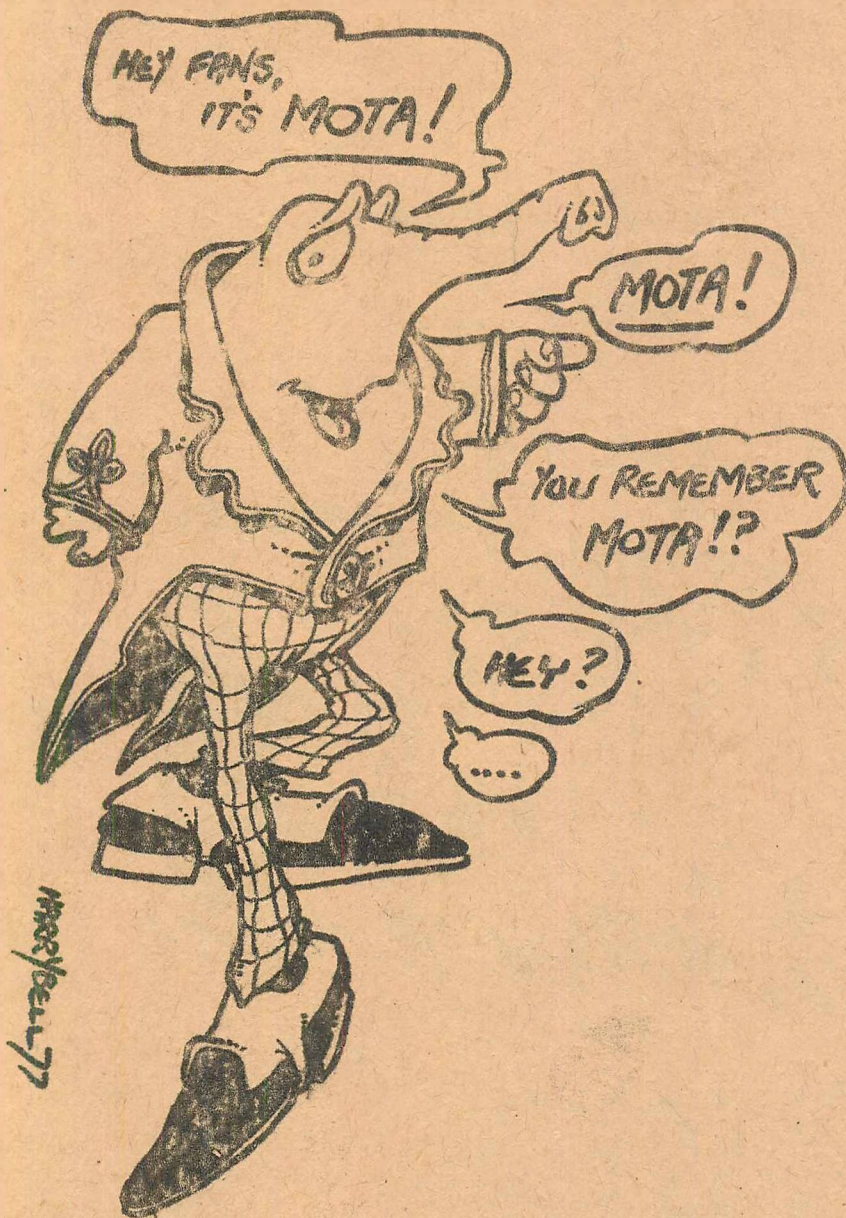


YOU ARE THE NIGHT & THE MOON





It's beginning to look like I am suffering from paranoia. This is not the sort of statement I hurriedly make -- there are few things I rush into (other than the open arms of a lovely woman or long sought for restrooms) -- but rather a conclusion I have gradually arrived at after careful consideration of recent events in my life. Still...still I have this doubt in my mind. Perhaps I am not suffering delusions, perhaps I am seeing things as they really are.

It all began, strangely enough, with the arrival of Hank and Leslie Luttrell on Memorial Day weekend at my apartment. This was an innocent enough beginning. Being old friends who had not seen each other for entirely too long, we exchanged lengthy greetings. Then we exchanged fanzines. I gave them a copy of the May 1977 issue of MOTA; they gave me a

copy of the May 1977 issue of STARLING. Then it happened: we looked at the fanzine covers...and looked...and looked. There was an uncanny similarity between the two, even though each was done by a different artist and depicted a different scene. Dan Steffan's cover for MOTA showed an enraged fanzine editor using a stylus to slash off the pointy-eared head of a trekkie. Al Sirosis' STARLING cover showed the after-the-fact scene of the murder of a funny animal rock musician. These covers are not only alike in showing a gory situation but they are also laid out almost identically. Both have a wide title logo across the top third of the page. Both have three round portrait inserts along the left side under a banner reading "featuring" with an identifying banner beneath each circle. Both have the word "fanzine" written vertically and set in a small rectangle on the left hand side of the logo. Finally, both have a circle on each side of the fanzine title with two letters in each (STARLING has AC DC while MOTA has TH TH). This duplication is indeed a strange coincidence.



Of course both Dan Steffan and Al Sirois drew their inspiration from the old Educational Comics (EC) line of horror comic books. Because they both drew covers that were faithful in terms of layout to the EC books, their work had this unnerving similarity. Still, even after considering the same source inspired both artists, it is strange for the covers to appear on the May 1977 issue of each fanzine. The statistical odds against this happening are phenomenally high.

Dan gave me his cover in January of 1977. I don't know when Al drew his piece but I would suspect it was some time later than that. Do the Luttrells have a spy in this area in order to steal MOTA's cover concepts? Can Al Sirois read Dan Steffan's mind? (Can anyone?) Can this really just be coincidence? I wonder. Perhaps Dan sold out to the Luttrells, going over to their side in this fierce competitive war among American fanzines and taking MOTA's top secrets with him. Can it just be a quirk of fate that he went back to Madison with Hank and Lesleigh when they left here and that since then he has done a large amount of artwork for STARLING? Are Sinister Forces at work?

Thankfully James Shull's back cover for that STARLING bears absolutely no resemblance to Alexis Gilliland's back cover for MOTA #21.

Along with another visitor to this area came another strange occurrence. Paul Williams was in D.C. at a booksellers gathering meeting folks and promoting his new book, RIGHT TO PASS. Rich brown drove in to pick Paul up and bring him back to fannish northern Virginia for a visit. While at the meeting in Washington the two of them were talking with a young woman there when (somehow) MOTA was mentioned. Paul and Rich both commented that they knew the editor of MOTA and the woman said that she knew one of the editors of MOTA. To clarify her use of the plural, Rich asked her if she knew Terry Hughes. No, she responded and gave the name of someone else. As I was told, this led to a bit of confusion as to what was going on. Matters got sorted out when Paul and Rich made it clear they knew the editor of this fanzine while she indicated she knew someone connected with the Museum Of Temporary Art (M.O.T.A.) Magazine.

The Museum Of Temporary Art is a barely surviving organization in D.C. that does such things as present showings of Ken Kesey's Merry Pranksters movie. Many things about the museum tend to be temporary, including its address which has changed several times. Roughly a year ago they launched M.O.T.A. Magazine, copies of which were given to me by my brother Craig, John D. Berry, and Dan Steffan. Being broad minded and thinking our readerships would never intersect, I did not contact the group about the name. Lately, however, they have dropped the periods following each letter and the word "magazine" from the cover. I sympathize with what they are trying to achieve and I have no desire to get into any hassles about titles, but I do find it irritating. Who would ever have thought a name like MOTA would be duplicated? Not I.

Is this another attempt to encroach on my slice of reality?

In addition, three times during the past week I received telephone calls for Terry Hughes. When I identified myself as one bearing that honorable name, the callers said they didn't want me. They wanted to speak with Terry Hughes the woman, who also lives in Arlington, Virginia.

Is nothing sacred?



I sit here wondering if my keen perception has detected some masterfully sinister plot to deprive me of my sense of identity in increasingly bold and sweeping moves. Or should everything be chalked up to coincidence, except for my suspicions which should be attributed to paranoia? Now I know how a character in a Philip K. Dick novel must feel.

If someone else wants to take over my fanzine and my identity, they could at least help with the collating.

