

BAI

Issue 1

December 1991

95p

"What's this?"

- Anne McCaffrey

"I'll read it on the plane."

- Colin Greenland

"Not Bad."

- Scott McMillan

"Thanks."

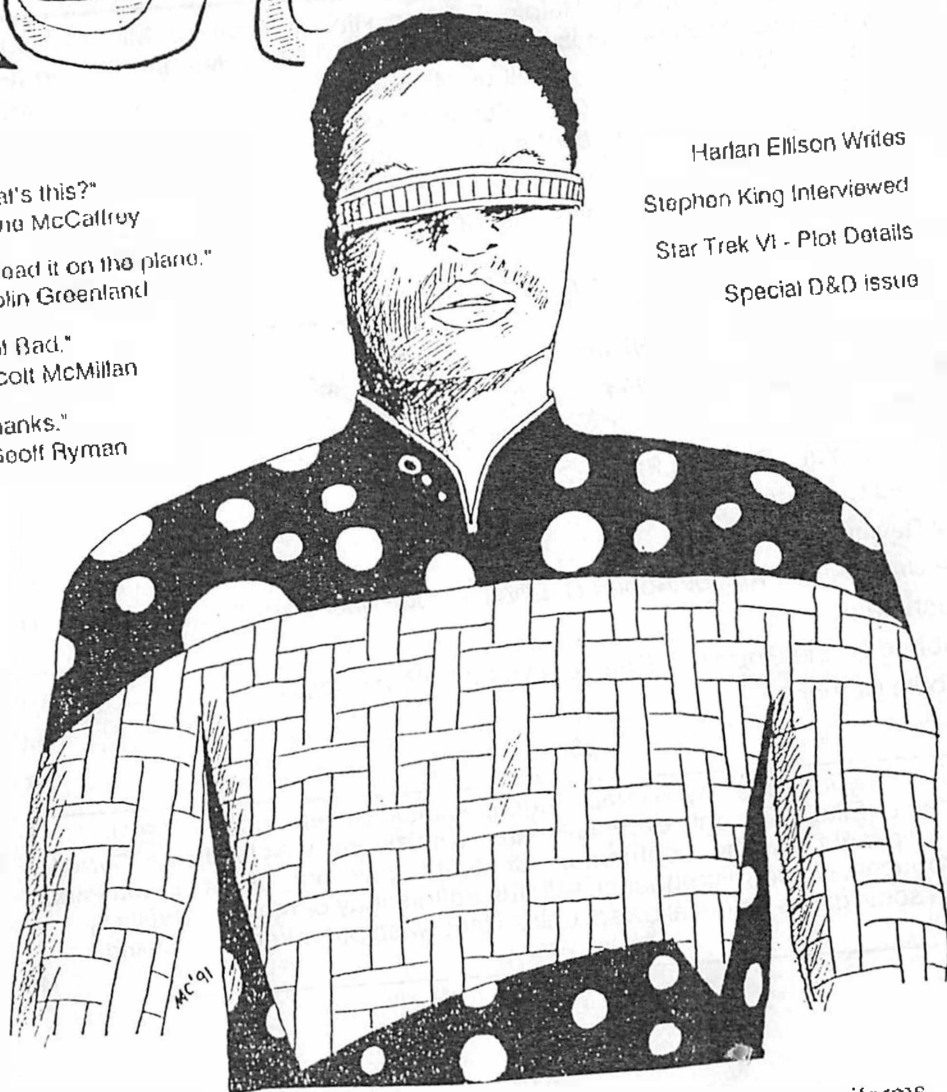
- Geoff Ryman

Hartan Ellison Writes

Stephen King Interviewed

Star Trek VI - Plot Details

Special D&D Issue



LaForge: Chief Engineer and creator of StarFleet's new uniforms.

INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions for the pleasurable read and enjoyment.

1. Grasp the magazine by the hands, firmly but not to crease.
2. Proceed with reading of the words from left to right (or, if preference desirable, from left to right), going always in a downwards motion.
3. When reached the end of the page, TURN PAGE OVER if on right side of page, OTHERWISE read next page.
4. Following these instructions, yours can be many hours of fun!

Many thanks to Frances Halpin, Edward Hickey, Shahruz Mirmirani and Leonia Mooney. Artwork this issue is by Frances Halpin, Michael Cullen and Michael Carroll. Last issue it was all by Michael Carroll, but he forgot to credit Robert D. Elliott with the idea of the Scotty cartoon, and Shahruz Mirmirani with the brilliant "Swiss Army Cheese" cartoon. And it was Robert who thought up the cartoon on the cover of this issue, so blame him.

We're still looking for submissions! See PFJ issue zero for full details. If you haven't got issue zero, liah!

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PFJ
Michael Carroll,
44 Leeson Park,
Dublin 6,
Ireland.

— HAMSTERNATOR II - Cheesement Day —

By Edward Hickey

It was a cold dark night in the small American suburb of Amieville. Fog hung like treacle in the air and the scant light from the street lamps did little to improve the visibility. A sense of dread permeated the ether and the night itself was curled like a tight spring in anticipation of the violence, evil and all round nasty goings-on that were about to wake the peaceful little town.

Without warning the fog began to swirl, a brilliant light filled the air as leaves and tiny bits of paper were whipped up in an eerie frenzy, (just like in all the cheap 1950's horror movies). The light maintained its intensity for only a few seconds and then, again with very little warning (less than before), it disappeared leaving only the dull glow of the orange lamps. Everything seemed to have returned to normal except for one very small (and furry) difference. There, at the side of the road, where only a few moments ago lay leaves, now crouched... a Hamster...

Most people would see this strange occurrence and pass it off as only the power flux from a time machine sending an inhuman killing machine back from the future to cause the destruction of mankind but a few and only a few would say it was a passing car uncovering a hibernating rodent... And guess who would be right...

Meanwhile in a nearby glade a young field mouse was busily contemplating life as the world leader, completely unaware of all the excitement and special effects that were going on around him. As he climbed down his wheat stalk he listened to the cows in the adjacent field mooing their favourite tune "you cud, be mine". He was totally unashamed of the rebellious life he led and also of the lousy pun that had just gone by.

Little did he know however, that the fur-covered stranger that was striding up the hill towards him was about to change his life completely.

The hamster moved steadfastly towards his target, the ground giving way quickly beneath his furry little feet. In the background a noise was gradually increasing in volume.

