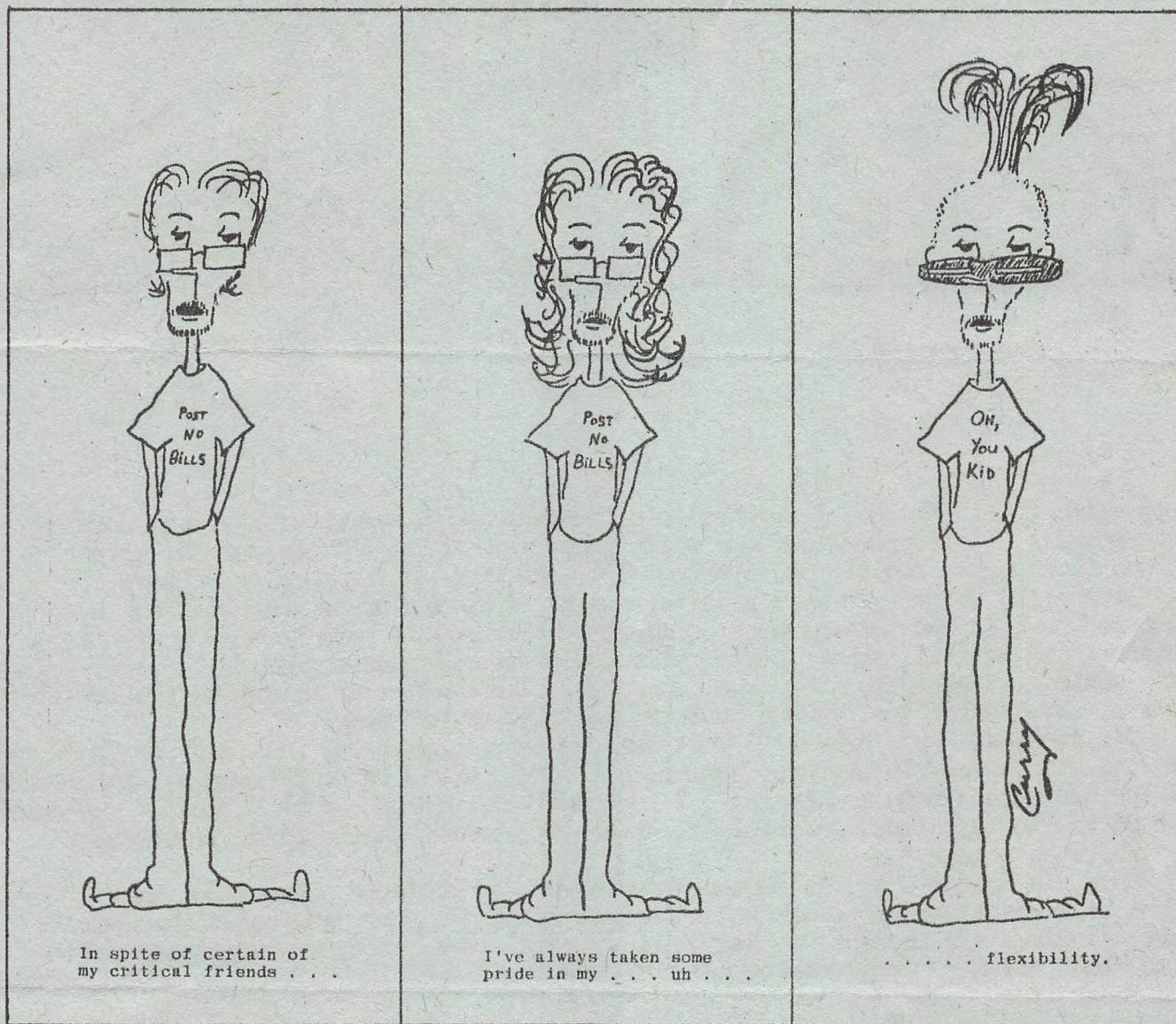
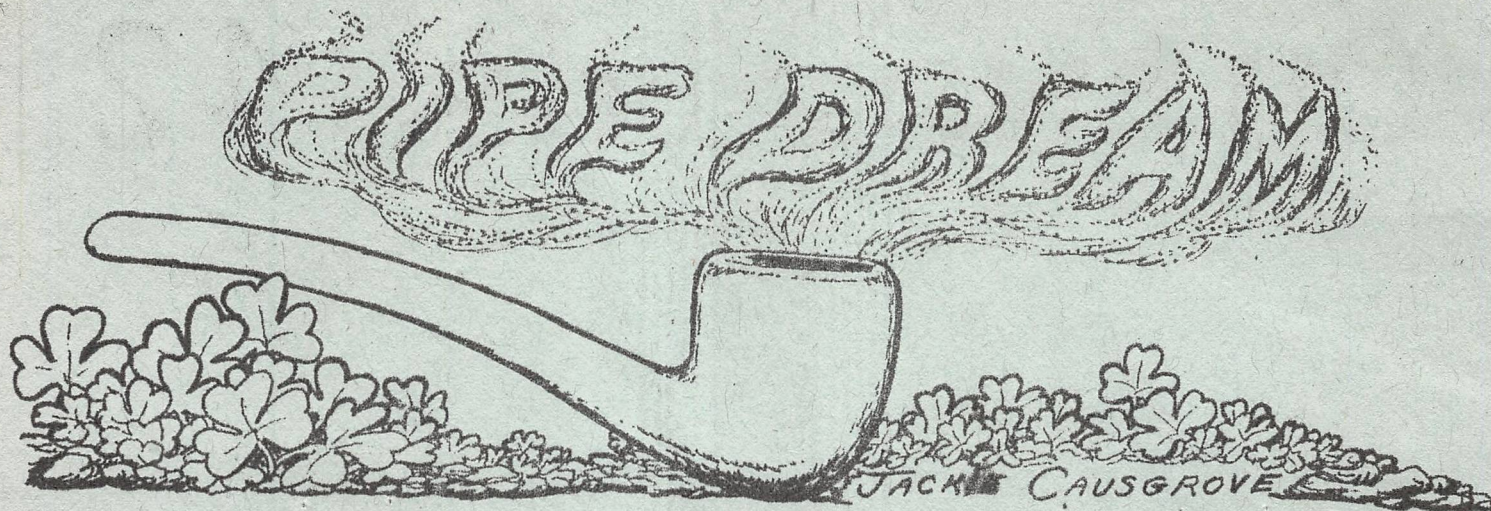


