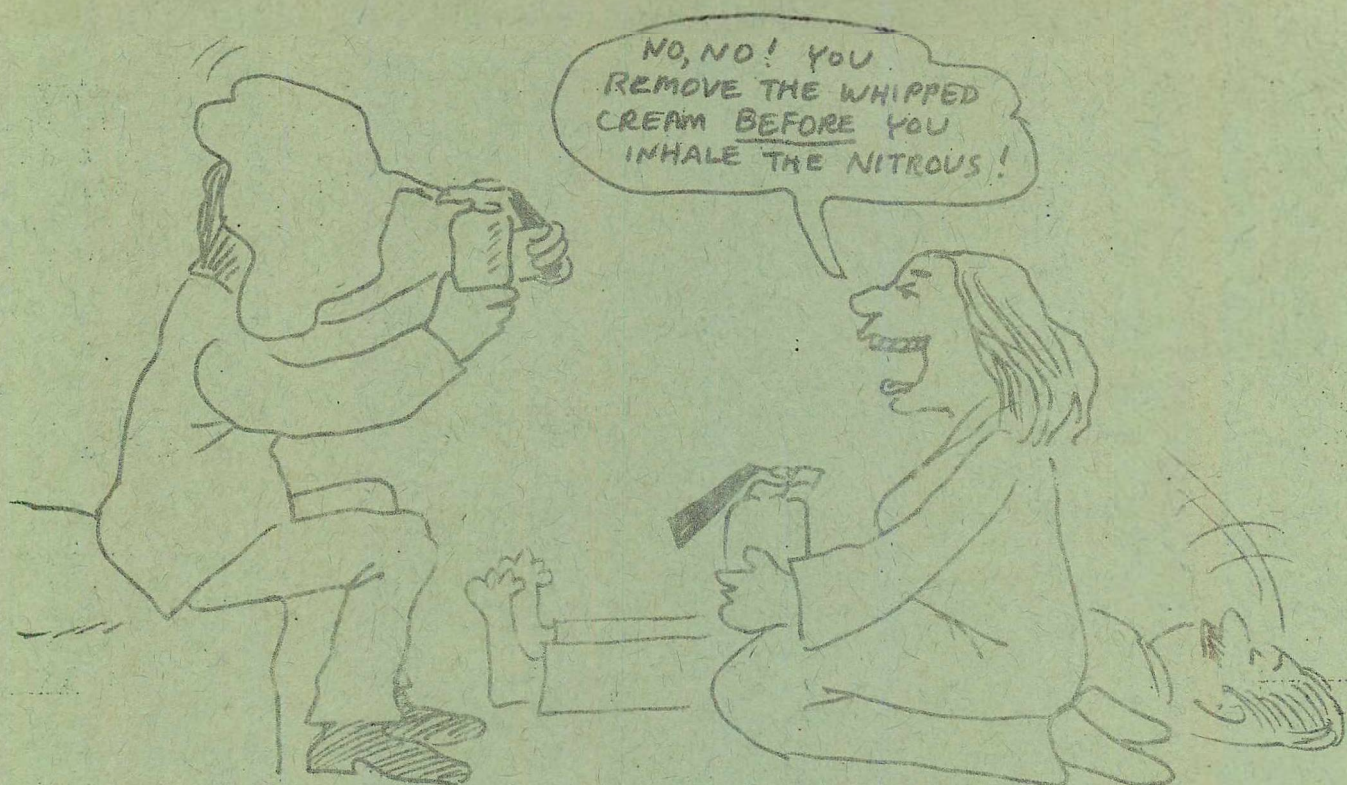
Room 770 -- the room that became so famous at the 1951 Nolacon that it was incorporated into the design for the Tucker Hotel -- at this con was occupied by a New York fan peddling minicomputers. To get to it you passed down a hallway of unfinished rooms. It seemed like a reflection on the growing prosperity of fandom -- those unfinished rooms were empty. At one time certainly there would have been fans in there with sleeping bags.

Terry held a party that night in the room he shared with his brother Craig, the Browns and their daughter Alicia, and god knows how many others. Fans and pros drifted in, some to stay, some to leave after a beer or something. I stayed, a strategy that allowed me to see as many people as I could want with a minimum expenditure of energy.

The costume competition came to us in not-so-instant replay over the closed-circuit TV system. Reception stank, but when someone phoned the desk about it and then passed on the management offer to "send an engineer up," the reply was unanimous: Forget it! The Missouri laws were such that even the beer was illegal under the circumstances (see pp. 6-7 of Progress Report 5), and besides the air was full of the sweet smell of ex-grass. The distortion tended to make the costumes more other-worldly anyway.

But some of us began to regret this decision when Sandra Patia von Sternberg appeared to fill the time while the judges invented enough categories to cover all the contestants, some of whom needed covering. Miraculously however once she got her clothes off the image tended to steady as if the set had mysteriously stabilized its vertical hold in sympathy with its male viewers.

It was a good party, rich and varied. Pages of Paul Williams' manuscript were flowing around the room, forming little pools occasionally when attention was diverted by an especially interesting topic of conversation or an important cultural event like the von Sternberg strip. Big name pros like Silverberg and Terry Carr made brief appearances. I was fascinated at one point when a gay libber from California described the revisionist fanhistory he proposed to write about Los Angeles in the forties -- apparently he intends to stand Laney on his head and show that FTL himself was an inadequate human being. (As who wouldn't be in that position.) I suppose he



THOSE WORLD CON WHIPPET PARTIES ...

Kinney

will entitle this attempt to put down Towner something on the order of Ah! Sour Latency! You'll notice that I'm purposely not mentioning how the bi line will read, in case it turns out to be a Daugherty project instead of a datary one.

For me though the high point of the evening came with the appearance of Bill Rotsler. Now pages of his cartoons began to flow through the channels already formed by Williams' articles -- there was a beautiful series showing the pens of various authors; look for it in a TATTOOED DRAGON -- and Bill's talk flowed, too, carrying us back to the war years when Ackerman was known as Sgt. Ack-Ack and formed a platoon of fans. It was so enchanting I couldn't take notes. Anyone who could find this man boring must be as shallow as that river in Nebraska that the natives call a mile wide and a foot deep. What's its name? Oh yes: the Platte.

--*

I had resigned myself to watching the banquet on TV, but late Sunday morning I happened across a notice saying two tickets were for sale from a guard at the art show. I hurried down the escalator to the art show and bought one. It was for table 54, in the fifth row, and banquet time found me sitting there watching the other tables fill up and wondering who else would be at mine. No one, it seemed -- almost everyone was seated and I was still alone. And then suddenly they arrived -- a party of dressed-up mundane-looking men and women. One of the men greeted me by saying, "you must have the wrong table."

"I don't believe so," I said, displaying my ticket. "It says table 54."

"Where did you get that ticket?" he demanded. "I bought it," I said simply. When I declined to tell him from whom he grew angry. "I'm afraid we'll have

to ask you to leave." I declined again, though I could just tell it wasn't going to be a pleasant meal. As the man glared at me I began to realize how strongly he resembled a retail dealer in cement footwear.

One of the women, apparently concerned lest he make a scene by killing me right then and there, took over the discussion while he sat glowering at me over his cigar. "You see, we arranged this party months ago. Suppose we could find a seat for you at another table? Would that work out all right?"

I took a deep breath. "Only," I heard myself saying, "if it's no further from the stage than this one." (I don't know what moved me to say this -- it must have been that old American spirit of 54 for me or fight.) Fortunately it was even closer. This odd group (two of the women wore name tags saying they were from Tahiti, and apparently spoke only French) made quite a business of promoting one of their number who originally had not been privileged to sit at their main table with them, and I took his place at a table in row 3. Their spokeswoman claimed they had owned all the tickets at table 54 but had given a couple away, apparently to people who would rather have ten dollars than sit with them. What remarkably good taste, I thought to myself as I changed tables. If anyone has heard of a missing Dorsai, I'd suggest dredging the Missouri River.

My new tablemates were an assorted group of pleasant young fans, including two young women from western Pennsylvania who represented a type of fan new to me: costume fans. Their sole form of fanac is to attend cons and appear in the costume show. I had noticed them last night in outfits that included huge realistic insect wings. Despite the poor reception I had been impressed by their costumes and was surprised to learn that the plethora of prizes hadn't included one for them.

Harlan Ellison was an inevitable topic of conversation. After winning the 1978 bid, the Phoenix group had announced that he would be their pro guest of honor. Repeatedly I had heard people say that if they'd known this beforehand they would have voted for LA.

When someone at the table repeated this sentiment to general agreement, I observed that though I was no big fan of his writing I had never been able to hate Harlan because of the hospitality he had shown me in New York in 1955 when he was starting his pro career and I was an unknown young fan.

"Maybe he's changed since then," said one of the costume fans bitterly. "The first words I ever heard him say were 'Get the hell off the bed.'" She went on to tell how Harlan had once tried to impress John Trimble by throwing open a closet to reveal his vast selection of outfits. "Well, Harlan," John had said, "you've got the same problem I do -- you can only wear one at a time."

After the meal Bob Tucker opened the speechifying by announcing that this was the fiftieth year since the publication of the first American SF magazine, and added thoughtfully: "Fifty years -- that's not too many." A dead silence greeted this Burbee paraphrase until I started applauding -- a commentary on how few trufans attend banquets. The sound of one fan clapping caused Tucker to point to me and declare, "I'm going to buy YOU a drink!" Try as I might, though, I couldn't locate Tuck afterwards, and I suppose I'll have to wait for that drink until I can enjoy it in the first-class bar of the spaceliner Chuck Harris.

Most of the speeches at the banquet consisted of tributes to Heinlein. Even Joe Haldeman was represented, thus destroying the theory that his work is intended to refute Heinlein's, though I did notice that he was careful to specify which of Heinlein's periods he admired: "Eighteen years ago I learned to type by copying stories from The Green Hills of Earth. It was cheating a little because I knew the stories so well I didn't need to look at the words."

Sitting through tribute after tribute, I began to wish one of the speakers would defy convention and offer some adverse criticism. Certainly there is a lot that could be said, and the formality of the occasion might prevent Heinlein from walking away from it (as he reportedly does whenever approached by Alexei Panshin). Celebrity and success have built a barrier around him which no negative feedback can penetrate -- and Lazarus Long himself has pointed out the unfortunate characteristics of a machine that receives only positive feedback. Heinlein today is rather like a collapsing star that has left our universe and left only a black hole.

Of all the authors that spoke, only Alfred Bester mouthed anything but pure praise. He commented that Heinlein "has a tendency to turn into the chief exec of the USS Toughenough."

Heinlein himself climaxed the banquet with a brief appearance (he had chosen to make his guest-of-honor speech after the Hugo awards). He displayed the bra that von Sternberg had draped over his shoulders during her strip the previous night and said, "I tramped through five hotels last night trying to return this." After his laugh, he got another by producing a pile of Tucker books and asking Bob to autograph them.

When the banquet hall had been cleared and rearranged, an exhibition of belly dancing followed. Even though this didn't have anything to do with science fiction, I consented to watch with Terry, rich, Colleen and the others since the first dancer, Dixie Tracy, was a friend of theirs. She was good. The second dancer wasn't nearly so good and the third must have been intending to clear the hall -- at least that's what she did.

There was nowhere a large party could eat quickly in downtown Kansas City on a Sunday evening, so our group split into those who didn't want to miss the Hugo awards and the Heinlein speech to follow, and those whose main interests lay elsewhere. I found myself on line with Terry, Colleen and Alicia, munching snack food we'd picked up on the way to the municipal auditorium. When we got inside we discovered that the con committee had reserved the first ten rows (of at least 40 seats per row) "for Hugo nominees" and the box seats at the front of the first balcony for the committee itself. Finally we reached the top balcony, only to find Ted, Grant, Dan, rich and others already there.