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan...
Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan

The hamster walked on. He was now only twenty feet from the mouse.

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan...
Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan

Something moving to the right caught the hamster's attention. There in the tall grass heading in the same direction was a rather hard and muscular looking guinea-pig.

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan...
Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan

The hamster increased speed but so also did the other rodent. The young mouse saw both strangers approaching but was too terrified to move.

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan...
Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan

The noise increased in volume.

The guinea-pig grabbed a plastic drinking straw up in its mouth but didn't slow its pace.

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan...
Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan

Suddenly all rodents stopped dead in their tracks.

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... as the 8.15 from Pittsburgh thundered past on the tracks.

As soon as the train had passed and the awful racket had stopped the guinea-pig dived into action. His powerful frame moved between the mouse and his assailant. He wielded the straw he had in his mouth and smote the hamster a cruel blow, but to his amazement the patch of fur he had struck slowly began to fluff up again. The mouse then went into motion and ran for a nearby coke can, quickly climbing inside. The hamster seeing its quarry escaping side-stepped another swipe from the guinea-pig and dashed towards the aluminium container knocking over his opponent on the way. The hamster was only about six inches away from the can when it began to roll away from him.

Down the hill it went with its furry cargo, the hamster in hot pursuit. It had reached maximum velocity by the time it met the road and even the hamster was losing ground rapidly. His narrow rodent eyes scanned the area and he propelled his little body towards an abandoned roller-skate that lay at the side of the road. With a single leap he landed on the skate, forcing it into motion, unaware that behind him, the guinea-pig was entering an empty beans tin and was about to give chase.

Down the hill they went, all the while the skate threatening to crush the lighter can or to push it into a roadside sewer grill. On the path, the tin containing the mouse's protector also rolled, slowly gaining on the two other vehicles. Inside the tin, the guinea-pig ran furiously, his hours on his little exercise wheel finally paying off.

The guinea-pig saw the edge of the path approaching and he carefully steered the tin towards it, all the time accelerating. Little furry eyes peeped out from the tin and saw the skate nudge the back of the can. It was now or never for the guinea-pig to make his move.

The bean tin left the edge of the path and sailed through the air. The mouse's furry protector looked down and saw the skate pass beneath him just before feeling the bump of impact. The coke can was a little to his right. He veered that way and pumped his feet so he could come along side. A furry mouth bit down on the wildly spinning mouse tail and whipped the young rodent to the safety of the tin. The guinea-pig with his charge beside him increased his speed. The hamster on the skate behind was so intent on catching his prey that he failed to see the stone on the road ahead.

Suddenly and with no warning what-so-ever, which just goes to show you should keep your eyes on the road when driving, the right front wheel of the skate careered into the stone that sent it into an uncontrollable spin (the skate that is, not the stone).

As the skate bounced end-over-end the guinea-pig stopped the tin with a little reverse footwork. Both he and the mouse climbed out to survey the wreckage behind them. The skate was upside down, its wheels spinning aimlessly and the hamster was no where in sight. The two remaining rodents waited for a moment before hopping in to the tin and continuing their journey. But as they left they didn't see the hamster, fur completely fluffed up emerge from the remains of the skate.

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan...
Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan

Another train went by.

In another part of the town the guinea-pig told the mouse about himself. The mouse was amazed and brought his bodyguard to the nearby school with a daring plan. The mouse's mother had been imprisoned in one of the class-rooms as the nature exhibit and her young sibling wanted her freed. The big rodent told his charge to wait and made a dash for the wall of the school. He had an idea for liberating the mouse, which involved scaling the wall, jumping through the

window, abseiling down the telephone cable and chewing open the bars. He approached his first obstacle and looked up.

Five minutes later he returned. The look of excitement on the young mouse's face died as he noticed that his mother was not present. The guinea-pig explained that rescuing the mother would put the mouse in danger and go against his mission priorities. The real reason - he just couldn't be bothered - didn't come out in the explanation.

The mouse was about to protest when a rustle close by, alerted them to the approaching threat.

Both mouse and guinea-pig ran down the path and away from their furry pursuer but the latter stopped abruptly when he saw something that might possibly slow their inhuman hunter.

The hamster scanned the path ahead but saw no sign of his quarry. He slackened his pace, his head slowly going from side to side in an attempt find where the two other rodents had disappeared to.

Not very suddenly, but suddenly enough to catch the hamster out, a seemingly innocent drinks carton toppled forwards and splashed its liquid contents all over its unsuspecting victim. The guinea-pig jumped out from behind the carton and watched as the remains of a slush puppy ice drink flowed over a now soaking and non moving hamster. The mouse looked on, as a mass of mushy ice began to cover the hamster. He thought for a few brief moments that he was

safe but to his horror he discovered that things were happening that would prove him wrong.

Above the sodden hamster a dull red glow was the first indication to those that were about, that a street lamp was about flicker into life.

As the glow increased the guinea-pig saw urged the young mouse into a run. The mouse's worst fears were coming true... The ice was melting, the hamster was about to break loose.

The two pursued rodents made a dash across a stretch of gravel before pausing on the other side. The hamster, not the slightest bit wet and as active as ever, was only about twenty feet away.

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan...
Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan

The guinea-pig's mind reeled - Was there any way of stopping this fiend?

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan...
Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan

The hamster was now only fifteen feet away and the guinea-pig still hadn't thought of an answer.

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan...
Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan

Ten feet. Time was running out!

Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... Dan... SPLAT

The 8.45 to New Jersey took care of the Guinea-pig's worries.

Hasta la vista, Hammy.

If you're interested in Science Fiction, Fantasy or Horror, then why not contact the Irish Science Fiction Association? Get in touch with the ISFA at 30 Beverly Downs, Knocklyon Road, Templeogue, Dublin 16, Ireland. You won't regret it!

(How was that, Brendan? Okay?)

MEANWHILE...

Narrator: ...two farmers sit on stone wall in rural Ireland.

Paddy: Och, begorrah, tax, begorrah.

Jerry: Top o' the mornin', begorrah.

Paddy: At all, at all.

Jerry: Sure at all at all, begorrah.

Paddy: (pause) Och, at all at all, begorrah.

Jerry: Cows.

Paddy: Och, begorrah, cows, begorrah.

Jerry: Cows, begorrah.

Voiceover: As we can see, cows and tax are the two main topics of conversation among rural farmers. Occasionally they will also discuss intellectuals...