Outworlds 42



--this, the Year End Fun & Frivolity (Mostly) Edition, Published on the Occasion of the Eighth Annual Cincinnati Floating New Year's Parties--is Dedicated to Those who Have Done (or Been) Whatever It Takes to Stay on My Mailing List for Two Years...or These Last Twelve Issues: PAULA-ANN ANTHONY, JOAN BAKER, RICHARD BERGERON, RICHARD BRANDT, BILL BREIDING, BRIAN EARL BROWN, rich brown, MARTY & ROBBIE CANTOR, LARRY CARMODY, AVEDON CAROL, TERRY CARR, DON & TANYA CARTER, JACKIE CAUSGROVE, BILL CAVIN JOE CHRISTOPHER, ALINA CHU, BUCK & JUANITA COULSON, IAN COVELL, NAOMI COWAN, AL&LIN CURRY, DON D'AMMASSA, LESLIE DAVID, LARRY DOWNES, LEIGH EDMONDS, BRAD FOSTER, DICK GEIS, MIKE GLICKSOHN, JACK HERMAN, ARTHUR HLAVATY & BERNADETTE BOSKY, TERRY JEEVES, JERRY KAUFMAN & SUZLE TOMPKINS, ALEX KRISLOV, DAVE LANGFORD, LAN & MAIA, STEVE & DENISE PARSLEY LEIGH, ERIC LINDSAY, DAVE LOCKE, DOC LOWNDES, GEORGE R.R. MARTIN, TERRY MATZ & KEN KELLER, LINDA MICHAELS, TERESA MINAMBRES, PAT MUELLER, PATRICK & TERESA NIELSEN HAYDEN, DARROLL & ROSEMARY PARDOE, PATTY PETERS & GARY MATTINGLY, MIKE RESNICK, BILL ROTSLER, STU SCHIFFMAN, PAUL & CAS SKELTON, DICK SMITH, BOB TUCKER, LARRY TUCKER, ROGER WADDINGTON, HARRY WARNER, JR., TED WHITE, NEAL WILGUS, WALT WILLIS, BILLY WOLFENBARGER, ALEXANDER YUDENITSCH & LEAH A ZELDES. Others will be added With Time (and Some of These won't get nextish Without Input), but that's how It goes. Thanks to One & All...and Have A Happy. You ain't seen nothing yet...



Jackie Causgrove

Sleepy-eyed, tousle-haired, I lurched into the dinette in search of a cup of morning start-up fuel. I struggled to focus while pumping a mug of coffee from the airpot -- what was that on the table? Oh, a note. I'm like that in the morning. Sharp.

Forming the words with my lips after mental prompting as to which letters are pronounced how, it was but the work of minutes to translate Dave Locke's scribbblings into something my still-asleep brain cells could recognize as meaningful.

"Jackie". Yeah, yeah. Got that one okay. The earlier it's learned the longer it sticks... Even after just waking up I can decipher my own name.

"Did you read Glass Bushel?" That made no sense whatsoever. I idly scratched my scalp and blinked slowly, perhaps hoping the letters would reform themselves into words I could then attach some meaning to. I took another gulp of coffee. "Well," I thought, "best go to the next line. Maybe I'll get a hint about what the first line means." See? Sharp as a tack.

"Shaw, in fandom & sf, is someone I've highly appreciated. How about you?" Okay. The hot brew was starting to make those neural axions do something other than merely quiver. Rudimentary thought was beginning to take place. Bob Shaw wrote something called Glass Bushel. Or something called Glass Bushel mentioned Bob Shaw. Or something along those lines. Rudimentary, as I said, but things seemed more promising.

"Read 'FIRE W/O SMOKE', P36, first column." Take another swallow of coffee. Light up a cigarette. I had thought "Glass Bushel" the key to this message. What the hell was "Fire w/o Smoke"? God I hate mornings.

As I rested my hand on the note--perhaps minute tactile messages could be discerned through my fingertips--it suddenly occurred to me that the note was not lying on the table; it was lying on something *else* which was lying on the table. I lifted the note and squinted at the object. It was a copy of SFR, one of three issues Bill Bowers had lent us a few days earlier. Cleverly, my oh-so-sharp mind adduced that "Glass Bushel", "Fire w/o Smoke", and "P36" all referred to material in that zine! Eureka, indeed.