The ceremonies started. As each Hugo winner was announced he or she appeared on stage in formal attire, so that when Tucker read off the list of nominees for best pro editor, one of which was Ted, Grant was able to predict with uncanny accuracy, "Ted -- I don't think you got it!"

As a matter of fact Ben Bova won it, and accepted with a speech that drew cheers: "I'll never turn one of these down, but after winning for four years in a row I have to wonder if you aren't doing it just out of habit. There are a lot of fine editors around -- so I hope you'll think a little harder next time."

This made a nice contrast to Kelly Freas, who carried off his tenth Hugo with no apparent qualms, for five in a row.

Each winner tried to go off stage in the same direction they'd come on and each had to be redirected by Tuck into the arms of a beautiful young woman who led them off to stage right. At first it seemed amusing how each of them had to be physically halted and turned around, but at that point I was still expecting them all to reappear at the end in a chorus line doing a kick dance and singing something along the lines of "Happy Hugo winners we, assured of immortalitee." But they were never seen again, raising the speculation that the con committee had effected a Final Solution to the repetitive Hugo winners problem, and each tried to avoid that fate like a steer in a chute.

It turned out that the Grand Master of Science Fiction had not bothered to prepare a speech for the big special event (which, as Ted White commented later, constituted quite an insult to the convention). He set what seemed to be an alarm watch to go off in half an hour and spoke off the cuff for that length of time.

Everyone had been warned that Heinlein did not want his speech recorded, but there was no moral or practical reason not to take notes for the following paraphrase.

He reminisced, not very informatively, about his boyhood in Kansas City: he had delivered the K.C. Journal to the Carpenters, whose daughter had grown up to become Jean Harlow. He mentioned other famous schoolmates, such as William Powell and Sally Rand, and commented: "I left Kansas City fifty-one years ago. A friend treated me to a farewell dinner at the Muehlebach. I never expected to return this way."

Referring to his 1941 GoH speech at the Denvention, he mentioned that he'd predicted we were about to get into a major war. "I won on that," he said. "I would rather have lost." For some reason this drew applause -- damned if I know why, or why Heinlein would rather have had that prediction fail. At the time of the Denvention the British had been at war with the Nazis for almost two years, and Hitler ruled continental Europe. What would the world be like today if the U.S. hadn't entered that war?

It seemed an odd sentiment from the man who had refused to shake hands with Werner von Braun.

He tried to tell an anecdote about "a man who was twenty-one before his first birthday" and told it badly. It seems this fellow was born on February 29 and on succeeding leap years had missed his birthday by crossing the International Date Line, being in Russia when its calendar changed, and so on.

Finally he came to what was for me -- and I think for him -- the heart of his speech.

"I've seen slogans saying 'Peace and Freedom,'" he said. "Well, you can have peace, or you can have freedom -- but you can't have peace and freedom at the same time." There were cheers and boos. "Those of you who booed," Heinlein said, "presently you will find that I am right."

To back up this statement he added: "This is the two hundredth year of our republic -- the first republic since Rome. We have been fighting for 199

of those two hundred years." (He didn't mention which year we hadn't been fighting, but obviously by his postulates we couldn't have been free that year.)

"People speculate on whether there will be atomic wars." He paused for effect and added: "Certainly there will be atomic wars! And they'll be good for us! The human race was made for trouble -- we thrive on it!"

The rest was anticlimax. He attempted to sing "Everything's Up to Date in Kansas City" from the musical Oklahoma! in making the point that the "building seven stories high -- about as high's a building oughta go" still stood near by and was worth taking a look at. And he admitted to having a mistake among his predictions in his 1952 article in Galaxy. He had predicted great advances in housing, but "most of the people in the United States still live in masonry tents."

Suddenly the alarm went off. Heinlein cut off his speech -- in the middle of a sentence as near as I could tell from the top balcony -- and strode off the platform. The convention committee's special event, for which they had encouraged fans to don formal attire, was over.

It certainly didn't compare to his 1941 speech at the Denvention, "The Discovery of the Future," which has been reprinted over and over, most recently I think in Vertex.

But in a sense it had value. It was extemporaneous Heinlein, and if it was rambling and unstructured, it was also sincere. No one having heard it could contend that the message of his recent books has been garbled or misinterpreted. Heinlein means what he says. Jubal Harshaw might well characterize his creator's pronouncements as "speaking ex cathedra from his belly-button" but clearly to Heinlein they are selfevidently true and require no supporting argument. As much support as he cares to give them may be found in his books. (For instance if you want to find out how a nuclear war could be "good for" the human race, read the conversations of Hugh Farnham in the first part of Farnham's Freehold.) This never results in any deep examination of the question at hand because in Heinlein's recent books there is never anyone with intellect and honesty and strength of character who opposes the protagonist. Because of this, what could be stimulating and exciting science fiction turns into rubbishy propaganda.

The speech held value too for the insight it offered into Heinlein's own character. Years ago Willis wrote to someone in FAPA, "How can you contemplate so casually the prospect of atomic war? It sickens me to see nice people who would probably be horrified to see a little girl burnt to death contemplate so casually the even crueller killing of millions of them ... It's this lack of imagination and not real evil that causes man's inhumanity to man."

Here before us was the embodiment of this contradiction -- for the same Heinlein who thought atomic war would be beneficial to the human race had exerted himself mightily to encourage donations of blood to avert the "sort of unnecessary tragedy" that is "common any 3-day weekend" in the United States. Why the victims of traffic accidents should be objects of compassion and the victims of nuclear bombs not I don't know. Perhaps Heinlein has seen a traffic accident.

But there was hope. Heinlein had admitted being wrong in his prediction on housing. (Even though he did blame "special interests" for retarding progress

in that field.) So he wasn't infallible after all, even speaking ex cathedra in his naval way, and that meant maybe there wouldn't be a nuclear war and we could have peace and freedom at the same time.

To me Heinlein now greatly resembles that frequent object of science-fictional scorn, the head of the U.S. patent office in the late nineteenth century who allegedly resigned "because there is nothing left to invent." Humanity has invented more and more complex forms of social organization throughout history. Nationalism and capitalism are such inventions. Controlling atomic weapons and achieving mastery of space require new and better ones -- otherwise the human race won't make it. In this sense Heinlein's view of the future is as anachronistic as exploring the solar system in a hot-air balloon.

Nor is it harmless. The uncertainty principle -- that the observer changes the observed -- applies to the future, too. The men in Europe who looked forward with eagerness to the first world war helped make it happen simply by their belief in its glory and necessity. Those few who saw that it would be ruinous even for the "winner" have been thoroughly vindicated. Take a look at Europe's place in the world now compared to the power it enjoyed before 1914.

I thought I had been prepared for the Heinlein speech -- Heinlein had once been an heroic father figure for me, one I relinquished only reluctantly during the sixties -- but apparently the impact was greater than I had expected: rich brown practically had to lead me back to the hotel, and once there I stumbled down a short flight of stairs.

It was time to eat at last. The problem was to find something open. As a start we resolved that under no circumstances would we dine at the Pioneer Grill.

The resolution held only until we had established that there was nothing -- nothing at all -- open on Sunday night in downtown Kansas City except the Pioneer Grill. Then we reassessed our options and faced our fate bravely like true Heinlein survivor types. Amazingly, the service had deteriorated. I had been certain it had already reached its slow, sloppy and discourteous ultimate, but no. This tended to confirm the old Heinlein view that human ingenuity would always exceed the forecasts of timid prophets.

Then we began looking for some of the parties we had been invited to. The search was in vain. After several tries we settled on the eighth floor in front of the elevators, creating a mini-party of our own. Other people joined us. One was Dave Rowe, an English fan wearing a bright red outfit. As we were sitting and chatting about the fact that we had come almost 5000 miles to meet after failing to run into each other at several monthly One Tuns, young women walked by and complimented Dave on his Cockney accent, which he does to perfection. For my part I learned how to pronounce Bow Bells. I'm not telling, though. Come on over in '79 and find out for yourself.

Presently we were joined by a round-faced man named Tom Collins, who started trying to sell Terry a Goon magazine. "No," said Terry politely, "I don't think I'm interested enough in the Goons to subscribe to a Goon fanzine." "It's not a Goon fanzine," said Collins, "it just tells you where the Goons are now, what they're doing, when their shows are replayed, and so forth." Obviously this sounded quite a lot like a Goon fanzine to Terry, but he was quite incapable of coming right out and flatly contradicting Collins and

the conversation continued along the same lines. It was in a sense the tragedy of Terry to be defeated by his own strength. All during the convention he had been acting as a turn-on. Now he had turned on someone he couldn't turn off.

I caught the eyes of my other companions and we made our escape with excuses as flimsy as toilet paper. When we were safely out of earshot I asked in all innocence: "Who is that man?" Colleen Brown explained that he was in reality the Reverend Goon, who with his loyal followers the Goonies was revolutionizing attitudes toward humor.

We began exploring the hotel, searching for bheer, a resource which had been cut off abruptly Saturday afternoon by the blue laws of the middle west before those of us from more cosmopolitan communities had made a sober assessment of the situation. We found a small cache in a room where two young men were dialling a computer terminal into various dial-up computer systems around the country. "I'm the second best computer thief in the country," said one as he attempted to guess the password that would give him access to the computer. "Oh really?" I asked with professional interest as Colleen visited the bathroom and emerged with cans of the magic brew.

Shortly afterwards we found another room containing the remnants of a party. "I see you're from Philadelphia, Mississippi," I said to the host, quickly divining this fact by reading his convention badge.

"No," he responded, "Philadelphia, Mississippi, dammit!"

"Why dammit?" I asked, noticing that this word did indeed appear on the badge.

"They sent all my progress reports and membership card and everything else to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania," he explained, "and when I wrote letters about it they must have sent the answers there, too. I came to this convention with nothing but a canceled check." Philadelphia, Mississippi, gained brief fame in 1964 when three civil-rights workers were killed there by men who were subsequently let off in a jury trial, so I asked after Sheriff Rainey, who the FBI testimony had said was one of the killers. It was a relief to learn that he was no longer sheriff.

Eventually Terry and others joined us in our fruitless search through the hotel for an active, open party. It was like the last scene in a play as everyone gathered on the 14th floor, from Paul Williams to the fan from Mississippi. We accepted the inevitable and adjourned to the swimming pool, which was located outside between the two wings of the hotel, on the fifth floor level. As a retaliatory blow against midwestern morality, the pool had been liberated. In my case avoirdupois destroys the poise needed for skinny-dipping (as my wife's brother-in-law Lee Hart commented later, it would have to be called fat-dipping), but I admired the fans who did take off their clothes and jump in. In fact I admired them so much that one young woman commented icily, "Haven't you ever seen one before?" and I tried to pretend without notable success that I had actually been staring at the unusually interesting sun umbrella just beyond her.

About 5 a.m. Terry brought the 40-odd copies of MOTIA that I would mail in England over to my room in the Dixon. Four of us -- me, Terry, John D. Berry, and rich brown -- sat around for a while, discussing the con. John Berry marveled that my room in the overflow hotel cost only half what he

was paying to stay in the Muehlebach, right across the street; considering the crowds on the elevators in the main hotel, probably I could go from my room to the Muehlebach lobby or vice versa faster than he could. Finally we went downstairs and said an exhausted goodbye. After they left I allowed myself to be enticed once again into the Pioneer Grill by a group of fans around Ted White. I was trying to give these new friends the attention they deserved when a Pioneer Grill waitress arrived and demanded our orders. Yes, demanded. She stood several booths away and yelled, "You guys ready to order yet?" What little adrenalin I had left surged into my veins and I rose and explained that I had had enough of the Pioneer Grill for one lifetime, and went upstairs for a few hours of sleep.