Paddy: Intellectuals, begorrah.

Jerry: Och, top o' the mornin', och.

Paddy: At all at all.

Voiceover: ...or the state of the economy...

Jerry: Och, begorrah, the state of the economy.

Paddy: Och och, at all at all sure begorrah.

Jerry: Och, the state of the economy.

Paddy: The state of the economy, och, top o' the mornin'.

Voiceover: ...but very rarely does one bring up the issue of drug- taking among American baseball players.

Paddy: Drug-taking among American baseball players, och.

Jerry: (Stunned silence)

Voiceover: Recently the American president Mister Bush visited Ireland, and addressed rural farmers. He had this to say.

Bush: Ireland, top o' the mornin', begorrah. Cows. Sure at all at all at all. Begorrah. Thank you.

Voiceover: Rural farmers were overjoyed at the president's comments, especially his reference to cows.

(Screen: "End of part one")

First ad: (Picture of cow being drenched, and product name "Panadalladall")

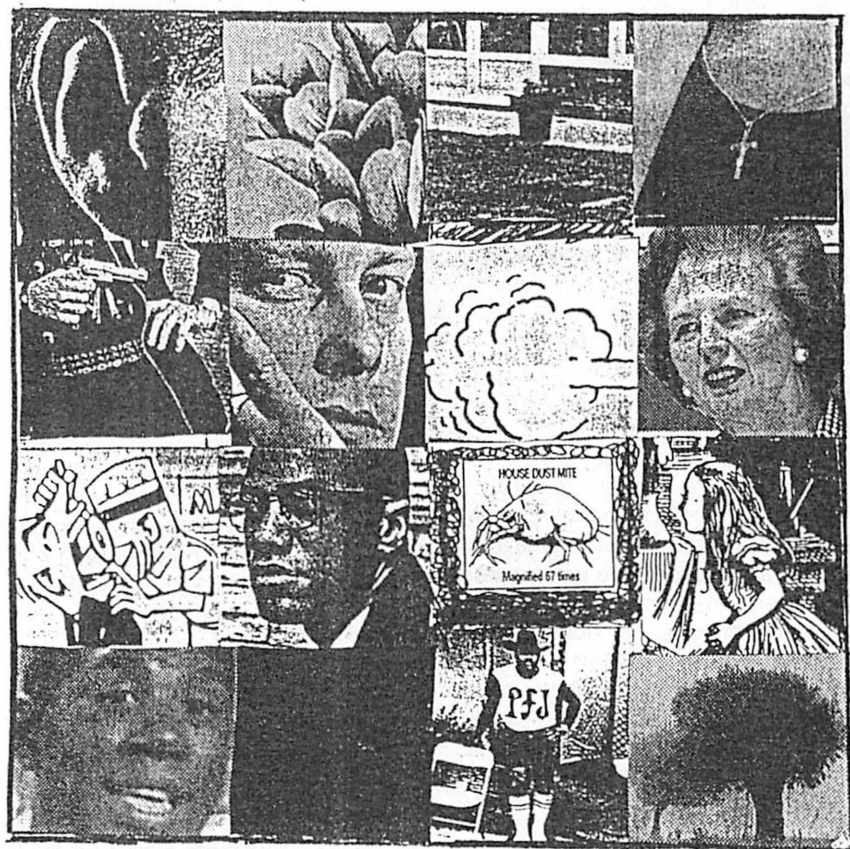
Voice: Farmers, cows, sure at all begorrah liver fluke. Top o' the morning'!

*Michael Cullen
(Words are his power)*

A man's gotta do and that's all that I am

the long-awaited new album from Yule Two

Gott in Himmel, Groovy Chick



Yule Two will be performing songs from the new album live at the Virgin Megastore at midnight on Sunday December 1st

One Small Step for Mankind

by Robert D. Elliott

"Ladies and gentlemen of the press, I give you the team that will pilot Ireland's first shuttle."

To a round of applause, the seven astronauts-to-be filed into the room, lead by the mission leader, Deirdre Allen. They took their seats, looking discomfited by the attention of the world's press. Mary Dalton, the mission controller, fielded the questions as the team acclimatised themselves to the wapping of journalists. Derek Kilbride, Science and Cookery Correspondent for the Irish Times, started off.

"Ms Dalton, could you tell us why the St Brendan is undertaking such a difficult project on its maiden voyage?"

"The reason we're doing the repairs on the L5 space station is simply that there is no-one else available. The American shuttle aborted its launch on the pad," - she politely paused as the entire room attempted a collective look of surprise - "and we've just gotten news that the Russian shuttle has declared independence. There's no-one but us. But I don't see any problems. Mr Shaw, who will make the repairs necessary, is one of NASA's top spatial engineers, and it's not really that necessary for us to get that close; his backpack will get him there."

Kilbride nodded as he listened, and wrote her answer. An old fashioned journalist, he had a reluctance to use technology that bordered on Luddism¹, being a firm believer in a good notebook, a sharp pencil and a good headline. For this reason, he grinned as he licked his pencil tip and wrote

down "Deirdre Defies Danger: Shuttles Shaw to Save Station". Dalton, familiar at this stage with Kilbride's unique literary style, shuddered at that grin and tried not to imagine tomorrow's front page. Instead, she started to introduce the seven astronauts to the throng.

"As you all know, the mission leader will be Deirdre Allen. She's one of Ireland's best test pilots², and has an extensive collection of Airfix space models. In training for her demanding role as mission leader, she has listened extensively to assentiveness subliminal tapes.

"Chuck Shaw is an American engineer of many years. He's the one who will carry out the repairs. Not only was he involved in the initial construction of L5, but he personally shook the hand of Gene Roddenberry at a Star Trek convention in 1988.

"John Newton is our resident biologist. He'll be monitoring the biology experiments, in particular that of Albert Miller, who's in sixth class in the Mary Robinson National School. He's trying to prove that in zero gravity, the leaves of a plant won't all point to the floor, but to the nearest source of sunflower oil, which will be the hydroponics lab in geosynchronous orbit over the Briquette Burning Propulsion Laboratory, Co Cork.

"The chief pilot will be Edward Kennedy, no relation. He's the only one to ever finish our Flight Simulation program without crashing.

¹ Or possibly Luddism, but then that would probably make him a Luddist. Founded by Eric Tao Xiang, Luddism is a philosophy that embraces the contemplation of non-technical uses of a novel.