Emboldened by this marvel of conclusive logic, I pressed onward. "Whim--to send him a #." "Dave, Dave," I whimpered, "why are you doing this to me?" I'd been awake for ten minutes and this mental detective work was sheer torture to my brain cells. Give who a number? Shaw? Geis? A number of *what*? Phone #s, fanzine #s, simple digits --it could also mean a joke, as in "do a number on," although that didn't fit right into that sentence. I almost gave up. I could phone Dave at work and ask him to translate this note. He'd understand. He's not a morning person, either.

My rugged Gaelic-Slovak (or maybe Czech--grandma was coy on her family background) determination asserted itself. Besides, the ringing in my ears had faded to a high, distant hum, and my vision was hardly blurred at all anymore. The caffeine was doing

its work. I zipped through the next line--"Question - is it legal thru the mail?"--feeling confident that once I checked that copy of SFR for the earlier references even this cryptic clue would unravel its secrets.

The last line was a gold-mine of information. Quote: "Would you call postal info # 684-5664 & ask if any problem or limitations sending gift of pipe tobacco to U.K.?" It was a plea for action on my part. Action? When even breathing was still under full mental monitoring? Well, it didn't mean I had to do something just this moment. Phone calls could wait until my brain/tongue synapses were under proper control. "Tobacco" obviously referred back to "Fire w/o Smoke" and the "legal thru the mail" bit and I felt assured that all else would be Revealed in reasonably short order.

After refilling my coffee cup, I sat back down and regarded the copy of SFR #51, Summer, 1984. Bob Shaw's name was on the cover, and was further reinforcement to my belief that the complete answer lay within its pages. I flipped to page 36. Flip flip flip. Oops. That's 42. Thumb back. Thumb, thumb. There it was. "Fire without Smoke", a segment of Shaw's Glass Bushel column. I skimmed the words (good, the signals were really rushing down those neural pathways now. Zipping right along. Singing even). Shaw likes U.S. pipe tobacco. Cheap U.S. pipe tobacco. The stuff was sold at a horridly high price in Britain. Eight times the U.S. price. Hard to get non-smoking friends to get the right stuff--they didn't, couldn't understand his plight. Sad, sad story. If I'd been more awake I might have wept, the tale was so touching. Once again I thanked the Fates which placed friends in Canada and Canada itself so near that International trading could be arranged with relative ease. A great deal more ease than Shaw was apparently encountering in trying to obtain duty-free pipe tobacco.

I looked at the clock. 9:45. It had been 9:10 when I first opened my eyes in the bedroom. Allowing time for toilet functions, coffee pouring, trips between countertop, refrigerator, and table, it must have taken a good 25 minutes to crack the code. But Secret Agent Causgrove was up to speed now. All faculties were moving in high gear. Closing one eye--vision wasn't 100% blur-free as yet--I aimed my finger at the appropriate buttons on the phone. Chortling, I leaned back as the relays clicked home. "Heh-heh" I thought triumphantly. "Didn't miss a single digit. When you're sharp, you're sharp!"

To my utter amazement the phone was answered right after the third ring. (It has been known to take six attempts--allowing the phone to ring 20-30 times each--before a person will answer that Postal Info number.) I tried to respond to the (actually, honestly) cheerful voice. A thin croak emitted from my throat. Swiftly I adjusted the cerebral cortex-to-larynx relay. "I'd like some information about sending pipe tobacco through the mail to England." Previous, repeated experience has taught us U.S. fen never never to refer to the U.K. as Britain, Great Britain, United Kingdom, or anything else but ENGLAND. Postal workers don't know what you're talking about if the country is called anything else but that. The fact that there is no listing for ENGLAND in the various USPS manuals means nothing--they'll figure out how to find it but first they need to know the country you mean. U.K. or G.B. or their full forms are Sanskrit as far as the clerks are concerned. "Are there any restrictions, and what about Customs duties?" I could hear pages being riffled through the receiver. The clerk hummed tunelessly as he researched.

"Ah yes, here it is... 'Tobacco products like cigars, etc., with non-tobacco additives and...' uh-huh... 'tobacco products composed of 100% tobacco' ... yeah. Sure. You can mail 'em. No problem."

"What about duty fees?"

"Well ... I dunno about that." The clerk didn't sound quite so cheerful anymore. Here he was, trying to be helpful and I was pressing him.

"I realize the U.S. Postal system is not responsible for giving information on other countries' fees, but maybe you could tell me if there are any, if not actually how much." I briefly (yes, I can be brief when the crunch is on) described the situation. He sounded relieved and more cooperative. I was a person with an honest problem, not some faceless voice bugging him out of maliciousness. I heard pages rustling again in the background.

"Aw, gee..." he sighed. "Says here 'Tobacco products ... humm ... er ... are dutiable at an extremely high rate.'"

"Does that mean 100% tobacco products, or just those with additives, or..." I was recalling the breaks in the phrases when he had first read them to me. Perhaps an essential word or two had been glossed over during those "uh-huh's" and "yeah's".

"Nope. It's applied to anything with tobacco in it." He sounded definite. Quite definite.

"Ah..." I began tentatively, "would you have any idea where I could find out how much the duty is, and if it could be paid on this side?" A moment of silence.

