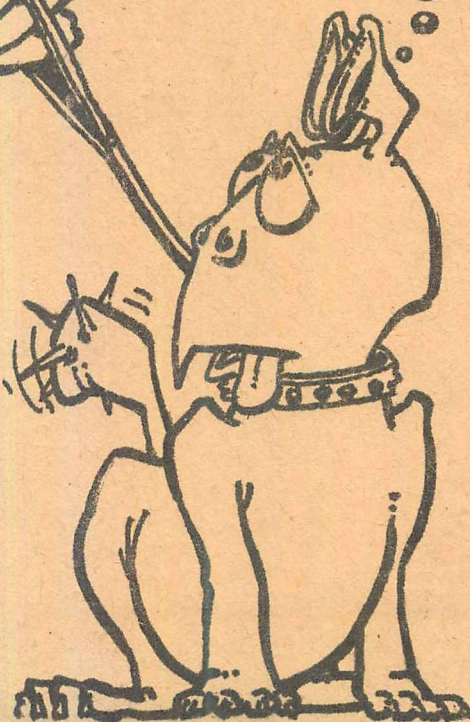
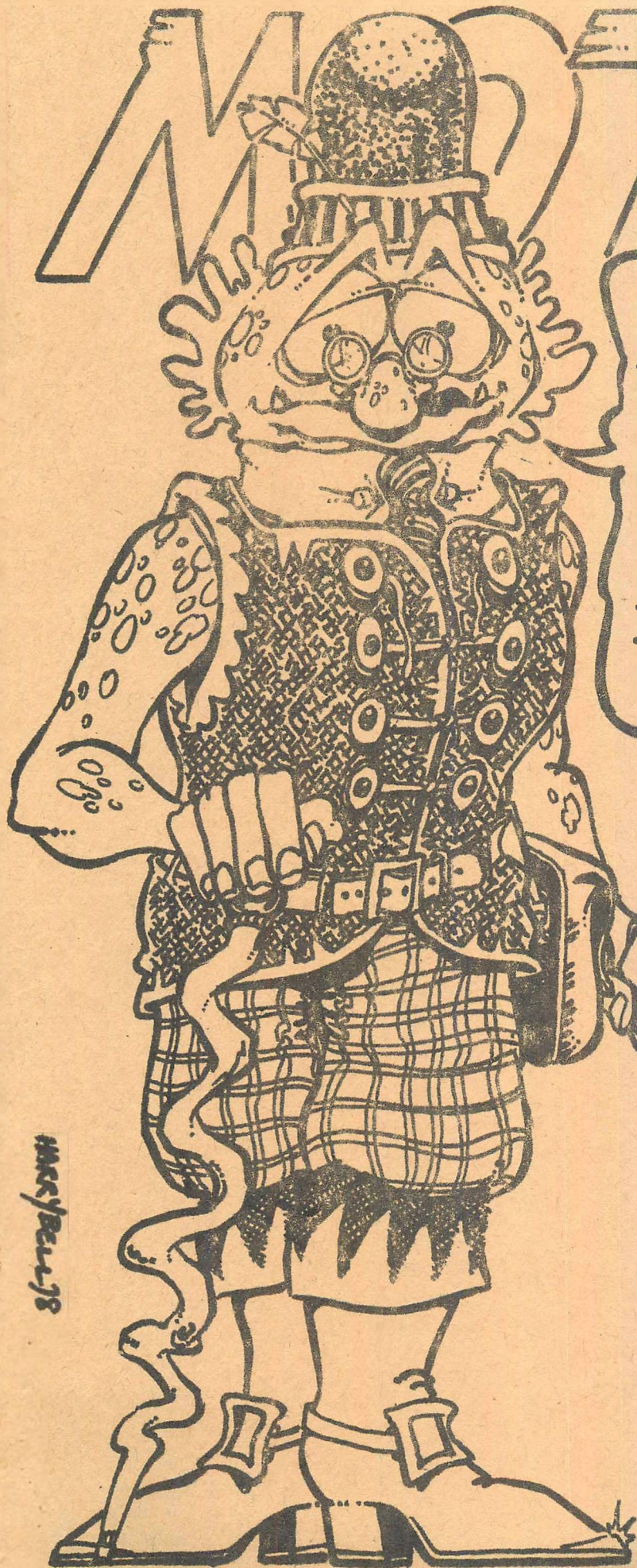


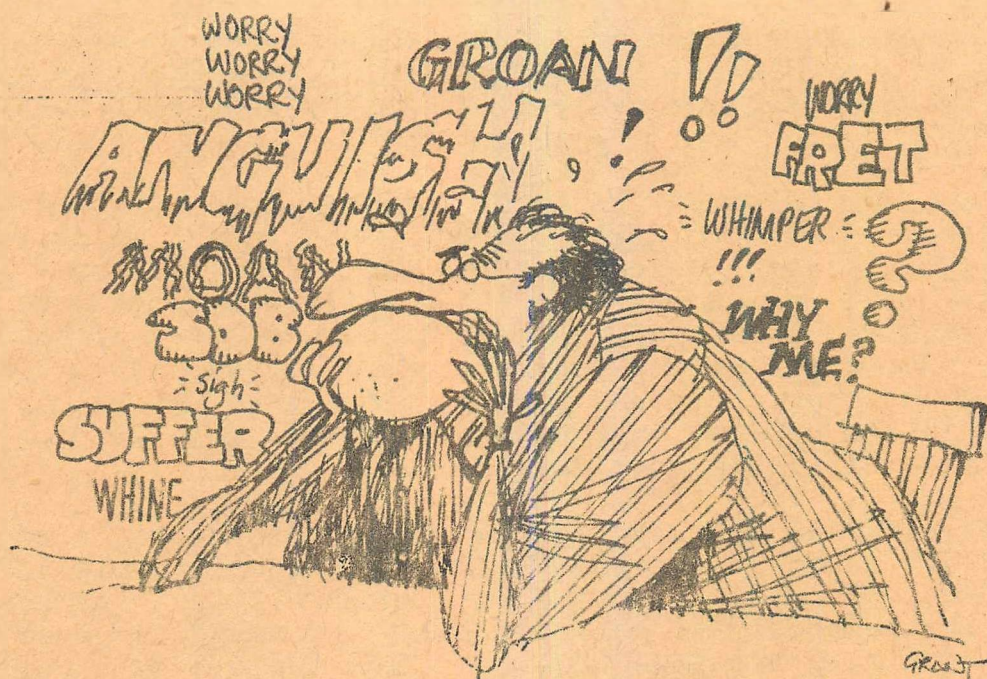
META

FOR A SUPPOSEDLY
INTELLIGENT AUDIENCE
YOU DON'T LOOK OVERLY
EXCITED AT THE PROSPECT
OF ANOTHER FUN-FILLED
SCINTILLATING AND, YES,
THOUGHT-PROVOKING
ISSUE OF THIS NOTABLY
WORTHWHILE FANZINE

COBBLERS



MSK/BE-178



HOW TO MAKE OMLETTES WITHOUT PARING APPLES

(A True Story)

Amazingly enough no one has ever asked me to come up with a title for his or her fanzine. I must admit to being baffled by this lack of initiative on the part of fans in the 1970's. Since I am the one who came up with the name MOTA for this fanzine, I expected that fans in need of title would be banging on my door. So far they haven't even rung my doorbell. (I have no doorbell, but they don't know that.) I had thought my flair for naming things would have been obvious.

When I first launched MOTA into the mailboxes of the world, I decided to keep mum about its unusual title. Let the readers go crazy trying to discover the meaning of a word that doesn't appear in Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary. Besides, I thought to myself, what could be more fun than to have a letter column filled with guesses as to the true origin of MOTA? (Since that time I have discovered a number of things that are more fun than having a letter column filled with guesses as to the true origin of MOTA. Honestly!)