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I was up around 9, made a last tour of the huckster room, and ran into Terry and the Browns in the lobby of the Muehlebach. They would be driving to Terry's parents' home in Windsor, Missouri, for a visit before heading back home. Then I went back and checked out and just managed to catch the airport bus.

Another fan was returning on the same flight -- Polly Riddle, the wife of Ira Riddle, who is the son of Charles Lee Riddle, an oldtime fan who was noted for getting out his fanzine PEON even while he was in the Navy. Polly wore the trinket that Heinlein had passed out to blood donors who attended his receptions -- a heart with the letters S F on its two lobes. She hadn't seen anything objectionable about the Heinlein speech but did inquire politely whether I had been offended by the Sandra Patia von Sternberg strip at the costume competition, hastening to add that she did not oppose all striptease but thought this one had been in bad taste and possibly illegal in view of the fact that minors had been in the audience. I replied as tactfully as possible that I wished I had seen it firsthand rather than by television in order to give her a better informed answer.

Polly Riddle wasn't alone in this odd attitude that the striptease and the belly dances -- celebrations of the beauty of the human body and its potential for joy -- were out of place at a science fiction convention while the prophet of nuclear warfare and contempt for humanity held the seat of honor. Yet the mental contortions involved in believing that sex is bad for the human race while hard radiation is good for it constitute the real obscenity. And the real sexism too.

It was from Polly that I learned what the much-touted receptions that Heinlein had held for blood donors had actually been like. His ads in Progress Reports 4 and 5 had said that because of an incident in 1969 when five strangers gave blood to save his life, "every volunteer donor is my blood brother or sister, whom I want to know and appreciate." But apparently this knowing and appreciating consists chiefly of signing autographs. "You could get on line and get one book autographed," Polly explained, "and you could get on line as many times as you wanted, with one book each time." From another source I heard that Heinlein autographed only his own books -- no inscribing program books or booklets or plain autographs on a piece of paper. Even in thanking the blood donors who symbolically saved his life, Heinlein apparently follows his sound commercial instincts.

There was no time at Polly's reception for anything other than autography, such as talking with Heinlein. Admittedly she had attended the overflow reception held Monday morning -- maybe the others were different.



According to New York magazine, most of the blood available for transfusions in the U.S. comes from commercial institutions with questionable practices, and there is a very real danger of surviving a minor operation only to die from receiving a small transfusion of diseased blood. So real in fact that members of the medical profession specify when hospitalized that they are to receive not blood but plasma extender, a saline solution that can replace blood in minor transfusions. You might say that blood is sicker than water.

Nevertheless it was odd to reflect that at a previous worldcon, Heinlein had been engaging in the water sharing ritual with water brothers and sisters just as if his fictional Martian religion really meant something. Now, after his 1969 experience, it was blood brothers and sisters.

And I understand he would like to see blood donations become a regular part of science fiction conventions.

It's a temptation to call this bloody nonsense. hadn't this same man been saying Sunday night that atomic war would be good for the human race? Hadn't he written a book that explains how such a war will "improve the breed"? What right has such a man to ask us to donate blood? Does he have the right to be blood-thirsty in both of these different ways?

But there was another Heinlein once. Whose ill health ended his career in the navy, and then destroyed his attempt to study physics. Who "became a writer because it was the only way I could make a living without actually stealing." Who sent Sturgeon a hundred ideas and a hundred dollars when his fellow author was faced with a writing block. Who believed in democracy and didn't divide the human race into "mathematicians and zeroes." Who refused to shake hands with the scientist that built the V-2 for Hitler.

If there's anything left of that Heinlein it must lie in his caring about people who might die for lack of blood for a transfusion. He doesn't suggest with Hugh Farnham that letting them die might improve the breed. He doesn't hold with Jubal Harshaw that the way to cure hemophilia is to let hemophiliacs bleed to death. He forgets to be "tough" and just cares about them as fellow human beings. Blood relations, you might say.

I hope we do this -- and I hope we make it clear which Heinlein we honor by doing it. Blood will tell.

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The next Saturday I drove from New Jersey down to Terry's place in Arlington, Virginia, a suburb of Washington, D.C. I wanted to visit Terry and Craig and to see the Aerospace Museum. The rest of the family was committed to a gathering of my wife's relatives, so only 3-year-old Alix Anne came with me. There was plenty of room in the VW camper.

We arrived later than I expected -- about ten at night -- but in the Hughes Batcave the night was young. By a stroke of luck John D. Berry was

also visiting that weekend. (Nevertheless Terry clearly indicated who his favorite fan was by giving me and Alix Anne his waterbed when it came time to retire.) The Browns were there, and Ted White and Dan Steffan came by to watch early morning television and make fan gab. If I hadn't been able to get to the con, a visit to this fannish focal point would have made a good substitute.

Next day Terry, Dan, Colleen, Alicia, Alix Anne and I set out for the museum in the camper. From the driver's seat I could hear little Alix unwittingly raising my fannish status by quoting things Mrs. Willis had told her. There was no reason to spoil matters by mentioning that this Mrs. Willis was our cleaning lady.

The museum was a thing of wonder. We spent most the afternoon there and still didn't get to see everything. I deeply enjoyed walking through the backup Skylab since I'd just been reading about the real Skylab in the New Yorker, and I liked seeing "The Spirit of St. Louis" again after twenty-one years -- it used to hang from the ceiling of an incredibly crowded room in the old red brick Smithsonian Institution building, looking like something stored in an attic; now it has a place of honor and with the glass wall beyond it you can almost picture it in flight.

That evening Colleen prepared a delicious meal with no apparent effort and Terry's place was the site of another fannish party. What a fabulous fannish way to live. Again I was struck at how much I had hankered for fannish friends, missing something I had never really experienced. It is illustrated as well as anything by the reaction I got when I mentioned in passing how a former co-worker and I had created Zen Vaudeville. "Zen Vaudeville! Tell us about Zen Vaudeville!" I stalled for time. Was it even possible to communicate something as private as this old in-joke? Especially since the friendship that it had been part of had long since dissolved in the acid of jealousy? "Probably not" was the only sane answer --but if it could be done at all, certainly this was the company it could be done in. So I tried telling a koan in the Zen Vaudeville manner.

But it had been a long time, hadn't it, and I was steeped in various intoxicants. My timing was off -- I couldn't make my toes go "clickety-tap!" as in "The Night the VOID Boys Played the Palace" -- and the punch line of the koan eluded me. Nor was there a Philistine in the audience to play straight man. John Berry however did manage to recognize the koan and retold it in Sercon Zen fashion, so at least it wasn't a total loss. Here's the version of it I like best:

The master Gutei made a practice of raising his finger whenever he explained a question about Zen. A very young disciple began to imitate him, and every time Gutei raised his finger when he preached, this boy would raise his finger too. Everybody laughed.

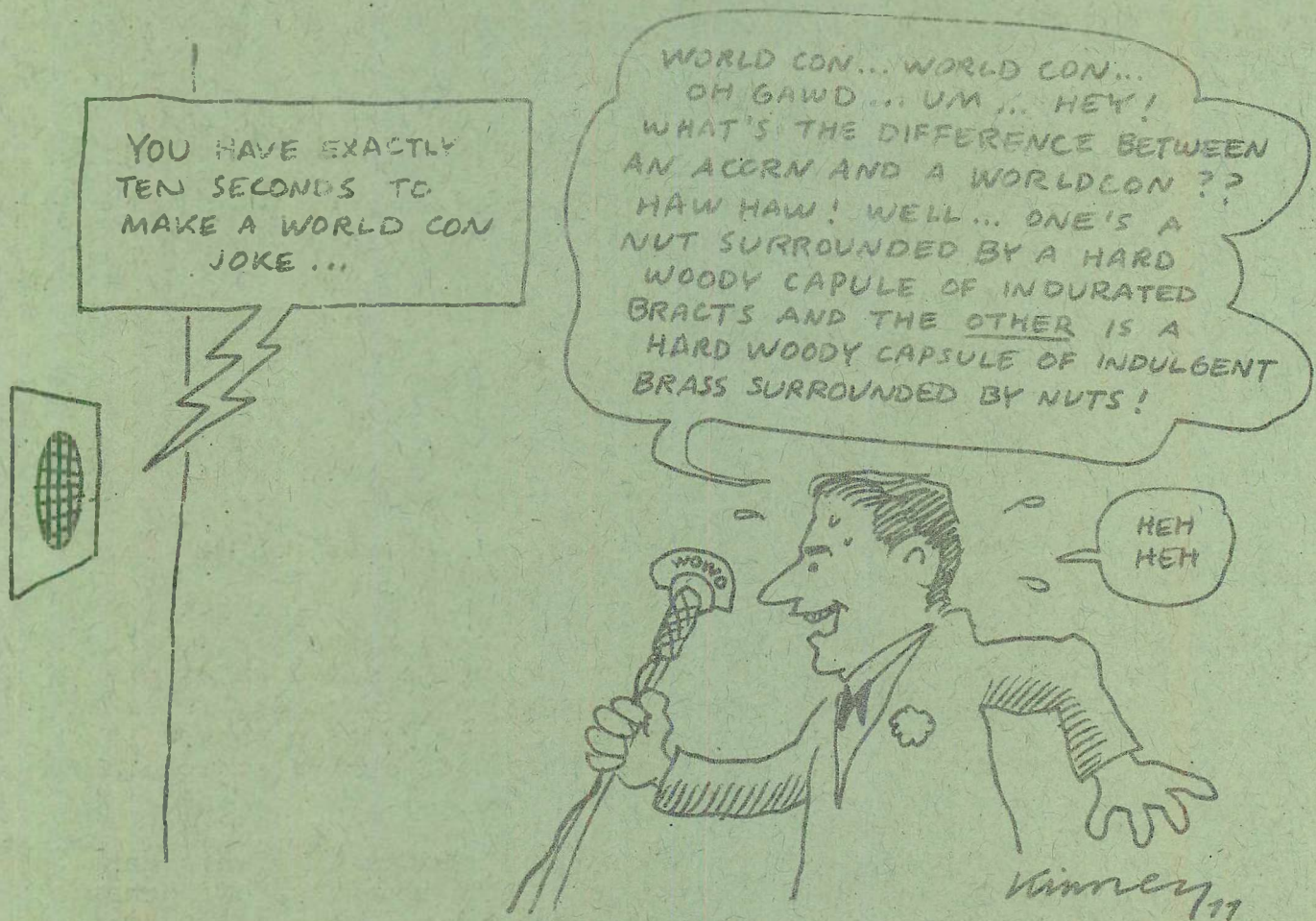
One day Gutei caught him at it. He took the boy's hand, whipped out a knife, cut off the finger and threw it away. The boy walked off howling.