"Nope. I really don't. We aren't responsible, y'know..." He was a nice guy, really. And he *wasn't* responsible.

"Yeah, I know. Thanks a lot anyhow. At least I know it can be mailed, and that's helpful." He made pleased noises and the call was terminated.

I dug out the phone book and jotted down the number of the Cincinnati Library's Information Desk. The Fates seemed to be with me--again, the phone was answered on the third ring. I described the sort of information I wanted. He gave me the name of the division I wanted--Government & Business--and, after finding their line was busy, gave me the direct line phone number.

I punched out the number a few minutes later. Busy.

I tried again a while after that. Busy.

The third time I switched the phone to "Pulse" function so I'd engage the internal memory to enable use of the "redial" feature of our set. Tapping out the same seven digits is not difficult, but it sure gets monotonous in short order (not to mention the lousy tune that number produces on the touch-tone mode). Naturally, the line was clear and a man answered after a couple of rings.

The Cincinnati Public Library (actually The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County--governmental bodies are so darned jealous of their proper designation and titular rights. Try calling it the Cincinnati Library to a Norwood librarian. You can actually see the hackles rise...) had no information on customs duties of other nations. The clerk did suggest another place--the Information Desk at the Federal Building. I thanked him and tried that phone number.

When the line clicked after the third ring, I thought my roll was still working. But instead of a human, I was played a recording: "We're sorry, but all our lines are busy. If you are calling about Federal Job Information, you may call blah blah blah in Dayton. That is the Federal Job Information office in Dayton, and the number again is blah blah blah." Silence. I wasn't sure if I was to hold the line, call back later, or what. Some systems have a "parking" mode where incoming calls can wait for an open line. Others don't, and the taped message wasn't of any help in that area. Ha. The phone was on "Pulse". I hung up and poured another cup of coffee. The last cup of coffee **whine**. I debated whether to make another pot now, or wait until this cup was finished when I might want to switch to a different drink. The decision was to table the resolution.

It was 10:10. I tried again. Same tape-recorded message.

10:15. Tried again. Same result.

10:20. Again the message began, but, abruptly, a voice cut in over it and the tape-recording stopped (somewhere in Dayton, I presume). "May I help you?"

I stated the information I needed, the places I had tried to obtain it from, and why I had been referred to her. "I know this isn't a Federal matter, but perhaps you could refer me to someone somewhere who would know."

The woman thought a moment. "You could try the Department of Commerce. Their number is XXX-XXXX and you should ask for the International desk." She paused. "And I guess you could try the British Consulate." She gave a mild cough. "They are located in Cleveland." The upturn in tone at the end of the sentence almost changed it into a question. I sighed.

"I'd better write it down, then. In case the people at Commerce can't help me." She gave me the number and I added it to the list. The last dregs of coffee were gone. I wanted something cold. Got up and poured a glass of Diet Coke. Punched in the Dept. of Commerce's phone number.

The call was answered directly and I was switched to the proper extension. I could feel the throbbing beginnings of a headache. Once more I repeated my request for information. The business-like voice informed me that the Cincinnati office of the U.S. Government does not handle, set up, nor establish the customs fees for other nations, and perhaps the Commerce Dept. in Washington, D.C. might be of more assistance. However, if I wished to call or write to the British Consulate... I thanked him for his help. The headache became more assertive and I reached for the bottle of A.C.C. tablets (oh, thank you again, Canadian friends!). It was time to call Dave. I wasn't about to make a daytime long-distance call (in-state no less, expensive buggers) without clearance. This was *his* baby, after all...

"This is Dave Locke, may I help you?" It was his standard response to calls on his extension at work.

"Not really," I said, "but it doesn't look like I'm being of much help to you, either." I gave him a rundown of the calls I'd made and the pitiful crumbs of information I'd gained, ending with "...so I'm left with the British Consulate, and that's in Cleveland, for ghod's sake."

"Well," he paused, "I guess we'll have to call them then." (Where'd this "we" come from?) "We do have that discount service..."

"Yeah, but it's not good during daytime..." I paused, recalling details of the Cincinnati Bell Long Distance Service we'd signed up for some few weeks back... "except during noon til one in the afternoon! Sure, I can call then." I glanced at the clock. It was 10:48. "It's only a while from now." I felt somehow relieved.

"Great. Do that. Hey, hon, I'm *morrt*a in the middle of something here and..."

"Oh, sure," I rushed. "I just didn't know how far you wanted to go with this thing. Daytime rates are murder, especially in-State, but heck, it can't run much if I call at noon on the Service. I felt like I was babbling. I *was* babbling."

"I'll call at lunchtime. Bye. Love ya," Dave closed off the call.

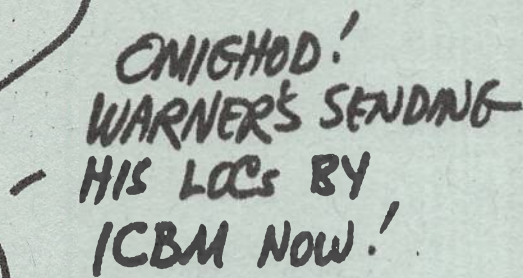
A copy of *Time* magazine served to while away the next 70 minutes. I felt itchy with anticipation. Our clock's big hand raced to catch up with the little hand and passed it on by. At 12:05 I punched out the 22 digits needed to connect our phone in Silverton with the British Consulate office in Cleveland via the discount service. My index finger tingled--it had almost recovered from the earlier pounding it had endured and now I had abused it again. Viciously. The magic third ring came and the cultured tones of a British secretary announced "British Consulate, may I help you?" I once more repeated my tale of woe. The secretary clucked sympathetically at appropriate spots. My hopes began to climb upward.