+ Terry Hughes +

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Judging from the letters I received, quite a few of you are confused as to just who wrote "Death of a Fan" which appeared last issue. The author was Ted White, as I indicated on the contents page of that issue. The story was a spoof of some Gary Deindorfer articles, which themselves spoofed various fannish goings on. At least that is how it was intended. Some people thought Gary wrote it, some thought Ted wrote it, and some were simply perplexed.

For the most part you can trust me when I list something on the contents page. But not all the time as you have learned in the past. Last issue I listed the contributors scheduled for this issue and then expanded the list to include some highly unlikely celebrities. One new reader took my Soupy Sales reference seriously and wrote me an excited letter about it. If any of the rest of you had your hopes up, I'm sorry but no Soupy Sales contribution is in this issue. Instead there is a piece by an Australian living in Britain and an article by an Englishman living in Canada. (The Jeff Schalles story is being held over for next issue.)

You can trust me, but only so far.

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#### Changes of address:

Alyson Abramowitz, 638 Valmont Place, Elmont, NY 11003  
Bill Bowers, P.O. Box 3157, Cincinnati, OH 45201  
John Brosnan, 23 Lushington Rd., London, NW10, U.K.  
Dave Burton, 6309 E. 169th St., Noblesville, IN 46060  
Rich Coad, 1645 Filbert St., apt. 302, San Francisco, CA 94123  
David Haugh, 2017 Elm St., Forest Grove, OR 97116  
Alan Lankin, apt. E-101 Hamilton Ct., 3818 Chestnut St., Philadelphia PA 19104  
Sam Long, 425 W. Lawrence, apt. 7, Springfield, IL 62704  
Darroll & Rosemary Pardoe, 38 Perrins Lane, Stourbridge, West Midlands, DY9 8XP, U.K.  
Karen Pearlston, 132 Hove St., Downsview, Ontario M3H 4Z7, Canada  
Tom Perry, P.O. Box 6, Lake Mohegan, NY 10547  
Alan Sandercock, Lehrstuhl B Anorg. Chemis., Pockelsstr. 4, D-3300 Braunschweig, West Germany  
Dan Steffan is no longer at his Frederick St. address in Arlington. He is presently traveling.  
Creath Thorne, 5443 S. Woodlawn Ave., apt. 3-N, Chicago, IL 60615  
Reed Waller, P.O. Box 362, New Richland, MN 56072



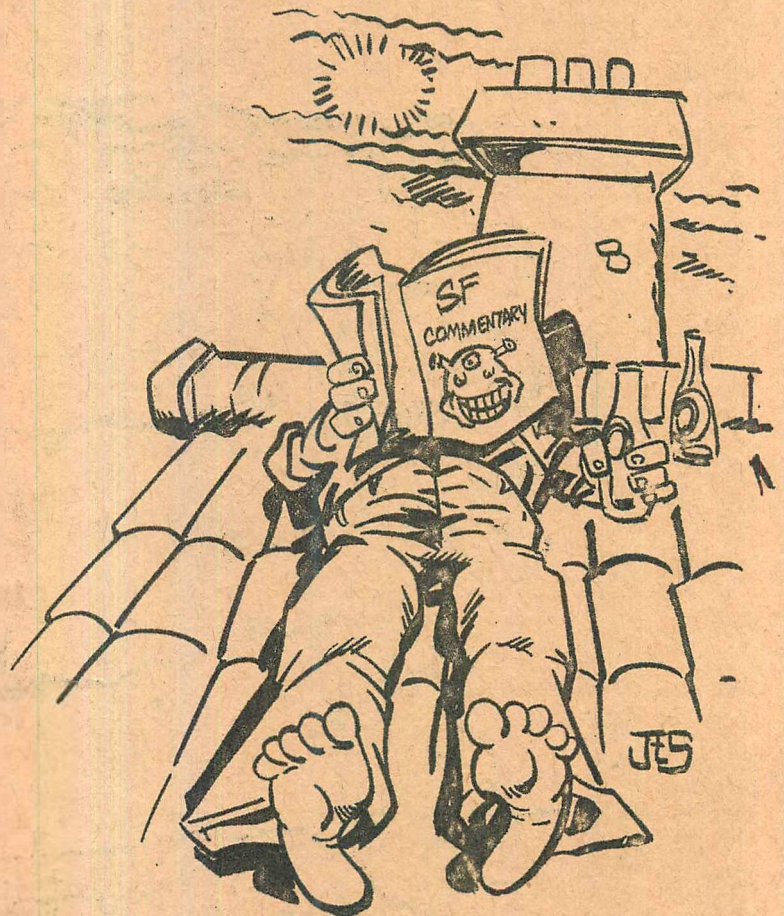
# URETHRA! I'VE GOT IT!

JOHN BROSNAN

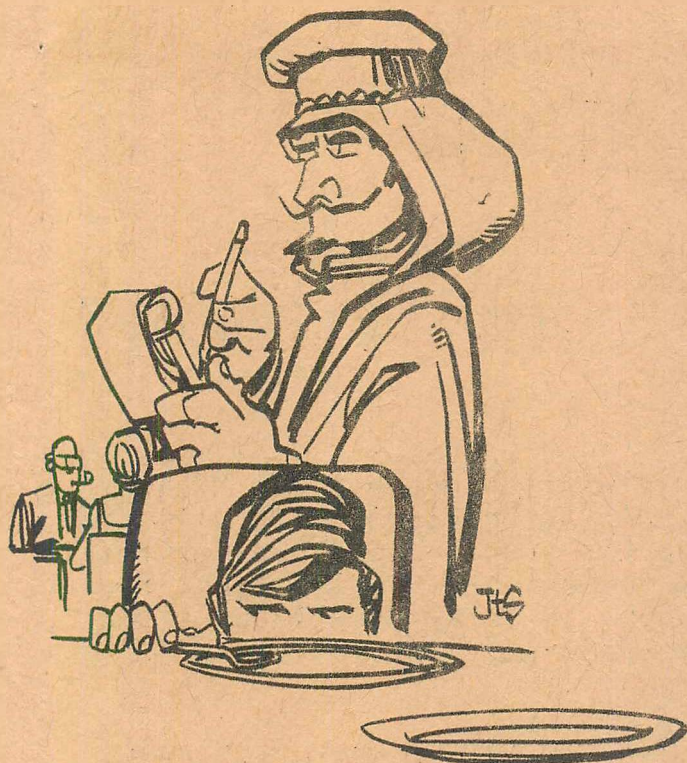
June 1976 was an eventful month for me. It was the month I met Harlan Ellison for the first time and also started pissing blood. I'm still not sure if there's any connection between the two events but I have my suspicions. The year before he visited London to meet his British agent for the first time (Janet Freer, who also happens to be my agent) and a few days later she was in the hospital with a temperature of 106 degrees. Perhaps it's true what they say about Harlan.

Actually I blame Bruce Gillespie most of all. I was lying on the roof last summer soaking up the weak English sun and reading a copy of Bruce's fanzine SF COMMENTARY in which he extolled the virtues of swimming as a form of exercise. In a mere matter of months, it seemed, Bruce's shambling, over-weight form had been transformed into that of a trim, healthy athlete. I raised the Guinness bottle to my lips and mused -- it was time I started doing some form of exercise too. I decided I wanted to be like Bruce: bright-tailed and bushy-eyed. I too would start swimming.