² She was actually Ireland's only test pilot, which puts her in the top ten by default.

"Secondary pilot on the mission will be Henry Stewart, whose brilliant spatial perception allows him to solve a Rubik Cube in less than a minute, if it's not too messed up.

"Helping Chuck out with the repairs will be Eva Connors. She's Ireland's top engineer, more or less, and while she's never worked in space before, she's spent many hours in training with an oxy-acetylene torch and a trampoline.

"And last, but by all means least, is Don Thomas, a FAS trainee. In a unique agreement between Spás Eireann and FAS, he has been permitted to do his work experience in two weeks running, instead of every Thursday afternoon for six months. His three month's training so far has given Don knowledge of welding practices, and it is hoped that the unique insight offered by this mission will help him in getting a proper job when his course is finished.

"Are there any questions for the team?"

Many questions followed, interspersed with comments from the wittier journalists such as "Home on LaGrange", and the problems of getting 7Up³.

After this, it was more training, until the launch, two weeks hence.

"Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, ignition, one, ignition, ignition... Dodo 1, is there a problem?"

"Shannon, we have a problem. Where's the bloody key gone?"

"Dodo 1, I always keep my car keys hanging on the rear view mirror."

"Oh, yeah. Thanks, Shannon. Start again from ten."

"Roger, Dodo 1, will resume countdown on the count of three. Three, two, one, ten, nine,

eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, ignition, thingy, I know it, don't tell me.. Lift off."

It was a proud moment for the Irish Space program. The St Brendan thrust itself free of the constraints of gravity, borne aloft on a chariot of fire. A tear came to the eye of many, as they viewed Icarus, striving to reach the heavens with a Solid Rocket Booster under each oter. Within seconds, the clear blue sky swallowed from view the majestic machine that represented the peak of technology, the very apex of Humanity's striving for the Great Machine⁴Orbit. The very word conjures up images of mystique. That mysterious condition whereby denizens of a planet circle their home, many thousands of miles above. Where the distance is so great that the tug of their home no longer affects them, freeing them from the ground. Where seven of those denizens sit in cramped quarters eating out of bags, and not even thinking about toilets. Where if he cracks another bloody Star Trek joke on this bloody shuttle I'm going to bloody kill him.

"Captain! There's something clinging on the starboard bow!"

"Right! That's bloody it. I've had enough of your 'Russian Inventions', and 'Tribble afoot', and.."

"No, I'm serious, captain." Thomas looked pained. Innocent, this once, of the crime. "Look out the window. Whatever it is, it wasn't there when we got the tour of the shuttle."

Allen looked out the window. "You're right."

He was right. Attached to the starboard wing was a small capsule, aerodynamic enough to have survived takeoff without me having to think of a scientific explanation. As the crew looked closer, they noticed that it seemed to have a tear inside it, as if someone had emerged...

³ You know, the sort of jokes the science fiction community has been telling for years, but everyone else thinks are highly original.

⁴ Except for the self-warming toilet seat, PFIJ issue 1

There was a knock on the door.

"I'll get it!" Thomas kicked off towards the door, and was about to open it when a floating tackle from Shaw stopped him pressing the button. Ever since the Challenger disaster, the self-destruct needed a key to be operated, but the front door (which was actually at the side) still opened at the press of a button. Had Thomas opened the door without making sure the outside screen door was closed, they would all have been blown out into space⁵.

Shaw turned on the comm and asked Kennedy in the cockpit if it was safe to open the door.

"Sensors indicate that the outside one's bolted. Open away."

As the airlock cycled⁶, Shaw wondered what could be on the other side. The door opened, to reveal...

"Derek Kilbride, Irish Times. Can I ask you your first reaction to being in space?"

"What the hell are you doing on board?"

Kilbride's shorthand skidded across the page as he answered. "I've been promised that I'll be promoted to Science Correspondent if I can get the inside story. But just in case, how do you guys prepare your dinner?"

Thomas butted in. "Man, you wouldn't believe it. Just because I'm the trainee around here, I have to do..."

"Can it." Shaw grabbed Kilbride and pinned him against the wall⁷.

"We've got oxygen and food for seven people for seven days. Now we could let you stay, and leave early. On the other hand, you could get out and walk and we could finish our mission in peace. What do you reckon we should do?"

Kilbride grinned. "I've got it all figured out. Inside the durawing, I've got a spare suit, and more tanks than you'd ever need. I've also brought a few plants, which can help with the recycling of the air. And as for food, I've a supply of Mars⁸ bars in the durawing, so food won't be a problem either. And in return for your stories, I can offer you a pretty good deal on the book rights."

Allen, happy enough up to now watching an American macho man do what American macho men do best, interrupt.

"Pardon me, but now that he's here, we'll have to put up with him. He can take over the working of the galley."

"All right!" This comment didn't come from Kilbride.

...and he can give us a portion of his foodstuffs. Communism may be dead, but that doesn't mean we can't share."⁹

The intercom beeped, quietening them all down.

"Kennedy here. Sensors indicate the station is in visual range."

"What sensors?"

"The, erm, you know. The window."

"Ok. Open hailing frequencies and initiate the environment integration protocol."

"What?"

"Tell them to open the door. I'll be with you in a minute."

Allen left the crew to discuss who would be sharing a bunk from now on, and joined the two pilots in the cockpit. She reached it to find Stewart in a state of panic.

"Captain, the station's disappeared! Look! There's no sign of it. It's been destroyed, and I'll swear that nothing came from Earth!"

⁵ Not sucked out, as most people think. "PFJ: the stories may be crap, but the science might be correct".

⁶ Whatever that means. It's in all the science fiction novels, so it must be right.

⁷ With one hand. It's easy in zero gravity, but it looks really impressive.

⁸ Arf arf. Mars bars. Geddit? I crack me up sometimes.

⁹ I actually wrote this story in 1988, so this is a great bit of prediction.

Kennedy directed the sensors towards the moon, hoping to catch some sign of the aggressor.

"My god. It's bloody huge. I respectfully suggest we haul ass before we're next."

Allen checked the sensors, and slapped Kennedy on the back of the head.

"That's the station, dickwit. You were looking out the wrong window. We turned, remember?"

"Erm."

Suddenly, the station disappeared from the scope. A frantic look through all windows revealed that the station was indeed gone.

"That's what I meant. It's about to disappear. Can we go now?"

Shaw came bursting into the cockpit. "The station! It just disappeared! How could anyone!"