"I'm terribly sorry," she said when I'd finished, "but while it is possible to send tobacco products to England [L], it is impossible to mail them within the country. Combustible products are Not Permitted." She pronounced the capitals, I swear.

There was nothing to be said. While I could have argued that pipe tobacco was hardly apt to burst into flames while lying in a mail pouch, there is a certain something about the tone of a British Civil Servant that shuts off debate from lesser mortals like myself. Employees of HRM's Government carry the weight of generations of Tradition and Authority--they have their techniques down pat. A U.S. Supreme Court Judge couldn't have managed such a note of finality with half the effect as that Consulate's secretary.

What cannot be done cannot be done. I thanked her politely and cradled the receiver with a sigh. Bob Shaw would not be receiving a gift from us. He would still have to rely on the ghodd graces of non-smoking friends to bring in his supply and face the prospect of receiving something other than what he wanted. We tried. My forces of information-seeking had been expended to the utmost, bureaucracies had been contacted, data collected, time wasted. All in vain.

Sorry, Bob. We *did* try.



Comments on the 40th Outworlds have

But my professionally published science fiction was mostly hack work. I'd been trying for years to sell, couldn't do it, so one day I sat down and spewed forth an assembly of all the most frequently overused plot cliches I could think of, culminating with wolves chasing the heroine over Icepacks. Doc Lowndes bought it for one of his prozines. He must have guessed what

Al Sirols' article was wonderful, not only for the way it was written but the way it was published. Al's difficulties with new software for computers are beyond my experience in a sense because I've never owned a computer and haven't used one at work for almost two years. But in another way his plaint is familiar because such things kept happening with the computer terminals over which I hovered during the final three years on the job. The instruction book we were given when we were learning how to use the terminals was about an inch thick and looked at first glance as if it contained every morsel of information anyone would need to know. But eventually we discovered one minor difficulty: it didn't contain even the merest hint of how to call back on your screen the things you'd written and sent to the computer for storage. Then there was the occasional jolt when we'd find something in our file that we hadn't put there and hadn't written: apparently a few thousand words would accidentally leak from one reporter's file to another or would be transferred inadvertently. One wonderful thing about the computer, we were told, was the way it automatically put the date and time of day on each item fed into it. But the next day you called back something you'd previously written, you would find a fictitious date and time on it because the newspaper company had two identical computers which were used alternately, and every 24 hours everything in one of them was transferred into the other, causing all the dates and times to reflect the moment of change-over. One terminal insisted on doubling the 't' in words where only one belonged. Another ejected its 'w' key top every time you pushed it and then you had to go crawling around under the desk trying to find where it had landed to restore it to its place. Then people wonder why I am almost alone in fandom for my failure to invest in at least a word processor if not a full-fledged home computer.

10/16/84

If you lose *this* letter, I'm not going to write another one. I love the 'zine.

another one. I love the zine.

...I wouldn't worry overmuch about Naomi's comments to you, Ian. In my humble (but widely shared) opinion, her "current Other" is not exactly a sparkling example of the Aware American Male in the 80s. So, while you are certainly Asking For It with some of your comments, her response to you is at best suspect, if not totally uncalled for.

...as for you, Naomi:

I won't be at your CFG meeting tonight. I'd planned on being there--it being Your First and all--if only out of a sense of Obligation, because of all I owe you. (I know I owe you; you keep telling me so...) Besides, my semi-significant other is going to a horse auction (which is marginally more exciting than listening to Denise expound on the upcoming publication schedule of *Graymalkin*, I'll admit, but...), so what else is there to do on a Saturday evening in Cinsanity-town? (Well, I could watch some of the 30-40 movies I have taped...or I could read one of the hundreds of unread books upstairs...)

...or I could; no, they say that puts hair on the palms of your hands. (That may or may not be...but the subject matter which inspires this discourse certainly will!)

Not to worry, Naomi: none of any of this is your fault ~~for a change~~...

But maybe I should explain, since you probably haven't the slightest inkling of any of the Fun Times in certain areas of fanfandom these days. Lucky you. ...anyway, the reason I won't be showing up on your doorstep tonight is that I know the "mailing" for Midwestcon is to be prepared there. But it's not only to avoid the 'work'...

A couple of days ago I was down at Cavin's and noticed the print-out of the labels. I saw that he'd added a "message" line above each address. I didn't say anything...

This morning, at work (you remember "work", don't you, Naomi: the place where, "if you work hard and go to school in addition to all the overtime ((I had 412 hours in 84)) ...you'll Get Ahead"), for some reason I started thinking about that little message...

"Martha Beck*Write-in vote*TAFF 85"

...normally, Naomi, I'd take time and "explain TAFF" to you here, but somehow I get the feeling that those four letters are totally irrelevant to What's Going Down....

