

# OZ

No. 4







The sun comes up and the sun goes down - but for all the good it does right now, it needn't bother. The temperature has remained well below freezing point all day (said day being January 14th 1966), the usually noisy mice have apparently removed their hobnailed clogs and gone into hibernation, sensible little creatures, and I only wish I could join 'em in that blessed state of unknowingness. But no. The still, small voice of OMPA calls, and will not be silenced. So, Good Souls All, here is:

OZ Number 4  
bashed out for the  
47th OMPA Mailing  
by:

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E&OE.

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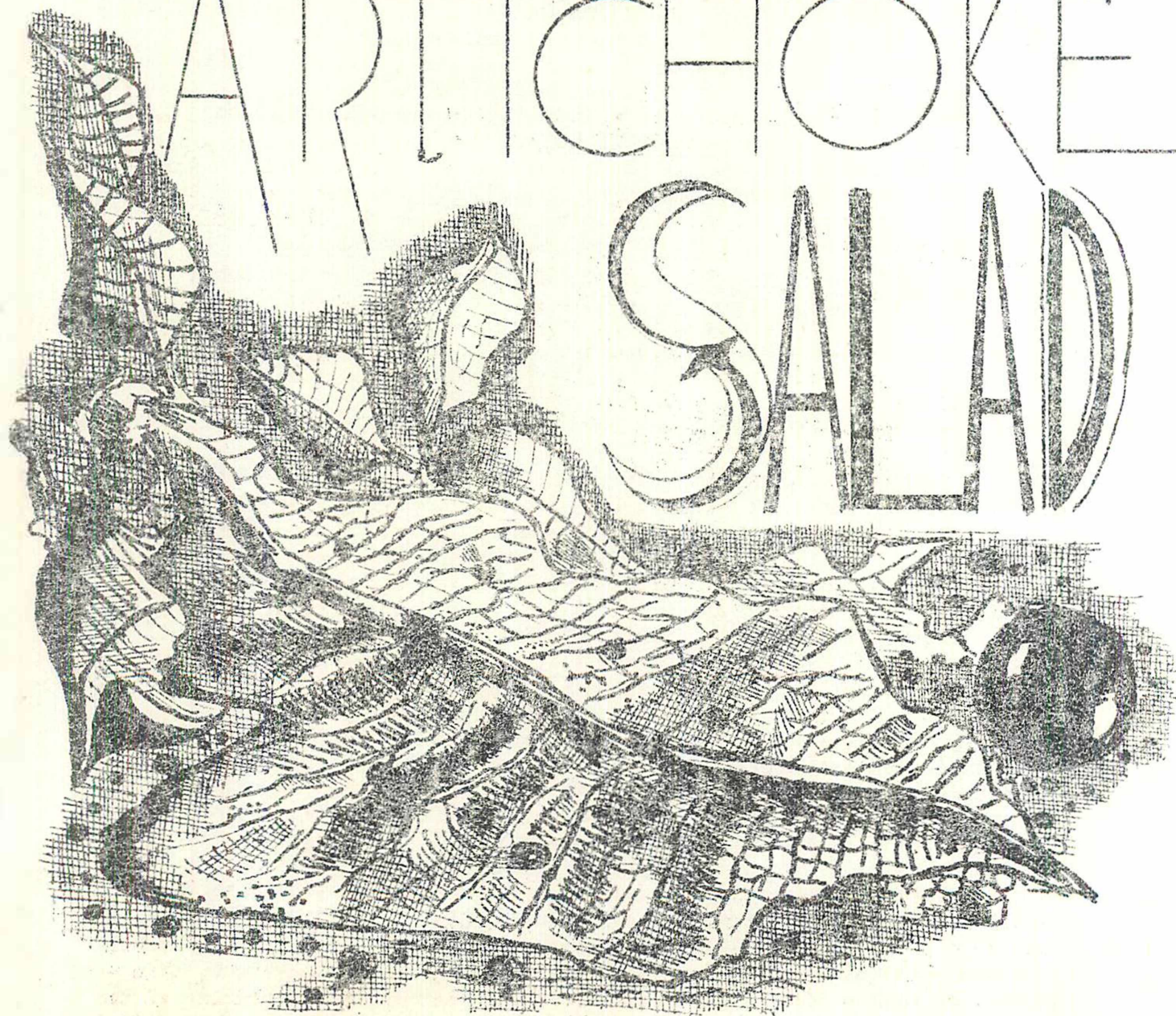
So here I am with this space to fill, and not an idea in my half-frozen head. Except this: I've often wondered if it would be possible to write a properly-constructed story using only song-titles. I propose to have a go at this right now until I reach the bottom of the page. Beginning with the one that's been buzzing around in my brain all day. I know a place where my caravan has rested on the sunny side of the street. People passing by look in any window; who will buy souvenirs? Standing on the corner there's a small hotel; up on the roof, I have dreamed when day is done. Tonight, I'll walk alone; I'm biding my time until my guy comes back. Walking in the rain, whispering "Where are you?" June is bustin' out all over, (but) without you, it might as well rain until September .... h'mmm ... feeble, innit? ++BM



THE  
*Dor Studebaker*

# NAKED

## ARTICHOKE SALAD





It's been a while since I have done any fan writing, though this has not been by choice, I must assure you. I have started on this column several times, with a number of suitable titles and a page or two of copy for each. But somehow they never look quite right the next morning, so this time I am taking what desiderata I have from others, putting a carbon in the typer, and launching into it with all my faculties in their usual state of numbness, and hoping for the best. You see, I discover that it is already mid November and I will have a column off to Beryl in time.

So then, the perennial problem, what to write about. On the subject of perennials, I might talk about with Don Fitch, if he is still with us. These things change so quickly. I am muchly enamoured of the plant world, and the idea of growing flowers for a living, of arranging them beautifully, of working in particular with fountains, sends me. Tell me, Don, you don't happen to work with aquatic plants, do you? You see, I have had a passion for water lilies ever since the day after General MacArthur got fired.

Not that I ever had any love for MacArthur. He was the worst kind of responsibility-avoiding coward of the war, (discounting the millions of Nazis who used that patent excuse at the war trials) in my opinion. But when he came back to the U.S. we all got a half day off from school. I lived further from school than any of the other children, so when we had the option to stay home or come back for part of the day, after the television parade, I stayed home.

Then I came in the next morning, it seemed that the children who had returned were treated to a field trip to a gigantic aquatic gardens, and the catalogues with which they returned were so lovely that I spent many years writing off for similar catalogues. I even built pools in several places where I lived, but always had to move before I could stock them. I still haven't got a pool of my own, but someday ...

Someday I am going to get caught up on my correspondence, and maybe even my fame. But at the moment I am far too busy trying to get caught up on my proac. (Proac ????) I am perhaps the slowest, least prolific writer in the genre, and that is pretty slow. However, I have managed to land myself a top notch agent, who thinks enough to put out money on my behalf, and who has never charged me a reading fee. The main difficulty now is waiting for the cheques to come in. I am always in dire need of encouragement, being naturally morbid to begin with, and it's always painful waiting to find out if even one person in the world liked a story. I have a hell of a lot to learn about the art of writing, and each and every story is still, for me, a gruelling matter of write, re-write, re-write, check, re-write, ad infinitum. Some stories come easily, but others ... I have one which I've just got up the courage to send off that's been eating at my vitals for better than three years now. And it's only about ten pages! However, now that I've finally broken into the business of writing novels, I expect it will come easier.

That's a hard step, to write the first novel. With me it took forever. I was at work on it just before I joined Ompa, I believe. No, it must have been longer than that. Because I remember tallying up the total at seven years of work. Any rate, I finished it, in first draught, this spring, or perhaps it was last winter. I then set to the re-writing of the first part. I got the first ninth in reasonably good shape and showed it to

a few people.

The concensus was that it was TERRIBLE !

First of all, one simply doesn't write a novel of roughly one hundred and fifty thousand words. Secondly, one can't depend on even the most perceptive reader to see things in quite the subtle light the author does. Thus, the first part of the book was so boring that Harlan Ellison vomited twice on attempting to get through it. I mean, really, no one liked it. Except Joanna Russ, who didn't know what I was getting at, but was sure it was there. (Joanna is a very perceptive woman).

So there I was stuck with seven years work which had to have something done to it or ELSE. I decided about then it was time for me to settle down with myself and learn a little from what I had done.

To implore the old cliché, I got invaluable aid from the criticisms of that book, and with that aid I managed to sit down to the typer, and in about two months turn out my second book. Much shorter than this one, but without the millions of dismal faults the first one still possesses. When I have learned a little more, I hope to turn the first one into something worthwhile. Until then, I have to keep learning.

The only trouble with the new book is that it is a little shorter than it ought to be, and it is a fantasy adventure story, for which I understand there is very little market in the magazines. The trouble with writing is that one gets ideas for stories that sometimes just don't have a market.

Stories such as THE MEADOWS OF FANTASY, which Archie had in the mailings a couple back. Really Mercer, this is a beautiful piece of writing: what I've read of it. You see, I've only read part one. It is, however, the first piece of faaaan writing that I've found to be of 'professional' quality. That is to say, a piece which got me emotionally involved not because of the person who was writing it, or because it mentioned persons and places dear to me, but simply because it was excellently written. Well, that about the first piece is not strictly true. One other: Marion Zimmer Bradley's BREAKUP. (I think I have the title right). That was the first. But then, MZB has been a writer for many years and has all the technical tricks of the trade at her disposal, and uses them well.

(It occurs to me that Mercer may prove to be a big time pro over there, and I may be showing my ignorance by not knowing this. But really, my ignorance is abysmal, and I've been off reading for a long while; only this summer that I read a Cordwainer ~~Smith~~ Smith story for the first time).

Anyway, I was delighted by what I've read.

I suppose now that I had better explain why I am just getting around to reading the March mailing, hadn't I? That may be a little difficult, in view of the long chain of events that has kept me out of fandom this while. But ----

Well, there is the fact that I haven't received any word of any conventions in a long time. But that's not surprising considering my jauntiness. Hmmm. Just why haven't I been reading my fanzines ?

Now that I think of it, why haven't I been reading anything for the better part of two years ??? I suppose it was finishing that book that did it. I've been busy trying to catch up, but it's hopeless. A book a day is rough on a man with only one eye. Oh, but I haven't told you about that yet, have I ...

Well, I guess I'd better start by explaining that I had a job running a Multilith, which is a kind of offset press. The sort of thing Amra was run on. Of course, I had to be fairly good at it; after all, one doesn't make a living running off fanzines. How good was something that amazed even me. My predecessor, who was leaving the job for greener pastures, had been at the company for nine years, and I assumed he knew the machine and its idiosyncrocies rather well. When he kept handing me envelopes and asking me if the imprint was straight, I began to suspect that perhaps my visual acuity was somewhat high. I've since found that I have 20/20 vision, with a fantastic degree of (self trained) perception and discernment. I can tell, roughly speaking, if a line of eight point type is crooked while it's running off the machine at about six thousand an hour, to about a thousandth of an inch. Or perhaps I should say 'could.' This was one of the reasons the company was so happy with me.