Allen shut him up with a wave of her hand. "You're the engineer. What - or who - could do that? And more importantly, can we go after them? It was obviously taken; nothing could disintegrate a thing that size without leaving some sort of trace."

Shaw thunk for a second. "Set the scanners to look for an ion field. That should do it."

"What sort of ions?"

"Any ions. I don't know. Hydrogen ions."

"The bloody universe is full of hydrogen ions. Which ones should we eliminate first?"

Kilbride rushed into the cockpit, which by now was resembling the ship's cabin from *A Night At the Opera*¹⁰. "Look!" He cried. "It's back!"

"Station L5 to Dodo 1, this is Station L5 to Supply Shuttle St Brendan (my italics). Do you copy, over?"

Allen grabbed the comm set. "Station L5, this is Dodo 1. You faded out on us there for a second. What happened?"

"Dodo 1, this is Station L5. You're not going to believe this. The fracture on the hull you guys came to repair suddenly worsened. Explosive decompression was imminent, and only the timely intervention by a fleet of aliens of superior intelligence saved us. To do this, however, they had to bring us back in time to before the accident to heal the rip in the fabric of the space time continuum. It's all very metaphysical."

"So you don't need us?"

"That's basically it, guys. Sorry for dragging you all the way out here. But you know the story; the ruptured hull is always there, but as soon as the repair team arrives..."

"You realise that we have a minimum call-out charge?"

"We'll not only pay it, we'll give you a bonus for a job well done. No-one's going to believe what happened, so I think we'll just say you did it."

"No problems there, Station L5. One thing. Our trainee, Don Thomas, needs some extra marks to pass his exams. If you were to say he did the repair work, I'm sure we'd all be very grateful."

"Anything you say, Dodo 1. Come on in, and we can discuss the fine print."

"Ahem." That from Kilbride. "Of course, you realise my journalistic integrity won't let me lie about this story?"

"Come on", Allen protested. "Nobody believes stories about aliens unless they make people pregnant or burn bits of their fields."

"Well, if you were to buy the drinks..."

"Spoken like a journalist. Let's go celebrate a job well done."

¹⁰The Marx Brothers' film, not the Queen album.
PJF Issue 1

AUNTIE FRACTAL'S PROBLEM PAGE



Dear Auntie Fractal,

I have a problem - When I was a kid I was accidentally zapped by a near-lethal dose of radiation. Luckily, I survived, but now whenever I'm around a good-looking girl I find that two strange protuberances grow from my forehead. This is very embarrassing. What can I do?

Mutated, Sligo

Dear Mutated,

Don't worry! This is perfectly natural - we all get a little horny from time to time.

Dear Auntie Fractal,

That's nothing! When I was a kid both my parents were killed by a mugger, so I decided that when I grew up I was going to fight crime dressed as a bat. My problem is that now that I'm really big and muscular I can't find any shops that sell tights big enough to fit me.

Bruce-Wayne Batman, Gotham City

Dear Batman,

Have you tried contacting the Superheroes Guild? They deal with this sort of problem all the time! Alternatively, you could try getting zapped by a near-lethal dose of radiation, and with luck you'll be able to mutate into a real bat.

Dear Auntie Fractal,

I have been married for 12 years to a kind man. We have a nice house, two loving children, and I am just about to return to work in a solicitor's office. Last month we took delivery of a fridge-freezer after my husband won a small amount on the lottery. We have applied for planning permission...

Self-satisfied, Santry Close, Dublin 13

P.S. My youngest son has also been chosen to play the lead in the school's performance of 'Joseph and his Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'.

Dear Self-satisfied,

You can't fool me, there ain't no Santry Close.

Dear Auntie Fractaleach,

Gen fath nobody ag schpeaking Irish aon more? Ta me ag doing my besht to be ag keeping an language seo alibhe, ach sometimes ni knowigh me why I bother, agus no mishtake. Kids seo days, you know uat I meaghan?

Otto Bean, Baile Atha Dublin

Dear Otto,

I agree totally. Now that we are part of a single Europe whose dominant languages are German and English, it makes perfect sense to force our kids to adopt the language of the Blasket Islands. And let's make shelling mussels our major industry too.

Dear Auntie Fractal,

Yours sincerely,

Forgetful, Crumlin.

Dear Forgetful,

The PFJ Calendar

We in PFJ have been long known as supporters of the arts. To this end (and a great end it is too), we now proudly present the PFJ calendar. This will be appearing in four parts, each part having two or three months. Unfortunately, the last few months won't be available until January 1993, but we're sure you know what a December looks like by now.

The main aim of this calendar is to make money, but we also need to give exposure to the artists, in the pathetic hope that they'll remember us if they ever become famous.

Please note that this calendar is purely a work of fiction, and any resemblance to any other date-carrying apparatus is entirely coincidental. A catalogue of all the other 'coincidental' publications will be available as soon as we think of something funnier than spelling mistakes to put in it.



Vincent Van Vogt

I studied in the Sorbonne, taught for twelve years at the Musee de Quelque Chose in Paris. I have twenty-four children, three wives and a dog called Toulouse. But enough about me. This artist draws pictures for a living, and has displayed his pieces on the corner of Grafton Street.



Donna Muchaboutistory

Although she failed her biology exams, Donna developed into a celebrated artist-cum-allyefaitful. Her experience in the Hudson Bay submarine disaster led her to paint her moving montage entitled "20,000 Colleagues Under the Sea". She has since become internationally renowned for her double-award-winning picture entitled "Death of A Sailsman". She has won Two Nobel prizes for Interior Decorating, a Hugo, two Emmys, a Brian, and was co-recipient of an Alfred.



Boris Generalissimotors

One of the leading Russian/Italian masters of the genre, Boris has garnered more attention to his personal life than to his artistic endeavours. He remains on the fringe of the Hypernaive movement, ostracised by his erstwhile colleagues. This picture is his meisterwerk, and has brought him international critical acclaim. It represents our modern infatuation with detail, and shows how the philosophies of man and nature merge to form one immutable whole.