It apparently started when Fan "A" (for "Administrator") wrote to Fan "B" (after speculating on the sexual preference of Fan "C") asking why Fan "B" had voted for Fan "D" rather than Fan "bigR". Some initials later, Fans "D&J" Became Involved...and eventually it became alphabet soup. And the broth was not clear; "creamy" is an understatement.

And absolutely none of this had anything to do with Martha Beck.

...who I've known and loved for well over twenty years, but who I was not supporting for TAFF '85; I honestly did not think her the best "qualified". (At the time I voted; subsequent posturings by the "candidate" I did vote for makes me wish I'd have voted for Fan "Rich", or even Fan "Hold-Over-Funds".)

But all of this is not what got me going. No, it was simply that the tag-line was going out on an "official" CFG mailing. I am a member of the Cincinnati Fantasy Group. So, inevitably, it would be surmised that I supported the message. I'm not being paranoid; I am well versed in the intuitive leaps of Slans.

Had the subject been raised at a meeting, and supported by a majority... But it hadn't been.

The more I thought about it...it was a slow morning.

Concluding the only 'honorable' way was to resign from the CFG (but how does one resign from an organization that has no "regular" membership roster anymore?), I came home and opened the mail...

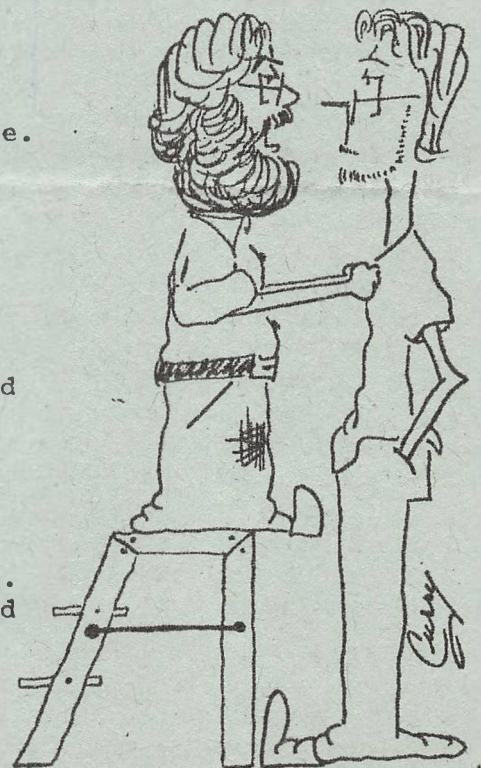
...and out popped a note from a friend, ending with:

"...----- sez the reason you haven't taken a stand on the Martha Beck issue is because you still need to use Dave & Jackie's mimeo. *snicker*"

Cute. Really. But, hey guys, I really don't need this.

I could have Gotten Involved. Early On. Maybe I Should Have. But I choose to Sit It Out and, by-and-large, the Principals (on Both Sides) have honored that decision. (In point of fact, Dave & Jackie have bent over backwards to avoid Twisting My Arm...and I appreciate that...)

But, from the beginning, I have seen this Whole Thing as a matter-of-personalities-rather-than-of-substance...and nothing I've seen since (a L*O*T) has changed that opinion.



What the hell ya mean by sayin' I'm rude, eh, Mr. Pencil?

Feuding.

Now there is a way to put your name out on the fanish stage. Sometimes even in lights up there on the marquee...

...at least until someone puts out the lights.

There are two main classifications of feuds. Old Wave...and New Wave.

Old Wave Feuds generally have something to do with science fiction: either by involving pros holding highly literate discussions with the editors, publishers, agents, producers, or fellow writers who have screwed them ... or by pros shredding fan critics who have questioned their work, motives, or sexual preferences.

New Wave Feuds aren't so easily defined. But they seem to involve Sixth Fandom a lot. Why this is so, I'm not sure--I suspect that Reaganomics has a lot to do with it.

Two Cautionary Notes about Fan Feuds:

1) No matter what the provocation, it is not cool to sub; and,

2) Unless your name happens to be Anthony, Ellison, or White...the odds are that you're going to be strictly light-weight stuff...so why not just forget it...?

Who needs you anyway?

I wrote that in January, 1983. I delivered it at Confusion, and ran it in *Outworlds* 31. ...a copy of which went to virtually everyone involved in All of This.

I don't know, Naomi. It was probably too esoteric.

I have the Credentials to Get Involved: To my knowledge, I am the only Cincy fan who knows Patrick & Teresa, Martha, Rich...and Avedon...and has known them all for some time. Also, with no modesty whatsoever, I am possibly the most balanced fan in one sidebar: Fanzines published--138; Conventions attended--136.

And I certainly do have Opinions...

...fanzine fans, by-and-large, are not particularly exciting to socialize with.

...if I were interested in running for a fan fund, I'd make the effort to find out when the nominating period was rather than waiting for *Fizz* 77.

...if I were the Administrator THIS year, I'd have Harry Warner, Jr. receive and count the ballots.

...it is my Observation that most convention fans who support the fan funds do so to buy the auction material or See the Show; they could care less where the money goes.

I have more. Pages.

And I'm really not sure which upsets me more: ballot-stuffing, or the seeming inability by others to discuss the subject without making farce of...

But I do know what got me riled: the rich brown missive of 12/6/84.

In early October, 1984, in the course of a long van-ride to Buffalo, I asked Rusty Hevelin if the Events of '78 had any bearing on his position in All of This. He said no, that was all long in the past as far as he was concerned. I believe him. After all, if any of that was relevant, I would not have voted for Patrick... I was there that year; rich can have no direct knowledge of those event on which to base his statements.