The trouble arose when I could no longer get rides to the city from the country. I decided that it was about time I learned to drive. There are lots of chickens in the world, so I had to hire a teacher, and after fifty dollars in lessons, I passed my test. Trouble was, the car I had purchased for the outrageous sum of \$15 lost its brakes. So I had to buy a motor scooter, which I have affectionately christened 'Grane.' First morning out, the day after I got plates, with no experience except night riding, I went around a corner too wide, and smashed up.

When I awoke in the hospital, there was a woman in the next booth screaming "No, not again, I can't stand it, don't let them do it again," etc., and this did not improve my marvelous state of calm. You see, I have a very long standing battle with the American Medical Association, which I consider somewhat on a par with the men who burned Copernicus (or was it Galileo ... or who ?) or the Nazi party. (After all, the Nazis purported to be working in the interests of humanity too). And here I was, helpless, at their mercy, in the very heart of one of their septic smelling institutions.

Of course, the first thing I inquired after was whether or not I had killed anybody. I had not. The next thing I inquired after was much later, as I passed out for a while and then that infernal woman had been ... gulp ! ... silenced.

They took lots and lots of pictures and trimmed away the remnants of that portion of my beard which had been scraped off the sidewalk. They did painful things to the areas where skin should have been, all over my face. Oh, it was jolly enough. I remember a very kind police officer asking questions in a most gentlemanly manner; the first time that has ever happened to me. Then a fellow from work came and got me, and away we went. The only thing really wrong, the doctor said, was that I couldn't see straight, my ear was out of commission, and my skin was missing. Nothing to keep me in hospital for, after all !

Many things happened after that. For instance, I lost my job. Refreshing that nineteen other people lost theirs the same day and that a couple of companies were immediately vicing for my services starting with a ten dollar raise. But depressing in the fact that I can't do my job any more, and therefore couldn't accept the offers.



I still have 20/20 vision, but in each eye it is at a different angle. Diplobia, I believe it's called, and according to my eye specialist, I may be laid up for as much as nine months in this condition. A very sad condition for a man as visually oriented as I am. You may have noticed in my writings a decided preoccupation with the visual side of the world. Well, now it's half shut off because I can only use one eye at a time. Otherwise I lose my balance. And of course, you can't read books with two overlapping lines of print. So I have to use a very romantic eyepatch, which gives me a headache.

Headaches, luckily I can get rid of with a little effort and coöperation. The Scientological method, as Beryl says, works. For me too, at least. I have done a little studying, er, studying, of this sort of thing, in conjunction with my research into psi over the last few years. I come up with a conclusion John Campbell gave to me in one of his editorials years ago. To wit: If it works, use it. I have just about given up theory, in any of the sciences, as an amusing but useless plaything, geared to whatever language the scientist is using at the moment. The phenomena remain the same, whether the man using them is Christ, Plato, Schopenhauer, or Rhine. Each of these men is offering explanation, and this is a fool's approach. At the least it is impractical.

Campbell keeps shouting that we must study psi. Lester del Rey tells us that it is a waste of time, since we have been studying it for several thousand years without results. I would stand between the two, if a position on the matter were socially allowable, and say that study of psi is at this point, useless, but the study of its application is not. What Christ, and the other philosophers, should have been doing, was not to show people how they could develop psi, what its causes were; such an explanation is impossible due to the limitations of the language. Any language! But merely to show people how to use it.

Now that I think about it, perhaps Christ was thinking in just those terms. But to turn psi loose on a world of the kind that crucified him ?? Or perhaps it is just against the rules for people without that ... something ... ethicality, perhaps, to use psi. At any rate, what it boils down to is this: It's silly to teach aborigines the wiring diagrams of a television set. They may be able to memorize them, but they will promptly alter them to a more esthetically pleasing pattern. Rhine may some day be able to see the diagrams of psi. But to what avail is it, to either Rhine or the aborigines, if neither knows how to turn on the set? And what good is either if the majority of the tribe refuse to look at the picture? Or perhaps, the stars through the lens of a telescope.

Of course, if you don't go around shouting to everyone, "Come look at the Stars!" you have that privilege all to yourself, and no one will bother to burn you for seeing something that they could see, if only they would ...

+ + + + +

And there I seem to have gotten so very serious that one might almost think I were about to end this article, and go to bed. But no! For the party has just started, which is what must always happen really. When one has seen something particularly true or beautiful, or noted something very new, why, it is time to enjoy life all over again. To invite in some friends, to open a bottle of home-made wine, to bring out the cookies and mix a few martinis, for the non-connoisseurs in the audience, and to explain the point of the joke. To tell you why this one is called The Naked Artichoke SALAD.



It is, of course, a mixture of many things, some leafy and green, just budding, some a little sharp in flavour, some a little piquant, and some perhaps bitter; also there may be bloody colored bits of juiciness, tomato like, in there among the bananas. Heavens, how did bananas get in here? Why, like the author, things change a little from moment to moment. The author being damaged, and fragmented and chopped up a bit, torn up both in emotions as well as in body, is very much like a salad indeed. All that is lacking is the sauce, which is a thick or thin, liquid or semi-solid concoction poured over the whole thing. Style must do for that, I'm afraid, however lacking in strength it may be.

And then what? Why, we toss the salad, of course, to the first person who enters the room. We wait for the party to reach its peculiar peak, that essential moment when fen and mundane humans (who just happen to be friends or amours) grok as well as they can and fuse into the kind of unit to which one may throw a bottle of brandy and shout "catch!" and expect in return some witty phrase, some clever remark. At that moment we move from column to the con-report sort of thing, and suddenly the paper is no longer mine, my fingers only an extension of the people who are burbling into the room, winding their way to find out why I am shouting help over and over and help over and ...

... Ah Ha! I turn and say  
"Say there people, say something funny."  
"Something funny." says Paul.  
"That's pretty trite," says Harvey Forman dismally.

I busily type down their clever remarks and wonder where all the great fannish minds have gone. Probably out to the Bar ...

"There was a man named Leaf," declaims Paul in that sturdy viking way he has, "who was son to Eric the Red, who was driven out of Norway by the F.B.I. He sailed to the land of Iceland, which was a country of boiling water and hot springs, and therefore had no ice at all, which he thought remarkable, but which has no place in this story at all. One day Leaf was out blowing in the wind (Ah, careful of the censureship laws, says a pretty thing named Vicky) when he spied a land far out in the west. Said Leaf then, in his accent: 'I tank dat it would be a great idea to sail out der and vin de vest. And von I haf von dis land, I vill call it vin land, because I haf von it.'"

"Everyone," says Harvey dismally, "has the right to go to hell in his own way. If that's your way, have fun."

"Aren't you going to do anything to stop this horrible thing?" asks Dorothy, in desputation.

"So Leaf sailed into the West and came to Peru. You must understand that the science of navigation was not nearly so well developed in those days. In Peru he met with a people called the Incas. They were just about to leave, and already had their packing done. It seemed that they were being frozen out of business. When asked by whom, they pointed to a small shop being run by a tiny Italian priest. It was obviously a Franciscan Pizzaria."

Harvey picks up Paul's bagpipe chanter and begins to play a sad old Yiddish tune.

"But I'm anti-Jewish!", cries Harvey, who is not only anti-Jewish, but Jewish! "Say that in your column and I'll run you through! Do you know what it means to be run through with a bagpipe?"

"So he sailed off with the Incas and their leader, Thor Heyerdahl, to Easter Island."

"For the Eastercon ?" shout I with joy.

"And they carried a great cross on which" said Harvey with malicious glee, "we are planning to nail up any historians who relate that terrible story."

"This is the first teaching of the Golden Eternity," says Kerouac. "The second teaching of the Golden Eternity is that there never was a first teaching of the Golden Eternity."

Harvey plays more Yiddish duck calls on Paul's chanter.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaarrrrrrrrrrrgggggggghhhhhh !" says Charlie Brown, lying there in his comic strip.

Part of my ear falls off.

Then Ingeborg had something to say but I couldn't hear it because the piano started to play cralle de luna.

"Col, my bondservant, has a sword which is called Greyflank."

"Does that make him the man with the grey flank sword ?"

Laughter ... Much Laughter ... What about it ?

The children in the kitchen are screaming because their daddy is threatening to throw away any noisy breakfast cereals. The phone rings wildly.

"Arthur," says someone who just wandered in, "will not be here tonight, so you can take the still apart."

"Why does Rusty always try to kill his sister ?" asks Cinderella quizzically.

"Why does he not succeed ?"

"I believe," says Harvey solemnly, "that I was barefoot both nights."

"Everything has a field around it."

"As long as you qualify it that way."

I can hear the vacuum cleaner stealthily crawling across the floor. At any moment it will grab for my little left toe. I shall, however, with my cleverness foil it ! At the moment it leaps I will leap to my feet, shout an obscene word, and plug it in. This shock will momentarily paralyze it. The fact that Harvey's feet are naked will also help. And the existence of the Conservative party.

"You teens are english ?"

HAVING READ THIS, ARE YOU ENLIGHTENED ?

cough, gently, cough

This party is getting a little too out of hand for me to continue to write on my lovely new electric typer which has a type face pretty much like Harlan's; deliberately, in imitation, even. I wish I could have more to drink, but my eyes ... I wish I were a chrysanthemum in a yellow pot ...

"Pot ?"

Pot is illegal.

"Anybody who calls my uncle a clod is a clod !"

Damn the bagpipes and full speed ahead !

"Quote me some more. I like being quoted. Oh, look, he's quoting me !"



C-OZ-MENTS ...

being mc's on the 45th Mailing.

OFFTRAILS. Well ... (she said wistfully, not critically) ... I must say I do get a bit frustrated, waiting for the Mailing. However, having become co-administrator of an apa, I do appreciate the difficulties caused by lack of fanac-time. Don't shoot the AE, folks, he's doing his best !

AMBLE-23. (Archie). L't for clearing up the "Bird lives !" mystery - which included the problem of whether "lives" was pronounced with a short or a long "i" ! // I always thought it was phagocytes which were essential to anaemic girls. Or was it Iron Jelloids ? // Perhaps it's just as well Don Studebaker wasn't able to attend the Worldcon. You might have been tempted to sing that wickedly clever song to him. On the Sunday night, for instance, after the Knights-of-St.-Fantony party ! // By the way: since you weighed around eleven stone at that time, instead of the twelve you'd originally aimed for, I can only describe you as a wasted Knight ...

ANOTHER ONE-2. (Heinrich). But I never saw the first one. Was that called "Another One", auch ? Ein anderer was ?? (Mein Deutsch ist jetzt schlecht, nicht wahr ?) // Heinrich, dear Heinrich - can we please get one thing straight before we go any further ? I know you meant it as a politeness (what's the German for "toujours la politesse" ?) - but I have a built-in antipathy to being called a "lady". I can never visualise a lady as being anything but dull, ultra-respectable, "refeened", and a bore. I prefer to be called a woman. Ne' mind ... // Yeah - Archie and I don't go in for bun-fights, we have pun-fights instead ... (If that's a bit obscure to you, the term "bun-fight" is a jocular colloquialism meaning a tea-party. The sort attended by ladies !) // If it takes you an hour to "get with it" in the mornings, I'd say you're probably a Night Owl. In which case, welcome to the Club ! I'm a fiend first thing in the morning. But what time do you start "drooping" at night ? If it's around 10.p.m., or earlier, you're cheating ! // It's not the OMPresidency that's interfering with Archie's activities. It's me. The unfortunate Mercer is, in fact, being Interfered With from all angles ... // We always send copies of A, and O. (AMBLE & OZ, not ANOTHER ONE !) to waiting-listers as soon as we can get their names and addresses from OT. If all OMPans could manage to do this, all wl-ers would get a full mailing every time, involving no extra work or expense for the AE. // Re Archie's article: I'd be very interested to read one on the same subject written by a teenager, or at least by a fan under the age of about 22. I get the impression - perhaps wrongly - that we older fen (I'm 40) are carefully avoiding the subject of World War II when we are in contact with members of Gerfandom. Archie's article is a case in point. He sort of dabs at the subject of war-in-general, and I think he's trying to say that it's ridiculous for either "side" to carry old grudges. I couldn't agree more. The war happened, we all suffered during it, and it ENDED over twenty years ago. So my opinion (for what it's worth) is that we shouldn't argue about it. At the same time, let's not feel that we have to lean over backwards to avoid talking/writing about it when it seems natural to do so. It's in the past, and surely fandom-in-general is a future-oriented entity ?