"Stop!" shouted Gutei. The boy stopped, and looked at the master through his tears. Gutei raised his finger. The boy raised his finger. Then suddenly he realized it wasn't there. He hesitated a moment:

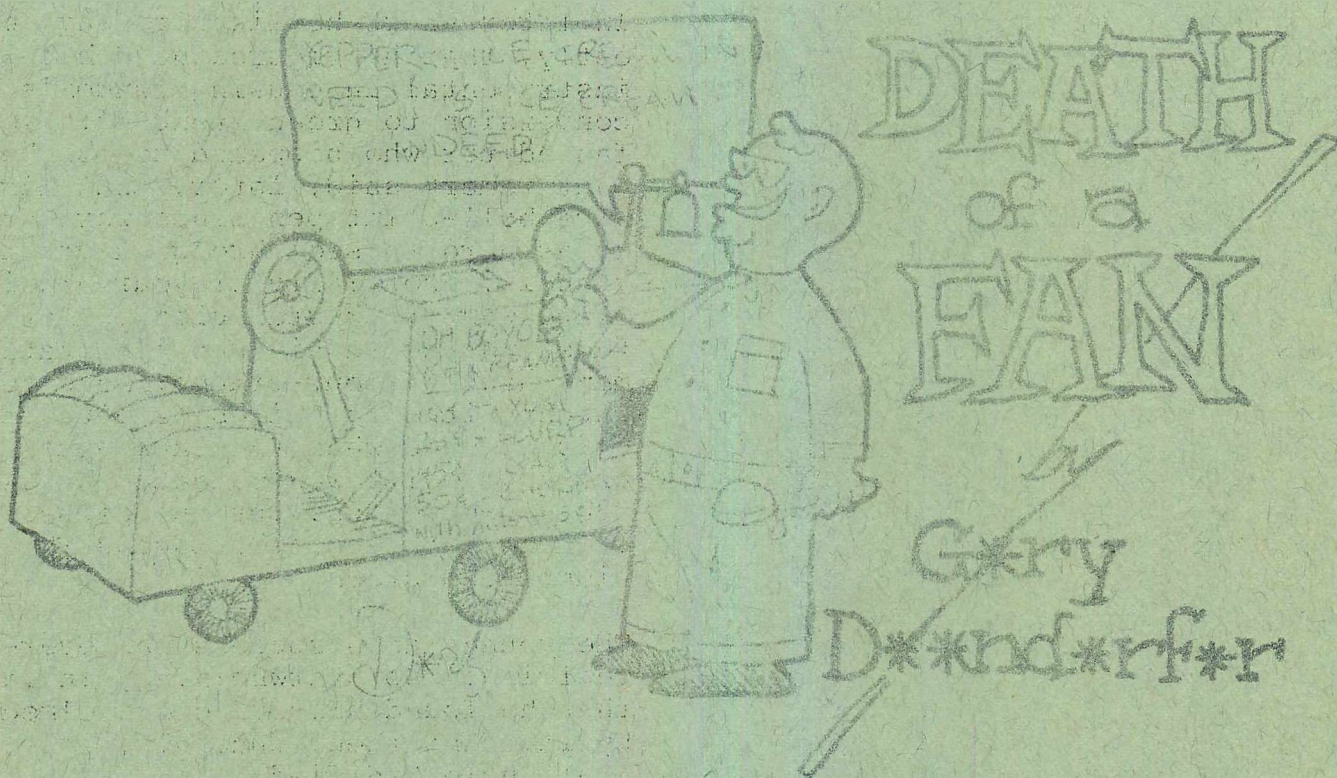
Then he bowed.

Zen and fandom have a lot in common.

-- Tom Perry --



Someone recently sent me some very crudely drawn artwork without a return address or name. The art was signed "Kinney" and, therefore, I can only assume that some fugghead thought he could imitate Jay Kinney's art and pass it off on me (and other faneds). This is a ridiculous assumption on his/her part because the humor has no punch at all and the drawings are so poorly done that no one would ever use them. The work, of course, does not look at all like Jay's; the signature is the only thing that comes anywhere near it. The envelope was postmarked "Crawfordsville, IN" but no one on my mailing list has such an address. This "Kinney" art stunt and the written contribution I received from "Randy Fecker" have convinced that the fuggheads are out in force. Unfortunately, they have my address.



Once, long ago, a lonely fan lived in New Jersey. He was young. He had pimples. Girls didn't like him.

"Well, ahahaha!" cried the young fan. "I don't care about girls. It just leaves me more time for f*a*n*a*c!" And so saying he sat down to draw a cartoon series about another New Jersey fan who sold ice cream for a living. The young fan liked to poke fun at older, more sedate fans. It made up for the emptiness in his own life, and might even distract others from noticing it.

"Oh, boy!" the young fan said, as he began the third panel of his cartoon strip. "This is really fun!" The third panel showed his cartoon character ("Uncle Ned") getting a Good Humorous bar shoved in his ear. "This will set all fandom on fire!" the young fan chortled. "Maybe it'll even start a new c*a*t*c*h*p*h*r*a*s*e -- maybe in a few months everyone in fandom will be picking up on my punchline and saying 'Stick it in your ear!!!'"

He was right. In exactly four months and three days, he overheard a fat woman in a purple pokadot dress telling another woman at that year's Lunacon, "Stick it in your ear!" He felt fulfilled. "Fame is mine!" he chortled to himself. "Maybe I'll even get a Hugo nomination!" (He knew he wouldn't win the Hugo for Best New Fanphrase -- this was, after all, the same year in which another fan had coined "I have a piece of chicken stuck in my teeth" -- but just getting on the ballot and having his name read among the nominees at the Annual Hugo Awards Banquet would be egoboo enough.)

By then he had his "Uncle Ned" cartoon strip running in two Hugo-award-winning fanzines and one up-and-comer. He drew the strip with a light-blue ballpoint pen (one with a thick line) which was impossible to see (to trace) beneath a blue stencil, and invisible to an electro-stencil machine.



In later years he liked to say, modestly, that he figured he'd been instrumental in causing fandom's conversion to green stencils. (One fan editor who happened to overhear that remark said, later, that light blue ball-point pen lines were nearly as hard to see through a green stencil, especially if your drawing plate wasn't crystal clean. But those who heard him put his statement down as sour-grapes; he'd been caught with ten quires of blue stencils on hand when the change to green stencils was mandated by the N3F -- whose Mss. Bureau refused to send out pieces to faneds who didn't use green stencils.)

The young fan's success was overwhelming. So overwhelming, in fact, that he found himself overwhelmed by it. And then, suddenly, the real Uncle Ned died.

With his source of inspiration dead, and the continuation of his cartoon strip rejected by his editors as "bad taste" (he'd wanted to do "Uncle Ned Goes To Heaven" and have Uncle Ned selling ice cream to F.T. Laney...), the young fan entered a period of deep depression. He spent most of his time locked inside a closet, under the door of which his mother slipped him cold TV dinners. He said later that he developed quite a fondness for cold TV dinners during this period. He especially liked to lick them when they were fresh from the freezer and covered with tiny ice crystals. "Once in a while my tongue would stick to the metal -- you know, freezing to it for a moment. That was when I first began to experience true emotional maturity."

Coming out of his closet after six years of self-imposed confinement, the young fan began a new career for himself. He became a musician.

"I discovered that each TV dinner tray has a slightly different resonance, especially if you leave bits of old food in some of the compartments. I found that Swanson's trays had, when rubbed with leather,

an amazingly genuine woodwind sound, while Morton's trays could be struck together to recreate the brass sound of Guy Lombardo's magnificent orchestra. When the Hungry Fan Dinners came out, my orchestra was complete, and I began memorizing all of Pat Boone's old hits and performing them on my collection of trays at such exciting Village botes as Max's Kansas Kondom, the Village Gatehouse, and Gem's Spax."

Fame beckoned.

For a time fandom was forgotten and he found himself caught up in the glittering whirl of superstardom. Appearances on Ed Sullivan's show, then Lawrence Welk's band made room for him as a soloist after Pete Fountain left.

But the big time took its toll. The heavy pace was demanding. He fell back on an old habit: drugs.

As a neofan he'd sniffed corflu, and, when he could, the just-run pages from a Ditto machine. Later, as a hobby, he'd collected the butts of mentholated cigarets from ashtrays and gutters and boiled the butts in chicken broth. "It really wires me up, man," he told one friend during this period. Alas, it came to an unhappy end when he was collected by a street-sweeping machine while crawling the gutters of Manhattan's 52nd St.

During his recuperation and drying-out period at the City Dump he had time to reflect upon the many turns his life had taken and the sense of loss he felt when he'd left fandom behind for the bright lights of Broadway.

It was time to return to fandom! Yes, and perhaps they'd even remember him. He was, after all, the one who'd coined that famous fannish phrase, "Stick it in your ear!"

He found a battered page from a recent KARASS at the Dump, and checked the listings of conventions. Yes, there was one in New York City this very weekend! He'd go, and startle all his old friends with his return!

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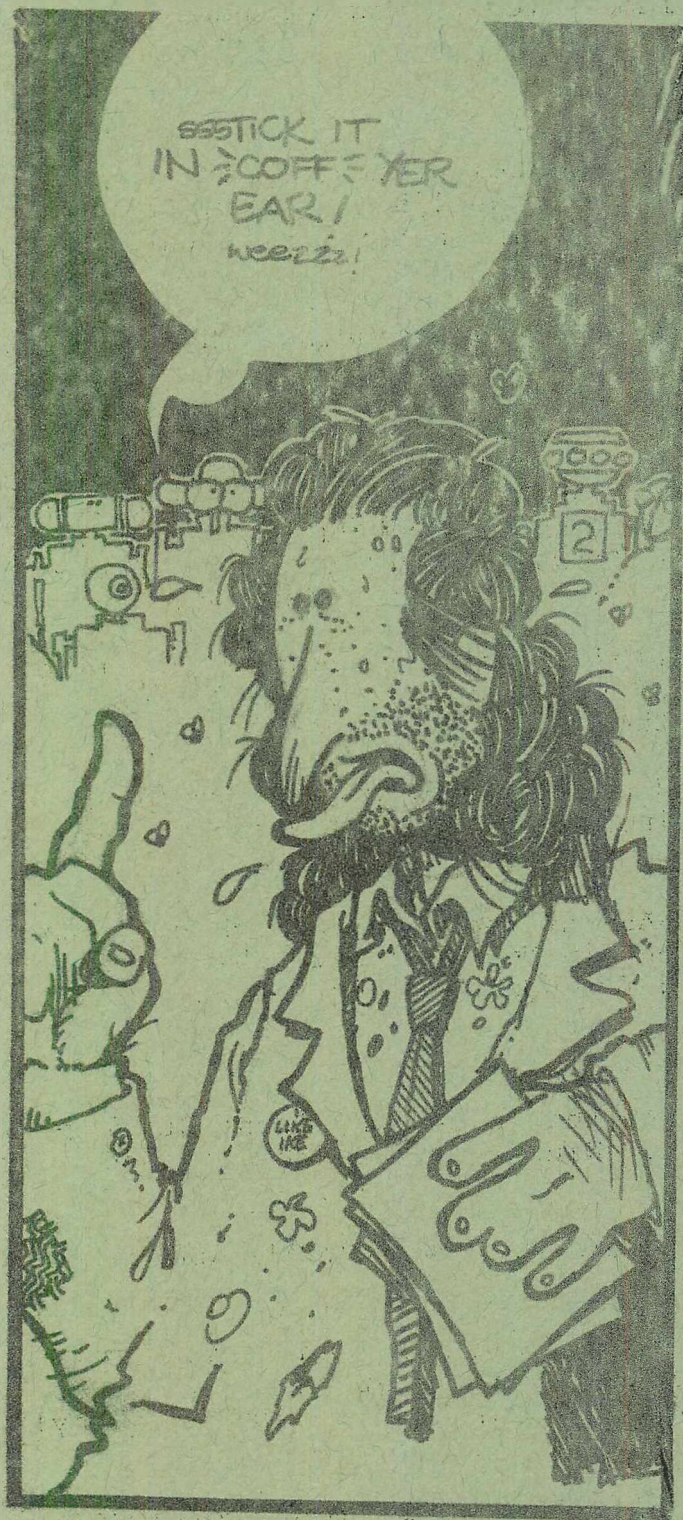
A shambling figure lurched into the lobby of the once-magnificent Statler-Hilton and looked around with satisfaction. Winos dozed on the lounges. He felt immediately at home.

"Hey, man," he said, accosting the nearest person. "Where's the con?" He winked, a knowing wink.

The nearest person was an adolescent wearing pointed ears and shaved eyebrows. He pointed something that looked like a transistor radio at the shambling figure and said in a cracking voice, "Zap? Zap? Goshwowboyoboy!" Then he pointed in the direction of the registration area.

The no-longer-young fan grinned, exposing his pitted, bleeding toothless gums. "Hey, thanks, kid," he said. "Stick it in yer ear, heh heh."