...but what really galls is that the one who's going to be most hurt out of all this is Martha--who can only be compared to Gay Hallerman and Jodie Offutt as a warm and outgoing mixmaster who greets the neofan with the same caring as friends of decades....

And I'm not sure who's going to hurt her most: those fanzine "experts" who obscure the fact that she has subbed to my fanzines for twenty years, send me cheery notes-in-lieu of loc, and that she has, indeed, been published in these pages this year...

...or her friends who, while well-meaning, can arguably be said to have used her to prove a point. (Having been there, I can only say: Save me from my Friends!)

Martha will survive. Martha will still be Martha.

But fandom will be the less for all of it. No matter which way the ballots tally.

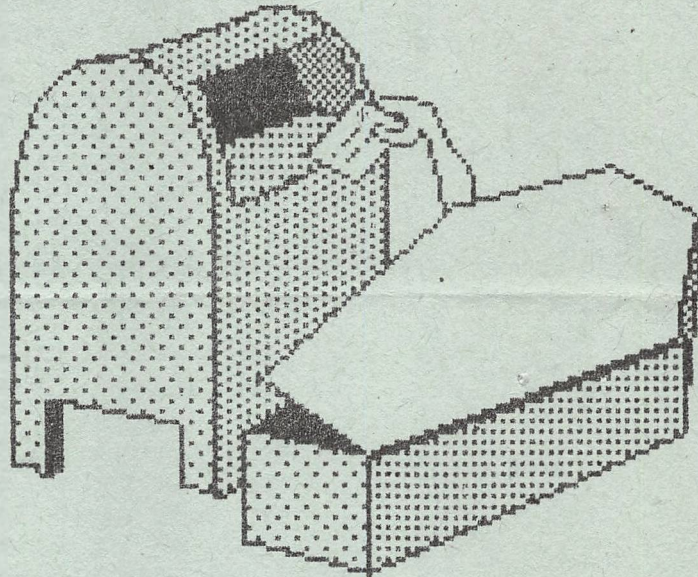
I'm tired, Naomi. It would have been simpler to have gone to your meeting...

But I've mellowed: I just talked to Mr. Cavin, and he assures me the "message" line was His Very Own Idea...his "blow" for the Wimpy Zone. Nobody put him up to it. I'm sure you will great this news with the same astonishment I did. (That's Cavin going to do about...? "Well, who talked to him last... Resnick? Dave & Jackie? Powers...?")

...and, when you've been around awhile, you'll realize fan feuds are as inevitable as

DEATH AND TAXES

Al Sirois

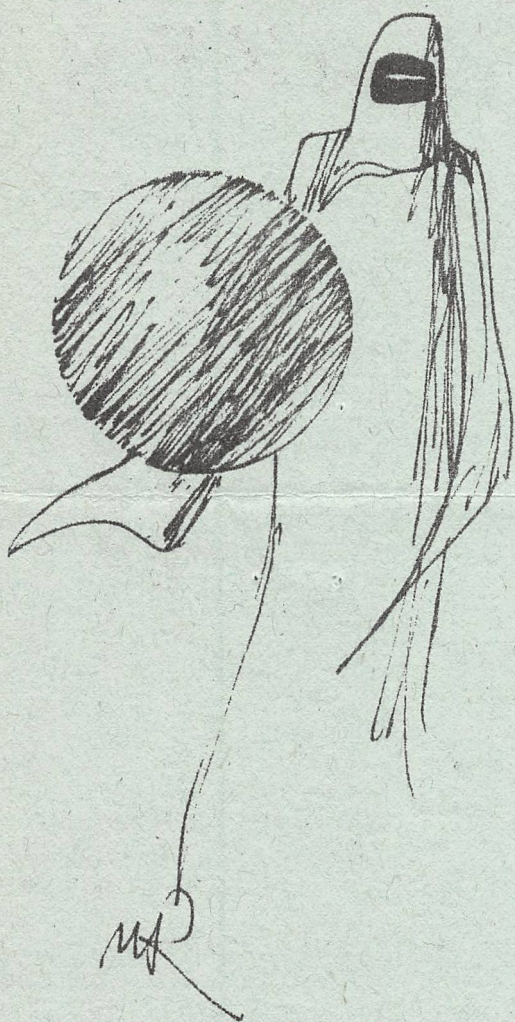


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As one of the millions of freelancers in this fine country, I have had to pay rather more attention to the tax laws than I would like. This is the Catch-22 of the capitalist system: in order to be able to buck it, you have to work inside it. I have gotten to the point where I know how to deduct your basic three-margarita lunch (I dislike martinis), assorted happy hour maunderings, and the occasional Chinese dinner at cons. All freelancers do this, some going so far as to deduct the salad oil in which they soak their typing ribbons in order to be able to run them through the typer again. The government expects self-employed peopple to try to get away with as much as they can, which is why some of us get audited each year. The IRS figures that auditing at random like that helps to keep the rest of us honest. And, to a greater or lesser extent, this tack works. (You in the back, wipe that grin off your face.)