CRABAPPLE-1. (Mushling). Two Tribesters in OMPA - aieee ! we'll gerrem, gal ! // What's all this subversive propaganda about Banbury Cross being moved ?? Are the Fodwhacks up to their old tricks again ? Reckon we'll have to

tighten up Tribal discipline a bit, post extra sentries and things ... Or is it CLANG, after the "rings on her fingers" ?? HELP ! // S'funny - I've never seen "The Big Country" or "A Summer Place", either. // Yes - right up to the moment of Poland's collapse, the first eleven notes of Chopin's most famous Polonaise were broadcast every thirty seconds over the radio. I learned this from the film "Dangerous Moonlight" - the one which featured Richard Addinsell's "Warsaw Concerto". Have you seen that film - or, since it was originally "before your time", have you seen any of the re-issues of it ? // Er ... Bobbie Gray doesn't have to come to Britain - she lives in Cheltenham ! // Kingsley's book, "Hereward the Wake", was recently serialised by BBC-TV, for the children's Sunday afternoon programmes. In the first episode, Hereward was represented as being the son of Leofric and Godiva of Coventry. Anybody know if this was indeed the case ? // Didja notice the link in HELP ! ? - viz., the Beatles doing a recording on what was supposed to be Salisbury Plain, with Stonehenge in the background ? Wonder if Ringo did read that copy of LINK-1 we sent him ?

DLABLERIE-1. (Steve). Your riotous yarn about Doctor John reminded me of a placard which, it's said, (though I don't believe it, mind), hangs in the waiting-rooms of some doctors. It pleads: "Patients are earnestly requested not to exchange symptoms - it only confuses the doctors." // Oh, phooey to youey, I think Cordwainer Smith is a genius, and his stories are fabulous. Though, as I said in a review elsewhere (ZENITH-10), it took me a while to "get with" his style. As for his "comments concerning himself and his stories" - don't you know that a genius is never modest ? He doesn't need to be ! // Never mind, Steve - I hereby forgive you, since you're obviously a confirmed Bradfan. // Can you or anybody else explain why there are dozens of "James Bond" pb's on the bookstalls, but never a pb copy of "The Spy Who Loved Me" ? At least, I've never been able to find one. Is it because it's sexy, or what ?

HAAGGIS-5. (Ian). For your information, King John did not sign the Magna Carta. Like most people of that period, he couldn't write ! // I considered pitching in yet again on the subject of abortion, but I'd only be repeating myself, and that could become a leetle boring, I teenk. I'll just say this: we read and hear a great deal about a foetus being a personality, an "ego", from the moment of conception, and about its "murder" by abortion. I suggest that it would be both just and compassionate to transfer some of this concern to the women involved. After all, we're people, too ... (not castigating you, Ian, of course ... you're on Our Side, and therefore a Good Man !) // Well, what about cami-knickers in black stretch lace ?? (Uh ... what happens when a girl unfastens the strategic buttons - does the garment roll up with a swoosh ! like a Venetian blind or something ? Or wouldn't you know ?).

MOREH-38. (John). I don't think I act in a superior manner towards non-believers in reincarnation - I certainly don't feel superior. Why should I, and how could I, since I believe that everybody is reborn, not just Us Reincarnationist Chickens ? And Pete will tell you that I regularly drive him barmy by cheerfully refusing to argue about my beliefs. Like, I don't feel "driven" to try to convert anybody. I believe in it simply because it makes better sense than any other creed I've come across so far. Which is, of course, more or less what you said. Why don't you believe in it any more, though ?

NEXUS-4. (Power-Mad Pete). A car, a secretary, a second place in the Hugo awards, a new job - it'll soon be half-a-crown to speak to you if this trend continues ! Oh, and I understand that Brum has recently acquired custody of the



B.S.F.A. fanzine library, too. Tsk ... what careless clod allowed that priceless agglomeration of incomparable literature to get away from him and fall into the benighted Brumitts ?? Shame ! // If you want to get back at Joe Patrizio for his "yellow" crack - tell him that your spelling blind spots sometimes get cured, meaning that you don't do it every time ! (No more "a's" in "definite" ... "necessary" with only one "c" ... ah, you're a goooooo boy !)

RING CYCLE, A Genuine Genuflection to Ser Richard of the Clan Eney.  
PHENOTYPE & To the perpetrator of the "Uruks" verse at the foot of the 5th  
Things ... page (no page-numbers, Dick - gnash !) - 'ere, mate, 'oo the  
(Dick). 'ell are you gettin' at ?? I mean, that fifth line o' yours ...  
us femmefen are feeling slightly warm under our - er - collars  
about that ! (snigger ...) // Verses much appreciated, anyway - I seriously  
frightened a passing passion-peddler by bawling out "High Fly the Nazgul-O"  
at the top of my baritone ... // Was pickled tink to see "How nell ..." in  
your comments to Don Studebaker. Friend of mine constantly uses "nelly" as  
a kind of mild cuss-word: "Nelly off !" "Oh, nelly with it." "What the  
nelly's goin' on ?" etc. // Oh Dick, dear Dick, thank you most unmaudlinly for  
the "Tefflan cooking utensil" pun ... just what I wanted for a Krimble-present,  
but ... what does it MEAN ?? (Anguished shrieks of frustration ... even  
Archie hasn't a clue !) // "But with all the nutty people you can detect with  
one glance at the newspaper, is insanity much of a defence ?" Yeah. In fact,  
yeah, yeah, yeah ! One of my standard mutters is: "And they say I'm a crackpot !"  
// I once read somewhere that Britain produces lively, questing minds; inventors,  
engineers, researchers, a vast variety of industrial goods, etc. - simply because  
the many changes in our climatic conditions keep us mentally alert. Like, we  
have to be adaptable bods to live with our weather ! If Britain lay in  
latitudes conducive to the custom of regular afternoon siestas, we'd probably  
be as happily soporific as Mexicans or something. (No derogation intended;  
personally I'd love to live in ~~Ypse/Ypsi~~ a sun-drenched country and be as idle  
as all-get-out). // Re the "Conrep from BHAM" - I guess Archie's more or  
less the relaxed veteran and I'm the excited neo. That's "who must have done  
this." !

THE SCARR. (Geo Graphic). (a) My copy was illegible so I didn't read it.  
(b) I am a liar. (c) Delete whichever is inapplicable. // Loved  
"The Thing from Belfast Lough." Reminded me of several crazy incidents I  
witnessed in the Fleet Air Arm. I'll probably pass 'em on sometime. //  
The Nostalgist's version of "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" likewise much  
appreciated. Milton, you say ? S'funny. I'd have thought that a poem about  
shooting would've emanated from Shelley ... (or Browning, suggests Archie).

ST-OMP-1. (Arnie). Hi. "Len Bailes can't possibly burn himself out. If he does,  
I'll hit him." One of the best remarks in the whole mailing. And if  
you ever address me as anything but "Beryl", I'll hit you. Anyway, I've been  
messing about with my surnames recently. So, since I am (to the best of my  
knowledge) the only Beryl in actifandom - and certainly the only one in OMPA  
to date - better stick to that, mate. // Please explain the Sneaky Fun thing -  
I hate being mystified ! // I sent you a copy of LINK-4. Sorry you asked ??

TIMPANOGAS-2. (Rich). What does "Timpanogas" mean, please ? (if anything !)  
Is it a U.S. place-name or something ? // Thanks for the

compliments - I was all aboo with egoglow ! // I gather that you're what Archie calls "a publishing giant" Over There. Good for you - but we OMFans don't know you very well - or at least, I don't. How about taking a leaf out of Arnie's book and telling us a bit about yourself ? (Go on - you know everybody loves talking about him/herself !).

Oops - I try to keep the zines in alphabetical order for C-OZ-MENTS, but I seem to have slipped up this time by missing out PANTHEON - sorry, Burkhard. Re: "Ghost-Riders in the Sky" - Rolf, I was disagreeing with your contention that "an extensive preoccupation with science fiction may breed more than an interest in literary phenomena." (i.e., in politics), until I came to the final couple of paragraphs. These reminded me so forcibly of the final chapter of Alfred Bester's "Tiger, Tiger" that I had to stop disagreeing and admit that you're probably right after all. Incidentally, this book has been for many years my all-time top favourite in sf novels. // I'm afraid I'm not very interested in politics these days; I went through an active-for-socialism period shortly after the war, but I seem to have outgrown it, like religion. One thing that does regularly make me wild, though, is when I hear a woman say, "Oh, I can't be bothered to go and vote," or, "I haven't got time," or something like that. The only reason why I would ever abstain from voting is if I genuinely considered that neither or none of the official candidates was worth my vote - I mean as regards their individual party's election platform. Otherwise, I would feel that I was betraying (by not voting) the suffragettes of the 1920's who endured so much and fought so gallantly - unto death, in at least one case - to get the vote for British women. // I believe I'm right in saying that in Australia - or at least in some of her states - it is compulsory to cast one's vote, and anyone not doing so may be subjected to a fine. In principle, I'm agin compulsion, but, as Archie has just remarked - if it's a case of being legally compelled to go to the polls, but being allowed to register an abstention there if one wishes to do so - I'm in favour. // It must be admitted that the political position in this country is pretty ludicrous right now, and until Britain adopts the eminently fair and sensible system of proportional representation, it will probably continue to be ludicrous for some time. Unless, of course, an entirely new party suddenly arises and offers a programme which satisfies most of every other party.

and so we proceed to C-OZ-MENTS on the 16th Mailing.

OFFTRAILS-46. (Brian). (p.2): "As the voting deadline is in May, it seems (what say all of you ?) that any." Hear, hear, Brian ! Couldn't agree more ! Surely nobody will disagree with such a sensible suggestion ? All in favour ? AYE ! There you are, B. - carried 'Arry Moseley ! // I'm reserving comment on the mooted amendments - my eventual vote on same will, I think, be sufficient in that line.