It was on a Tuesday I took the plunge. The Saturday night before I had met Harlan at a sort of dinner party held at the W.C. Fields. The 'Fields' is a trendy restaurant in St John's Wood which specializes in American-Jewish food, such as salt beef, potato laptkes, etc., and hamburgers, of course. I'd been there often before and while I admit the food is good the service lacks anything approaching efficiency. I always remember the time I was having a meal there with Janet and her husband Peter. We were having a lot of difficulty with a waiter whose command of the English language was slippery to say the least. Finally Peter snapped: "I don't like your attitude...it's arrogant!" The





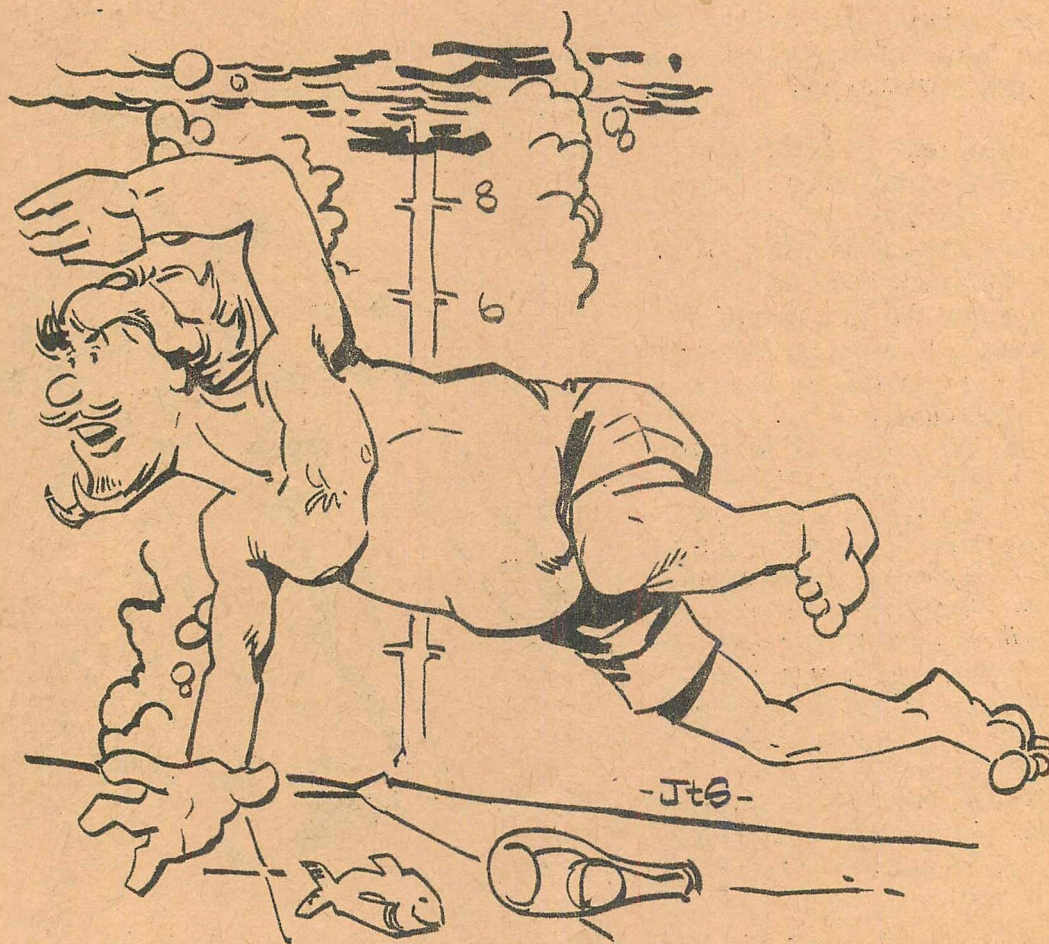


waiter stared at him blankly. "What?" he asked. "I said you're arrogant!" snarled Peter as only he can. "No...I'm not," mumbled the waiter defensively, "I'm South American." Anyway, the night Harlan showed up there was quite amusing. He did his W.C. Fields imitation as expected but after that he was charm itself and even had a good thing going with the waiter (not the South American one I hasten to add). "I will teach you how to make a good Jewish sandwich," said Harlan jovially, "Where are you from anyway?"

"Egypt," replied the waiter.

It's a great restaurant.

Anyway, the following Tuesday I finally made it to the Swiss Cottage public swimming pool complex. It turned out to be quite a modern, clean-looking place and I confidently jumped into the water and prepared to do several lengths of the Olympic-size pool. But I had forgotten that swimming, especially in fresh water, involves a certain amount of effort, and halfway during the first length I decided I would do several 'widths' of the pool instead. But even this compromise proved strenuous





and after about four widths I was thrashing about in a foam of impotence. "Good grief," I muttered to myself, "gone are the days when I could swim a mile each day through the raging Australian surf and then wrestle a Great White before breakfast. Face it, Brosnan, you're getting old." I sunk gracefully to the bottom of the pool.

Later, while clinging to the side, I decided I would only do another two widths and then retreat home in defeat. But by the time I had dragged myself out of the pool I was feeling utterly and completely bugged. I had never felt so exhausted before in my life. I could hardly stand and my mouth felt like it was full of broken glass. "So much for exercise," I groaned as I tottered out into the street and fell into a taxi.

With great difficulty I hauled myself up the four flights of stairs, drunk the refrigerator dry of cold water and then went and collapsed on the floor of the front room where I remained for the next couple of hours, stirring only to emit little moans of pain. It was a pathetic sight.

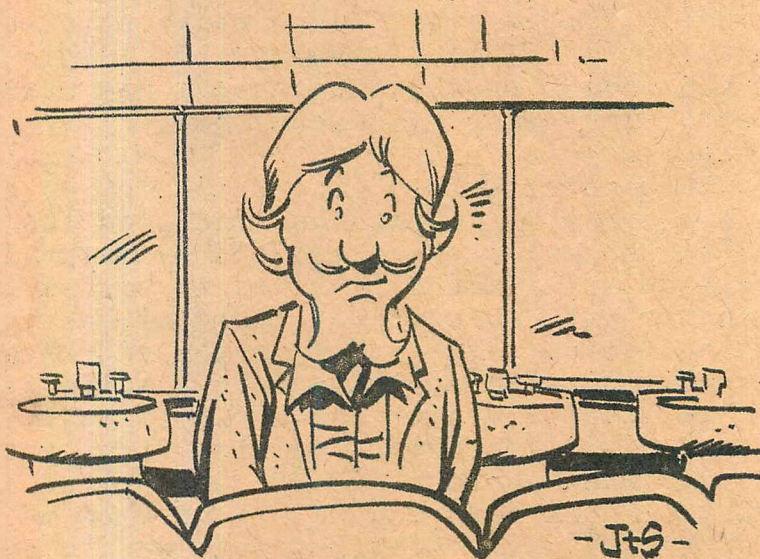
"You look terrible," said Jill, looking in briefly during the period between her return from work and her departure for a press show. "What have you been doing?"

"I've been getting fit," I groaned. "I want to be like Bruce Gillespie."

"Who?" she asked. By the time I'd finished explaining who Bruce Gillespie was she'd gone.

Thirty minutes later I was feeling a lot better. I raised one arm off the floor, then the other. Soon I was on my feet thinking about food. I walked up to Kilburn and had a pizza in the local Pizza Hut, had a few drinks, bought my usual booze quota for the night, then walked back home. It was a balmy summer night. I went out onto the roof, played with the cats and drunk my booze. Nice. Then I went to the bathroom for a piss. My mind was comfortably blank until I happened to glance down and see that I was pissing what appeared to be Guinness. "Uh oh," I said to myself, "that's funny." Black piss...that can only mean blood. I'm bleeding internally and that can be bad. First let's examine the possibilities before breaking into Panic. Pissing blood...could mean my first period? No, doubtful. Very. My heart? Had I ruptured my heart with all that exertion? But surely there would be other symptoms, like a deep coma, for instance. I felt my heart. It was still beating, sort of. But was that a stabbing pain I felt running down my left arm? Was I about to pass out? No.

I took a deep breath, went to the refrigerator, removed a bottle of Guinness and swiftly consumed it. Then I took a second bottle and went back on





the roof. No use getting over-excited about this phenomenon. So I was bleeding internally. So what?

That night I went to bed feeling reasonably okay, except for being a bit pissed. I wonder if I'm dying, I asked myself. Is there an artery flailing about inside me like a bisected firehose, sputing blood all over the place? If so, I probably wouldn't wake up in the morning. But I did, so I leapt out of bed, went into the bathroom and pissed a pint of blood into the bowl. Bugger!

It was Wednesday and that evening I was supposed to be going to Harlan Ellison's publisher's party. I was also supposed to be meeting Roy Kettle beforehand. I rang him up and said: "Look, I'm not sure if I'm going to make it tonight because I'm not feeling too well (actually I felt fine but it seemed wrong to say that...and I didn't feel like telling him I was pissing blood as that would have sounded pretentious) but if I do make it I'll see you in the Cockney Pride at 6:00."

I spent the rest of the day drinking two bottles of white wine while sitting on the roof in the sun and contemplating the mystery of the universe. "Why me?" was the question that provided the basis of my philosophic meanderings.