As a few of you may remember, a number of fans did write in with possible answers to this unasked question and I printed a couple in each letter column for the first few issues. In looking back over those early issues as research for this editorial, I discovered that Hank Davis was the first to write in with the observation that MOTA is atom spelled backwards. Since then many other readers have also made this astute observation (maybe even you) -- a fact which has lead me to believe that the fans on my mailing list have minds like steel traps (and we all know the IQ rating of steel traps). Still, if the atom is the building block of the universe, then mota must be the opposite -- something containing everything. I saw possibilities in this: MOTA could be a fanzine with all sorts of material, a fanzine of unlimited scope. While this wasn't the true source of MOTA, I decided to adopt this view as an editorial attitude towards contributions and that is why over the years the material in MOTA has run the gamut from A to C.

In the days before he was a Hugo-winner, Mike Glicksohn noted that MOTA was the name of the heavy in the Republic serial Flying Disc Man of Mars, a piece of information that is every bit as pithy and exciting today as it was then.

Jeffrey May was the first one to point out that Lord Mota was the chief god in the fake religion in Sixth Column. This answer would be most appropriate and highly stefnal except for the fact that I've never read that novel (short story?) which was reportedly written by some dude named Heinlein. This acquired knowledge did help to keep me from getting upset during MidAmeriCon. One day I wore a tee-shirt Dan Steffan had done for me with a MOTA logo across the chest and several times that day people would point at me and say "Lord." They must have been better Heinlein fans than I, not that it is a difficult accomplishment.

It was Robert Lichtman who told me that "nota" is Mexican slang for marijuana. Good ol' Robert Lichtman! Without a doubt I would have chosen this title for that reason if only I had known. I have shamelessly stolen this idea from the editor of FRAP and it is the answer I generally give when I am asked where the name MOTA came from (unless my questioner is wearing a police uniform, in which case it is atom spelled backwards).

In choosing a title for my fanzine I felt that it had to meet four requirements:

- (1) That it be easy to letter on a stencil -- the idea of using lettering guides for a name like PRETENTIOUS SCIENCE FICTION QUARTERLY is horrible enough to make me wake up screaming in the middle of the night. MOTA is short enough to take care of this and also to make it nearly impossible to leave out a letter.
- (2) That it not be so long that people will contract the title into a nickname, as ENERGUMEN became "Nerg" and INNUENDO became "Inn". Anyone who calls my fanzine "Mo" is just plain lazy.
- (3) That it be a new name so that no one would write in saying "Gee, Fred & Ethel Mertz used to do a fanzine called MOTA back in 1943."
- (4) That the name have a pleasant sound to it.

Three out of four isn't bad.

Actually I like the sound of MOTA (and peanut-butter-and-jelly is my favorite ice cream flavor) but I have to admit that its aural similarity to a slurred pronunciation of "motor" has caused me to receive stacks of cartoons from a wide variety of fan artists with themes like: "MOTAcAR", "MOTABOAT", "MOTACycle" and so forth. I even have a stack of non-motor MOTA-pun cartoons such as "QuasiMOTA" and "the MOTA in god's eye". As Grant Canfield might say, it's been Chuckle City, you bet.

While I like the name MOTA, I have been forced by these cartoons and letters (and the promise of more to come) to realize that it's time for a change. Twenty-seven issues is a long time to stick with any one title (just ask Buck or Juanita Coulson). That's why I wrote this editorial: so that you would be informed about the forthcoming title change and so that you'd have an idea of what requirements I had in mind when choosing a replacement. I briefly toyed with the notion of switching to ATOM but I decided that would be going at the thing all backwards, I also felt that MOAT would not be the solution to my problem ("the MOAT in god's eye"). So I found

myself creatively stymied and ended up resorting to opening a dictionary at random and sticking a pin onto the page. That's how I came up with MOTA's new title: beginning next issue this fanzine will be called HYPHEN.

+ Terry Hughes +

P.S. Effective next issue also I am changing my name to Swami Arjuna Chichirichi.

GOING OUT WITH THIS ISSUE is a copy of the 1979 TAFF ballot and I hope you will use it to vote in this year's contest. If you've already peeked at the ballot, then you probably noticed that I am one of those standing for TAFF. (If you did not notice this, please look again.) You may have been expecting this what with me dropping little "Terry Hughes for TAFF" hints in the past couple of issues and the time for voting has finally arrived. I have long considered TAFF as one of fandom's best aspects and I would be honored if you would vote for me. The other two candidates, Fred and Suzle, are fine people, but I must confess to having a personal bias towards myself. TAFF is the only realistic way for me to meet the UK fans with whom I have had paper contact and while the printed word is a fine medium the prospect of face to face conversation is even more tantalizing. Please support TAFF even if you don't vote . . . but while you're at it, why not vote for the Terry Hughes of your choice. (This has been a highly political announcement.) (All proceeds from orders for this issue of MOTA will go to TAFF.)

Despite the doubt I expressed last issue, fans anywhere in the world may vote in the GUFF contest providing they meet the requirements on the ballot. In order to raise funds for GUFF Leigh Edmonds has provided me with a spare copy of ANZAPA 64, October 1978, the tenth anniversary mailing of that apa. There are 413 pages in this monster and this is an excellent opportunity for an outsider to see why this group has been going strong for ten years. This copy goes to the highest bidder. I will notify all bidders of the highest initial bid and you will have a chance to top that, and so forth. SSAEs would be appreciated where possible.

I also have some beautifully lettered pieces by William Rotsler which were done to raise money for DUFF. Quotations like: "Trekkies fart in airlocks...and like it." and various fanish bits. For more details just write or ask me at a convention. I'll try to provide a list of what's available and quote prices. They'll look great on your wall or forehead.

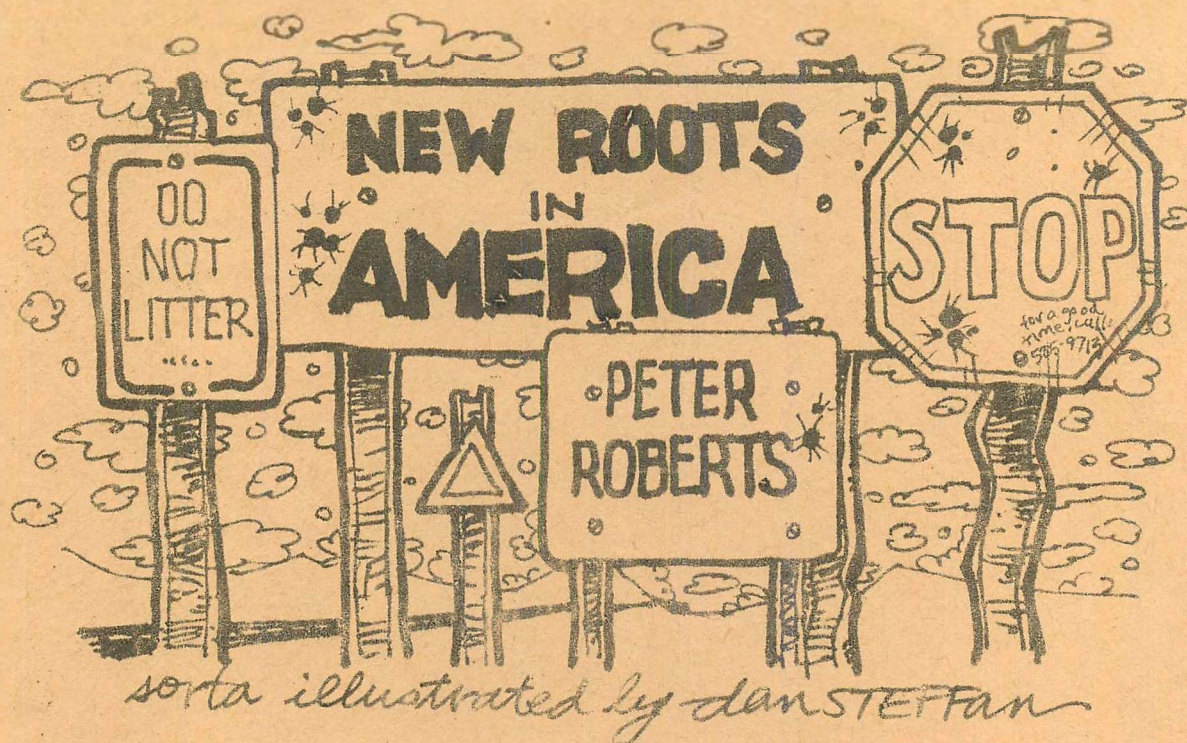
I never thought I'd grow up to be a fan fund huckster...