AMBLE-24. (Himself). I wonder what middle-aged virgins could possibly be dedicated to ... the preservation of their middle-aged virginity, perhaps ? And I do so agree that, as far as the G.P.O. is concerned, one just can't win. (We know, don't we, Mate ??) // Yes - that Walshindig on November 6th was really something. But why didn't you tell the Nice People that you got happily tight ? (Never seen anything like it, folks - he went around loving everybody at the top of his voice ... lively, he was ?) // "Wonderful old explosive gas geyser", he says ... HUH ! Stand by for the Now-It-Can-Be-Told Department ! We moved in here on Saturday, November 20th. I spent most of the preceding day hanging about here, waiting for delivery of various items, for the electricity



bods to come and connect up the meters and instal some extra wiring, and for the gas-men to come and turn on the gas. After the last-named had performed their duty and checked that everything was working OK, I asked them to show me how to operate the geyser. (I had never met any type of geyser before). Obliging, they did so, and after they'd gone, I ventured to have a few practice runs with the thing. // After we'd moved in, I carefully explained Operation Geyser to Archie. He was entranced with it, and promptly decided to take a bath. I still had a lot of stuff to sort out, so after making sure he'd got soap, towels, etc., I left him to it. Less than a minute later there was an almighty BANG! from the bathroom. Terrified, I rushed in there, expecting to find, at the very least, a totally hairless Archie, sans hair, eyebrows and beard! He wasn't, though; the gurt fool was standing there doubled up with laughter, and the bath, floor, window-sill and all immediate environs were covered in a rain of black particles. // And I'd been so careful to stress the exact sequence of operations: light the pilot jet, turn on the water, wait till it runs freely into the bath, then - and only then - turn on the main gas-ring under the geyser-tank. He had, of course, turned on the main jet before turning on the water. After that we both left the thing alone for a while - until one day I got mad at it, and, muttering, "You're not going to beat me, you beast!" I got it working. Since when it has been completely tame, and produces near-boiling water within about half a minute of lighting the main jet. // That wasn't the only scare I had, though, our first weekend here. Simone (Walsh) had very kindly given me an electric iron which she no longer used, and which required only a new length of flex to make it completely serviceable. After scrabbling through Archie's box of electrical bits an' pieces - which he call s his "infinite connectivity system", and which would probably make any professional electrician faint in horror - I announced that I couldn't find a piece of flex long enough for the iron. Archie promptly offered to cut off a suitable length from the flex which serves his desk-lamp. He was disconnecting the plug or something from this wiring when he suddenly announced, quite calmly, "This thing's live" - and dropped it. Crackling sound, shower of blue sparks, and a pair of blackened connections ... it worries me, y'know ... Archie, Mate, are you sure you're not regretting having Taken Me On ??? (=Dumio, like. Until I acquired you, it hadn't even occurred to me that an iron - electric or otherwise - might be considered by any reasonable being to be a desirable item of household equipment. I think it must have been the shock of discovering that you actually felt the need for one that bereft me momentarily of my wits. At least that's my excuse. AM.)=)

ANOTHER ONE-3. (Heinrich). Good luck with your bid for the 1970 Worldcon. I have a feeling that many British fen will back it, because a holiday on the Continent is less expensive and much more convenient than a visit to the States. // Re having something in every Mailing - see my remarks to Rolf on the preceding page, about compulsion. I'm stubborn, Heinrich - anybody tells me, "you must do this!", it makes me dig in my heels and get mutinous. Conversely, anybody says, "you can't do that!" - most times I gotta go do it, just to prove that I can! // I think I sampled Vurguzz last Easter at the Brumcon, but I'm damned if I can remember what it was like! However, Archie insists that I did have some out of his sole surviving bottle, and I must have lived through the experience 'cos I'm still here ... I think ... what am I burbling about, VURGUZZ sake ??? Did you really mean your offer, though? And if you did - wouldn't I have to pay Customs duty on it? If I remember rightly, Archie had a load of fun with his bottle on the way back from the Castlecon! Here, I'll let him tell you about it:

(Well. I produced this bottle, all signed, sealed and delivered according to the tradition, as I was passing through the British customs. What was it? - I was asked. Vurguzz, I said. What did that signify then? Oh, it was an alcoholic beverage that wasn't, so I was given to understand, very widely publicised but that was on sale in one particular valley in the Bavarian Alps, where I'd purchased it. Then the questioning turned on whether it was a spirit or a liqueur. The man thought it was probably a liqueur because it was coloured. I thought it probably wasn't because it didn't taste like a liqueur. (Nor, come to think of it, does it taste like a spirit. In fact I don't recommend it to anybody who is not at least half-drunk already.) Anyway, the customs man hummed and hawed and eventually - possibly pleased at my honesty in declaring it anyway - decided that the easiest way out without precedent was to let it through free. However, it was touch and go, and the postal customs inspector opening a parcel might well decide that a bottle of Vurguzz merited quite a tidy little sum in customs duty. These things are almost impossible to foretell in advance. AM.) S'right - so I think I'd better decline your kind offer with thanks for the moment, Heinrich. However, IF we make it to the Vienna Con next summer, and if you're also there (ja?), perhaps I'll be able to take you up on it there. Then I'll be able to experience my own bit of fun 'n' games with the British Customs authorities! // I didn't exactly "waste" that last stencil (OZ-3). I simply wrote until I had no more to say, and no time in which to say it, anyway - remember, The Worldcon didn't end until August 30th, OMPA's deadline was September 5th - and I hadn't even started OZ-3 before the Worldcon! I suppose I could've used an illo, but that might have been spoiled by the last page of printing showing through or something. Anyway, I hope that thish makes up both for OZ-3, and for my having missed the last Mailing altogether. OK?

CRAPAPPLE-2. (Mushling). Sob ... you haven't got me Tribal name in "A Camel's Eye View". I know my pseudonym (Beryl) appeared in C/A-1; doesn't Tribe X approve of cross-references, then? // IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT: BE IT KNOWN that, on Christmas Eve 1965, the Mercers were officially created the Bristol Area Leaders and Keepers of the Clifton Toll-Bridge, by order of the Co-Leaders, whose signatures appear on the official document above the GREY OXO SEAL. // However, lark, honoured though we are, we're somewhat concerned about the present leaderless condition of the Midlands Area. I delegated a certain amount of responsibility before I left, but Custard can't be everywhere at once, and you know Gritty's not all that reliable! So may we (Arch and I) suggest that the Hon. Leek be promoted to the vacant position of Midlands Area Chieftain? He will be able to render regular reports to Queen Hagg, and we of the South-West will no longer need to worry about possible depredations by the Fodwhacks, or - worse - a sneaky Take-Over Bid by the Awful Alcestrian, Green Henry. // Oh ar - me orbs - well, I'm Tribally known as Two Lovely Red Eyes because I've got dark hazel eyes with red flecks in 'em! Archie sometimes calls me (among other things!) "Electric Eyes" - red flex, see? // Mush, I don't know why "the Naked Artichoke", and up to now I've been too shy (yes, me!) to ask the bloke! Like, he might think I was being too personal or summat ... // Well, I never drank all that much Naval rum - it wasn't officially issued to Gens, you see - we just used to scrounge it off the matlows occasionally. But it certainly tasted much better than any rum I've drunk since demob. The nearest I've ever got to it is "Coruba" rum, which one has to track down most assiduously. However, I can assure all connoisseurs of Nelson's Blood that "Coruba" is well worth searching for - and paying for - it's somewhat expensive! // The only alcoholic drink that burns my throat unpleasantly is whisky - I can't stand the stuff! // Re Hereward - see my comments on C/A-1. // I considered having a go at this



"Happiness Is ..." thing, but at present I'm somewhat biased, if you see what I mean! // Liked Harry Vlad's pome - some nice imagery there. "The Patriot" wasn't nearly so good - for one thing it doesn't scan properly, and secondly, the sentiments expressed are not those of a really fanatical patriot. This man in the poem is full of doubts and questions; a patriot (in my opinion) simply accepts his destiny, whatever it may be, without demur or query. Might have been more to the point if he'd called it "The Doubting Patriot" ... or something like that. // I do wish you'd keep your flippin' Granny in order, Mushling. She broke into the place where I work, last weekend. I didn't care about her turning the Reception Office upside-down; I work in the Stores, at t'other end of the corridor. I likewise didn't care that she pinched some log-books. None of 'em was ours, since we don't yet own a car. And it didn't matter a hoot of a horn to me that she hi-jacked one of the firm's hire-cars and bolted to Bolton in it. No, what really rarked me was that, while making her escape from the scuffers, she put her Chelsea through a damp place in the ceiling of the Stores, and made a dirty gret 'ole! So on the Monday we all got stiff nex an' things from the perishin' draught. And on the Tuesday a pair of gormless workmen, having spent Monday patching up Reception, gave us all headaches and bad tempers by banging like hell in the Stores. And putting trestles in the aisles for us to fall over. And drinking Crum's tea and Franklyn's coffee. And leaving a disgusting mess for me to sweep up - I told Michael to do it, but he said he'd got a bad back ... // SO! next time you see your rotten Grammy, tell her she's getting too old for this trouble-making lark, and she'd better retire and take up tatting. After all, another spell of P.D. on the 'Moor would surely do the Old Girl in, and then we'd have nobody to blame for everything!

HAGGIS-V2N6. (Ian). I howled at "... if the parents are not mature, the progeny will be immature." // Does this nut Kellog advocate anything ghastly to stop female masturbation? // "Of the mediaeval Church," you say. Yeah. Ian, I long ago came to the conclusion that it is religion and the churches which have made sex a dirty word. At one time the district in which I lived was visited by a plague of Jehovah's Witnesses. Most of the time I couldn't be bothered with them, and said so, but occasionally I'd feel like having a good argument, so I gave 'em one. The best one that I recall was about this ridiculousity known as Original Sin. The pair of J.H.'s who were giving me the spiel at the time were a very earnest young man, and a woman in her early thirties, I'd guess. The gist of my argument was that, if one accepts the Adam and Eve malarkey (which I don't), the Original Sin that all the hoo-ha is about was not the first sexual act between Adam and Eve - it was their disobedience in doing what God had expressly forbidden them to do. Like, if God had literally forbidden them to eat apples, then eating apples would have become as sordid, furtive, and snigger-provoking as sex now is for so many people. There would be bawdy jokes about eating apples; parents would get red-faced and inarticulate when asked questions by their innocent offspring about apple-eating. Apples would be grown in secret, concealed orchards, and sold furtively - probably in defiance of some crackpot law, too. And a young man would risk getting his face smacked if he offered his girl a Cox's in the cinema ... "you dirty beast!" // But, as I said, Original Sin is surely disobedience of divine law, and therefore nothing to do with sex at all. The J.H.'s tried to have it both ways (they usually do!) Yes, they said, Original Sin is disobedience, but it is also the act which comprised the disobedience, viz. sex ... yer carn't win, can yer ?? They were being all mild and forbearing, like, so I gave 'em the old line about, "If God made anything nicer than sex, he keeps it in heaven for himself". And they went off, shaking their heads and tut-tutting, after promising to pray for me! // "... naturally, nowadays