I met Kettle in the pub as planned then we wandered around to the National Book League headquarters where the party was being held. It was a suitably distracting affair, for reasons no one who was present is allowed to reveal on pain of death, and I also managed to consume a large amount of booze. A minor annoyance was the presence of the appalling Little Mal. I sincerely hoped I wouldn't drop dead at his feet as that sort of one-up-manship on his part would have been unbearable. Near the end of the affair I finally gave in and wandered down to the toilet to relieve myself. It was something I had kept putting off but the pressure had reached an intolerable level.

I didn't want to be reminded of my obviously fast-approaching demise so at first I shut my eyes, but at the last moment I looked down. No blood...it was crystal-clear! It was as if I was pissing pure champagne. I was saved! I immediately raced back upstairs and consumed several glasses of wine. "I'm saved! I live again!" I told anyone who would listen. How had it happened? What had changed? Had Harlan accidentally touched me? Was it true what they said about him?

I subsequently got so pissed I ended up eating in an Italian restaurant with a party of people that included the obnoxious Little Mal but I was feeling so mellow I restrained my natural impulses to throw pointed objects at him. Actually I was so pissed I would have had difficulty hitting him with a chair but I did my best to conceal my alcoholic state, making tedious small-talk to the androgynous Pat Charnock. Unfortunately the mask slipped a little when I got over-enthusiastic while trying to cut my steak and sent the whole thing flying into the air where it stayed for a brief time before falling first onto my lap and then to the floor. "Do you want another steak?" the waiter asked me. "No," I replied easily, "just wipe it down and put it back on my plate." And that's just what the Italian sod did. (The incident was to result in an embarrassing scene in my local drycleaners: "What's this?" asked the woman behind the counter. "Food stains," I replied indignantly, aware of the queue forming behind me. "It looks like vomit," she said authoritatively. "No, it's not...it's steak, mushroom and sauce stains," I replied. "Are you sure it's not



vomit?" she persisted. There were now approximately three hundred people in the shop, all looking suspiciously at the stains on my trousers. I resisted the temptation to grab her by the throat and scream: "Alright, I confess! It's vomit! And sperm! And blood! I'm really Jack the Ripper!" But I didn't.)

The next day I asked Peter, my agent's husband and sometimes script collaborator, what it meant when you pissed blood. He looked at me with alarm. "Blood? You've been peeing blood? That's bad."

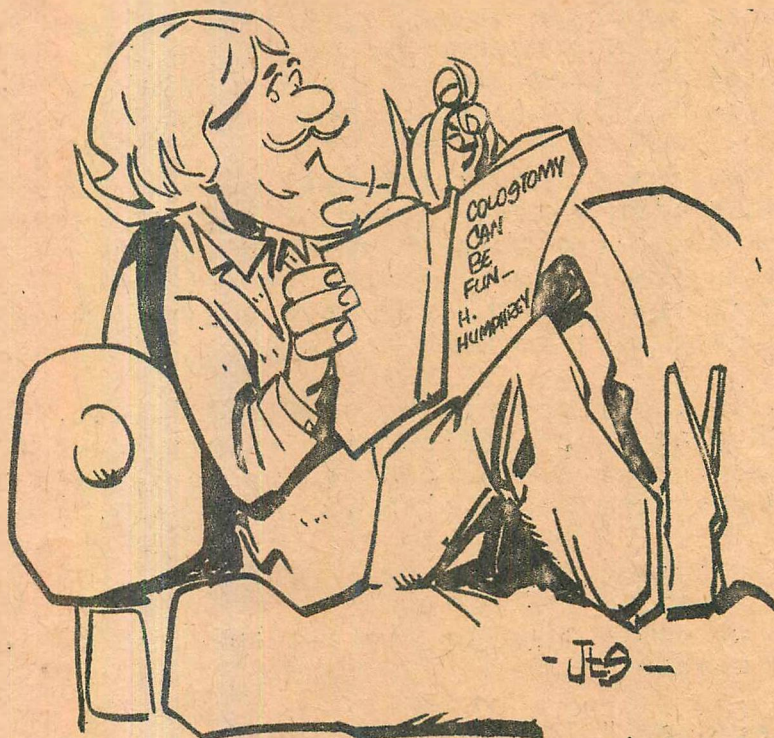
"I was afraid of that," I said. "What does it mean?"

"It could mean several things. It could mean your liver, or your kidneys... or your bowels."

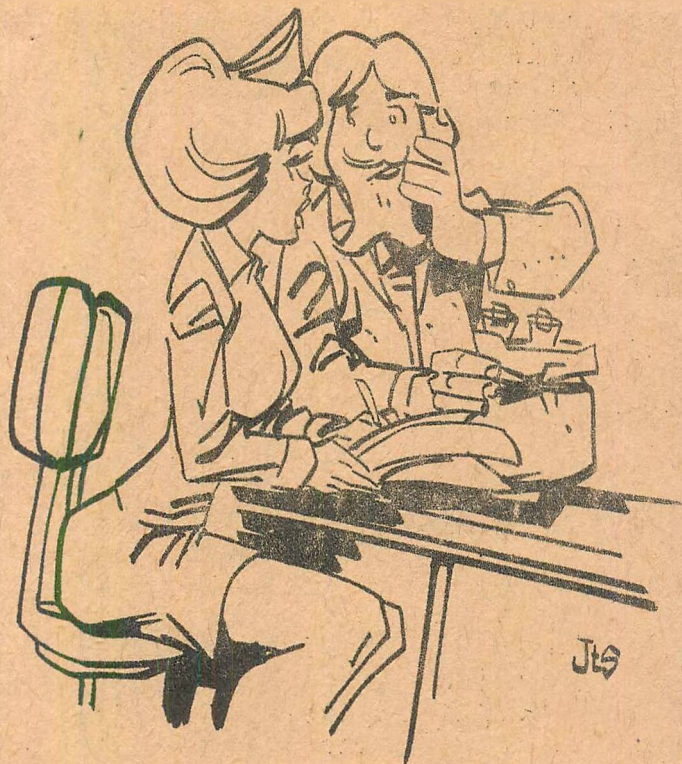
"Bowels!" I gasped. Immediately I felt a sharp stabbing pain in my bowels. I had cancer of the lower bowel, I knew it. "Quick, give me a double whiskey," I muttered as I toppled from my stool (sorry). Peter told me about a friend of his who had had a colotomy. Apparently they cut out several feet of bowel and give you an artificial anus in some incredibly inconvenient place, such as on the side of your neck or your groin or somewhere. To make you feel better about the operation the hospital gives you a little booklet that includes the names of all the famous people who have had colotomies. It seems that anyone who is anyone is walking around with little plastic bags of warm shit attached to their bodies. Strange as it may seem, this knowledge does not make me want to emulate them. I mean, lots of famous people are dead but that doesn't make me any keener to take the Big Drop myself.

"Why not see a doctor?" suggested someone. It was a revolutionary idea and I gave it some serious thought. Eventually I did see one. "I've been peeing blood," I told him. "What does it mean?"

"Hmmm," he replied and started scribbling on his notepad. So much for medical science. I mean, I can go 'hmmm' and scribble doodles on a piece of paper whenever someone asks me a medical question. Finally he did write me a letter which I sent to the local hospital. It was a request for an appointment with a piss specialist (at what point in his career does a young medical student decide that he wants to devote the rest of his life to urine?). But before I got to see the Man himself I had to undergo a series







of blood tests, x-rays, etc. I also had to deliver vast amounts of piss to the hospital for analysis. The first time I did this I went with the three little bottles discreetly wrapped in a brown paper bag. I finally located the pathology department which seemed to be staffed entirely by fourteen year old girls. I hastily deposited my cache in a metal tray marked "Urine samples" and prepared to make a fast retreat but the girl nearest the tray looked up from her typing and asked: "What's that?"

"Whisper, whisper," I replied.

"What?"

"Well, actually...it's urine...uh, mine," I muttered. To my annoyance she unwrapped the bottles and held one up to the light as if she was examining a bottle of vintage claret. "You haven't signed them,"

she said. The other girls in the office had now stopped work and were staring at my precious bodily fluids.

"What?" I asked, disbelievingly.