Linda Bushyager (1614 Evans Ave., Prospect Park, PA 19076) has been supplying electronic stencils for MOTA for some time and if you have need of them then I would recommend her services to you. Please contact Linda for her rates (it depends on the country). It's not every day you get the chance to have a sf pro do your electrostencils!

"At all costs avoid terminal adulthood. As you well know, the juvenile dinosaurs who refused to follow the adult dinosaurs became birds."

Timothy Leary - 1978

Or would you rather swing on a star and carry moonbeams home in a jar?



(5) FREEWAYS AND TURNPIKES

The Middle Ages were a big non-event as far as America was concerned. You can tell by the roads. They just don't come up to good mediaeval standards -- no twists, no turns, no halts at country villages, no fords, no cobbles, no hump-backed bridges, no curves, no bends to avoid cottages, no detours around fields, no following forgotten paths through vanished forests and long-drained marshes. American roads go straight ahead, oblivious of the landscape around them. Even a modern British motorway looks like a meandering folly beside a US highway. The Americans must have taken small maps and big rulers and drawn bloody great lines connecting the cities. Then they simply went out and built roads where the lines were marked. It didn't matter to them what was there: valleys, hills, forests, rivers -- they ignored the lot.

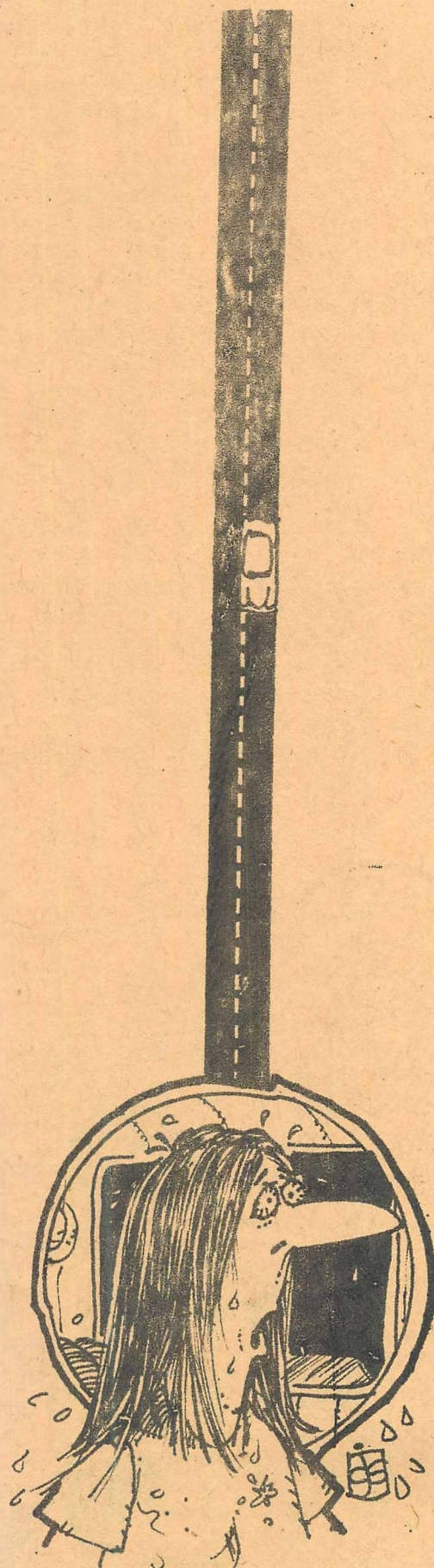
I know I live in Devon where the roads are little more than tangled mazes of high-hedged lanes; but I reckon any European takes it for granted that no road is straight for long and that even the ill-natured motorways will do a little bit of twisting and curving and disappearing into hollows. A proper road is part of the countryside -- it follows a natural course; it blends in with the landscape. But in America the roads are startling asphalt slashes cutting straight through the land and the result is thoroughly unnatural.

For one thing they emphasize the emptiness of the land. Cresting a hill, you can see the highway stretching straight in front of you till it's lost in the blur of the distance. And on either side of you there are tracts of land. Not countryside -- just empty land. Great belts of forest, desert, grassland, or swamp, without fields or hedges or cottages or anything. Mile after mile of empty land and ahead there's always the same damn road heading straight for the horizon. It's unnervingly desolate and unchanging. After a while you start wondering whether you're actually getting anywhere at all or whether you've driven into some strange limbo state where the landscape repeats itself like a cheap cartoon and the road never ends.

Certainly the roads weren't made for human beings. There's no chance of a US highway stopping at a village inn for tea or taking you the pretty way around a lake. They're just made for machines, mechanically cruising along straight lines. The lines don't even lead anywhere after a while -- they just head North or South or wherever. Cities and towns seem to be forgotten. The whole thing becomes quite dream-like: the traffic flows steadily at 55 miles per hour and your mind becomes detached and blank. After a while hardly anyone seems to speed or even overtake. All individuality is lost in this weird constant cruising on highways without an end or a beginning.

As a passenger, whether in a coach or a car, I found myself hypnotized by the roads. I'd just sit there blank-eyed and slack-mouthed, brain completely vacant. Only rare and remarkable events like a change of gear or a hint of a curve would rouse me from this zombie-like state. I noticed it was the same with other people -- there'd be some sort of unusual movement and everyone would suddenly snap awake, look around, shift in their seats, start a conversation, blow their noses, or yawn.

Still, there were breaks in the flow. Every three or four hours we'd stop off for a coffee and a bite to eat. On the Greyhound this meant grubby little bus stations; but travelling down the East Coast by car we stopped off at the restaurants that clustered round the freeway and turnpike exits. In Britain the motorway services are doled to single companies under licence; but in America, as might be expected, it's all free enterprise and a batch of restaurants, motels, and garages tout for trade at each exit point. These service complexes form strange little villages, leeching on the traffic for their existence. They're all virtually identical -- the big companies favouring similar styles for all their buildings, so that mind-numbed travellers can recognize them at a glance. The brand dictates the architecture so the architecture reflects the brand. For the less sensitive there are enormous signs