we would tend to exclude the inebriates, addicts and perverts, and include some of the hereditary defects such as haemophilia, heart abnormalities, etc." As far as haemophilia is concerned, Ian, I think I'm right in saying that this would be damned difficult to detect. Because (again if I've got my facts right - haven't checked) in at least 90% of cases, the disease is transmitted to male children only, by the mother, who is not herself a haemophiliac. Therefore it would not be known that the mother was carrying haemophilia in her genes until after the birth of her first son. And if she had no sons, but produced a flock of daughters, I think it's more than likely that they, too, would be able to transmit the disease to any sons whom they in their turn might bear. // However, if the first-born was a son - a haemophilic son, poor little beggar - then I reckon it would be right to sterilise the mother rather than the father. If the mother died fairly young, or if there was a divorce, the man should surely retain his right to beget children if he married again later? // And what about allergies? Do you know that a person who has suffered from only mild and infrequent outbreaks of eczema in childhood can beget or bear a child doomed to suffer from asthma, eczema, seborrhoea, hay-fever, urticaria, angio-neurotic oedema - the LOT? // I saw the TV programme, "The American Way of Sex." Hoo-bloomin'-ray - somebody else thinks Muggeridge is disgusting! His lip-licking salacity on that programme was, to me, the utter personification of the phrase, "dirty old man." // Re: "The Changing Position" - did you hear the (reputedly true) (most of 'em are, though!) story about the elderly biology professor? He asked his (mixed) class, "How many recognised positions are there for the performance of the human sexual act?" A (male) wag at the back of the class shouted "Twenty-seven!" Ignoring him, the prof. asked a young female student in the front row to stand up and describe the most orthodox of these positions. With clinical detachment, and an admirable absence of embarrassment, the young lady did so. Whereupon the back-row comedian called out: "Oh, all right then - twenty-eight!" // Re what you said to Bill Donaho about: "... it is to your great credit that you could shake off your childhood conditioning, not an easy thing to do." How right you are! I have always regretted that one of the songs from "South Pacific" was never plugged as strongly as, say, "Some Enchanted Evening" or "Bali Hai." (Possibly any such plug would have aroused protest in the Southern States of America or something). I refer to "You've Got to be Taught" - d'you know it? // I could make a very coarse pun on your final para., but it might get censored - remind me to tell you at the Yaron - you two are coming, aren't you?

KIPLING'S ETHIC. (Fred). Interesting. However, my own favourite Kipling-poem is not included (well, obviously you couldn't mention them all!) - but as far as I can see, this particular one doesn't quite "jell" with the ideology you outline. I'm not sure of the actual title, but it begins: "We have fed our sea for a thousand years, / But she calls us, still unfed." To me, this poem expresses a kind of angry pity - almost bitterness - and I visualise Kipling standing on an English beach, staring at a stormy sky, and asking, "Why? Why?" ... "We have straved our best to the weed's unrest, / To the shark and the sheering gull, / If blood be the price of admiralty, / Lord God, we ha' paid it in full!"

KOBOLD-11. (Brian). Peppermint tea? UGH! I loathe peppermint in any form - even cleaning my teeth is something I hate doing, since nearly all effective toothpastes and powders are peppermint-flavoured. Years ago, I used T.C.P. toothpaste, which had a pleasant, mildly antiseptic flavour. Then it, too, went peppermint. I wrote a niggly letter to the manufacturers, and eventually

*try / me*



got an apologetic sort of reply. This explained that the manufacturers had decided it was high time they brought their product into line with all the others - damned conformists ! Well, they promptly lost one regular customer. I can't help hoping (somewhat vindictively) that I wasn't the only one ! // I've never been partial to circuses either, Brian. Somehow, even the greatest of them seems (to me, at any rate) to exhibit a quality of shoddiness, tawdry glitter and general sham. // I've read somewhere that in Naples a simple contraceptive costs more than a loaf of bread ... however, I'd imagine that this in itself is only a minor deterrent compared with the religious one. I mean, engaged couples could always save up for 'em, couldn't they ? Along with saving up for sheets and cutlery and other items for the connubial bottom drawer ! // Oh heck, I had that series of R.C. leaflets, too, about ten years ago. This led to some lively correspondence between myself and a Father Somebody-or-other, (Commolly, I think), on the subject of hell. Wish I'd kept his letters. 'Twas slightly frustrating, though, because he declined to get mad at me ! // Have a joke. R.C. priest to Jewish Rabbi: "Your religion forbids you to eat pork. If you will excuse a very personal question - have you in fact ever tasted pork ?" Rabbi: "As a matter of fact, I have. I tried it once, just to see what it was like. I thought it was delicious, but my curiosity was then satisfied and I have never touched it since. Now, if you will excuse a similarly personal question: your religion requires you to be celibate. Have you in fact ever indulged in sexual intimacy ?" Priest: "As a matter of fact, I have. I once took a willing young lady into my bed, just to see what sex was like. My curiosity was then satisfied, and I have never indulged in sex again." Rabbi: "Did you enjoy the experience ?" Priest: "I did indeed - and I'll tell you one thing: it beats eating pork, clean out of sight !" // I've been trying to figure out something constructive re this mooted limitation of Amerompans. On the one hand, it seems to be in the nature of unfair discrimination; it's not their fault that the entire United Kingdom could get itself lost twice over in the state of Texas ! On the other hand, the difficulty re administrative posts is a very real one, and, as you say, OMPA is the only British-based apa. Therefore, I can only agree that your proposed amendment is basically sound. May I suggest, however, that this should be classed as amendment number five ? Then (if it is passed), we Britons can at suitable times claim the support of the Fifth Amendment !

QUARTERINGS -V2N2. (A postmailing from Don Fitch). Enjoyed all this, Don, but for me there's only one comment-provoking bit, and that's the remarks about Japanese-Americans. It reminded me that when I read James Michener's wonderful book, "Hawaii", I found the part which dealt with the Japanese-American regiment in W.W.II intensely interesting and very moving.// So on to QV2N3. That's this thing you have about the 54th OMPA Mailing ? Somep'n's comin' in December '67, perhaps ? // If you're really interested in the origins and doings of Tribe X, try to get hold of copies of the first three issues of my genzine, LINK - sorry, I've no spares at all, but I'll send you a copy of L-4 if you want one. Or you can ask Arnie for a loan of his. There are also some Tribal "reports" in a couple of issues of Charlie Winstone's M.D.I.R. It's all madly esoteric and in-groupish, of course, but great fun. (Well, we think so, anyway ...) // Ta for them few kind words ... please note that I have Irish ancestors - or at least that's what my father says, though I don't think he has any actual proof. I certainly haven't - and I'm not going to make any effort to find out, either - it might not be true ... horrid thought ! // "Hiding fanzines in those stacks of 10-year-old publications" (in doctors' waiting-rooms) - what a good idea ! Wish I'd thought of it ! But I'll do it anyway, next time I have to take me carcass to

the repair-shop. Come to think of it, I might as well slip in a few copies of Ron Hubbard's "Certainty", or a couple of Scientological PAB's - that should set the feline among the avines, house ?? // You to John Roles (re generalisation): "... aside from the obvious reason for crogglements (the statement is, itself, a generalisation) ..." Agreed. This always reminds me of the glorious mess I invariably get myself into when I consider the statement: "There is always an exception to every rule." Now, if one accepts that statement as a rule in itself, it must surely follow that somewhere there is a rule to which there is never an exception? To complicate matters still further, chuck in the bit about "It is the exception which proves the rule." Stir well, sample after two triple tots and a hard day's nite, and the best of British luck! // Kindly do not mention rain, Mister Fitch. I'm not sure how the rest of these sodden (I ain't swearing, Brian - at least, not in print!) islands have been making out, but it's been distinctly, decidedly damp down in the south-west corner recently. 3.4 inches in 48 hours last week - every room in our flat seemed to have its quota of gently-steaming clothes. (Scootering can be convenient in traffic-jams - Archie has a very neat way of weaving in and out of stalled vehicles which drives bus-drivers clean barmy. But in wet weather one does tend to get wet ... if you see what ...)

TIMPANOGAS-3. (Rich). See my remarks to Don Fitch re the Tribe X mythos. I'm a comparatively new member myself, mind, in spite of being co-leader of the Bristol Area (see mc's on CRABAPPLE-2), so I'm not yet au fait with all the finer points myself. However, it seems that my particular brand of insanity is sufficiently way-out to afford near-total comprehension of all the esotericisms Tribesters employ.

VAGARY-21. (Bobbie). Somebody (not a fan) once remarked to me that people who claim to remember incidents from previous lives always seem to remember pleasant and/or historically-recorded things - "like being a Queen of Egypt, for instance." (I asked him if he'd been reading Joan Grant, and he swore he hadn't. However). My own sparse collection of "far memories" seems mainly to comprise several unpleasant deaths - including being burned as a witch, and also drowning in an icy sea - the latter was, I think, more horrible than the former! // I read all of V-21 and enjoyed it - particularly the gen on the Celts. How does one go about ascertaining if one is or is not descended from Celtic stock - d'you know? It's the sort of thing I'd like to know concerning myself. On the other hand I don't want to know - via astrology or any other means - my future. Not because I'm afraid to know, but because (a) it would leave little or nothing for my curiosity to play with, and (b) I like to think that I have some control over my own destiny! In this connection I worked out, some time ago, a strictly theoretical balance between free will and predestination. It's a bit lengthy to detail here and now, though, so I think I'll leave it until the next mailing, and try to work up a proper article on it meantime.

And that's it for this time, souls. Cor, what a load of matter on less than a dozen zines! No wonder Archie says I talk too much ...

P.S. to Fred Lerner: I've just remembered the title of that Kipling poem: "Song o' the Dead."



-15-

T H E

P-OZ-T M A N

B R O U G H T . . . . +

From: SETH JOHNSON, New Jersey. Dated October 16th 1965.

Thanks for OZ 3. Nice fanzine, although it could stand a little of the fine artwork you generally put into LINK.

Fancy Pete trading a mimeo for a car. Just wish I could trade my car for a mimeo, although I'm not sure I'd ever be able to master the monster if I did.

Never heard of an "Imperial" typer before. Or is this a designation for some particular machine of a better known "brand"? (+ (No - it's one of the best-known British typewriters, and can be found in most business offices along with Underwoods, Remingtons, Smiths, etc. Not sure if Imperials are still being made, though. Surprised you've never heard of 'em)+).

Don Studebaker's poetry is exotic and rather morbid, and not the sort of thing one might expect in the gay and carefree pages of any of your productions. I did like his Olin T. Fredegar poem on Christmas, though.

As a matter of fact I understand abortion is not only legal but commonplace in Japan. And if performed in modern scientific operating room by skilled surgeons it's no more dangerous than any other operation. So under these circumstances perhaps the average gal would think nothing of having an abortion to save her figure.

So at last I learn what PADS is. And here I thought it had something to do with footpads or Martian padwars.

I knew there were a large number of dialects in Britain but didn't realise it would be so bad that people just 14 miles apart would be incomprehensible to each other. You'd think radio and TV would more or less get the general public speaking with the same dialect at least.

Who the heck is Ken Williams? Some celebrity I should know of? (+ (Again, no - just a lad a few years older than myself, who attended the same school. Pre-war, that was)+).

From: Paul Zimmer, New York. Dated August 1965.

So that's where our rain has gone. Might have known you thieving Sassenachs would get it ... (+ (Here, hold on! Scotland reckons to have at least as much rain as the rest of the British Isles - proportionately more, I'd guess, on the west coast)+). I've heard the weather blamed on many things in my time - Sputniks, atom bombs, flying saucers and washing cars, but this is something new ... (+ (I'd explained that the English cricket season had begun and therefore rain was absolutely inevitable)+). Why don't you ship your excess rain over here. We need it! (+ (Wish we could, Paul - and all this rotten snow we're getting right now)+).