"You're supposed to put your name on each of the bottles, and the date," she said. She handed me a pen. Have you ever tried to sign your name on a bottle of your own piss while being watched by a horde of female office workers? It's not easy, but at least I didn't drop any of the bottles.

The worst test was the kidney x-ray. This involved being strapped down on a table with a large strip of rubber tight across the pelvis. This was to force the blood through the kidneys or out the nose or somewhere. They then injected some sort of dye into my arm. "You will feel a sensation of heat rising through your body and then nausea," said the doctor. He must have done that sort of thing before because he was quite right.

Finally I got to see the piss specialist, who looked exactly what you would expect an English piss expert to look like. He shuffled through the stack of papers that contained the results of my tests. "Well, we can't find anything wrong with you," he said, almost regretfully.

"Yay," I replied.

"But we would like to perform one more test," he said. "We want to x-ray your bladder."

"X-ray away," I replied easily.

"It involves inserting a tube up your urethra."

"Up my what?"



"Urethra. You'll be given a local anaesthetic, of course."

By now I had worked out what my urethra was. "No way," I replied.

It was his turn to say: "What?"

"I think I'll skip the bladder x-ray, if you don't mind," I said.

He gave a faint smile. "Well, that's your prerogative," he said.

"And it's my urethra too," I said as I ran out the door.

I found out later that there's a condition that sometimes occurs in soldiers who have marched a long way -- they get blood in the urine, due to some temporary strain to the kidneys, I think -- and I've decided that's what happened to me (true, I was swimming instead of marching but let's not quibble over minor details).

"Anyway, even if you have got cancer of the bladder," said John Baxter, the famous writer and wit who lives nearby, "it's not the end of the world. Look at Hubert Humphrey."

"Yes," I said, "look at Hubert Humphrey." Funny guy, John.

+ John Brosnan +

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Quite a few of you wrote letters since last issue but space limitations for this 22nd MOTIA kept me from using everyone's letters. Among those whose notes I appreciated getting were:

Eric Bentcliffe, Brian Earl Brown, Norm Clarke, Dave Romm, Jay Kinney, Bob Shaw, M.K. Digre, Dave Rowe, John Purcell, Neil Ballantyne, Jodie Offutt, Stu Shiffman, Dave Locke, Jon Singer, D. West, Bob Penland, Ben Zuhl, Robert Briggs ("Mota has too much humor in it."), Robert Bloch, Joseph Nicholas, Dave Haugh, Gregg Calkins, Jim Meadows III, Jim Herberg, Dave Piper (who sent story ideas for THSFM), John Boston, Ray Davis, Alan Bosco ("Overall, I'd been expecting a fancier faanish fanzine with much more material, maybe even offset. Seems some reviewers are vague and exaggerated in their descriptions. I'm kind of glad MOTIA is as it is, altho I'm not so sure it's so 'faanish', what with the catering to the BNFs or Pros (at least 4 thish)."), David Travis, Ed Chambers, Frank Malley, Tom Perry, Martin Morse Wooster, Robert Daly, Rich Coad, Alan Bostick (who says it was he, not John Berry, who was among the four at the gathering in Tom Perry's room that Tom refers to in his Big MAC report last issue), and Peter Roberts (who noticed the success Chuch Harris had and wrote asking Bob Tucker to name a carrot after Peter in his next story).

Thank you one and all for writing and I hope to hear from you again soon. Those of you who did not write now have a golden opportunity to write to me about this issue; take advantage of it.

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VOTE BRITAIN FOR 1979!

11



# SPLITTING HEADACHES



• MIKE GLUCKSOHN •

Not long ago, in a cold, gray, bleak impersonal building on a cold, gray, bleak and wintry day, a day that to anyone of greater sensitivity and education would have positively reeked of prophetic fallacy, I had a unique experience. At least, I hope to hell it will prove to be a unique experience.

The Supreme Court of Ontario put asunder what no god had joined together: Susan and I were finally divorced. I figure I ought to get a fanzine article out of it, just so the day won't be a total loss...

You often see it said in fanzines that "There are some things man was not meant to know"; this is usually mentioned in reference to the Post Office, the fan Hugos or Bill Bowers' love life. But it applies equally well to the divorce laws of Ontario. And so it came to pass that in the halcyon days of 1973, Susan and I settled amicably back to await the passage of three years of non-conjugal tranquility in keeping with the requirements of Ontario's arcane judicial system. It was either that or involve a third (and possibly fourth or even fifth) party and there didn't seem any need for that.

Time passed...

About the beginning of the year of our lord 1976, Susan began encouraging me to start the necessary legal proceedings considerably faster than Bowers publishes fanzines. She seemed eager to sever the ties that bind. That seemed reasonable to me, so I contacted our lawyer. Who just happens to be a science fiction fan, first president of the Ontario Science Fiction Club, and a friend of both of us for many years. Sure, he said, in that reassuring way that lawyers, doctors and morticians have, we'll start the paperwork, and with luck you'll get a court appearance by May or June. An indecent amount of money changed hands and I sat back to let the wheels of jurisprudence grind inexorably to their goal.

Well, the wheels of justice grind exceedingly slow. Winter slowly passed into spring, and all across Canada young men's thoughts turned to baseball, from hockey. The convention season began in earnest and parts of the body that had been frozen stiff since November got a chance to thaw out. Weeks



slipped gracefully by, and only occasionally did I ponder what wonders of legal legerdemain were being worked on our behalf. Before too long had elapsed, I'd received in the mail three copies of a decree to sign, one of which was then presented to Susan in far-off balmy Vancouver, so things seemed to be progressing expeditiously.

May came, bringing my epoch-ending thirtieth birthday, and May went. June arrived, bringing to a close another year of teaching, as well as Midwestcon and the return to fandom of a short, hairy Englishman living in Canada. And June went, taking with it yet another thirty days without a message from my legal representative. July ambled warmly past, bringing wild weekends of monstrous excess, and separating me from two of my teeth but not from my wife. August rushed upon me, inundating me with fans and frantic weekends, fanzines, letters, postcards and phonecalls from everyone I'd ever known: but the courts of Ontario uttered nary a peep, and my lawyer might as well have been Claude Degler for all I heard from him. And suddenly it was September, and worldcon, and briefly we touched so many people we really meant to see again for a longer, deeper conversation ("Hi, Susan; loved your fanzine. Good luck! How's John? We're still married. Catch you later...") and then it was over, the summer of seventy-six, and it was back to work, back to school, back to reality.

And a little voice said, Maybe you should phone the lawyer? When I turned around the little voice was mine. So I did.

It seems that "Hurry up and wait" is the official philosophy of the legal system of this province. I was told that everything had been processed months previously, and it was just a matter of waiting for a trial date to be set. The gargantuan glacier of Ontario's antediluvian separation system was limping along its preordained path and we had as much chance of speeding it up as Highmore had of winning the worldcon. "They'll let us know, then?" I queried ingenuously. "Of course," said my tireless champion of justice. And after fifteen years of watching Perry Mason reruns, I slept easy in my bed.

As another short fat fellow with a beard is wont to say, "Ho, ho, ho..."

During the fall of '76 I helped coach the highschool football team and Thursday afternoons and evenings after games would often find me down at Duffy's Tavern with twenty or thirty players and fans either celebrating or commiserating over the game. I'd buy the draft, then win the chugging contests, and a good time would be had by all. And afterwards, as often as not, I'd stagger home and go straight to bed, just to rest up for the next day's practice.

On a certain Friday late in October, after just such a session the evening before, the phone rang shortly after I returned from work. Because it was shortly after I'd returned from work, I was still sober enough to answer it. And I did. The hobbit who works as secretary for my lawyer said, in a disgustingly cheerful voice, "Hi, sorry we missed you yesterday, your divorce went before the Supreme Court this morning!" The sound of my jaw dropping was audible all the way to the University of British Columbia, Department of English.

"A half a day notice!" I said, shouting to be heard over the sounds made by my faith in democracy, justice, liberte, egalite and fraternite crashing about my ears. The wheels of justice may grind exceedingly slow, but when they finally get where they're going they accelerate like a bat out of Hell! "What do we do now?"



"Why," came the sweet reply, "we wait again, of course." There spake a woman whose divorce had already been finalized years ago! How soon they forget.