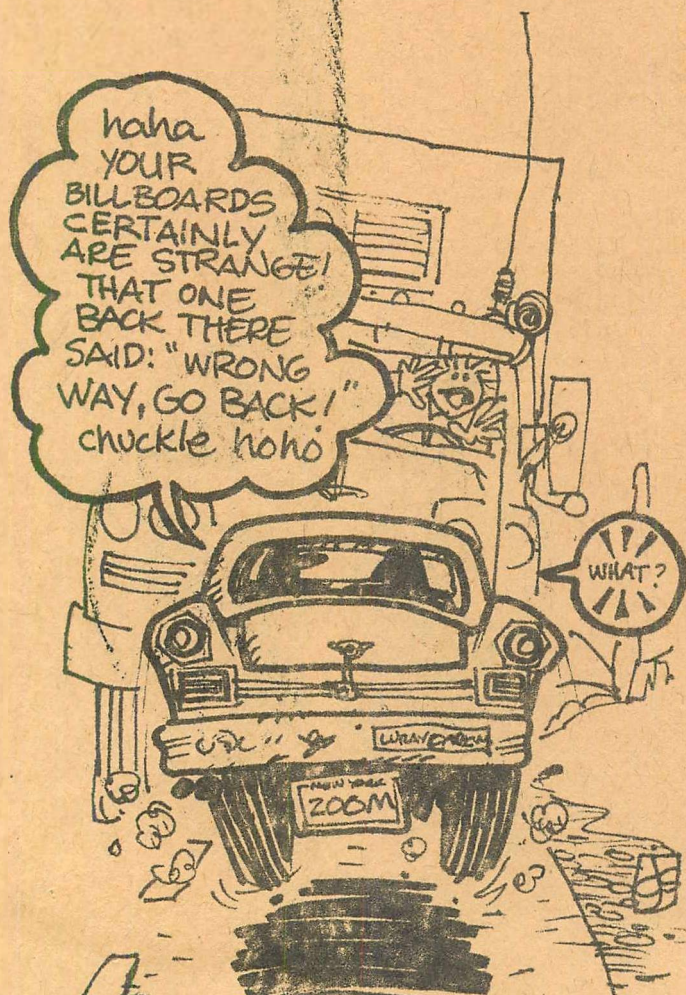


identifying each motel, garage, and restaurant in giant letters and garish colours. For the illiterate, the signs are grotesquely shaped, each to its own distortion. These vast totem poles rising high above the complexes are visible for miles along the road. And at night they're a riot of neon: flashing, winking, electronically whirling, calling the entranced from the roads and into the brash little villages with no names.

Back on the road again you can stave off boredom for a while by looking at the billboards. These aren't the stunted little hoardings occasionally seen in Britain, but tremendous great things erected all along the freeways in desert, forest, or farmland. Most are illuminated, some have moving parts, and all are designed to catch the eye, either by violent colours and vast lettering or by jokes, jingles, odd pictures, and strange shapes. Most of the billboards are concerned not with products but with services or roadside attractions. On the tedious eastern highways where the scenery consists of a 2000 mile row of trees, the billboards provided reading matter and occasional light relief. But elsewhere, in the desert and the hills, these cheap and nasty hoardings with their cheap and nasty messages were a profound irritation and an ugly curse on the landscape.

If you get tired of billboards, and that's easily done, you can always stare at the traffic. Most of it is as tedious as you'd expect, except for the trucks; I never tired of marvelling at these massive machines steaming past in groups and convoys. I know we're supposed to call them "lorries" in Britain and not "trucks"; but "lorry" is somehow too ineffectual and weak-kneed a word. These American trucks are solid and big; British lorries are tinny and frail in comparison -- even the giant articulated things, the juggernauts that cross over into the European mainland, are somehow too slender and elongated. American trucks are heavyweights. Seen

from a car, a truck overtaking you is like Armageddon approaching -- the sky darkens, reeks and stenchs pour in, smokes and fogs fill the air, and there's a roar and rumble like hell opening its gates. Somewhere up in the iron and steel above the clouds there might be a driver. And at night the trucks are outlined with patterns of dull red lights on front, rear, and sides -- mechanically steaming on like the never-ending highways themselves.



(6) A WAY DOWN SOUTH

Anyway, we travelled on south from Washington, Joyce Scrivner and Rob Jackson taking turns with the driving whilst Gary Farber and I dozed or stared at the billboards. Or maybe Gary was thinking great thoughts -- unlikely, however, in that heat. And it was getting steadily hotter, though Washington had been bad enough. We had to have the car windows fully open, which meant a constant flutter of

wind and hair flying everywhere. Occasionally this produced a brief diversion when Rob was driving. He'd mutter something that was lost in the wind, Joyce would lean over to hear better, and suddenly there'd be a frantic swirl of long hair and a moment's panic as Rob spluttered and lashed out, fighting off the strands like a swarm of gnats.

This relieved some of the monotony of east coast highway 94 which was notable for its featureless, tree-lined flatness. The heat, the clatter of the wind, and the everlasting road didn't stimulate much conversation; I'd exhausted my fund of interesting and seldom-heard facts about trees after the first hundred miles or so and there wasn't anything else to be seen except American cars, which look like American cars, and asphalt.

The first day out of Washington we stopped at a nameless exit somewhere in Virginia and pulled into a Howard Johnson's for lunch. We seemed to attract some slight attention whenever we stopped and I suppose we were a wild-haired and improbable bunch. Our restaurant entrances were probably worth a look. There was Joyce, by no means slender but with a quick and potentially dainty step that was spoiled by toe-hold sandals; Rob was a stolid but indecisive mover; Gary a rapid, mouse-footed lightweight; and myself, a slug among men. Joyce would get through the door first and would advance rapidly on a table in a sort of flopping skip; Rob would reach the door, pause to let Gary through, and then himself stalk uprightly in before halting as if totally mystified by his surroundings and quite unable to detect any sign of Joyce, or even Gary, who'd furtively managed to reach the table unseen. They'd all seated themselves, read the menus, examined the sauce bottles, and been served iced-water before I'd reached the door and begun my long, stately slouch towards them. Anyway if we seemed peculiar to Howard Johnson's that afternoon, the feeling was mutual. Here we were in the thick heat of Virginia and there was this restaurant, looking like a cross between a church and a Swiss chalet with a brilliant orange roof, steeply angled to keep off the snow. I've a suspicion it might have had a bell-tower as well. I don't know what restaurants are supposed to look like, but it's certainly nothing like a Howard Johnson's.

Still, the food was good (or at least, a hell of a lot better than a comparable place in Britain), though I was distracted from the main meal by overpowering thoughts of ice-cream. When the time came for dessert, however, I got into difficulties. The items labelled as ice-creams in the menu bore tempting, but incomprehensible names, so the waitress patiently described each one, with Gary and Joyce giving secondary descriptions of the equally incomprehensible ingredients. Whenever I said yes, great, I'll have one of those, the waitress said she was right out of them and we'd all move on to the next one. We played this game for some while till eventually somebody asked what she did have and she said Butterscotch and I said yes, great, I'll have one of those, and we actually got somewhere. Very nice too. I asked for cigarette papers, but they didn't have any, so we ambled and flapped out and were soon back on the road again.

At some stage in the afternoon we crossed into North Carolina and stopped at the information centre on the border. The others went off to look for free maps and water fountains, whilst I chased a couple of magnificent butterflies into a woodland area, neatly laid out for picknickers. I made a vague search for poison ivy, an all-American plant which for no very good reason I'd become anxious to find. Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, I didn't know what it looked like and Joyce and Gary's descriptions dwelt more on the gruesome results of touching the plant than the actual appearance of the thing. Anyway I hopefully picked a posey of assorted

undergrowth (which turned out to be harmless) and peered into a slovenly little brook where something had audibly but invisibly splashed -- undoubtedly an alligator.