The next two hours were a heady experience for him. Almost immediately he ran into several of his old croneys; they were selling dirty 8-pagers in the huckster room to twelve-year-old girls wearing "I Like Spock" buttons. They greeted him with cries of delight and immediately pressed him for stories about his days as a musician.



after 

"Uh, yeah," he said, "I've hobbled and I've nobbed with the great and the near-great, as well as a few you've never heard of." And he proceeded to tell them more than they'd ever wanted to know about the great, the near-great, and the few they'd never heard of.

After an hour of this, one of them led him out to the street and pushed him in front of a truck, which hit and killed him.

"It was a Swanson's TV Dinner truck," the old croney said. "I thought it was poetic justice."

+ the phabulous phantom +

Lee Hoffman sends her thanks to those of you who have written to her in response to the issue of SCIENCE FICTION FIVE YEARLY we published last November. She sends her apologies for not being able to reply to all of those notes. I really enjoyed working on the fanzine with LeeH and I am eagerly awaiting the next issue, which according to schedule will be out in 1981. Bob Silverberg has already sent in his contribution for that seventh issue.

Golden Collage Days, or (more) Joy of Barfing

BY JIM (MIDWESTERN GOTHIC) TURNER

The universe is either a confusion, and a mutual involution of things, and a dispersion; or it is unity and order and providence. If then it is the former, why do I desire to tarry in a fortuitous combination of things and such a disorder?

-- Marcus Aurelius

Having done what men could, they suffered what men must.

-- Thucydides

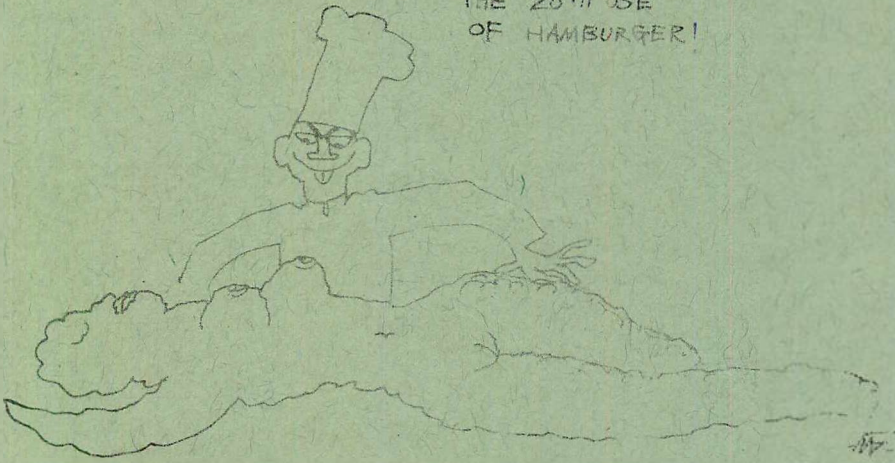
I have purposely avoided weighting down my essay with theory, for which reason many things must remain obscure and unexplained.

-- Carl Jung

This all happened the year before the Night of Terrible Gilbert on which I discoursed in these pages 2½ years ago. Most of it takes place in 1966 and a little of it in 1965 and, for those of the younger set who lacked the singular good fortune and misery to stride into (supposed) adulthood then, much needs explaining. (Actually, I have never strode into anything. I tend to lurch blindly ahead, reeling from side to side. Several times I have crawled. Of late, I keep perfectly still, with my head down.)

Things were different then. Take, for instance, dormitories. Probably nobody in college now (unless he goes to Harding College or Bob Jones University) lives under such circumstances. Just the other day I learned that the University of Missouri is contemplating a coed dormitory. Ten years ago, the University would have been more likely to have announced that it was seriously considering the establishment of a College of Criminal Insanity and Interracial Buggerypoker.

THE 28TH USE
OF HAMBURGER!



There we were, most of us away from home for the first time, exhilarated, bored, scared, horny and with an average IQ of 44, with the awful peasant cunning of the undergraduate determined to avoid as much honest work as possible. We were housed in an old stone barn that looked like miles and miles of the Men's john in the Cincinnati bus station, with horrible shit-colored walls that resisted the most determined ef-

forts to decorate, with noisy leaking radiators and showers without curtains and toilet stools covered with barf, with a cafeteria that took the leftover vegetables and put them in jello and served them up as something we called "the Crawling Mystery Salad" and which had 27 uses for hamburger. The only legitimate amusements possible inside the dorm were television, masturbation and endless discussions of whether or not somebody, anybody, anywhere in the whole wide world, was getting laid, not even regularly, but at all. We were a fumbling, ludicrous, misfitted, misbegotten, despicable, depraved garrison in an immense fort on the very farthest frontiers of Absurdity, mercenaries in reverse since we were paying for the privilege.

Ah, but I want you to know that there were illegitimate amusements in plenty! I had a reputation as a practical joker which I will elaborate on some other time, except to continue to deny that it was I who put the honey on the toilet seat. We could insult the House Queer (and every house -- dorm floors were called houses -- had one regardless of his predilections in that area. Somebody wanting a Masters Degree in Headshrinking ought to check into what factors determine who becomes the House Queer. I always thought that, to be fair, it ought to be done on rotation but failed to set an example by volunteering.) And we could get drunk.

"We could get drunk." What memories those four simple words recall! There were so many ways to do it. There were a couple of bars on campus that were not known for adhering closely to the laws on underage drinking. One of them, the Shack (Remember a song from the Fifties called "The Green Door"? It was about the Shack and, yes, it's still on the jukebox and, yes, the green door is still there.) still exists under new management and I go there a couple of times a year to meditate on how much of my life is bound up with the smell of stale beer and sweat and smoke. My own favorite was the Italian Village which is now a parking lot.

There was 3.2 Schlitz on tap with a big bear of an owner named Cornbread and a wife who probably inspired more lewd thoughts than any woman in mid-Missouri and Gene, the head bartender, a good old boy with a face full of knife scars. It was a big thing to steal glasses from the I.V. At one time I had 24 glasses and 2 pitchers and was the envy of every man in the house.

If there was no way you could find a cooperative bartender, you could find somebody with an ID that said he/she/it was over 21 who was willing to buy

your booze for you. (For a while I ran a profitable little business in forging IDs but gave it up when the word got around a little too far. Historians, take note: I believe that I am the first of my name, a name rich in felony, to enter into any form of criminality that required literacy.)

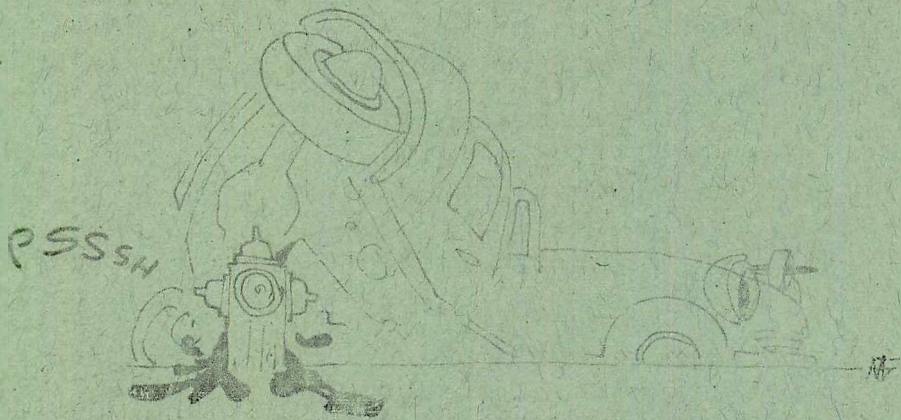
Once you got the booze, you had the problem of where you were going to drink it. It was absolutely forbidden to consume it in the dorm. (This never stopped anybody, certainly not me, but penalties were inconvenient.) There was no problem in good weather -- the woods were a short walk away. But Missouri winters can distress even the most hardened alkie.

I have forgotten exactly how I came to know Ron Strathman. He was a living, walking, talking, all-in-Technicolor Don Martin character. He had dark black hair that grew straight out from his skull and big eyes behind thick thick glasses and long skinny arms and long skinny legs with enormous elbows and knees and a big ass and a big beer belly. He had this curious garment/robe/towel/breechclout thingie made of hundreds of thousands of towels sown end to end and he would drape this thing around his extraterrestrial bug-eyed body when he went to the shower. The sight of Ron flowing, bouncing, and, often as not, staggering down to the shower, once seen, was not forgotten. I think that if you could gather together all those people after ten years of liquor, war, drugs, marriage, work, divorce, insanity, depravity, tedium, disillusionment, despair, disgust and apathy, Ron would be the first person everybody would look around for and would he have the most amazing, appalling and affectionate stories told about him if he didn't show up. Not only was he one of Nature's true noblemen, he had two things that were better than mere nobility. With these two characteristics, he could have been the debased offspring of Richard Nixon and a wormy dogturd and still have been exalted in the hearts, minds and various other organs of his contemporaries: he was over 21 years of age and he had a car.

And what a car! The Strathmobile was an old grey heap, a '53 Oldsmobile, I think, held together mainly by habit and by inertia and an aroma of beer and fear and sweat and rot and mold so rich, so powerful, so all-prevading that it had acquired an identity independent from the car itself. You could smell where it had been long after it was gone, leaving its abominable spoor wherever it went like a dog running from tree to hydrant. It was a great farting, stinking, belching, sneezing junkpile that Hunter S. Thompson could have driven to Las Vegas with perfect confidence.

It was Ron who introduced us to malt liquor. There was a generally held superstition that malt liquor was eleven or twelve per cent alcohol and, since it cost no more than beer itself, you could get a cheaper drunk by buying it. Nobody knew that the law required the proof to be printed on the label if it was stronger than beer. Even though the





extra juice was lacking, we got drunker on malt liquor than on beer through simple faith.

Malt liquor came in several brands and sizes and there was considerable discussion of the merits of each. There were the tiny cans and the regular cans and there was Glueck Stite and Schlitz with the classy

Egyptian bull can and there was Colt 45, the choice of Aggies everywhere. A great deal of the macho mystique is built around alcohol and its various delightful manifestations and there is no end to the number of hours and years men have wasted discussing them. This despite the fact that 99 out of 100 people could no more identify their fave rave in the cirrhosis line if it were in an unmarked glass than they could piss out the very fires of Hell. (I am partial to Rebel Yell whiskey and constitute that hundredth person.) Take note, ladies: if you want to be included in any conversation with male animals of this age group, be able to talk specifically about some favorite brand of beer or whatever. You can be a honcho in the WCTU for all it matters and know not at all whereof you speak. As the good old boys say, "It all comes out of the same hoss anyway."

Barfing was another topic of conversation. For a while it was a matter of some distinction to have a weak, foolish or nervous stomach. (I nearly said "female" while I was rattling out weak, foolish and nervous but will let it be. Quoting a recent philosopher-king, I want to make one thing perfectly clear: I am not a sexist. I consider myself to have been in the vanguard of those who seek to change the way men and women perceive each other. I never put women on pedestals or considered them inferior; I have always known in my head and believed in my heart that women are just as low, sneaky, untrustworthy, unprincipled and worthless as men. So there. I don't see how any thinking person can argue with me there. And, girls, don't you think it's wonderful the way I'm sticking up for you?

(To complete my digression, let me explain why I so nearly used "female" to describe a weak stomach. In those days, proper young ladies who used excessive drunkenness as an acceptable excuse for fornication, often would up too sick to fuck because the only ladylike thing to drink in those days was crap like cherry sloe gin and Coca Cola. This was all right to the guy. He never expected to get laid anyway and, besides, after the girl friend finished puking her entire intestinal truck into the commode or the creek or the glove compartment or the little crack in the car door where the window goes down or, more likely, her lap, he would then have an excuse to help her stand or sit straight with a quick chance to cop a feel on her boobs. In those days guys carried condoms in their wallets and changed them regularly every six months. End of digression.)