October became November, and the football season was ignominiously over, and then November became December, exams started, vacation loomed, plans were made, rendezvous were set up, and another year drew happily to a close. And as I sat marking the last few exams and recording the last few marks and thinking about how I'd spend the extra few days a fortuitous final exam schedule had provided me with, on Wednesday, December 15, the phone rang. "We're on at ten tomorrow morning!" exulted a voice.

The four year (and two page) preamble was over: Der Tag had arrived.

Coincidentally, Thursday, December 16, 1976, was a free day for me. (Pun intended.) The school was into examinations but I wasn't involved that particular day. So getting to the court house wasn't a problem. "Will I need a witness?" I asked the secretary. (The Ontario Supreme Court won't let a couple lie their way into a separation; they demand a third party lies in corroboration.) "I'm not sure," said that worthy, with whom I'd had by far the most communication of any member of the legal firm working for me. "I'll call you back if you do."

The evening passed. Silently. No message. No exhortations to round up a friend who owed me a favour. But out of simple common decency I notified Rosemary of the impending personal Rubicon I was about to cross. (Rosemary was a legend in her own time, a long time friend of both Susan and I, and had agreed to lie convincingly if we'd needed her to. As it happened, we didn't. I'd written a little about the separation of Susan and me but even if there had been any Supreme Court judges on the XENIUM mailing list they would not have noted anything of an untoward or circumspect nature. So Rosemary was ready to be once more into the breach, dear friends. If necessary.) I thought it only right and proper she should know that finally a glimmer of progress had been made.

On the Thursday morning, I trundled downtown to the Supreme Court building, a paperback novel in my coat pocket to render the subway voyage palatable. (With an average of forty fanzines a month arriving here, subway trips are among the few times I ever get to read books! By chance I was enjoying Graham Greene's The Honorary Consul when I set off to become single again. Anyone who has ever read Greene in general or that novel in particular will enjoy the delightful irony of reading it while waiting to be divorced.) And since I'd been told, "We're on at ten," I arrived with my typical punctuality.

And found that half the knot-untying population of Toronto was also "on at ten"!

The corridors outside the courtroom on the fourth floor of the Supreme Court of Ontario were filled with eager emancipators. Couples chatted amiably, sometimes in consultation with an impressive black-robed dignitary, while others glared at each other, barely supporting the facade of co-operation necessary to the events of the day. Alone, with neither spouse nor witness nor friend or even foe, I sat quietly on a long wooden bench, trusting to The System to see me through. And in the meantime, I read Graham Greene.

After a few minutes, I glanced up from Greene's appropriately cynical prose and noticed my very own lawyer coming out of the as-yet-quiescent court-



room. Aha!, I thought, personal involvement is about to begin. I even put down the book.

Graham, I think, would have chuckled.

My lawyer, my friend of almost ten years, my representative who'd been fighting the good fight on my behalf for lo these eleven months approached the bench I was sitting on, cleared his throat in an advocational fashion and politely inquired, "Greenbaum?" He stared at me, inquisitively. I stared back. He repeated the name to several people sitting near me. He stared at me again. No one spoke. And he left. He left! I watched him go. Silently.

Mere moments later he re-appeared from around the corner, came up to me and said, "Glicksohn???" The three question marks were very clearly audible. And so it began.

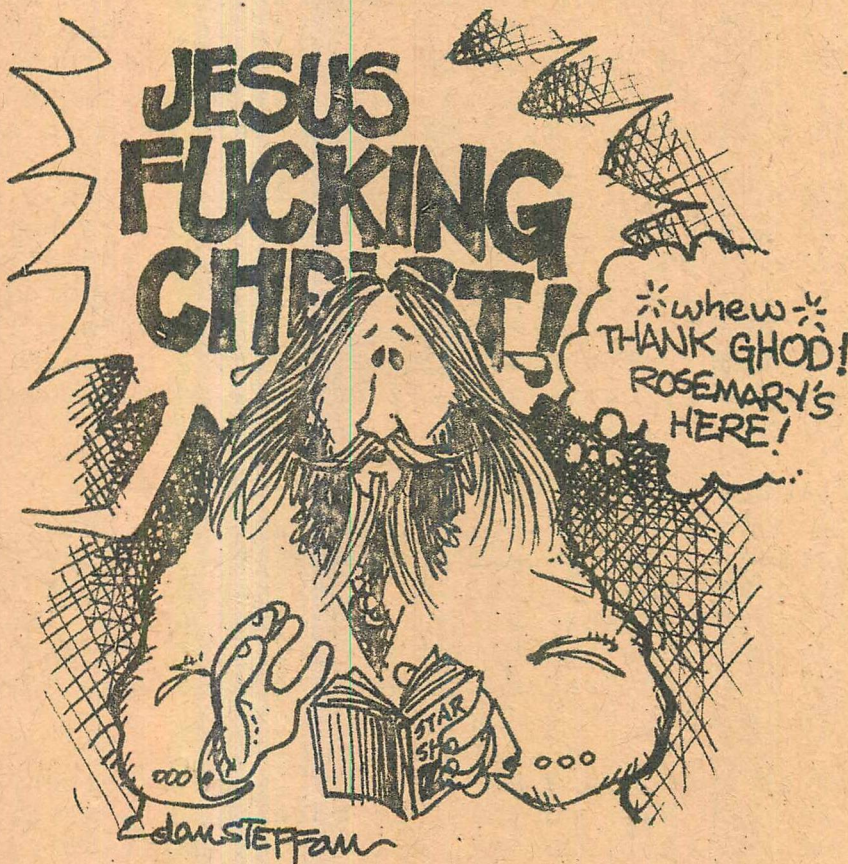
It turned out that I was Number Sixteen of those "on at ten" and bringing along a book to read was one of my smarter moves. It would be at least a couple of hours, said Ken. There'd be lots of time for him to prepare me and my witness. MY WITNESS! Oh, really? But your secretary never called back...

Ken gave me the sort of look I've given neofaneds who don't know what slip-sheeting is. "You can't get the decree without a witness," he said. "You're lucky you won't be on until past noon." It's a testament to my broad mental horizons that I just happened to have a slip of paper in my pocket with Rosemary's work number on it. I hope that little old lady who was using the pay phone when I reached it has recovered by now.

"Rosemary," I said, "I need you." Alexander Graham Bell may have made a bigger dent in history with a similar line, but I'm sure my degree of urgency matched that which accompanied his plea to Mr. Watson. And no one could fault the dispatch with which my entreaty was answered.

A few moments later, or so it seemed, as I sat perusing the pages of my Graham cracker of a novel, Rosemary made an entrance.

If you don't know Rosemary, that statement might not impress you. It is very easy to type "The atom bomb exploded" or "The world ran out of scotch" or "The sun went nova" but





if one's reader lacks any personal point of reference one might as well say "The gostak distims the galoshes" and expect a reaction. Rosemary entering a room is the sort of thing of which fanwriter Hugo nominations are made. Even entering a corridor, she did not let me down.

I was reading. Quietly. And suddenly I was being confronted.

"Jesus fucking Christ, Michael, I had to bust my goddamn ass to get over here in time! And I ran my fucking nylons, you bastard! I had to take a bloody taxi just to get here in fucking time and here you are reading a goddamn fucking book! What in hell's name is happening?" (Readers should realize that the text has been severely expurgated in case younger readers should encounter this article. The actual remarks are available, in a plain brown wrapper, along with a pair of oft-worn panties, for a mere seven dollars from the editors of Kinky Magazine.)

Well, Rosemary had time to replace her spoiled hose and we both had time to receive instruction from "my" lawyer so we'd know how and when to state our case in the most expedient fashion and then we were left to our own resources until the magic number sixteen was called. I was tempted to observe that we were waiting for two to be called fourth but obscure mathematical allusions didn't really seem appropriate. Instead, we amused ourselves by observing our fellow travellers along the road to matrimonial independence.

It was intriguing to hear such an odd assortment of lawyers frantically running from client to client stressing the fact that when the judge asked "Is there any chance of reconciliation?" each and every man, woman, child, friend, witness and coincidentally-passing-by window cleaner should yell out "NO!", as if one's very fee depended on it. And I couldn't help chuckling over the scenario of the lawyer who loudly berated his male client, at 10:15 in the morning, because "you were number 3 and they've already dispensed with you so now you're number twenty-two" only to be rather vehemently and indignantly told, "What the fuck, I only found out about it thirty-five minutes ago!" With the memory of an evening in Duffy's drinking beer firmly in my mind, I was very much in sympathy with the chap!