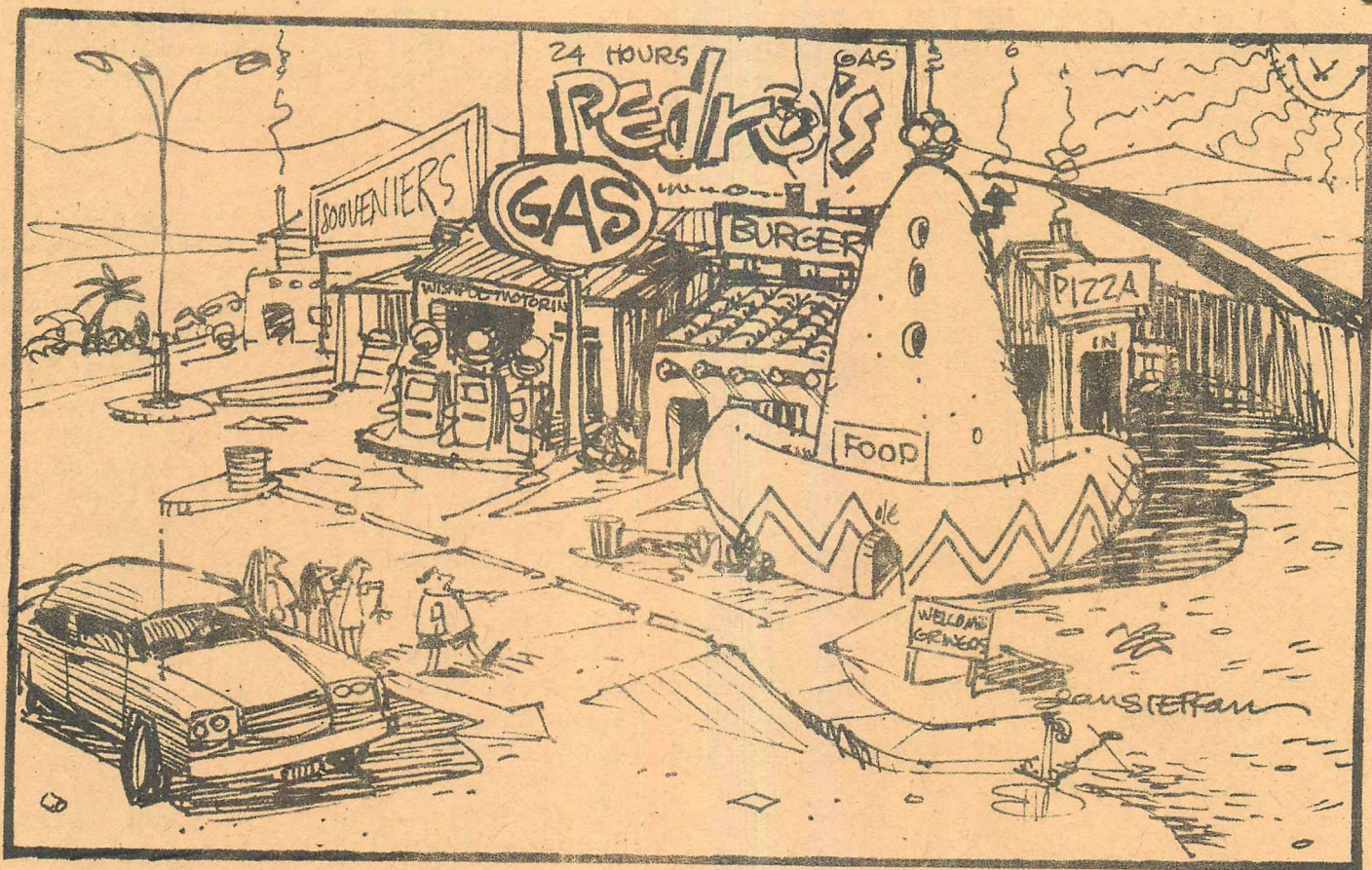
Having satisfied my curiosity, I thought I'd take a leak. This may not seem quite the sort of momentous event which TAFF reports normally dwell on; but, hell, fans are human too -- even me -- and I've always had a firm belief that serious works of literature shouldn't shy away from these things. That's why I gave up reading Enid Blyton. The Famous Five never went to the toilet once during adventures that lasted several days or more. As a kid I used to get really worried about that. It seemed like I wouldn't stand a chance of being an adventurer myself, should the day ever come.

Anyway, I looked around for a toilet. Most of the places I'd been to previously had handy little silhouettes on the door, for the benefit of illiterates and foreigners. However, I'd had a look at the Howard Johnson's earlier and hadn't found anything -- just a door marked "Private" and another marked "Rest Rooms" (presumably for long-distance truck drivers). This place was just the same -- "Private", "Rest Rooms", "Information Office", and that was all. So I asked at the information desk and the woman said that the rest rooms were next door. This wasn't very helpful, so I asked again, only to get exactly the same answer. I gave her a dirty look and went out. Now, if the toilets were inside the rest rooms, it'd be a question of disturbing the truckers and whoever else was trying to sleep there; the alternative was to find a few bushes out of sight of the picknickers. I walked off with this in mind, till I noticed that gangs of kids were playing hide and seek amongst the poison ivy and alligators. So I gave that up and went back to face the wrath of the dozing truckers. And of course it was then that I found out that "Rest Room" is no more than a misleading euphemism for toilet. All of which should go to prove something -- either about the occasional unexpected prudishness of Americans, or the gullibility of Cornishmen, or the strangeness of the world in general. I don't know.

Before heading off again, I picked up a pamphlet which proudly stated that North Carolina was famous for its Virginia peanuts, which seemed pretty daft. I also tried to get some cigarette papers, but they didn't have any.

I entertained the others for a while by reading out the pamphlet's unlikely and disgusting recipes for peanuts, until I made myself and everyone else slightly nauseous, then lapsed into silence and stared out at North Carolina. North Carolina looked much the same as Virginia, which in turn had looked much the same as Maryland, which hadn't looked a lot different from Delaware, and so on. We looked at the trees and the billboards.

Somewhere in South Carolina we started passing a series of vulgar and fatuous hoardings advertising a place called Pedro's. They must have subliminally influenced Rob, since, after a couple of hours' driving, when the place eventually came in sight, he unexpectedly pulled over and we found ourselves parked in a mess of mock-Hispanic buildings dominated by a gigantic statue of a comic-book Mexican, presumably Pedro himself. We all looked at Rob; he was in a state of severe billboard shock and was still mumbling jingles to himself. Anyway, we accepted this unseen twist of fate and walked up to the first building. The first building was too cheap -- an ultra-fast food bar that stank of disinfectant. We left it and walked on to the second building. The second building was too small -- just a confectioner's. I asked for cigarette papers, but they didn't have any, so we walked on to the third building. The third building (this is beginning to sound like a fairy story) was almost just right -- a restaurant,



in fact, though it looked rather bilious and bright. Indeed after a glance at the menu (which contained such well-known Mexican dishes as Southern Fried Chicken and cheeseburgers) we were inclined to give Pedro's a miss. Rob, however, was still suffering from jingles and, moreover, had worked out that we had to be in Georgia that night in order to reach the Suncon by Wednesday. I forget why that meant we had to eat in Pedro's, but Rob was in one of his no-nonsense doctoral moods, so we all did as we were told and made our usual ragged entrance. We sat down under a canopy of authentic signed sombreros from Pittsburgh, Detroit, and other Mexican cities and were briefly surveyed by a tv camera that was keeping an eye on the knives and forks. After a mere half-hour or so a female wrestler disguised as a waitress lumbered over to us and barked out some trite litany in a remarkable, thick Southern drawl, just like something out of a Civil War melodrama. I'd always thought it was a bogus accent invented by Yankee novelists, but here we were in South Carolina and the "you-alls" were tumbling out after every other word, despite the fact that we were supposed to be pretending we were in Mexico. Anyway, she moved on from the ritual greeting and asked Joyce for her order. Joyce ordered (Big City Americans can be stunningly blunt in restaurants) and the waitress grimaced visibly and glowered at Rob. Rob, not noticing any of this, started asking questions about the menu (the Anglo-American language gap is at its worst in menus). The waitress, already irritated and now confronted with an obvious illiterate, snapped back answers -- inasmuch as it's possible to snap and drawl at the same time. Rob, of course, not being a dialect enthusiast, didn't understand a bloody word she said. Things got rather strained. In the end Gary and I ordered the simplest meals in fear of our lives and we all ended up eating something vaguely unpleasant before clearing out as rapidly as we could. So much for the pernicious effects of billboards on tired doctors.