Back to barfing: as I said, for a while it was a studly (even the slang is coming back as I write) thing to throw up. I cannot fathom why. Finally

it dawned on everybody that it was a dumb stupid disgusting thing to do and a real man (which we all, of course, were) could hold his liquor. (Somebody asked me once how I could stand to drink straight whiskey. I told him I learned how by watching all those John Wayne movies.) All at once, anybody who tossed his cookies (or, as in the case of Terrible Gilbert, his lima beans and donuts) was a sissy, comsymp queer perverdo squirrel.

The combination of malt liquor (or any other available intoxicant) and Ron and his car and ID gave birth to a remarkable institution: the Road Drunk. They happened at all hours of day and night, but for the most part they fell into a pattern that came to vary but little that winter and spring.

About ten at night, weekdays included, after gestures toward study or a cokedate or whatever, people would tend to drift down to the house lounge, decked out in some paramilitary garb. Ron was the only regular who didn't have a road-drinking costume. I was never a regular since I did not live in that house -- I lived downstairs where we had a few delightful customs of our own. One fellow had a Nazi helmet he had painted fire engine red, a fatigue jacket, and paratrooper jump boots. Somebody else had an Air Force flight jacket with a real live green beret. (Upstairs there was one tiny enclave composed mainly of NROTC jocks, planning to go Marine when they graduated. They were the Jackson House Rangers or Raiders and they held regular "manuvers"...with sabres.)

On a good night seven people could fit into the old Strathmobile and down the pike we would go to Warehouse Liquors. Ron would go in and buy a great pile of booze for which we had given him money in advance. He would caution us to be discreet for if we were caught, the minors would only be fined but he would be up for contributing to the delinquency of said minors.

One night he went out twice. They came back to drop off the wounded and to recruit. I went along. I was the only one sober. It was late Saturday night and I saw them come in and was invited to hitch up which I did with no doubts or qualms.

This time they had passed up the malt liquor and had scraped enough money together for an entire keg of Bud. (Bud was a man's beer back then too. Every now and then Bud would run a two page ad in the Saturday Evening Post that consisted only of a giant Budweiser label in the very center of the magazine so that it was easy to bend the staples and turn the ad into a poster. Half the rooms in Cramer Hall were so ornamented.) All day they had been driving and drinking, going from rock quarry to cave to city park. Nobody thought they could get any drunker and live but they figured there must be two gallons of beer left and it would be terrible if it went to waste. (Teetotalers, be informed that many drunks have a curious Puritan streak in them. They dread waste. Do you remember in The Bank Dick where Egbert Souse goes into the Black Pussy Cafe and inquires if he spent a \$20 bill in there last night? When told that he did, he sighs with relief and says, "Thank goodness, I thought that I had lost it." As for me, I have a picture of Oliver Cromwell in my bedroom.)

A few miles out Route K there was a dirt road where we went on several occasions. This was known as "the Thinking Road". A few miles down that, out in the midst of bare frozen fields and barbed-wire fences white with frost, there was a terribly tall old tree. I never knew what kind because I never saw it in daylight. This was "the Philosopher's Tree" and beneath it we would pause and stand around and drink ourselves blind shitface drunk



whilst uttering great profundities. It was a good place to go because the single old tree inspired us and because things were flat and you could see for miles. I doubt that a sheriff's car ever passed down that road at that hour of the night but we worried about it nonetheless, so this was a very good place to overindulge.

There was this bridge over a little creek about fifty or a hundred yards from the Philosopher's Tree and it was a ritual to TP it (or cover it with toilet paper for the benefit of those who have never indulged in this moronic but pleasurable pastime). On this particular evening the TP duty fell to someone named Carl who was a KA pledge. For those of you who have been spared so far, Kappa Alpha Order makes a big stupid deal out of having Confederate sympathies and every spring they have Old South Weekend during which they parade about in Confederate uniforms and ride horses and behave like the biggest bunch of chowderheads yet uncommitted.

Carl was decked out in some sort of Confederate grey uniform with a motorcycle helmet. He leapt up onto the bridge railing and began to unwind a roll of TP. There was a cold hard wind blowing across the bare fields and the bridge was slick with frost as he paced back and forth. Considering the height of the bridge and the depth of the creek, he could have fallen eight or ten yards. (listen, Olga, if you'd had a good load on, you could have whipped the hell out of that little squirt from Yugoslavia. Or at least you wouldn't have worried about it.)

Carl stood on one foot, then the other, just to show off. He was chanting: "Oats, hay corn, alfalfa! Give 'em Hell, Kappa Alpha!"

Ron looked at me. "He could break his goddamn neck if he fell off there right now, Jim."

"Damn straight, Ron."

"Somebody ought to go up there and get him down, Jim."

"You fuckin' A. Somebody sure ought to do that."

Carl began to yaw back and forth, long white pennants of toilet paper wav-

ing around him. The moon was exceptionally bright. I remember it so well: everything bright and clear and beautiful, the stars brilliant, all of us surrounded by the halo of our own breath. We were drunk. We were happy. And right over our heads one dumb stupid sonofabitch that nobody even liked very much was about to fall and get his stupid body killed and all our asses would be grass. All I could think of to say was, "I hope he doesn't suffer much pain."



His legs began to wobble. He continued his chant. By this time the other guys had stopped singing a charming old song about what Freshmen never eat and were standing and watching as we were.

Carl remained oblivious to his plight. He announced his intention of relieving himself from his present position. At that moment Ron spotted a car coming. "Cops!" he yelled and drained his mug. (Waste not, want not.)

It was then that Carl chose to remember where he was and just how far gone he was. The wind had blown the TP all around him until he looked like a mummy. "Aaaaahhhh! Ron! Howma' gonna' get down from here?"

Ron scanned the scene quickly with the oncoming headlights in the background, coming straight for the bridge. "Jump!" he yelled. "Jump you silly sonofabitch!"

Which he proceeded to do. He landed no heavier than Dame Margot Fontayne would have and didn't even fall down. We had worried for nothing. To this day, I think he deserved at least eight or nine broken bones.

We ran to the car. But there was no time to get everybody in and have much of a headstart. The only ones who made it in were me and the guy in the red Nazi helmet whose name I have sublimated. Ron said, "Okay, you guys pretend like you're some couple out here making out and we'll all hide behind the Philosopher's Tree. Then as soon as they go past we'll get out of here in the opposite direction."

My red helmeted friend was the drunkest of the lot. He grabbed me around the neck and rose up over me with his face close to mine and proceeded to breathe into it with the fumes of 12 hours of beer guzzling. Friends, if I ever had any homosexual tendencies in my life, that killed every last one of them.

After what seemed like an hour, the car went past. It was not the police after all. It was probably some college kids on the same mission as us. Ron came and opened the car door. "Forget it now," he said. "I think we're okay, but we ought to pull out anyway."



The crypto-Nazi didn't budge. He continued to breathe into my face and was wilting my nose. Slowly, his eyes began to close. He slumped across me.

Now that was work. He had been kneeling on the seat. The angle of his slump as he passed out had sprawled him across me with his bent knees against the wall of the car, pinning him flat on top of me. I was perturbed. I cursed and hollered and finally they pried him off me and dumped him on the floorboard.

Then somebody noticed that if the passing car had been the sheriff, our little act wouldn't have done any good anyway. No one had thought to shut the lid of the trunk. The bright shiny aluminum keg was clearly visible even without car lights.

"That cuts it," Ron said. "We're getting out of here and going home."

We piled into the car as Ron slammed down the trunk. By the time we got back on Route K, he announced, "Men, we are running low on gas. I have to take up a collection."

We managed to rummage up a dollar. "Now listen," he said, "this filling station we're going to is owned by a deputy sheriff. I want everybody to behave. Don't be gross. Don't say anything. If you have to barf, say so and I'll stop right now."

We pulled into the station. Ron ordered a dollar's worth. We sat quietly. Nobody was gross. Nobody threw up. Ron paid the man.

At that moment a little girl, four or five years old, chose to come walking out of the station, cheeks pink, smiling and happy.

And at that moment, the crypto-Nazi with his bright red helmet chose to rise from the grave. He stuck his crazy head out of the window and leered. "Come here, little girl," he implored at the top of his voice, "Come here and sit on my face!"

I have never approved of drunken driving in principle or practice, but Ron was unique. Drunk or sober, he was one of the best drivers I've ever known: mind clear, reflexes perfect. I would still like to know how fast we went, how little time it took to clear that station and be out on the highway, moving toward town.

When we got back to town and to the dorm, we discovered that Rob had failed to completely close his trunk and somewhere during all of this, the keg had bounced out. He wanted to go back and look for it, but this time there were no volunteers. We offered to take up a collection to pay the deposit on the keg and the taps. He went back by himself, spending all night going

up and down those empty roads.

He never found the keg. The next weekend, he had another road drink and charged admission. The one I had been to had gotten so much good publicity that Ron made back all his money and turned a nice profit as well.

What did it all mean? What was the point?

All that I can say is this: the Duke of Wellington was once asked for some good general advice to give a young man starting out in the world. The Iron Duke thought a minute and said, "Sir, if I have learned one thing in my life, it is that a man should never pass up a chance to take a piss."

T-T-That's All, Folks!

-- Jim Turner

Just about everyone in fandom has moved recently so here are some c.o.a.'s:

Michael Carlson, c/o James Tower, The Knowle, Barcombe, Lewes, Sussex, U.K.
Eli Cohen, 2236 Allison Rd., Vancouver, BC V6T 1T6, Canada
Bridget Dziedzic, 949 West End Ave., Penthouse B, New York, NY 10025
Leigh Edmonds (& Valma Brown), PO Box 103, Brunswick, Victoria 3056, Australia
Fred Haskell, 7510 Cahill Rd., apt. 306B, Edina, MN 55435
Dave Haugh, 3813 NE 145 Ave., Vancouver, WA 98662
Jonh Ingham, 143 Chesterton Rd., London W10, U.K.
Catherine Jackson, 2670 Pierce, #4, San Francisco, CA 94123
Dave Locke, 25840 Oak St., #11, Lomita, CA 90717
Karen Pearlston, 79 Garden Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6R 1H8, Canada
Greg Pickersgill, 7A Lawrence Rd., South Ealing, London W5, U.K.
Peter Roberts, 38 Oakland Dr., Dawlish, Devon, U.K.
Jeff Schalles, 173 McClellan Dr., Pittsburgh, PA 15236
Bob Shaw, 3 Braddyll Terrace, Ulverston, Cumbria LA12 0DH, U.K.
Stu Shiffman, 880 W. 181 St., #4D, New York, NY 10033
Joe Siclari, 2201 NE 45th St., Lighthouse Pk., FL 33064
Lou Stathis, 949 West End Ave., Penthouse B, New York, NY 10025
Will Straw, 13 Raymond St., Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Jim Turner, 531 Nevada Dr., Longview, WA 98632
Simone Walsh, 7A Lawrence Rd., South Ealing, London W5, U.K.
Paul Williams, Box 176, Glen Ellen, CA 95442
and for those who've asked:
Dan Steffan is still at 866 N. Frederick St., Arlington, VA 22205
another fan who recently moved into this area:
Neal Goldfarb, 1219 N. Quinn, #12, Arlington, VA 22209

*** recommended fannish newszines ***

CHECKPOINT -- Peter Roberts (address above): 12/£ (Europe), 6/\$1 (airmail North America), 8/£ (airmail Australia & New Zealand). Send cash or IMOs.
FANEW SLETTER -- Leigh Edmonds (address above): 20/\$4.40AUS. (US agent: H & L Luttrell, 525 W. Main, Madison, WI 53703 - 35¢ @)
KARASS -- Linda Bushyager (1614 Evans Ave., Prospect Park, PA 19076, USA) 5/\$2 or sample 40¢.
THE NEW FORERUNNER -- Gary Mason (PO BOX 258, Unley, S.A. 5061, Australia) 10/\$3AUS.