Webbed feet are great for plastering ceilings.

Finding nothing else to comment on in your letter, I will now lift Don's copy of OZ and see what I can find there ... oh yes ...

Re the business of "is there such a thing as a same murderer ... what kind of sanity puts weapons into men's hands and sends them out to kill each other." There are as a matter of fact several excellent reasons for killing people besides self-defence. (Come to think of it I can even think of names). Killing for personal gain is considered immoral in our society, but there is nothing "insane" about it. And under primitive conditions survival might be

dependent on such an action. (+ (But isn't that a form of self-defence ?) +). Many people, I think, kill because they are expected to kill - as in the case of jealous husbands, etc. (Or feel they are expected to kill, rather, due to social pressure. There is insanity here, but it is in the society, not the individual). (+ (Which is, if I remember correctly, more or less what Joe and I said - that murder and capital punishment are manifestations of a sick society. But let's not forget that society isn't a kind of discrete entity, standing aside and aloof from humanity in general; it is, after all, made up of those very individuals with whom you are contrasting it) +).

And finally there is the fact that man was a carnivorous hunting animal to begin with, and still has the instincts of same. Man's behavior is not so different, really, from that of the lion or the wolf, or any of the other carnivora. Wolves and lions fight wars, too, for almost exactly the same reasons humans do - usually invasion of territory. Man is still, bar a few physiological modifications and a more elaborate social structure, pretty much the same hunting ape as he was back in the Pleistocene or whenever it was. All carnivores have an instinct to kill, for obvious reasons - which is why full-fed men and tame dogs hunt for "sport." Killing is pretty much basic to the human animal - which is not to say (as large dosages of pacifistically-oriented writing will have led you to expect) that "Man is rotten clean through," but that man is basically man, a hunting animal, and that this facet of his existence should be taken into account. People of this century and this generation always talk about how improved man won't be so warlike and a healthy society won't have war, and so on. "We must improve man so he will not be warlike" is a common enough idea. But I disagree with this. We must improve man - fine. But we will improve man only by learning enough about man that we can produce a truly improved man, and not by shutting our eyes and trying to make him into a mouse or a rabbit.

(+ (This reminds me of the end of W.W.II. My sister was then seven years old, and couldn't remember a time of no war. She was, of course, enchanted by all the celebrations and general hoop-de-do - especially seeing a city with all its lights blazing, and no air-raid wardens to holler "Put that light out!" Then she heard my father saying something to my mother about "their" war - W.W.I - and she piped up: "Is it always like this? I mean, is there a war and then a peace, and then another war and another peace?" My parents and I simply stared at her, appalled. This remark from a little child was a saddening reflection on the state of our so-called civilisation, wouldn't you agree ?) +).

On unintentional or subconscious plagiarism - you can get nothing out of your mind but what is there or what has been put there, and it is a wonder that there are ever any original ideas at all ... the thing is, of course, that what comes out of your mind must have had some source, but by having been in your mind, it will be changed - processed, so to speak - into something quite different - the degree of difference depending on how different your mind is.

We have a combination wood and gas stove here for cooking. An electric stove is completely impractical unless you can generate your own electricity. There have been many times we would have starved to death if we'd had to depend on electricity for our food. (+ (You mean you never eat uncooked foods ??) +). It's never a good idea to depend too much on any outside source.

Before his death I was totally unable to imagine a world without Winston Churchill. I still can't.

Thank you for your assistance in perpetrating the Scotland hoax ... Paisley? My ancestors came from there (some of them. Did you run into any Speirs while you were in the area? Distant kin o' mine). (+ (No - I was there

for only two months and spent most of my time trying to get/keep dry - it never stopped RAINING, so there !)+).

Being a Night Owl hatched into a family of Early Birds, I read your article with great appreciation. No other comments, though.

I wish I had read OZ-1 so I could dive into the comments here - as a matter of fact I do remember reading the bit about the elongated duel, come to think of it, but I can't remember any of the other stuff.

On Romantic Love as a relatively modern notion - read C.S. Lewis's "The Allegory of Love" as a good treatment of its odd and changeable history ...

The argument on poetry is something I can really dig my teeth into ... grrr ... !! Ted Tubb's remarks sound astonishingly like my own a few years ago, before I myself started writing "free verse." Actually, I must concur that "free verse" is not really poetry ... only maybe not. The problem is a matter of definition, and in order to make any sense out of the subject at all, one must fall back to the traditional definition of poetry - otherwise there is no distinction possible between prose and poetry to argue into which type free verse falls. Boy, but I'm really murdering the King's English today. (+Now we're back to murder again. And it's the Queen's English, mate. Has been for nearly 14 years !)+).

To begin with, there is a basic contradiction in the very term "free verse," since the word verse, implicitly, implies order, restriction, and cannot, therefore, be "free." Talking about free verse is like talking about dehydrated water. No such animal, nohow.

Tubb's definition of poetry as "spoken song" is perfectly correct. Throughout history, poetry has referred to a form, to words arranged in certain patterns; musical patterns. Prose refers to words that are not so arranged - that is, not arranged according to a strict form. Prose is free form poetry, actually - words arranged, but not according to strict form.

However, in recent years - during the Romantic period - the word poetry came to refer, not so much to a form as to subject matter - causing no end of confusion. The idea of modern poetry is to write what you could not get away with in prose. It takes the place of the essay, in a way - your definition is an example of what I mean. You write lyricism, but not lyrics - subject, not form. To differentiate between prose and poetry you must speak of them as form, otherwise the whole thing breaks down and there is no difference.

So "free verse," however lyrical in subject, cannot really be considered "poetry" because it is non-form, whereas the most atrocious pieces of doggerel, which are in strict form, are. This is not to say, however, that free verse is not art, or that it is not difficult to write. (I've written too much of it, as well as formal verse and straight prose, to say that. Of course you do have these pseudo-intellectual clods who arrange words haphazardly on paper with neither rhyme nor reason, and then talk about its "deep hidden meaning" and so forth.) But good f-v is quite as difficult to write as the most elaborate formal stuff. It is, however, a quite separate art form. (Or non-form).

The problem is, then, what to do with this "free verse"; whether to group it with prose or to give it a separate form to itself. Myself, I would say that free verse is prose, highly polished and beautiful prose in your own case, but not formally arranged words to make poetry. Perhaps the ambiguous "prose-poetry" should be used to classify it - being, after all, no less a contradiction than "free verse."

"Poet's Kiss" was nice, but I got the feeling that you were not so much writing poetry as writing about poetry. (+But surely there's no bar to my writing poetry - or prose-poetry, if you insist ! - about poetry ?)+).



The rhymes scattered around tended to break up the normal rhythm. It would have been much better written across the page as straight prose.

Oh yes, rhythm. Good meter (and why do you keep putting "(sic)" after that word? That, dear, just happens to be the way it's spelled!) - (+Oh no, it's not. At least, not on this side of the pond. The Oxford Dictionary states: "Metre: any form of poetic rhythm, determined by character and number of feet..." To us, a meter is a slot-machine into which one feeds coins in order to maintain one's supply of gas or electricity - such machines being an optional alternative to paying one's gas and electricity bills every quarter. The meters are emptied at more-or-less regular intervals by minions of the gas and electricity undertakings. Now then, where wuz we? - oh yes)+) - is essential to any kind of writing, whether prose, poetry, or f-v. The difference is that in poetry it must be a strict, formal, precise meter, whereas in free verse it can just sort of wander - the difference between and aimless whistle and a tune. There is a definite meter even to everyday speech, if you listen for it. A definite, strong rhythm, even in the most prosaic prose, drumming steadily through all functions of the ~~happy~~ mind. See what I mean? (+Yes - though I don't agree with all your points, Paul. But I'd like to say that this has all been most interesting, and I'm grateful that you took the trouble to write at such length on the subject)+).

Blank verse is solid, straight form, with so many feet to the line. Free verse has no definite rules. So, although neither rhymes, the one is poetry and the other prose. Poetry does not have to rhyme - try old High German alliterative sometime - but it does require a strict form, an adherence to certain rules. Because poetry is form, a specific, musical manner of arranging sounds. Free verse, read aloud, cannot be told from ordinary good prose read aloud. Poetry is meant to be spoken, it is spoken song.

The breaking up of free verse into lines is a silly thing, since when reading it on paper it tends to distract from the content and break up the thought line, and if it's read aloud properly you can't tell anyhow. I know - it's chiefly a matter of stressing rhythmic cleavages and indicating how it should be read, and of stressing certain words and phrases. I write the stuff myself. But in "Poet's Kiss" some of the breakages seem totally senseless, or purely for visual effect, as:

"Yes, all. He who

sleeps, dies"

I could see:

"Yes, all. He who sleeps,

dies

a minor death"

or better yet:

"Yes, all.

He who sleeps,

dies

a minor death."

or for that matter, what's wrong with:

"Yes, all. He who sleeps

Dies a minor death."

(+This is a valid criticism, I admit. In the original version of "Poet's Kiss", my arrangement of these few lines was in order to pick up earlier and later rhymes with the three final words. "Who" with "two", "dies" with "sunrise" (which pairing still exists in the finalised version), and "death" with "breath." You're right, I should've re-arranged that passage. Very remiss of me. Untidy)+).

Well, fascinating as this is, I shall have to stop now. I will argue the matter further if you wish, but I have no more time at present.

From: Peter Singleton, Preston, Lancs., dated October 3rd 1965.

Don Studebaker's poetry reminds me of a mammoth section of the last issue of West Indies fandom's sole fanzine, VOX, last pubbed in Barbados by Brent Phillips almost exactly a year ago. The memory of this huge slice of poetry persists even though I haven't seen the fanzine in question since. I assume it to be the same type of poetry because one main characteristic is shared between the two: a combination of little or no rhyme and a smooth flow of words, the end result being a singularly expressive art form. This doesn't come under my definition of poetry because if it did, it certainly wouldn't agree with me at all. I feel that 'poetic prose' would be a better definition. Does this stuff fall within the category of 'blank verse' ? (+ (See Paul Zimmer's remarks on this, Peter. I think you and he are probably in general agreement here) +).

The stanza beginning "Lips that kissed a burning poker" strikes me as being particularly expressive and the passionate message really slammed home on this high note; this comment isn't intended to be as satirical as it might sound, I'd like to point out. The poem following, concerning itself with Yuletide cheer does strike a weird contrast, but on reflection this is all the better.

From a personal aesthetic point of view, the imagery at the end of "Tourney" strikes a discordant note and if, as the good author strongly implies, this final segment is intended to convey any special meaning beyond the obvious - but tenuous - connection with the penultimate 'slice', I for one certainly can't see it.

The duo of Christmas poems strike me as being slightly on the cynical side (!) but I couldn't agree more with this interpretation of our highly commercialised seasonal remembrances of an ancient Christian event of reputed import. There's a tendency to dissociate Santa Claus from the real meaning of Christmas, but being an atheist this suits me very nicely indeed, thank you. So I've definitely taken a liking to Don's reflections on the subject and he presents them in a very enjoyable manner.

I also enjoy Callas in Bellini's "Norma" with "La Sonambula" coming in at a close second. Callas certainly provides the best interpretation I've heard - far more intoxicating than Joan Sutherland's version, for example. I used to borrow these recorded in La Scala LPs from the public library regularly.