Sometime after dark we had a real adventure (even though I'd been to the toilet at Pedro's). Joyce, entranced by the flow of fascinating fannish conversation ("What do you think of X?" "He's ok." "What do you think of Y?" "She's all right."), managed to run out of petrol in the middle of nowhere much at all. The car spluttered to a halt.

There was supposed to be an exit some five miles ahead, so, leaving Rob to guard the car, the rest of us got out and started walking. It was pleasant enough: a warm South Carolina night, with the moon hanging low over the trees and the insects buzzing and chirping in the dense tangles of vegetation alongside the road. The walk had a strange dream-like quality -- I mean apart from the fact that we now seemed to be heading for the Suncon on foot. Here we were in this deep rural landscape, miles from anywhere, and yet a few feet to the right of us strange, disembodied lights purred past and disappeared, whilst occasionally, on our left, vast hell-bright placards rose mysteriously out of the undergrowth, offering us good eats, prime building lots, and happy retirement homes. The hoardings hummed electrically to themselves, flickering with the rapid shadows of night-flying moths.

And then a police car appeared. We wouldn't have panicked much more if a herd of buffaloes had suddenly charged out of the shadows. American cop cars are intrinsically evil things -- low, sleek, and menacing, bathed in their revolving blue lights. This one passed close by us. There was a sharp red flash of rear-lights, and the thing stopped.



Well, I don't know. Two long-haired Yankees and a long-haired foreigner in the middle of the night well south of the Mason-Dixon line found walking along a freeway. Obviously hippies. Obviously full of any old drugs you could care to mention. Christ. I had my Easy Rider sunglasses on as well. I could see it coming: a big fat Southern Sheriff in a cowboy hat, sweat-stained and looking for trouble. Joyce had already reached the car and was talking through the window. It was a brief exchange and she looked up and beckoned us on. "He says to get in," said Joyce. We got in. And it was just about as bad as it could be: he was a sheriff, and he was wearing a cowboy hat, and he had a shotgun strapped to his seat, and it was a hot, humid, South Carolina night. Great.

Anyway the sheriff said he'd drop us folks off at the gas station along ways and then take us right on back to the car. And the sighs of evaporating tension damn near blew his hat off. So I sat back and enjoyed the ride in the cop car and the sheriff chatted away and we admired his shotgun and he said, hell, he'd got two rifles in the back as

well and they weren't gonna catch him with his pants down. We got to the garage where an evil-looking extra out of Bad Day At Black Rock lurked around staring at us and spraying bat-sized bugs with an aerosol can; a second cop appeared and asked who was out on the road now and our sheriff said no one, they can do what they damn well please, and we looked at the cop cars and found out we were in Florence, South Carolina, which has a municipal badge consisting of a palm tree with a couple of dates on it (1776 and 1828, actually), and shortly after we were driven back to find a worried-looking Rob who'd apparently been visited by truckers and had got himself on CB radio. We asked him if he was ok. Ten four, said Rob. Let's roll.

And that was just about all the excitement for that night. We stopped at a motel somewhere north of Statesboro (Statesboro, Georgia, that is) and all sneaked guiltily into a double room, since Gary was as broke as ever and the rest of us didn't exactly have money coming out of our ears.

Next morning I had grits for breakfast. Outside again the sun was fierce and the Spanish moss hung in thick strands from the trees. I asked for cigarette papers, but they didn't have any, so we drove off.

Sometime during the day the main highway petered out and we went off onto some sideroads with buildings and fields and people alongside them, instead of the endless row of trees that had stretched all the way from New Jersey. I saw peanut fields and real, genuine, white-flecked cottonfields, and began to sing Leadbelly songs about boll-weevils and suchlike, to the annoyance of everyone else. The south, however, was listless and dusty in the heat of August and the buildings and hamlets looked ramshackle and uncared for. No Gothic mansions lurked in lush plantations; just sheds, shacks, and low little houses.

One interesting thing about the Deep South is that it stinks. I reckon it's probably natural -- it certainly stank like a hundred dead possums when we passed the Okefenokee Swamp. There you are; that's an interesting fact to throw into any conversation. Did you know that Dixieland smells, vicar? Fascinating, Mr. Roberts.

After lunch we crossed into Florida and stopped at the border for our free glass of grapefruit juice. People in Florida take their grapefruits very seriously. Some of them were hovering around the juice-drinkers, smiling a lot and looking very earnest, like grapefruit missionaries. While the others were given pamphlets about grapefruits and why they're so good for you, I disappeared and plunged off into the swamp, alarming the picknickers eating grapefruits in their neat little glade. The swamp stank and gurgled contentedly to itself. The plants were looking strange; I stared at a bright scarlet lily growing in the ooze and thought of jungles.

Back on the road the long line of trees had eventually broken; they'd decayed under the weight of hanging moss somewhere back in Georgia and had given way to long vistas of grassland, dotted with shallow lakes and steaming wetlands. As we moved deeper into Florida, the landscape changed again, clumps of palms and pines breaking the flat expanse of grass and scrub. You could see vast distances just from the car, which didn't seem at all right. I mean, it's fair enough if you're up on top of a hill; but we were down at sea level and weren't supposed to see that far away. I fell to wondering whether the earth mightn't be flat after all, just like Herbert W. Haydon once told me. Herbert W. Haydon (1 Back Street, Weston-super-Mare) is a Professor of the Cosmos and knows about these things. He

once claimed that the Americans faked all the moon-shot pictures in their Hollywood studios. He also gave me a signed photo of himself and Miss Solarian (1964) clad in silver gravity suits.

The air was thick and humid, and something in the early evening lightning forked down around us and it began to rain. Not ordinary rain, but a sub-tropical downpour descending on us like a mass attack of waterfalls. I've never thought of rain as frightening before, but this stuff hammered on the roof of the car, thundered against the windscreen, and cut out all vision, even through the open windows. One step outside and I reckon I would've drowned just trying to breathe. It seemed a bit dangerous to shut off the engine, so we steered blindly through the cataract at a walking pace.

The rain belts only came in patches, so we still made quite good time, and around about eight in the evening we reached Miami. The road turned into a ten-lane freeway and rose up over the darkening city, carrying a great band of traffic in from the suburbs. This was an American vision I'd dreamed about since childhood -- a strange dream of entering some futuristic city on high raised roads at dusk -- and I felt nervous and ill at ease. It had been a fearsome vision as a child, and as the vision came to life, so did the old forgotten nightmares. But someone spoke, it passed off, and we cruised over the bridge and on to the island of Miami Beach. And there squatted the hulk of the Fontainebleau Hotel, and the beginning of the Suncon.

More of which next time.

+ Peter Roberts +

Further information on the Peter Roberts TAFF Report:

Chapters 1 & 2 appeared in EGG #11 (Available from Peter Roberts, 38 Oakland Drive, Dawlish, Devon, United Kingdom, for \$1.00 or 50p.)
Chapters 3 & 4 appeared in NABU #5 (Available from Ian Maule, 18 Hillside, 163 Carshalton Rd., Sutton, Surrey SM1 4NG, United Kingdom, for 2 international reply coupons -- supply very limited.)
Chapters 7 & 8 will probably appear in EGG #12, so ask Peter about it.