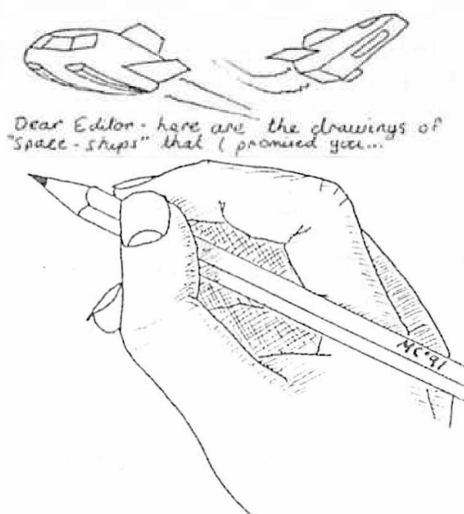
Pontius Palette

Palette studied painting for many years, before he realised that accountancy was his true calling. He can now balance any Trial within minutes, and his digital dexterity on a calculator is renowned within the financial community. He hasn't done a picture for this calendar, but he did promise us money.

January 1992

"A man who acts impetuously is not always right, but if he gives money to PFJ he can't be wrong."

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



Days of note:

- 6 Doris Day
- 19 Next-Door-Neighbours's Day
- 20 National Dyslexia Yad

Holy days of observation:

- 9 The Feast of Saint Ngreavsie
- 13 Anniversary of Imprisonment of Galileo
- 25 The Feast of Saint Ignatius Granola (Inventor of the Cheezy Wotsil)
- 29 Pope Leo I says "If world is round I'm Jewish"

Astronomy Calendar:

- 24 Terran Eclipse - A rare form of eclipse where the sun passes between the moon and the Earth. The effects will be quite visible under normal conditions, but skygazers are advised to use a pair of 20x binoculars if viewing from an area with a lot of light saturation. Optimum viewing point: Anywhere very, very far away.

Ye no gie a warra bi's don tae
- Old Scottish sheep-shearing motto

And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls.

An Post is on strike.
- Anon

Carpenter, heal thy self.

February++ 1992

"Truly I say to you, it is easier to pass money to PFJ under the counter than for a rich man to dance on the head of an angel."

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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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30	31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	40	

Days of note:

- 10 Induced Labour Day
- 17 Martyr Day (excl. Northern Ireland)
- 19 Daniel Lewis Day
- 34 Showaddywaddy Day

Holy days of observation:

- 2 The Feast of Saint Alfred Marks (Patron Saint of Job Interviews)
- 11 Feast of St John the Baptist
- 12 Feast of St John the Presbyterian

Astronomy Calendar:

- 11 The Iceman Comet. Note: Only visible from Betelgeuse, will meet indoors if raining.



"The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
no gie a warra bi's don tae."

- Anon

"For want of a nail, go to a hardware store."

"I disapprove of what you say, but if you say it
again I'm going to kick your head in."

- Voltaire

March 1992

"Blessed are the PFJ-makers, for they shall inhabit the Earth."

S	S	S	S	S	S	S
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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30	31					



Days of note:

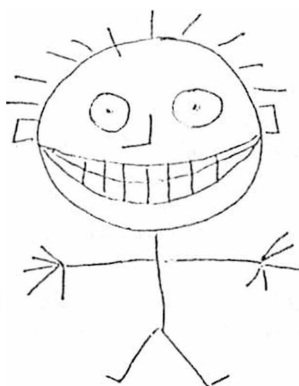
- 1 National Baby-Talk Day
- 11 Zippideedoodah Zippidee Day
- 17 Americans Dressed in Even Dumber Outfits and Hideously Green Hair and Did You Hear That Accent Day
- 28 My Mammy's Birthday

Holy days of observation:

- 4 The Feast of Saint Jude the Obscure
- 26 The Feast of Saint Francie of Assassin (Two Big Macs and a Large Fries)

Astronomy Calendar:

- 30 Irish Astronomical Society Annual cloud-watching night, Phoenix Park, Dublin.



Break, break, break,
On thy cold grey stones O sea,
And I would that my tongue could utter
No gie a warra bi's don tae.
- Alfred, Lord Tennyson

————— New Jacks in the City —————

The "Super Bowl" phenomenon - by Robert D. Elliott

For the last few months, speculation in the city has been mounting over the state of the new powder rooms on Burgh Quay. These bum/sewer interfaces, costing ten pee for one downloading - [No, no, no, Robert, this is coming out wrong - Ed] [But it's a moving article! - Rob] [It's a bit forced. It won't go down very well. -Ed] [But I was hoping it'd make a big splash - Rob] [Wipe it. Now. -Ed] [A lot of effort went into this. The strain's been terrible. -Rob] [But what if the censors get wind of it? -Ed] [Bog off. I wash my hands of the whole thing. -Rob]

————— The Commitments —————

by Michael Cullen

After all the hype, I was expecting something a little more from the "king of splatter" Alan Parker. I mean, already this summer we had Total Recall, which reportedly cost £600m and 58 lives, T2, £980m and 3m lives, and The Little Mermaid, £12.50 and a goldfish. Now we were promised the film which "pushed the envelope" [isn't that a postman's job? - Ed.], and which earned the ire of the American censor with a reported 245 acts of violence per minute. I don't know what all the fuss was about. This is the worst job Industrial Light and Magic have done since "On Golden Pond", and it seems that Tom Savini can't even do false beards these days... [Stop this now. This is all totally irrelevant. -Ed] [A horse is a horse, of course of course - Mr Ed] [Will that be all? - Ed Waiter] [How come Glasgow got to be City of Culture? - Edinburgh] [Dive, dive, dive! - Sub Ed]

————— Captain Laser Alien Attack —————

by Michael Carroll

Machine: IBM PC or compatible. System requirements: 640k RAM, VGA. Optional: Mouse, Sound Blaster, Hayes-compatible modem.

Inspired by the video game that appears in The Brentford Triangle by Robert Rankin, this is simply the best game the PC world has ever seen. Stunning graphics, superb sound, immaculate gameplay - Captain Laser is a must for all PC owners. The scenario is simple, yet gripping - you play Captain Laser, fearless defender of the Earth. You control the ship which defends the Earth from waves of inimical aliens, which are beautifully drawn and display superb animation.

The excellent title-screen, [Hang on a minute, Michael. YOU wrote the game - you're not allowed to review it, even if it an excellent game. I have had ten-hour sessions playing it -] [Hold it - you're his agent. Seeing as you're getting ten percent, you shouldn't review it either. However, it is, and I say this reluctantly, a truly magnificent piece of programming. The sprite animation routines, though very fast, have been written with such cunning that I suspect Michael will soon be writing -] [Now stop this. I realise that Michael's dad may know something about computers, but that doesn't mean he can review his games objectively. And although it's a superb game -] [Now he's got his mum interrupting. That's it. I am no relation of Michael's, so you know that when I say it's a fantastic game no nepotism is involved in the judgement. Just because I work for him -] [Stop that. This is becoming a farce. Oops, my trousers just fell down.]