It wouldn't surprise me to learn that many fans have never spent an afternoon in a divorce court. (Fans tend to be rather insular in their interests sometimes.) While it isn't exactly bread and circuses, as free entertainment it could well replace going to the laundromat and watching other people's underwear if the word ever gets around. It has everything that a popular soap opera has: drama, pathos, passion, lies, deceit, humour, sex, violence, and, above and beyond all, permeating every word and action, boredom.

The boredom was the weirdest sensation of all. I suppose that one tends to think that something as world-upsetting as the end of a marriage, the shattering of two people's dreams, the unhappy ending to one of life's greatest and most uplifting experiences, ought to generate some pretty heavy emotions. Not so. The judge was bored. The court employees were bored. The lawyers were bored. Even the plaintiffs and the defendants were bored. If I hadn't had Graham Greene, I'd have been bored too. At least by the time the fourth case came up.

The other eye-opener was my very first experience with Truth, Justice, and the Canadian Way. Until that morning, I'd never been in a courtroom before. Not even a traffic court. It was an interesting revelation. Even I could tell that some of the witnesses were lying: they hadn't even bothered to



work out a consistent story beforehand. And it seemed to me that the judge knew some of them were lying. He'd peer at them over his bifocals and rephrase the question until the answer given matched the previous information. There were a couple of cases that Rosemary and I were betting wouldn't go through. One in particular involved a Chinese couple, married five months, getting a divorce on grounds of adultery. The husband spoke no English, so had a friend there to translate. What he said we'll never know, but the husband's answers bore as little relation to the questions the judge had asked as ALGOL bears to a fanzine. And still they got the decree. I got the impression a walrus and a rubber woman with a built-in taperecorder could have sat in the witness stand and gotten a divorce if they'd had a lawyer with them to observe the formalities.

Eventually, after a couple of hours of separation, abandonment and adultery cases, the case of Glicksohn vs Glicksohn, in the presence of counsel for the Petitioner, no one appearing for the Respondent, was called and after dutifully yelling "No!" to the possibility of reconciliation, I took the stand.

My lawyer asked some of the pre-arranged questions and I provided the necessary answers. That he left out a couple of questions I'd have thought were rather integral to the proceedings lowered my overall impression of the process even further. And the judge said not a word.

Then Rosemary took the stand, and corroborated everything, agreeing that she knew us both, that we'd split three and a half years earlier, that she'd visited me regularly since then and could swear Susan wasn't living with me and had visited Susan in Vancouver and could swear I wasn't living with her. And to my immense relief, gratitude and surprise, she didn't say "fuck" once throughout her entire testimony. And the judge said not a word.

So then it was done. The judge finally spoke, muttering monotonically through the legalese necessary to the granting of a temporary decree, we walked back to the spectators' gallery for our coats and already the clerk of the court was announcing Case Number 17, Bambi versus Godzilla, no one appearing for the Respondent.

Elapsed time: approximately three minutes. Cost: approximately fifteen bottles of Chivas Regal per minute. Reduction factor of time being married to time getting unmarried: approximately forty million to one. It certainly was a wonderful thing, meyer.

Rosemary trundled back to work, and I wandered somewhat aimlessly over to the Royal York Hotel, site of Torcon II and coincidentally the last place Susan and I had been fannishly together as husband and wife. Armchair psychologists may make of that anything they want. I had an airplane ticket to a convention to pick up in the basement. But to celebrate/commemorate/observe this hopefully once-in-a-lifetime experience, I dropped in at their expensive bar and paid a monstrous amount of money to have myself made a Zombie. Somehow it seemed appropriate...

Later that night, I called Susan and told her what had happened. I figured she deserved to be the thirtieth to know, after all. "Yippety shit," was about the nature of her reaction, and she even put it into a fanzine before I did. (With delightful brevity, though, as befitting a talented writer who isn't desperate for topics to write fanzine articles about.)

And thus ended a most unusual day. After the nearly four years that had



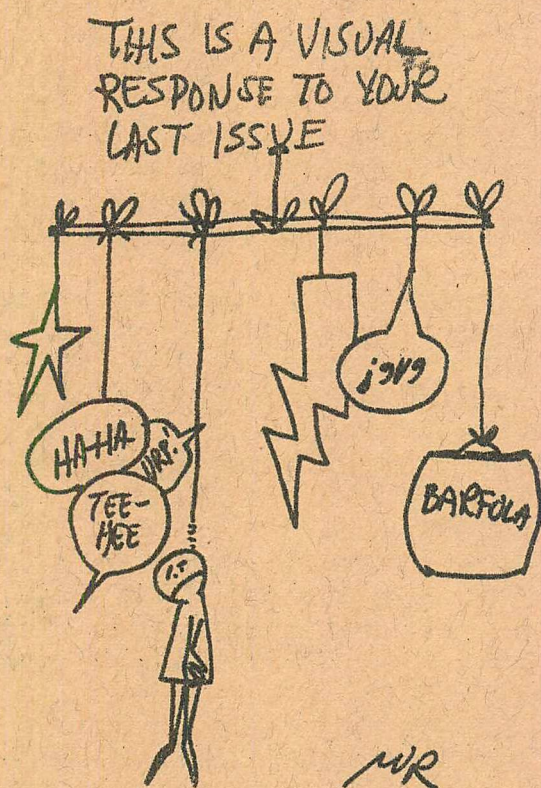
elapsed since we'd been really married, I didn't think legalizing things would make any difference in the way I felt. And yet I definitely felt slightly depressed all evening.

I wasn't really surprised by that, though.

Reading Graham Greene always makes me feel that way.

+ Mike Glicksohn +

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That about locks up the issue, except for these l.o.c.s...  
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JIM TURNER  
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Here is a problem I have been considering that you might want to consider in your next editorial: Is the method by which Bob Tucker is selected truly democratic? Are you aware that there has never been a female Bob Tucker at a science fiction convention? That the Tucker has never been Black, Latino, or native American? Just how fair is it that so important -- nay, vital -- a position in fandom is filled not through merit, through rotation or democratic election but by heridity? Why should the present occupant of this position continue to hold it for no reason other than that he was born into it? Is fandom a monarchy? Perhaps a new Tucker could be selected yearly through a method similar to the DUFF or TAFF votes. Have you any thoughts on the subject? Perhaps if it works out, the Hughes job could be filled in a similar way.

Perry's remarks on RAH seem to be among the most reasonable I have heard. When I have read them again and thought it over I may have something of my own to say. It has bothered me that many people who consider RAH a racist or sexist or facist or whatever do not seem to see any contradiction in condemning him immediately for being old. It is also unwise to assume that what a novelist puts into the mouth of his narrator is what the author believes. I don't intend to read FARNHAM'S FREEHOLD again but I doubt that Heinlein at his worst really thinks WWII would be good for the race. I think one reason that RAH is taking so many lumps is the age-ist instinct in many people. So many of us grew up reading the juveniles he wrote with awe and wonder that it is shocking to find that the man who wrote something we so identified with in our teens is an old, old man. The combination of the MadAve creation of the teenager as a separate race in the Fifties so that they could sell junk food and 45's and the Sixties polarization of generations have born full fruit: it is no longer respectable to be old -- it is shameful, disgraceful, unspeakable. Heinlein is old, self-centered



and set in his ways and, I think, an uncomfortable and prophetic sight to a lot of fandom that is young, self-centered and set in its ways. There is so much foolishness afoot in the world that I am unable to get quite as upset as most about all this.

Another thing is that Heinlein often gets overlooked by his worst critics in one area: his concern for individual freedom is obsessive. So is his concern for individual duty, something which is anathema to many people, especially younger ones who have grown up in an era when it is expected that somebody should always be looking out for you.

HARRY WARNER, JR.  
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A half-hour ago I started to read a sercon fanzine which has been awaiting comments for quite a while. But I couldn't get past the third page for thinking about the new, unread issue of Mota which arrived earlier today. I felt just as I used to when I couldn't get vacation scheduled so I could watch the world series and would fret in the office wondering how the games were going, the same way that I felt during long stays in the hospital wondering what treasures I was missing at the local second-hand stores. I put the other fanzine back on the pile and read Mota instead. I'll finish the other fanzine tomorrow and write a loc on it immediately unless a new issue of Hyphen arrives tomorrow morning. I even thought it would be nice to put a new ribbon on the typewriter for a loc on Mota. Then I realized I'd better leave myself something to do for an encore.