The entire report will be published in a single volume by Peter Roberts after the serialization is completed (lots more to come!), so don't give up hope if you miss an installment. Just be prepared to wait a while.

OF SUCH ARE LEGENDS MADE, Volume 1, has been published by Joyce Scrivner, Box 1518, North Wales, Pennsylvania 19454 and is available for \$1.50. It is a collection of accounts telling how certain fannish legends came into being. Contributors include Harry Warner, Jr., Mike Glicksohn, Denny Lien, Stu Shiffman, Ro Lutz-Nagey (with the story I mentioned last issue) and others. Proceeds go to TAFF. Well worth it.

THE TUCKER TRANSFER published by Gale Burnick, Burnick & Martin Manor, 2266 Jackson, Dubuque, Iowa 52001, is a fanzine issued to raise money for the fund of the same name (to send Bob Tucker to SEACON). Contributors include Mike Glicksohn, Mark Aronson, Steve Stiles, Terry Hughes, Howard Waldrop, and others. Available for \$2.00. Recommended.

TERRY HUGHES FOR TAFF!



JOHN BANGSUND
P.O. Box 230
Kew, Victoria 3101
Australia

As a teetotaler of nineteen days standing, I must deplore all this talk in MOTA of drinking. It reminds me too much, too soon, of my former status as a drinker of ten years falling over. It doesn't seem like nineteen days, but on this note-pad where

I mark off the half-hours as they creep round I see I'm up to 918, and that means I am into my twentieth day already. Soon I'll be into my twenty-first day, which surely warrants a celebration, like an extra-large orange juice or (dare I?) a double mineral water on the rocks, and then the twenty-second, and then the twenty-third, and in hardly any time at all it will be February -- 3070 half-hours from now, to be exact -- and the doctor will order another blood test for me, and about the middle of the month (another 340 half-hours, say) I'll know whether I have a liver, and whether I can go wild every Saturday night with a half-bottle of riesling. I know that young, reckless idiots like Brosnan and that Canadian chap will wet themselves laughing at the idea of going wild with a half-bottle of riesling, but if they ever live to my age they will understand.

I have to confess that I've never pissed on anyone's boots but my own, that I recall, much less chundered on anyone's carpet or person. Maybe I'm not a drinker's drinker at all, despite all that stuff that's been written about me in fanzines. At Aussiecon I tried to impress Glicksohn and Tucker (I was young and foolish then) by pretending to get hopelessly drunk, live, on stage, in full colour, while acting as toastperson at the Hugo Awards Banquet, but I think they saw right through me, perhaps even pitying my presumption. Maybe someone told them that that bottle of claret I drank between Hugos was only my third for the day. I would have got into my fourth then, only I was trying to set a world land speed record for Hugo-presenting, so it (and the fifth: it was during the fifth that I started inviting people to have breakfast with me -- about two hundred people, actually, or so they said next day) had to wait until later.

I'm also a little distressed, Terry, by your increasing reluctance to publish in your fanzine sober, honest, instructive accounts of non-guest-of-honour speeches. Any damn fool can be not the guest-of-honour and make a speech at a convention, and your policy of discouraging accounts of that sort of nonsense is wise and just, but non-guest-of-honor speeches are

rare and wonderful things, and I can only hope you will reconsider your rather tough, indeed brutal, attitude.

As it happens, I was the official Non-Guest-of-Honour, appointed as such by the un-organizers, who thought I wouldn't turn up (it's a reputation I have, quite undeserved), at Australia's very first Bring-Your-Own Convention, Melbourne, December 1972. We published a Do-It-Yourself Convention Handbook, which is a collector's item today because each non-member had to collate his own copy, and some, reflecting the general spirit of the occasion, didn't bother. Gillespie used the left-over pages as crudsheets, which is all they were to start with, so it's a pretty rare item.

My speech, I am forced to believe, was absolutely splendid. Apart from George Turner, I'm not sure exactly who heard it. There were non-members moving in and out of Gillespie's kitchen all the time, bringing their own or taking someone else's, and I could hardly insist that they stop and listen to my speech, since we were all there to 'do our own thing', as we used to say in those days. George listened though, because I had pinned him in a corner the moment he put his glass down and wouldn't let him go until he'd heard me out. Then he went home and wrote the best fanzine article I've ever published, all about how he met Dame Nellie Melba, and riding on cable-trams, and hooliganism in the St. Paul's Cathedral choir and so on. There were other things in it, like boorish behaviour by fanzine editors at conventions, which I cut out, and a few bits about science fiction, which I left in to keep him happy. I don't know what I said in my speech, but as I say, it must have been pretty inspired to get George writing autobiography.

Then there was the time... No, that's enough.

ERIC MAYER

175 Congress St., #5-F
Brooklyn, New York 11201

I have been awake since 6:00 thinking about Bob Shaw. Now this time I shall keep the praise to myself. Bob is the best writer in Fandom and that's a helluva thing. We all know what kind

of writing he does on the side and that he's the best fan writer too suggests that we other fan writers remain amateurs not merely because we choose to write things there is no market for professionally but because we're just not as good as folks like Bob. But then I'm always in a foul and bleak mood when I get up -- especially at 6:30 a.m. Thanksgiving day when I've had Bob Shaw on my mind since 6:00. It'll depress me every time.

What's bothering me is that the coincidence in space and time of Bob's office-window-road-vicious cur-hypochondria and a rectal examination is too fortuitous to be true. Right now I'm finishing up an issue of Groggy. It has lots of pictures, lots of letters, lots of unstructured blathering and not a single unified piece of writing by me. In short, it lacks a Game of Dog and Crab. But it's not my fault. Lying in bed I've been casting back over my life and I can't think of a single story such as the one Bob relates. It's just all a hodge-podge with nary a punchline and no plot line that anyone could follow very far. I would love to get into Bob's brain and see what materials he really fashioned this bit out of. Perhaps a window in Canada, an office in England, a dog from his childhood...or maybe it really happened just as he said. Maybe twenty years ago, when all this was going on Bob told himself: "Hmmm... This is quite an interesting situation but if I'm going to write about it for MOTA someday it needs a climax -- maybe if I think I have cancer and go for an exam..." Well, you get the point. I always wonder how much of stories like these are made up. It doesn't matter. I just wonder.

Considering the time I hope you'll excuse me if I refrain from entering into the spirit of the letter column, but I'm just not much good at alcoholic repartee. If I try to do that kind of humor, I just sound like an ass. I suppose we all must stick to what we do best. Can you imagine Harry Warner writing about how he pissed on someone's shoes? (There's an idea: mix up the names on your letters and see if readers can unscramble them. I need an idea myself but I'll graciously let you have that one.)

HARRY WARNER, JR.
423 Summit Ave.
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

The strange thing about the cover this time is the way it fooled me. I thought Dan had doodled on genuine pictures from some recent con or other. You see, I'm becoming quite morbid about the way I'm losing touch with fandom. So much in fandom revolves today around cons, and so many of the people who go to cons never have much to do with fanzines. I read these conreports and recognize the names of only a few fans whom I know anything about. So it seemed quite normal and just that I didn't recognize any of the faces on this cover. I assumed that they were among the giant majority of important fans who are unknown to me because I've been to only one con in the past half-dozen years and have had only occasional visitors to Hagerstown to bring me up to date on important faces in today's fandom.

The start of your own conreport in this issue impressed me as plagiarism from my unwritten autobiography. The things you wrote about how you reacted to the role of fan guest of honor at a con are uncannily like the passages that I would insert into that brawling, sensational story of my life. So now you've done it first and I'll be plagiarizing you if I ever go off my rocker completely and actually start writing such a thing.