AN INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS M. DISCH

LEROY KETTLE

Malcolm Edwards, junior assistant librarian second-class (unpaid), and I, budding young failed writer, were both eager to break free from the shackles of our current positions. Malcolm wanted nothing more than to become editor of everything; I merely desired lots of money and fame. We were in a position to make good contacts, to put out productive feelers into the world of professional science fiction. We were at Bob Sheckley's flat, sitting in a circle with John Brunner, Harry Harrison, Tom Disch, Peter Nicholls, Chris Priest, and their respective wives and hangers-on. A few well-chosen words could see Malcolm editing vast quantities of original anthologies containing stories by me, John Brunner's dogs, Chris Priest's big toe, and more by me. We sat there.

I said to Malcolm, "Who was Edson McCann?"

Malcolm replied, "Fred Pohl and Lester del Rey. Who was Karl von Kampen?"

I said, "John W. Campbell. Who was ---?"

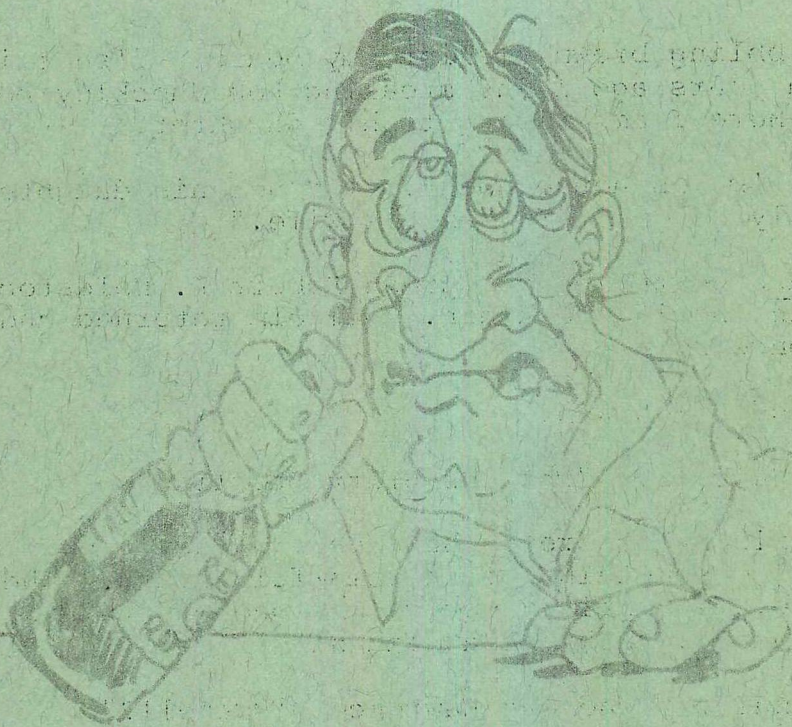
Suddenly I noticed that the cup I was holding contained only the fruity detritus of several punches.

"Fetch drink, Malcolm," I said.

Malcolm, who is used to being readily available for the purpose of transporting alcohol (usually pernod for conjugal reasons), immediately leapt to his feet, said, "Don't ask me that question until I come back," and trolled off to the kitchen.

Shortly afterwards, I was approached by Joan Harrison, who wanted to show me something she could do with a chair. This, she said, was something women could do and men couldn't. She was quite right. Inexplicable.

I waited a while longer, listening to one of the several bright young men present telling Robert Sheckly the plots of several stories by Robert



Sheckley. Then I went in search of Malcolm. He was still in the kitchen, downing brown ale like it was liquid Philip K. Dick. John Brunner was amusing himself talking to him. Being in that daring state of mind brought on by the consumption of lots of drinks quickly, I began swapping puns with John Brunner. He seemed unaware that it was a duel to the death.

Malcolm had just recounted his mishearing of "Night of the Lepus" as "Night of the Leapers." Quicker than a flash John Brunner said, "Next it will be 'Night of the Leprechauns.'"

We all laughed heartily at this.

Working liked pissed lightning, my mind came up with something which my mouth did nothing to stop. "Followed by 'Night of the Leper's Corns,'" I riposted.

John Brunner looked at Malcolm. "Yes," he said, and wandered off, looking slightly disgusted.

"You made a big hit there," said Malcolm.

"OK then," I flashed back, "who was Caleb Saunders?"

"Robert Heinlein," quipped Malcolm, and went away to do his doo dahs. I was alone again. Standing by the drinks table was, I noticed, a young lady.

"Hi," she said.

Where had I seen her before? Of course: at the Institute of Contemporary Arts during Bob Sheckley's lecture. She had been the one referred to by Bob -- rather sweetly I thought -- as 'baby' in the sentence, "I live in Spain with my wife and my baby."

"Hi," I said, dribbling brown ale into my beard. "Isn't it funny to think that only fifteen years ago I was stealing Bob Sheckley books from the library, and now here I am talking to his daughter."

"Oh," she said, "I'm his house guest. I'm not his daughter. She's only a year old. Actually, I'm older than his wife."

With that faux pas, worthy of the great Robert P. Holdstock, I left the kitchen and sat in the lounge again. Malcolm returned and we began mingling with the greats once more.

"Who was Cyril Judd?" I asked.

"Too easy," said Malcolm. "Who was Brett Sterling?"

While I was pondering this pretty hard one, a lady tapped me on the elbow prior to offering me something of an unlawful nature. When I refused, she looked at me. "Oh," she said, "you're the one who thinks I've got a daughter older than me." She began laughing.

"Yes. Ho Ho," I said. "Who was Lawrence O'Donnell?"

She didn't know.

"Henry Kuttner," said a little voice from my other side. He knew.

"Look," he continued, "there's Tom Disch. You need some money. Why don't you go and ask if you can interview him for SF MONTHLY?"

"Oh no, I couldn't. I'm not a rabid opportunist like you and Holdstock."

"Well, neither am I," said Malcolm.

We drank for a short while longer, then I saw Disch leave the room and go into the kitchen. My big chance. I followed him. We were alone. Luckily he is one writer whose name is impossible to slur.

"Mishter Disch?" I said.

"Yeah."

"Well, er, I'd, er, well, wonder if you, sort of, would mind if, you know, well, I could, er, interview you for SCIENCE FICTION MONTHLY?"

"You want to interview me?"

"Yes, Mr. Disch."

"Call me Tom."

"Tom."

"Why me?"

"Well, er, I like your work. I, er, do admire you a great deal. I really enjoyed the first half of Echo Through His Bones ---"

"Round. Echo Round His Bones."

"Yes, of course. --- a great deal. The second half wasn't much good, though."

"Probably not."

I could feel I wasn't doing too well here, and my brain was collapsing with drink and fear. In leapt Peter Nicholls, bent almost double, doing some silly impersonation of Richard III imitating Quasimodo. "Making trouble, Kettle?" he cackled.

"Oh, piss off, Nicholls," I shouted.

"No, Peter, hang on," said Disch, but Peter bounced off with an evil laugh.

"Er," I said, "I also didn't like your story Three Things On A Geodesic Dome."

"Three Points On A Demographic Curve."

"Yes, well, I didn't like that. But Camp Conshentration was good. Very literate -- and literary too."

"Well, it's not what I'm into now. I've moved on."

"Yes, yes," I said, thankful at least that his latest novel was his shortest-ever title, and I couldn't get it wrong. "Actually, though, I haven't managed to read 364 yet."

"334."

"Yes. But, of course, I'll read it before the interview."

He looked at me. "Right," he said. "I'm busy all weekend, but if you 'phone this number in Camden Town on Monday morning at 10 o'clock to say you can make it, then we can do the interview."

"Thank you, er, Tom," I said.

He hurried off to find Peter Nicholls, and they both left quickly.

Malcolm and I also left soon afterwards. I was quite elated, even though I'd made the usual kind of fool of myself. He'd said yes after all, and I needed the money.

First thing the next day I went to the library and got out copies of 334 and Bad Moon Rising. I had all the others. I wasn't going to be like Malcolm Edwards, I thought, interviewing Chip Delany after reading less than half his books, or like John Brosnan interviewing Harry Harrison after flicking through Deathworld. I would do it right.

I got together all the Disch stories I could find in magazines and collections. There were quite a few. I put these to one side with his novels, poetry, and sundry other items. Then I went through the review pages of the magazines. Lots of reviews of Disch books there. So I wouldn't have to reread everything after all. But no reviews of 334 unfortunately. I would have to make the effort with that.

I read all the reviews, noting comments and questions. I even glanced

through John Brosnan's interview with Chris Priest to see if he'd asked anything worth repeating. He hadn't.

I typed out three A4 pages, single-spaced, of standby questions, ranging from (and I quote) 'Is this something you feel?' to 'Is this what you feel?' via 'Why not?' I felt confident enough about the whole thing to stay awake most of Sunday night biting my nails.

Monday morning came. I got up early, looked through the questions again, had an extra squirt of Cedar Wood, and tested the cassette recorder almost to destruction. Christine left for work. She had been growing rather tired of my neurotic behaviour as regards the works of Thomas M. Disch over the weekend, and, in fact, had been understandably bored with him and me.

Ten o'clock arrived. I waited several seconds afterwards so as not to appear too eager and 'phoned him up. A male American answered.

"Can I speak to Tom Disch?" I said, just in case.

"Yeah. This is Tom. Hallo."

"Hi, Tom, Roy Kettle here about that interview for SF MONTHLY. Is it all right to come over?"

"Well, no. You can't come over here."

"Oh."

"And I can't think of anywhere quiet where we can meet..."

His tone was obvious. "I see. Well, I can't think of anywhere either then."

"Well, that's it then. Bye."

"Bye. Thanks."

I put the 'phone down slowly. It rang almost instantly.

"Roy," said a female voice.

"What?"

"This is Christine. I just rang to say Good Luck with the interview..."

+ Leroy Kettle +

(This interview first appeared in PARKER'S PATCH, edited by Brian Parker, and the readership overlap should be quite small.)



CHUCK HARRIS
32 Lake Crescent
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England

"MOTA's come," she said. "It sounds as if Tucker has named an intergalactic pimp after you and sold the write-up to ANALOG. Also, the school phoned up about Sean's singing, -- and I found this dirty piece of paper in your shirt pocket. It says -- 'My only ambition now is to withdraw from Miss World' -- you rotten filthy animal you. Coitus interruptus, indeed."

"For chrissake," I said, "that was just a Miss Venezuela quote that I picked up for the next '-' bacover. Nothing to do with me at all. I have completely different ambitions concerning Miss World."

"Yes, yes, I can imagine," she said, "but you'll only get a headache, dear. And '-' went irregular twenty years ago. Now about that lovely Bob Tucker...."

"No, tell me about Sean first."

"Well," she said, "you took him to the match last week to see Cardiff beat Leyton Orient and since then he's been teaching Class III the Welsh National Anthem. Miss Leland doesn't think it suitable."

"Racist cow," I said. "What's wrong with "Sospan Fach", "Land of Our Fathers", or whatever the bloody thing is?"

"This wasn't "Land of Our Fathers", said Sue. "The eight years old's choir had a different version."

"Our centre forwards name is Glyn

"He is very very thing, --

"But not so thin as Bledynn

"Who can nearly get his head in."

"Ummm," I said. "Yes, perhaps she's got a point there. I never hear the singing, -- but I'll have a word with the bhoy. Now..."

"I hope this isn't going to be another outburst of nasty libels on our Robert," she said. "He never quit FAPA owing seven pages of activity. He never let down LeeH when she asked for material for SF 5 YEARLY..."

"No, love," I said, "there's a couple of things about Tucker that worry me, so, not a word about him until we see "The Near Zero Crime Rate On JJ Avenue..."