Hunted and hated by the very people whom they wish to protect, a team of super-powered mutants has banded together to join forces to form a team to protect the very people by whom they are hunted and hated. Stan Leap Resents... **The Uncanny Y-Front!**

My Evil Duplicate, My Enemy!

By Robert Elliott and Michael Carroll

"Quick, **BlunderNerd**, execute manoeuvre Delta 4!"

"Affirmative, **Psychlod**. **Beets**, get ready!"

"Ready and waiting! What about you, **LiceMan**?"

"Ready as I'll ever be!"

Their strategy formulated, the surviving members of Y-Front attacked the evil McNugget. The *kpowwww!* as Psychlod's optic blast struck McNugget staggered him long enough for Beets to leap in and attach the neuro-frammistat to McNugget's helmet. The battle was won.

"Reckon we should trash him now, fearless leader. He's too powerful to let live."

"No, **Wolfurline**, if we do that we'll only sink to his level."

Despite his bonds, McNugget strained to grapple with the Y-Front's members. "Bah!" He snarled. "When will you puny so-called heroes learn? I, McNugget, the most powerful mutant on Earth, nay, the very universe itself, whose power surpasses that of all other mutants who one day shall kneel at his feet, cannot be defeated by you puny so-called heroes who are unworthy to lick even the grimeiest speck of dirt from the boots of I, McNugget, the rightful ruler of Earth."

With a growl, Wolfurine snagged McNugget's helmet in his claws and ripped it to shreds.

"My only regret is that I'm scraggin' the helmet, and not the slime that wears it. Cuz I'm the best there is at what I do, and what I do best is trash scum."

"Quiet, **Wolfurine**. Now, as you know, we've just finished defeating McNugget, the evil mutant who's determined to take over the world through the use of his nefarious machines. Now that we've got him, we should put him in the genetrapp, a machine designed by **Professor Y** shortly before he was killed by the evil McNugget."

A familiar, yet startling voice caught Psychlod's attention. "As they say, Psychlod, reports of my demise were greatly exaggerated."

"Professor! You're alive!"

"Evidently. And so is **Larval Girl**."

"Mavis... Alive?"

Mavis Gray, Y-Front's telepath, appeared from around the corner. "What's the matter, Scotty, disappointed?"

"Disappointed? Never! I love you!"

"And I, you, too, Scott, with all, my heart."

"Ahh, ain't that touchin'?" Said a familiar - yet oddly menacing - voice.

"My God, it's **Counter-Wolfurine**, from the Negative Dimension - That warped part of the universe wherein lie unknown horrors! A dimension devoid of time as we know it, where all things in our own correct, right-side-up, start at the beginning and finish at the end, truth, justice, God, Mom and Apple pie universe have alternate, evil doppelgangers!"

"Yeah, an' I've brought the rest o' **Counter-Y-Front** with me!"

LiceMan whistled. "Who'da thunk it? Only minutes ago we were fighting for our lives against the evil menace McNugget, and as soon as we defeat him we come face to face against our old foes, Counter-Y-Front, our evil duplicates from another dimension."

"Yeah, LiceMan, but don't worry, these'll only last for seconds. 'Cause I'm the best there is at what I do, and what I do is brutally massacre evil duplicates and pontificate about it afterwards!"

Psychod laid a hand on Wolfurine's shoulder. "Hold it, Wolfurine, old friend, they haven't attacked yet. Maybe they're here on a peaceful mission."

"Yeah? Well, they'd better not try anything while I'm here."

Counter-Psychod spoke up. "Looks like you're as smart as I am. Yes, we're here on a mission to save both of our dimensions from the cosmos-spanning might of... **Universus!**"

Wolfurine snarled. "Yeah? Well, he'd better not try to eat my planet while I'm around."

"Not just your planet, Wogan, but all the planet Earths in all continuums!"

The Beets, the only really educated member of Y-Front, spoke up. "Shouldn't that be all planets Earth in all continua?"

Wolfurine snarled at Counter-Y-Front. "Yeah? Well, you'd better not try any bad grammar while I'm in the vicinity."

Counter-Psychod frowned, and pointed to The Beets. "What he said."

Wogan paused. "Lemme get this straight. Having trashed McNugget, we narrowly avoid a fight with Counter-Y-Front, who warn

us of a threat by Universus to destroy all the planets- er- Earths in, er, this continuum and all the others."

"That's it, Wolfurine."

"Gosh, fearless leader, it looks as if we're alone against inimical forces, with only our indomitable will to save a world that hates us from the being cosmic known as Universus." LiceMan frowned. "Wow, deja vu."

Counter-Psychod spoke up. "One thing, Psychod, I think I should lead both teams, as Universus is from my dimension. And anyway, I've had more women than you."

Psychod stared at his counterpart cosmic for a split-second, and shook his head. "It's for the very reason that he's from your dimension that I should lead. If you were incapable of triumphing against hopeless odds in your own dimension, what makes you think you'll do any better here? And I've had more women than all of Counter-Y-Front put together."

Counter-Wolfurine spoke up. "Not me, bub. I'm the best there is at what I do, and what I do best isn't allowed under the Comics Code."

Aren't we forgetting someone here? a voice boomed from the heavens. *I've had whole planets!*

Y-Front and Counter-Y-Front gasped in unison. "It's... Universus!"

Next: Will Y-Front escape unscathed? Or will the galaxy-spanning might of Universus destroy them? Find out in "Bloody Everybody, My Enemy"! See ya in thirty!

TOUCHORAMA™

The latest concept in publishing - Touchorama (tm) - is brought to you for the very first time anywhere by the marketing division of PFJ Cybernetics Corporation. It is a tactile sensation relation operation via digital sensory apparatus interface, or something. There follows a short demonstration of this startling new effect.

How to use Touchorama (tm):

When you encounter a [1] in the text, touch box number one with your left thumb. You will experience sensations which are so life-like that you will believe you are the actual participant in the action.

Dave walked into his sitting-room, holding an Irish Times under his arm. He sat down by the fireplace and opened it. His bronzed manly fingers gripped the sports section with an almost tangible fervour [1].