But when I was fan goh at the Noreascon back in, let's see, it must have been 1971, the situation was even more extreme because of my reputation for rarely attending cons and for staying obscurely among the proletariat at the cons where I actually showed up. Halfway through the Noreascon, I learned that substantial amounts of money were about to exchange hands on the night of the banquet. They represented wagers between fans on the question of whether I would actually go through with it and make the talk. After it was all over, a member of the con committee admitted to me that the committee had arranged to bring in a physician even though it was Labor Day weekend, in case I reported myself suddenly taken ill and unable to give the fan goh talk. He must have had an unusually large sum riding on the matter. As it turned out, I didn't really feel panic until we were all at the banquet head table and I looked up and down it and had a revelation akin to the one I'd experienced years earlier, the time I first comprehended fully that I was a tiny speck on the surface of a single planet lost in the immensity of a stupendous galaxy which in turn was only one of uncountable quantities of other galaxies in a universe which may be infinite. In Boston, my glance showed me the faces of Bob Silverberg, Isaac Asimov, Cliff Simak, and others of like stature and I had the conviction I'd crashed a very important private party where everyone was too polite to throw me out. After the con, the committee sent me a complimentary copy of the two-lp set compiled from tapes of its major events. Seven years later, I've still not listened to the banquet section, fearing that it'll reawaken the panic.

M. K. DIGRE
1902 S. 4th Ave., #1A
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55404

It is interesting to note on the cover that everything in "Sci-Fi Nooz" except the logo and "Scithers Wins!" is in German. Other than that, the photo looks just like those

of Slan Shack gatherings in All Our Yesterdays. (This proves that Zeppelins are fannish.)

The third issue ((of QUINAPALUS)) will be out as soon as I get a couple of articles, a pile of LoCs, and illos. Then all I have to do is write the editrial and print it. So you see, it's almost done already.

WILLIAM GIBSON Steffan's cover is brilliant; I'm glad to know that I'm
3180 W. 3rd Ave. not the only one who's figured out that DEVO model their
Vancouver, B.C. hairstyles after old photographs in The Immortal Storm.
Canada V6K 1N3

. Tell Deindorfer that life's even crueller than he thinks.
The bitter truth is that Lenny Kaye publishes a personalzine now, and that Patti Smith does all the illos for it, and that all Kaye ever writes about is what a stone groove it is to be a rock star and what a dismal bunch of losers sf fans really are.

GREG BENFORD I was talking to Terry Carr the other day, urging
1105 Skyline Dr. him to put out the lastish of INNUENDO (or was it
Laguna Beach, LIGHTHOUSE?). He has it all on stencils. "What's
California 92651 holding you up?" was the way I put it, adding, "---for
Chrissakes?" Terry said, "It's my proac." I replied
learnedly, "Whassat?" and he said, "You know, I've got the BEST SF OF THE
YEAR to do, and THE YEAR'S FINEST FANTASY, and then there's THE BEST SF
SHORT NOVELS OF THE YEAR, too." "Having trouble?" "Yeah, finding good
stuff; the usual problem." "Why not use In Alien Flesh, F&SF September
1978, pages 6 to 29?" I said casually. "It's a thought," he conceded.
"But if you don't get out INNUENDO (or maybe LIGHTHOUSE), you'll have no
FAPA credentials." "Yeah, wow." "So why not double up?" The leading
editor of our time said, "Whassat?" "Fill the BEST SF OF THE YEAR with
stories by fans. Then call it a fanzine and get enough copies to send
through FAPA." "Hey, why not? There's Dick Lupoff and, and..." So I
thought you'd like to know, Terry, why the entire issue of MOTA 26 will
be in paperback next year.

WILLIAM ROTSLER MOTA 904 arrived today and I must say your photo
P.O. Box 3780 cover of Dan Steffan nude was in the worst possible
Los Angeles, taste! It wasn't the nudity, mind you, nor the K-Y
California 90028 jelly, the leather straps or the WWI German helmet.
But I really think you went too far when you showed
the expression on the chicken's face. Spare us, please.

Your conreport on Tahiticon 2000 was almost as good as your trip report to Moon Base 3 in the last issue. Haiku conreports are rare enough, god knows, but the border designs by Harry Bell (entwined neofans, indeed!) were superb.

It is encouraging to know we will be holding the worldcon at the Tucker Hotel two years from now, but I really think that making Bob Tucker GoH Emeritus has been long overdue. The panels look encouraging ("Sex in S-F," "Sex in First Fandom," "Sex in Fantasy," "Sex in Women's SF," "Sex in Sex" and "The Deviate's Panel.") but I think the con committee should not celebrate the Phil Foglio Forgetting Ceremony. (I know, I know, we always forget it, and him, but the thing was botched by the NFFF last year.)

MOTA's photogravure continues excellent, everything reproduced beautifully on my Magnafax Home Recorder, including the odor of old pulps which you so cleverly chose to impregnate this issue with.

Harry Warner's I REMEMBER FANDOM THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY continues to be good, though I must quibble with certain facts: It was Burbee, not Laney, who slept with Whatshername Majors in the late 70's. A natural mistake, though. And Glicksohn's hat was entombed in the 1990 Time Capsule, not the 1984 First Fandom Tomb.

Leigh Edmonds' photo section -- the complete tank corps of Erwin Rommel in a Guinness bottle -- was nicely done, and Peter Roberts was at his usual level with his "King Charles's 25th Anniversary and What It Means to English Fandom."

Encouraging, too, that Joyce Scrivner has managed -- once again! -- to get all of Australian fandom transported to Tahiti -- except for Bangsund, of course, who would not leave his pink sheep.

Keep up the good work with MOTA and let's have more on this new fangled Time Machine Mailing Device you hint at so casually.

I ALSO HEARD FROM: Gary Deindorfer ("The Bob Shaw piece is devastatingly funny."), Lee Pelton, David Travis ("I'm pretty sure my title as the cleverest writer in fandom of 'I also heard from' letters will never get me invited to be a GOH."), Roy Tackett, Arthur Hlavaty, John Purcell, Glenn Garrett, and there will no doubt be a number of letters to arrive after I've finished doing this column and they'll have to held over for the 28th issue. That issue by the way will mark the debut of a new regular feature in MOTA called "Science Fiction for Actuaries" that will be worth holding your ~~nose~~ breath for.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS ANYONE?

Rich Coad, 781 Castro St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Dave Cockfield, 57 Wilson Ct., Hebburn, Tyne & Wear, U.K.
Graham England, 1 Fleetway, Didcot, Oxon OX11 8BZ, U.K.
Lane Lambert, 2020 Golf Rd., #201, Huntsville, AL 35802
Ethel Lindsay, 69 Barry Rd., Carnoustie, Angus DD7 7Q9, Scotland
Beverly Reams, 6406 NE 24th Ave., Portland, OR 97211
David Travis, P.O. Box 1011, Clovis, NM 88101

NOTE: Grant Canfield is still at 28 Atalaya Terrace, San Francisco, CA 94117, despite what you may have read in a couple of fanzines.

THE LETTER COLUMN
IN THE COMING ISSUE
WILL BE BRILLIANT!



MOTA 27 - January 1979

This issue, as the 26 before it, was edited and published by Terry Hughes, who lives at 4739 Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia 22205, USA. This fanzine is available for contributions, letters, trades or \$1.00. (Funds so raised by this issue will go to TAFF.)

Happy New Year to you all!

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(Connect the dots for hidden message.)

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Your last issue is # fourteen.



Tom Perry
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THIRD CLASS MAIL