+ + + + +

I also had a letter from Joe Patrizio, dated July 26th 1965. I had loaned him some of my Scientology books (at his request), and he dutifully read them all except one which, when he wrote, he hadn't had time to tackle. There are many points in the letter which I should have taken up and dealt with (or not, as the case may be) long ago, BUT: Joe, I'll have to re-read the books myself first, but there's one thing I'll attempt to answer now. You wrote: "Externalization. So you did it. So what does this prove ? Scientology isn't the first religion to induce externalization. And anyway, how do you know that you did ? How do you know it wasn't a self-induced hallucination ? Sure, you may have externalized, but you can't prove it - not even to yourself."

This question, "how do you know that you did ?" could be applied to almost anything. How do I know that I caught an 83 bus and went to work this morning ? How do I know that I had Chow Mein for my evening meal an hour ago ? To get down to basics: how do I know that I'm me, that I exist ? And how do you know that you exist ? Combining the two, how do I know that you exist ?

This solipsism business can be stretched in all directions to a ridiculous degree, of course. Something strange and powerful and totally outside all my prior experience happened to me during processing; hallucination or not, it effected vast changes on my outlook on life, and my way of living. Some of these changes happened almost at once, others were gradual, and I sometimes think that it's possible they are still happening. It was an utterly indescribable experience; I am not trying to evade the issue, but (to borrow someone else's analogy) - how do you describe the colour red to a man who has been blind from birth?

"Before I stop I would ask one favour from you; what is Scientology about, pray tell. I'm afraid I couldn't really decide. It might be a psychiatric treatment, it might be a religion, or both, or something else. It might be meaningful, but it isn't to me."

For those in need of psychiatric treatment, I am told that it can produce beneficial results. For those who need a religion, it can be that, too. I prefer to call it a philosophy. Even - if you will excuse the cliché - a way of life. It is officially defined as "the science of knowing how to know." If that means nothing to you, let me try to elucidate. I remember reading, several years ago, an autobiographical series written by the Duke of Bedford for a "popular" Sunday newspaper. Only one fragment has remained in my memory - in fact I don't think I read much more than the first episode. He reported that his scholastic record had been consistently poor, and added what I considered to be a most perceptive remark: "I needed to be taught first how to learn." (My underlining).

Think for a moment about a child's ability to learn, Joe. Consider the fantastic amount of integration of facts required of a young brain, the feats of memory, the necessity to put theoretical teachings into practice. Think of the postulates, the extrapolations, that any child of average or above average intelligence makes automatically throughout the years of his/her schooling. The actual process of learning, be it English grammar or chemistry, is taken very much for granted.

And perhaps you will wonder, as I sometimes do, how many so-called backward children might become considerably more efficient, mentally, if some method could be devised whereby they might first be taught how to learn.

My own favourite definition of Scientology appears in (I think) "The Fundamentals of Thought": (I quote from memory) - "Scientology doesn't teach you anything. It merely reminds you of what you were doing before you forgot what you were doing." Again, perhaps this means nothing to you. It meant a helluva lot to me, the first time I read it, and still does. Hard to define, as are most subjective things, I guess - but it seemed to provide a kind of incentive. A sense of purpose which pointed all my most basic instincts in a certain direction and then gave 'em a push!

"You say you accept only part of Hubbard's theories. Tell me, are the bits you accept those which are basically Freud, Christianity, or what Hubbard has thought up for himself?" None. The bits I accept are those which, by personal application, are proved to work.

See you at Yarmouth?

+ + + +

And that's it for another quarter. No poetry - prose-poetry, not-poetry, free verse, poetrzebie! - this time (stop cheering, Bennett!). I had thought of including a trilogy I wrote some years ago, called "Human Trinity," but on re-reading it I find that I'm dissatisfied with it. H'mmm ... wonder if it'd read better as prose ... ? Over and out. ++ BM



A P A G E O F R H U B A R B S . . .

"And that's it for another quarter," she said on the previous page ! Huh ! I'd forgotten all about my "farrep," and when it came to page-numbering, I omitted it. So now I have to fill another page in order to make the zine come out right.

It's nice to be living in a city again, after over twenty years in the "outback." However, it's taking me a while to find my way around, and on several occasions I have managed, very successfully, to get myself lost. But I don't get lost like ordinary people do. Oh dear me, no. I bet I'm the only person who ever got lost in Woolworth's.

It happened just before Christmas. During my dinner-hour, I nipped down to the nearest shopping centre - Broadmead - to pick up a few last-minute gifts. The place was, of course, packed to suffocation, and dangerous with it; it was a terribly wet day, and everybody was being spiteful with dripping umbrellas. Dodging these as best I could, I made a few purchases then, catching sight of the clock, decided I'd better beat it back to work.

I fought my way out of the place, then stared around in baffled bewilderment. Nothing was familiar. I got the weird feeling that I'd emerged into a different space-time continuum or something. I began walking uncertainly to the right, remembering that I'd turned left to enter. It was incredible. Where was Marks & Spencers, which I'd passed on my way to Woolworth's ? Where was the big road-junction, with the British Home Stores on one corner ? Where the hell was I ??

Then at last, light dawned. The Broadmead Woolworth's is the biggest one in Bristol ... with two entrances/exits. I'd gone in at one door, walked right through, and I'd come out of t'other.

How daft can you get ???

Anyway, I was 20 minutes late getting back to work - but my reason for so being was the cause of hilarity for quite a long time.

I'm working in the stores of a large garage - College Motors - who are the Bristol distributors for Standard/Triumph cars. There are over ten thousand different spare parts in the place, from complete bonnets (hoods to Amerompans) to tiny screws and washers. Yet we frequently have to tell customers that we "haven't got that part in stock at present."

Sometimes a ticket brought in by one of the boys from the workshops is good for a laugh. Like yesterday, I was given a ticket which said, among other things, "1 spicket bush." Since other gear-box parts were also listed, I interpreted this fairly quickly as "spigot bush."

Another ticket required "1 Can follower." I took it into the office and announced, "Ken wants a woman." "We're out of stock," was the prompt reply from Fred, the stores manager. "They're in short supply," added Bob, the assistant manager. "What's he asking for ?" demanded Phyllis, the stock controller (and wife to Fred). I showed her the ticket; Fred and Bob peered over her shoulder. Bit of an anti-climax, really - nobody got the joke except Phyl ...

They're not a bad bunch to work with. Everybody is on first-name terms, the jokes and the language are quite unprintable, and Fred gets thumped just as frequently as I do. We have our Awkward Customers, same as every big store, but on the whole they're O.K., too.

My biggest moan is about the parts lists issued by the Standard Motor Co. The English language as used therein is often incomprehensible. For instance, some thieving hound pinches one of your hub caps. Weeping bitterly, you come to us for a new one. But do we sell you a hub cap ? We do not - or, if we do, you reject it. Not what you want. We sell you a nave plate. !!!

Fan-ay  
Meeting  
you . . .

I haven't attempted to write a Worldconrep, and I don't intend to do so. What I'd like to present is a Fanrep, this being a round-up of my personal impressions of some of the people whom I met in London during those three wonderful, hectic days and nights.

Ethel was the first, I think. There she was, nobly manning (womanning?) the registration desk with Jim Groves (whom I'd met previously at the Bruncon), and Peter Mabey. I suspect that it may have been my lack of height which proclaimed my identity to Ethel before I produced my Con-card (or was it my Brummie accent?). Ethel proved to be all that I'd been told she was - and that, Sister dear, is very definitely complimentary!

Who was next? - oh yes - the gentle giant. Dick Eney, who sort-of took charge of me until I'd familiarised myself with the hotel's general lay-out. He carried my case and showed me how to operate the lift - oh all right, Dick, the elevator! His is the only signature in my programme booklet, too. Said signature follows the statement that it's all his fault ...

He escorted me to my room and waited patiently while I prowled around, poking into cupboards and things, finding out where the light-switches were, etc. During this process I switched on the radio, whereupon a sepulchral voice immediately announced that nitrates were not the best fertiliser for this purpose ... (Well, it was flippin' funny at the time ... Dick said so!).

Afterwards I took Ethel's place at the desk for a while. This wasn't entirely altruistic, mind; it seemed to be the most strategic position for the purpose of meeting people! Ina Shorrocks, for instance - with whom Archie has been in love for years 'n' years, or so I've been solemnly informed by various people. I don't blame him, either. She's eminently fall-in-love-withable, and after all, it's a compliment to me that Archie has such good taste in women!

Mary Hall arrived shortly afterwards with her sister, Doreen (Secretary) Parker, and I'm not referring to Mary's figure when I say that she was a barrel of fun.

Later that evening I got a real, heart-warming kick out of the way Ron Bennett's face lit up when he peered at my name-badge. It's great when somebody is so genuinely pleased to see you. And we had a really stimulating and interesting conversation, tête-à-tête, in the bar on the Saturday night.

*me -  
feel great*

That's a point, you know. My Mercatorial Mate, here, once put words into the mouth of Mr. Gaudeamus Higginbottom that "conversation has been driven underground." Just how far underground is starkly revealed at Cons, or any place where fans congregate. Revealed to me, at any rate. I am (or I was) so unused to the cut-and-thrust of good talk that when I do manage to find some, I don't really need rum or any other liquor to make me feel slightly intoxicated! Can anybody else get "drunk" on good conversation, and leave a bar feeling beautifully euphoric (me, you ijjuts, not the bar!) after an hour's gabfest with somebody like Ron Bennett ??? Thanks, Ron. I reckon you should've tried tumping a thub at Speakers' Corner ... you'd have made all the other so-called orators break down and cry!

Another one who had this effect on me was Bobbie Gray, she of the dry wit and the wry grin. I'd been given a sketchy idea of what she looked like, but even so she was sort-of unexpected. I had to do a mental double-take when she introduced herself. (Though I dunno why, exactly ...). There being no vacant chairs in the vicinity at the time, Bobbie promptly sat on the floor, which endeared her to me at once - such a sensible thing to do!

The main fault of this (and every) Con was that it was too short. I didn't get to meet half the people I wanted to meet, and ever since the Con I've been thinking frustratedly of things I wanted to say, and didn't, to those I did meet. I'd have loved a longer matter with Ian and Betty Peters, for instance, and I don't think I exchanged more than half-a-dozen words with Terry Carr. I said "Hello" to Heinrich, and made a mental note to follow up that brilliant conversational gambit later, but I never did. I intended to ask him if he could suggest a way whereby he could help me to get back my former fluency in German, so that I could tackle future issues of "Whisky Zine & Pipe Smoke Messages" without whimpering in frustration! Because the bits-in-German lie tantalisingly at the edges of my comprehension.

In No. 2, for instance, I have a suspicion that he or Rolf - or both - were "getting at" Axel. In the friendliest spirit, of course. And I'd like to join in - on Axel's side. He's been one of my Favourite People ever since he turned up in the Con lounge on the Sunday morning sporting half a beard. Glorious, mad Axel - he'd done it himself!

Oh yes - there was a wealth of meaning in the way Rolf said, when I was introduced to him, "Ohhhh - I've heard of you!" Sehr bedeutungsvoll!

John Roles looked exactly as I'd visualised him. He was yet another with whom I'd have liked more conversation. And I don't think I met Ser Thom Schlück at all.