Nevertheless, there is no dearth of Americans who feel that they are being, in the words of a popular bumper sticker, "TAXED TO DEATH", and they have taken to protesting rising rates of taxation. Some people refuse to pay the taxes on their utility bills. Some people promulgate the concept of withholding a portion of their taxes from the IRS. And there are those protestors who prefer to deal with the problem in an even more immediate manner, i.e. direct confrontation and flagrant violation of the IRS and its agents. I refer, of course, to that breed of American known as "heavily armed extremists".

Such types began to attract some nationwide attention in mid 1983 when fugitive tax protestor Gordon Kahl blew away a sheriff during a confrontation in northern Arkansas. Kahl was a part of a group referring to itself as the Posse Comitatus. This outfit preaches open defiance of the IRS. It is one of several such groups in Arkansas, which seems to have attracted more than its share of self-righteous bastards. The main reason seems to be that there simply aren't many law enforcement representatives out in the hills. The region is rife with possum and inbred psychosexuals who still believe that a Jew has horns and a tail. (You can't tell an anti-Semitic possum from a normal one by simply LOOKING at them, you know!) This Eden-like area harbors extremists and survivalists of all stripes, from the Posse Comitatus to the CSA, or the Cross, the Sword and the Arm of the Lord. With a name like that, you know that these folks aren't going to be too interested in open marriages. Their ideological stand is that a state sales tax is Quite Enough, thanks very much, and if you send them another 1040 form they're going to be at pains to introduce it to your colon.



It appears that there is at least one fortress out there in the woods, whose denizens have been merrily stockpiling weapons for quite a while. The governor of the state has gone so far as to assure the state troopers that he's going to supply each and every one of them with his own bullet-proof vest. (Federal agents get to supply their own, presumably.) Each one of these puppies costs \$200, and it's interesting to speculate if the governor has had to raise taxes to find the money to buy them. One has to wonder how much of an increment in one's personal taxes it takes to shove one over the line into extremism.

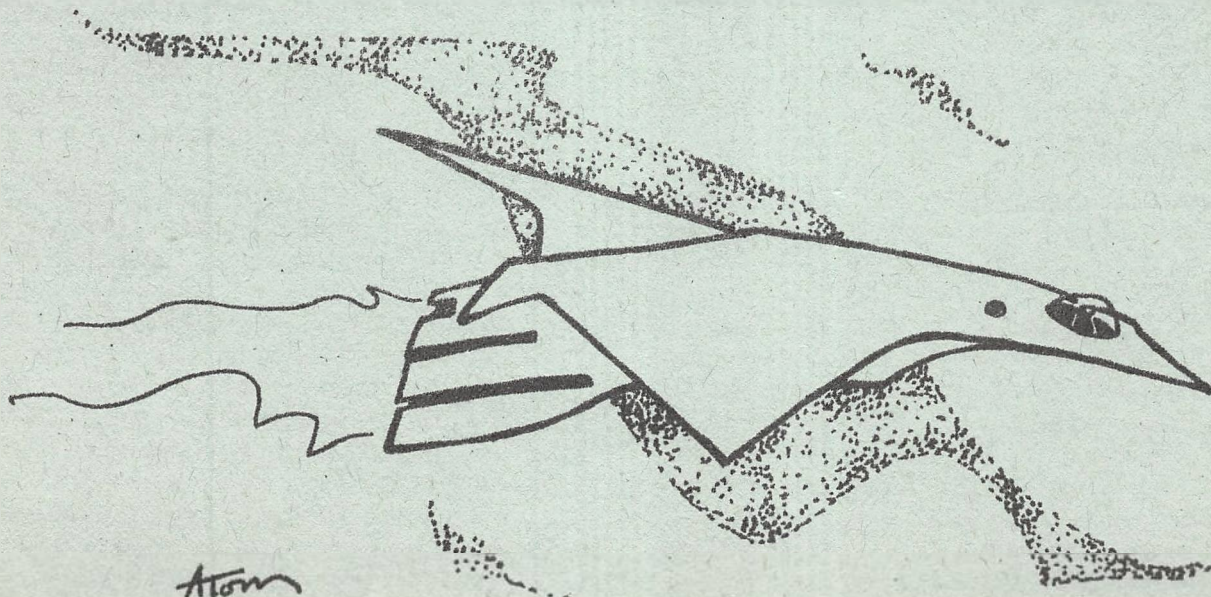
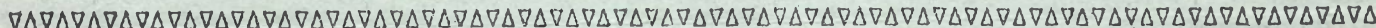
I can picture a tooth-sucking codger out in the hills, reading the papers and calculating in his head how much money is going to come out of his paycheck from the tapioca mine. His rheumy eyes widen in outrage as he arrives at a figure.

"Eighty-sem cents?" he shouts hoarsely. "Sheee! Break out the rifles, Martha--we joinin' the CSA this very day!"

You have to figure, this is kind of like taxation without representation. I mean, hey, this is how the American Revolution got its start; and personal weaponry is lots more sophisticated these days. I like to think that our forefathers would look with a sort of fond tolerance on the zany antics of tax protestors like Gordon Kahl, recognizing something of their own makeup in him.

As for myself, I keep a calculator handy. Whenever I get paid I do a little figgurin' and cipherin', and I keep a careful eye on my profit margin while sipping my margarita. They may not have margaritas up in the hills, so I plan on enjoying them while I can.

□ □ □ Al Sirols



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 WHEN THE STENCILS
 WERE BLANK?