Tom Perry's conreport is of unusual interest, as the only one I've seen which gives a lot of space to Heinlein, his behavior and his ideas. Fortunately, I was never the kind of person who built up illusions about favorite authors or other favorite creative people, so there's no image of the Heinlein of the 1940's to be spoiled by the 1977 manifestation of the same writer. I admired his writings enormously but maybe I've read too many biographies all my life. I decided long ago that creative people are superior in creativity and rarely in other respects. Once in a long while, a happy exception occurs to this general rule, like Cliff Simak, who everyone agrees is as splendid a person as a writer. But my general impression about the creators saved me a lot of time, making it unnecessary, for instance, for me to read the gossip columns about Hollywood stars during the movies' golden age. I knew instinctively that they did appalling things in their private lives and reading those columns would have been redundant.

Tom's pages are meaningful to me in another sense. Maybe he didn't mean it that way, but many things in his conreport recapture neatly the sense of alienation I feel on the rare occasions when I attend a big con. The mix-up over the registration times, the boorish table companions at the banquet, the inability to find parties: they are episodes like those that I encounter at cons that cause me to feel that I know nobody in fandom. I know that it isn't so, that no fan can be acquainted with all the thousands of people at a worldcon. But it's still disconcerting to spend most of the year with fanzines and correspondents whose participants are almost all familiar names, then find all these never-heard-of-before individuals dominating at a con.

Your new staples are splendid. The upper one on my copy appears exceptionally endowed with graceful lines and a subtle balance between symmetry and unsymmetry. Its lower end is more sturdily arched than its upper end, but the latter seems to symbolize the eternal quest for new pathways by exhibiting just the right amount of deviation from adherence to the vertical,



turning just a trifle toward the nearer margin. The lower staple is memorable for the abnormally deep bite its two ends have made into the paper of the back cover, as if this inanimated metal were instinctively seeking to gain entrance to the interior of the fanzine with its verbal treasures. I also like the manner in which you placed both staples, in areas of the front cover which are mostly black, to prevent them from looking vulgarly conspicuous, but offering just enough white patches for the reader to enjoy the sense of security which comes from visual evidence that the staple is there. Even if holding down a job has its disadvantages, you can be comforted with the knowledge that it is permitting you to purchase the raw materials which you have converted into examples that the utilitarian object can also be aesthetically satisfying.

MIKE GLICKSOHN  
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Much enjoyed reading all the neat words in MOTA 21 and not seeing any of the illustrations. I'm impressed with your innovative use of barely discernable artwork thus allowing each of us to exercise our broad mental horizons and imagine our own artwork for each piece!

This ensures that every article is perfectly illustrated, of course, since we can envision exactly the sort of accompanying cartoons that we'd like to see. It is surely just a short step from this major graphic breakthrough to the day of the perfectly blank fanzine where we supply both the artwork and the text ourselves, thereby ensuring that every issue fits our own idea of the perfect fanzine. And coincidentally guaranteeing Terry Hughes a fanzine Hugo since he'll be satisfying every reader from the hardcore serconists right up to the trufannish faaans. A brilliant stroke, Terry, and I'm just sorry I didn't think of it before you did. And think of the money you'll save on ink and stencils! Hell, you could probably get away without even running the pages through the duplicator as long as you pretended to have done so and wrote the usual mandatory editorial about what a bitch of a job duplicating this issue was! A fannish revolution in the making and I'm right here on the ground floor watching it all happen: makes a fellow feel kinda proud and lonely.

While I sympathize with your desire to grow rich off sci-fi like the big boys, I'm afraid you just haven't thought out the commercial viability of TERRY HUGHES' SCIENCE FICTION MAGAZINE carefully enough. Everyone knows that in order to start a successful new skiffyzine you have to attract the attention of the buying public with a picture of a famous person on the cover. Now while TERRY HUGHES isn't quite as big a name as ISAAC ASIMOV... well...actually, I guess it is, isn't it? I mean TERRY is exactly as big as ISAAC and HUGHES is precisely the same size as ASIMOV...that's odd: I'd have sworn ISAAC ASIMOV was bigger than TERRY HUGHES. Must be the silent "g" that fools me, I suppose. Anyway, accepting all that, the simple fact is that in order to get your nose on the cover at all the rest of your face will have to be so small that not even your own urologist would recognize it from more than two inches away. Casual glancers will think it's a magazine about pyramid power and simply won't buy it and you'll go out of business right away. Why don't you just save your money and send it to me out of gratitude instead?

Jim Turner's fascinating grotesquerie resonates with a few mild incidents from my youth but I'm afraid that compared to Jim I've lived a staid and quiet life unworthy of annotation or description. He do write good, though, don't he?

((This issue's electrostencils were done by Linda Bushyager because I gave up on my former electrostencillers when you spotted my invisible illo ploy.))



GINA CLARKE  
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What am I doing writing a LOC? I thought I'd put all that behind me. But it seems that Old Fans Never Die, they just keep crawling back out of their coffins until somebody gets to them with a silver bullet.

But, of course, what I'm commenting on is some incidental little item tucked away in the letter column. Greg Shaw mentions seeing Leonard Cohen in an eatery. And I have this Leonard Cohen Story. (well, anecdote.) (Would you believe snippet?)

I met Cohen years and years ago. Before he became a (it is to laugh) rock & roll singer. Back in the days when he was well-known only in Canlit circles (though the term Canlit was still unborn) as one of Canada's half-dozen best known contemporary poets. Believe me, that is miniscule fame indeed. Anyway, I was working as secretary to the Assistant Arts Director of the Canada Council, a body which gives puny little hand-outs to artists and scholars of the Canadian persuasion. (Recipients immediately fly off to Spain or the Greek Islands, like sensible Canadians.) Anyway, into Ann's office comes this apparition -- two ugly young men in black leather jackets with dangling forelocks well annointed in greasy kid stuff. Very punk looking. But in a put-on sort of way. I mean, they didn't look truly threatening, as if they'd beat up anybody. What I took them for was homosexuals playing at S/M. I was surprised when one of the two was introduced to me as Leonard Cohen. My, he didn't fit my idea of a poet. (The other guy was some nameless \*friend\*. Whether a Great & Good Friend or not, I can't say for sure.) Cohen peered over my shoulder and went into rhapsodies about the beauty of my shorthand "hieroglyphics". I regret to say I did not respond with a snappy rejoinder, since I was busy being somewhat mildly dumbstruck (a chronic condition with me). Then Cohen & Friend whisked Ann off to discuss \*money\* with her. They couldn't set a spell in her office for this, because they'd hired a chauffeured limousine, which was this very minute circling the block. So all three rushed out to catch it in mid-flight. Ann returned some hours later, looking rather bemused. I don't know if Cohen got any \*money\* or not.

HARRY BELL  
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While Greg Benford, in his stay in Britain, has obviously grasped the principle of the Official English Quip and does a sterling job in teaching your readers an appreciation of written English humour, he does not appear to have benefitted from his experience at the North-East Science Fiction Group here in Newcastle. Greg was invited by Gannetfandom to come and give

a talk to the NESFiG members last year, and shortly before the meeting was called to order Greg asked me if there was any particular Number of Quip he could toss into his talk to guarantee a laugh.

After some consideration, bearing in mind his nationality (No. 283, don't forget), I thought that No. 27 would be a good choice. "The old ones are always the best," I assured him.

Rob Jackson made a quick introduction ("No. 155 and No. 283," he Quipped) and Greg got into his talk. About halfway through the night Greg paused and said "No. 27."

There was a deathly silence.

To his credit Greg recovered quickly but I could tell from the rest of his speech that he was shaken at his lack of success (No. 408, you might say).



((HB cont'd))

When we were taking a drink in the bar afterwards, Greg drew me aside and asked why No. 27 had died the death.

"Ah, well, you see, Greg," I confided, "it's not the joke that counts -- it's the way you tell them."

Like I said, the old ones are the best.

\* \* \* \* \*

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