Reverting to the distaff side of the Con, I was well and truly crogged by Irene Boothroyd's greeting: "Oh, you're Beryl, are you? I've got a bone to pick with you - you've pinched my bloke!"

Jill Adams was, again, not quite what I'd expected. I've had very little correspondence with Jill, yet I somehow got the impression that she'd be small, blonde and sorta fluffy-frilly! Instead of which, she turned out to be a dark, "tailored" person.



I had a brief breakfast conversation with Karen Anderson, an evening one with the vivacious Moira Read, and I discussed bruises with Jean Bogert. Lois Lavender was one of a party taken out to dinner by Ron Ellick on (I think) the Sunday. And I really didn't mind a bit when six-foot Brenda Piper towered over me - she was such a nice person to talk to.

Yes - that dinner-party. Lessee. There was Ron Ellick, of course, and Lois; Ed Meskys, Boyd Raeburn, Ted White, Archie and myself. I think there were a couple of others, too, but neither Archie nor I can recall who they were. 'Twas a happy occasion, with other fans drifting in all the time, until it seemed that a kind of radar must have been at work, summoning half the Con-attendees to that particular restaurant.

The professionals? Well, there was the bronzed, short-haired, smiling Judith Merrill. The slight, bespectacled, dark-suited James Blish. Tall, quiet, reserved Poul Anderson - introduced to me by Rog Peyton, who was obviously in a seventh heaven of bliss to be conversing with his idol. Arthur Clarke, who joined Bob Little and myself in front of the "Stingray" showcase, and listened interestedly to our remarks about the TV programme. George O. Smith and Syd Bounds. Ted White and Bill Temple and James White. Arthur Sellings and his wife - I hope he'll remember our agreement that "The Uncensored Man" deserves a sequel.

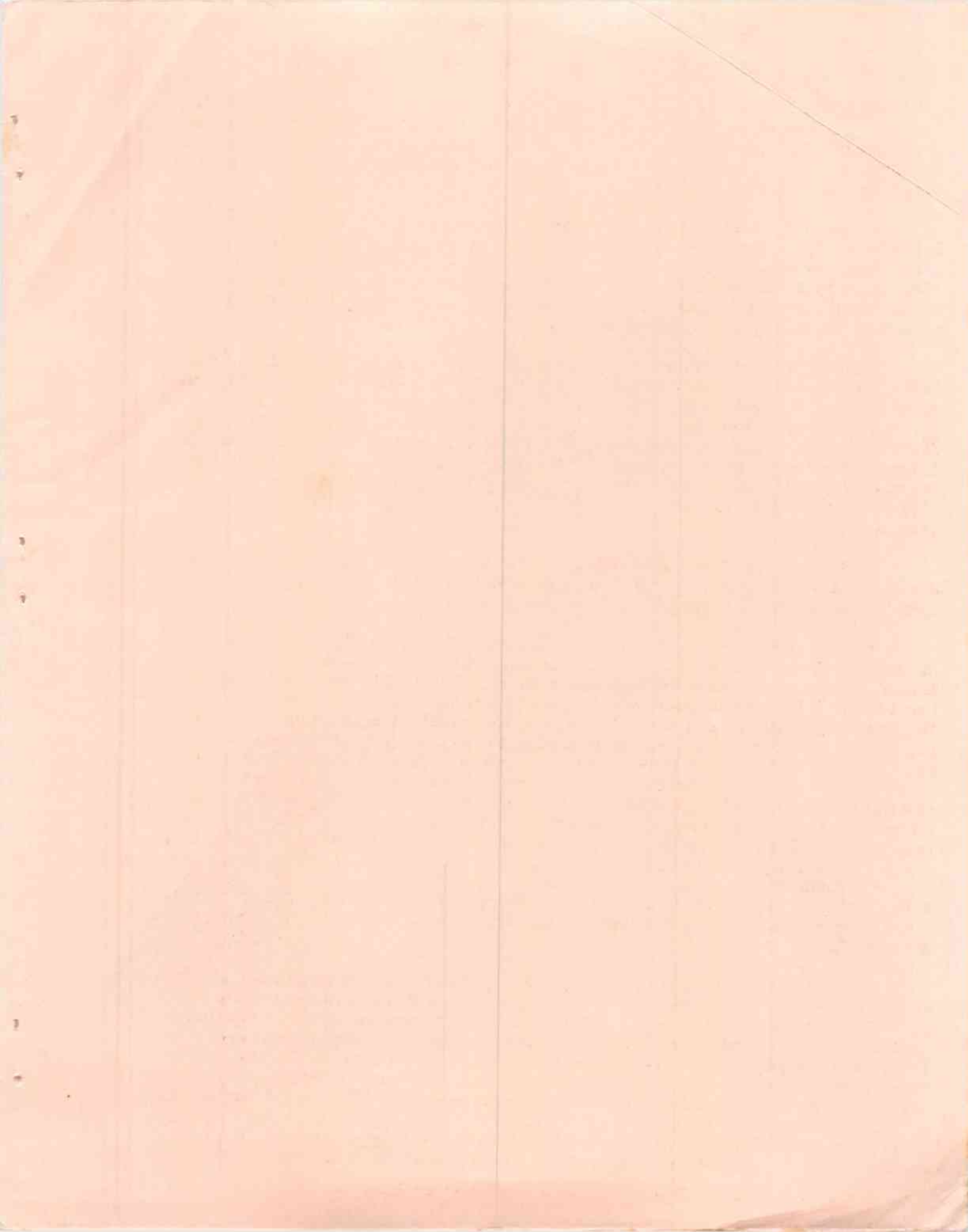
So many new faces ... some of them, though, with long-familiar names. Joe Patrizio. Harry McGarnity. Ron McGuinness and Dave Baldock. Mike Sharp. Tony Glynn. Michael Rosenblum. Eric and Margaret Jones.

I've concentrated mainly on those fans whom I hadn't met before, but of course, there were also many old friends. The Brungroup, several of the London fans, and the Peterborough-based party (whom Archie calls the "Peter-bunnies"). Eddie Jones (whatever happened to those photographs you took at the Brumcon, Eddie? And congrats on your assorted triumphs at the Artshow; Rog Peyton and I spent half-an-hour trying to devise a way of raising enough money to buy that green Venus-landscape of yours. Then we realised that if we did scrape up enough lolly, we'd be forever fighting over who should have custody of the thing! Who did buy it, anyway? If it's still in this country, I might be able to go look at it sometime ...). Ivor Latto and Richard Gordon from norrrth of the borrrder - come to think of it, I met Donald Malcolm, too. And that mad lot, the Salfordaliens. At the Brumcon, they insisted that they were all Chuck Pertington, so that I could never figure out t'other from which. This time they all decided to be Harry Nadler, but I identified him at the St. Fantony ceremony. The rest I managed finally to sort out at the Fanfawkes Party chez Walsh.

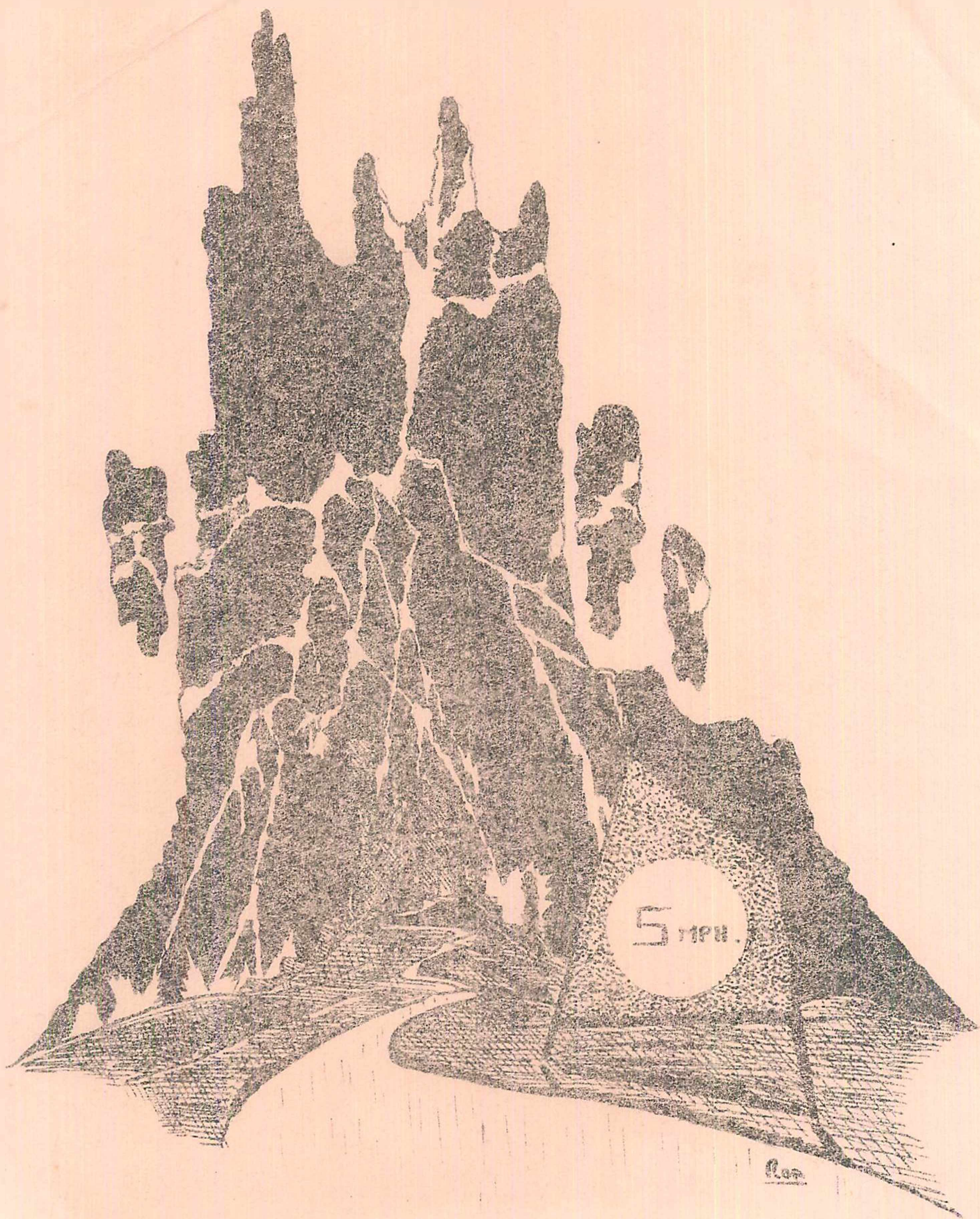
That St. Fantony ceremony was one of the items I enjoyed most of all at the Worldcon. To my mind, it was oddly impressive yet light-hearted, in that the participants didn't make the mistake of taking the proceedings too seriously. Tiny Wendy Freeman, with her elfin face and dancing eyes ... Ina in her superb costume ... Margaret Jones, confident and serene ... Wee Ethel disappearing under a huge bouquet ... Tony Walsh manfully controlling his splutters after tossing back his initiation-draught ("I thought the top of my head had flown off!" he told me afterwards - what was that stuff, anyway, slovits or something?). And the howls of He-Who-Was-Not-a-Trufan, as he was hauled off to be beheaded: "I protest! Asimov shall hear of this!"

It was a great Con.

Roll on Easter.







Don