"And then we change our names and move to another district," she finished. "But what do you think he means about doing the preliminary research on this winter's book with me?"

"That's the other thing that worries me," I said.

ED CAGLE
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Football. Ah yes. Even if it is soccer. It takes me back. Back to the glorious days of grammar school when, during recess, all 80 boys would gather in two groups to attempt to kick the ball and the hell out of each other. One point for kicking the ball over the opponents' goal, none for kicking a first-grader over the goal. Those were the days. We had our moments of glory, intervals of agonizing defeat, and an occasional mass thrashing by the principal for fist fighting. To this day I much prefer soccer to riding on a merry-go-round.

Our baby son, 13, is fond of making (and eating) caramel-coated apples. Does it all himself. On occasion he allows his mother to eat one of his gommy apples. She appears to love them. In fact she likes them enough to eat one without his permission. This disturbs him to some extent, like when he comes home from school expecting to glom an apple and finds them all gone. So, the other night I was surprised to see him offer his mother a freshly-carameled apple. I thought a truce had been reached. Not so. When she bit into the yummy, runny red juice squirted everywhere. Ploy: a caramel-coated tomato.

DAVE PIPER
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England

Your editorial this time raises a more interesting point than you possibly imagine. Look, when Grennell was, er, alive and kicking and being all gruesome it was before we Over Here went ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ decimal; in fact it was, I guess, even before LSD was changed from being a currency term to a high-old term; in fact I reckon it was in those halcyon Days

of Empire when there were 4, yeah, count 'em, F*O*U*R dollars to the £Stg. Y'see, when I was a nipper, everybody always termed a quarter of a pound, which was 5 shillings (there were 20 shillings in the pound), as a 'dollar'. Everbody. So 25¢ being a quarter of a dollar would have equalled a quarter of 5 bob. Now, a 1/4 of 5/- would have been one shillings and three pence. A shilling was a silver coin, about 3/4 of an inch diameter and the threepenny piece was an umpteen sided small brown coin. Sooooo, in those dead, days gone beyond recall (except for old gentlemen like DAG and Coulson and Dave Locke) "sticky quarters" on your side of the water would have been relatively easy to send, taped to a letter, being just a neat little coin whereas a "stcky quarter" from this side of the water would have cost about 5/- to even send over sea-mail. Now...I've been thinking this out as I typed it and the question uppermost in my mind and, I have little doubt, yours is why. Why, why,

why, therefore, did these faneds of yesteryear just happen to pick on a medium of exchange which resulted in the most bother for UK fans to abide by. You may well cringe a little at this stage, Hughes! This revelation will probably cast all fandom into war and result in totally unforeseen circumstances like PAJ and HE writing 8K words on the subject, each, and having them published on LOCUS' address page, and Joe Hensley making a small name for himself as an obscure lawyer in some hick town in Indiana or somesuch. If the UK fans like Herbie Wells, and ol' Val Brunel, couldn't actually have seen the US fanzines of that period due to their not being able to afford to send the faneds sticky oneandthreepences then all they'd have ever known about US fandom would have been by word-of-mouth (and let's face it, it aint everybody who can strike up much of a conversation with a crow or seagull) which they would have probably believed and would not have actually seen the pathetic state of the fanzines themselves and, therefore -- now pay attention, Terry, -- would not have realised that what US fanzines needed, Oh so desperately, was WAW and the rest of those little people from Across the Water. Somehow DAG et al had found out about the fans over here and plotted (yes, Delanyforbid, actually plotted a deep and murky plot to keep out of US fanzines those fans from the UK who, they...the plotters plotting...knew only too well would put their own writings to such shame that they'd barely be able to lift their collective heads out of their beer-mugs again. So...they chose the quarter. But, But, BUT, as is ever the case with plots of this negarious nature, they failed. Miserably. The Empire (Finsbury Park Empire, that is) didn't build itself, y'know, the UK fans of those days (and you may think I speak from ignorance of the true facts here -- not so I loudly declaim! -- which intelligence I have gleaned from a long posthumous interview with Vargo Statten) discovered a tremendous discovery and foiled the dastardly plot. They discovered the 'issue for a letter of comment' medium of exchange, thus obviating the necessity of sending sticky whachacallittts.

(Okay, everyone, once more MOTA breaks another astounding, amazing, fantastic news item. Please forget that you read it here first.)

GREG BENFORD
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The point you must understand if you're to comprehend British fandom & British humor (read: Irish humor; everybody knows the English have none) is that they have been roundly educated for centuries in how to appear witty. It's mostly in the technique, you know -- the distant stare, the wry twinge of the

lip. The English are to the manner born. Each of them carries about a little book which has roughly a thousand clever sayings in it, fitted to ordinary events of the day. Every year or two another saying is added (by the Queen) and an official announcement is made, and all the Englishmen (those who can read and write) copy it down into their books. The rate of about one per year is the rate at which they arise spontaneously in the mind of the 60 million Englishpersons elbowing each other to stay on this isle. The only requirement for an Offical English Quip is that it make the upper lip of the Queen move 1/8 of an inch or more for a duration of 1/2 second. The 1/8 inch is measured by the Royal Astronomer, and this is his sole offical duty other than counting the stars every night. (There are six. That is, visible from England under normal viewing conditions.) This Universal British Standard has held true for centuries though with one disqualified entry, when a workman by mistake left an upended sausage roll on the Queen's chair and said woman (Queenie, as she's known), lifting her skirts to descend on the chair, was observed to move her upper lip in a brief spasm at'touchdown, as we would put it. This is the famous secret 'sausage joke' which was so hushed up and plays

a role in English pubs roughly parallel with the Rosebud Joke in US fandom.

I hope these notes have been instructive. Once you understand this point, reading English humor is simply a matter of identifying: 'Oh yes, number 564, combined with 287. Good Show.' In fact, that's how I wrote this letter.

MIKE GLICKSOHN
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Canada

I was quite intrigued by your dissertation of the demise of the sticky quarter and your assertion that inflation is the cause of this unfortunate phenomenon. Being of an abservent nature (and also being a pinball addict which means I have a permanent if fleeting association with a sizeable number of quarters) I hadn't noticed any measurable

increase or decrease in the size of the quarter in the last twenty years. So I immediately looked askance on your suggestion of inflation. Now you intimate that the quarter is now smaller than it used to be since it takes more of them to purchase a fanzine nowadays, and this struck me as a hypothesis subject to empirical investigation. I went to my latest paypacket and withdrew the five quarters from it (I approve of the new weekly pay scheme they've introduced this year) and luckily one of them was from 1956 while another was a recent vintage. Exhaustive scientific tests proved my guess to be correct. You're wrong, Terry Hughes; the 1976 quarter is the same size as its counterpart from two decades ago, having neither inflated nor deflated in that time!

I immediately started to wonder what could possibly cause a fan who is usually as perceptive, intelligent, fannish and owner of such a large nose as you to make such a mistake. After a few moments cogitation, the answer was clear. The quarter hasn't gotten smaller since 1956, Terry. You have gotten larger! Everything is relative, as the plaintiff in the paternity suit told Bill Bowers, including the size of quarters. Today's money merely looks smaller than the old coinage to the bigger, roomier (or is it rheumier?) eyes of the latest model Terry Hughes. I hope this self-evident explanation will enable you to sleep easier at nights in your rapidly shrinking bed.

(You'll never know how close I came, Mike, to pointing out that everyone but you has grown since 1956 but I decided that would be a small thing to say. However, I do want to point out to everyone else that Mike has published his convention report of the Australian worldcon. For a mere dollar you can get Mike's publication which mentions alcohol in its various forms 2,349 times, tells you that every Australian fan is a crazy driver, and makes you laugh as long as you read it. There should still be some copies available.)

Okay, gang, it's name listing time: Harry Warner, Jr., F. M. Busby, Jerry Jacks, Brendan DuBois, Alan Lankin, George Flynn, Eric Mayer, Karen Pearlston, Ian Maule (who wants to start wedding conventions), Dave Prill, Jim Meadows III, Gary Deindorfer, Sharron Albert, John Thiel, and Alan Bostick have sent me letters since last issue. Someone named Randy Fecker sent me a contribution but neglected to give a return address so that I could sent it back to him. He really shouldn't have bothered putting his name on it, and he certainly shouldn't have bothered sending it to me. I never heard of Randy Fecker before and don't care to again. The rest of you are all encouraged to contribute and I hope you will.

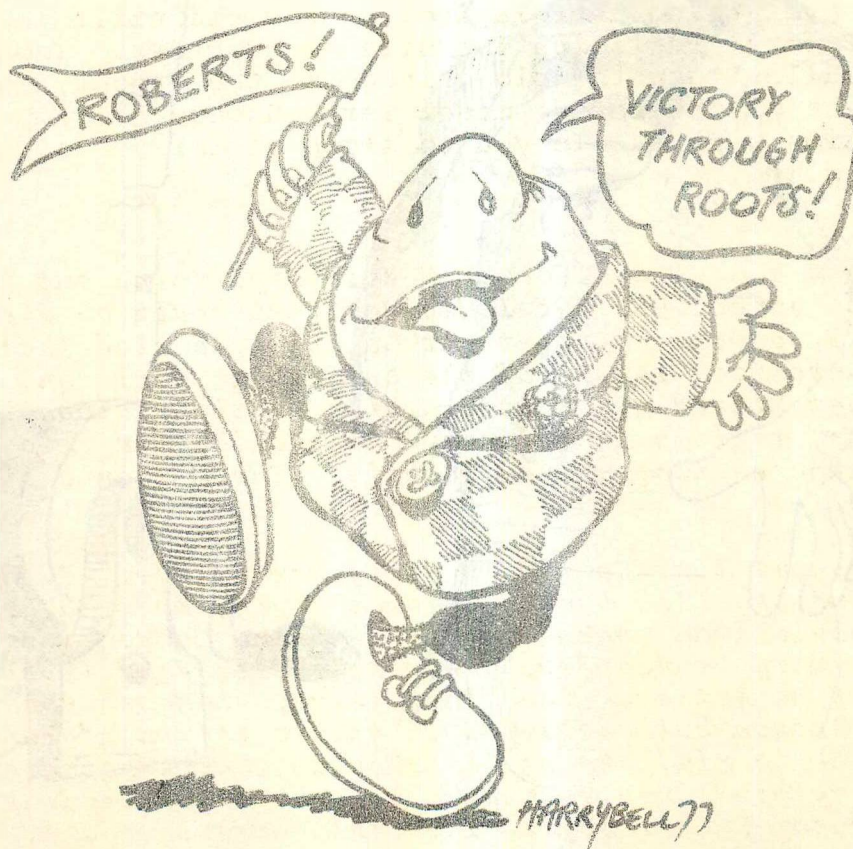
Quite a lot of time has passed since I cut the letter column stencils and during that period several excellent letters arrived. These will all be held over until next issue. MOTA #22, the issue that won't be so damn late. This forthcoming issue will have contributions from Bhob Stewart, John Brosnan, Mike Glicksohn, Jeff Schalles, Alex Haley, Thomas Jefferson, Diana Rigg, and Soupy Sales. Trust me.

Most fanzine editors go on at length about a change in typeface, as if it were of earth-shattering importance. Usually only a few people actually notice it, but it preys on the faned's mind. While the typeface is not that important to me, the typewriter is. This issue would have been delayed even longer if *rich brown* (saint among saints) had not given me this very typewriter. I was seperated from the IBM Selectric which I had been using and I did not have a typewriter capable of cutting a decent stencil until rich gave me this one. If there is a god above, he will send rich a couple of groupies at the next convention. Until then, rich, you'll have to get by with my heart-felt thanks.

BRITAIN IS FINE IN '79!

ADELAIDE IN '83!

THE BIG NEWS is that Peter Roberts has won IAFF and Bill Rotsler won DUFF!
Congratulations, dear people.



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