After a while Dave lit a cigarette and went to his bookshelf, where he took down a copy of 'Man and Superman' by Joe Shuster. He let the maid answer the phone ringing in the hall, while he opened the tome and let his fingers slide delicately down the page to where the O's were no longer filled in [2].

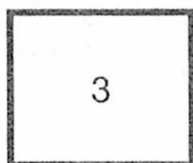
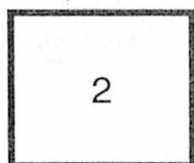
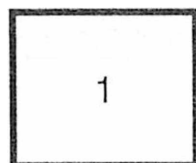
After a while he scratched his back through his papier-mache shirt [3], and read the mail [4], and went to pick up the bookmark but couldn't find it [5], so he did the crossword in the paper instead [1].

Meanwhile, in the Do-it-Yourself shop, Tom held out the catalogue for the customer to peruse.

"It's our latest line," he said, demonstrating the texture of the wallpaper [1].

"May I?" The customer enquired salaciously, reaching out her hand. [2] [3] [4]

Back at home, Dave couldn't figure out the final clue and rubbed the page in frustration [1] [1] [1] [1] [1] [1] [1] [1] [1].



THE GOBBIES PLAN

By Michael Carroll

Chapter Two Grabbed by the Gobbies

What has gone before - Lieutenant Yaggi Hamstring has been forced to undertake a mission to rescue Sergeant Clint Wayne and his team of recruits, who have been captured by the evil Gobbie empire. Yaggi and his pilot Tess have been instructed to infiltrate the Gobbie prisoner of war camps and - if possible - deal the Gobbies a harsh blow for freedom, democracy, the human way, etc. Now read on...

The Neophyte cruised at maximum speed, powered by a newly-developed propulsion method called "Disk-Drive". This allowed the ship to travel at faster than light speeds by warping space and treating it as though it were a flat disk, with the centre of the galaxy as the hub. Any position on the disk could be reached by either rotating the disk and keeping the ship still, or by moving the ship to or from the hub, or a combination of both. This was a very practical method of travel, since the ship could go almost anywhere in the galaxy without the need for a pilot who could think in three dimensions.

Of course, certain areas of space, such as black holes and other anomalies which could damage the ship on re-entry to normal space, were unobtainable. These were marked on the map as "bad sectors" and the ship automatically avoided these.

Yaggi and Tess spent the journey in a drunken stupor. Yaggi was lying on the floor, quietly singing to himself, when he noticed a red light flashing on the console. After a few more verses and another can of Heisenberg, he decided to investigate the light. It looked like it might be something important. He crawled up, stepped over Tess's sleeping

form and carefully made his way to the pilot's chair, holding the wall with one hand and his head with the other.

He slumped into the chair, and saw that the red light was under a sign marked "Warning". He thought about this for a few minutes, and then went to wake Tess. The two of them held each other up as they examined the console. Tess looked at the screen, and gasped herself back into sobriety.

Tess sighed resignedly. "Well, they've found us."

They watched the screen as three flashing red dots moved in on the green dot that represented the Neophyte. Yaggi grabbed the controls and swung the ship around. The nearest Gobbie ship went careering past and ploughed on into space. Yaggi activated the weapons system and aimed the missile launcher at one of the Gobbies. He was about to blast the Gobbie ship into its component atoms when Tess lunged forward and wrestled him out of the seat.

"Don't you ever get tired?" Yaggi asked her as she dragged him to his feet.

"You fool, Yaggi! If we put up a fight they'll just wipe us out! We're supposed to get captured."

"Oh yeah. Old habits die hard, I guess."

"Okay, that's enough kurking around. Let's surrender." Tess stood up and began to put on her spacesuit. Yaggi did the same, and bravely they stood side by side at the airlock door, ready and waiting to be taken on board the enemy ship, willing to sacrifice themselves for their species.

Some time later the inner airlock door fell inwards with a clang. A Gobbie stood in the doorway, the light pouring in from behind him as various gases formed a mist which

showed up his silhouette in a most dramatic fashion, which was lost on the humans as he was less than a metre tall.

"You are my prisoners. You will do as I say, or you will be instantly terminated. You have the right to remain silent. If you give up that right, one will be provided for you... Er, hold on a minute." The Gobbie took a tiny card out of his pocket and squinted at it. "You will do as I say, or... Oh, I've already said that bit. Never mind, just come with me."

They followed him into the Gobbie ship, which they noted was clearly designed to hold captured humans as they could walk in without banging their heads. Or their knees.

They were led into a dark cell, complete with bars on the window and a toilet without a seat. The Gobbie slammed the door behind them, and climbed up to a small hole in the riveted steel door so he could talk to them.

"Well," he said, "you are to be taken to one of our base ships, where you will be put on trial for your crimes, and if convicted you will be sentenced to stay a very long time in a very bad place indeed. I hope you have a pleasant journey, and thank you for flying with us."

"He's not very good, is he?" Said Tess, after the Gobbie had left. "I mean, it's obvious that they're not really the aggressive type. Makes you wonder how they've managed to hold off against our forces for so long."

"Yeah, sure." Said Yaggi, who couldn't have cared less. He was annoyed at having been press-ganged into this mission, and couldn't be as objective about it as Tess. He simply sat on the bunk and waited.

They didn't have to wait too long. Within two hours the Gobbie ship docked with its base ship and disgorged its prisoners. Apart from Yaggi and Tess there were six other prisoners, all of whom looked as though they'd put up a fight and just barely lost. Yaggi felt a little ashamed at his own neat and undamaged appearance, so he coughed a bit and favoured one leg. They were led into

the heart of the base, the steel handcuffs around their wrists were connected to a long chain pulled by one of the Gobbies. Since the Gobbie home world is a 12G planet, he had no problem dragging them along even when one of the more seriously wounded humans collapsed and the rest of them tripped over him. The Gobbie simply kept walking, his prisoners a writhing, tangled bunch sliding along the floor behind him.

"Strong little buggers, aren't they?" Yaggi mumbled from somewhere underneath the bunch. They were dragged in this position to a cell with armed guards standing against the far wall, one on each side of an important-looking door. The chain connecting the handcuffs was removed, though the handcuffs themselves were left in place, and they collapsed onto the benches that lined two of the walls.

"I suppose you've been wondering what they're going to do with us?" One of the prisoners asked Tess.

"Oddly enough, I have." She looked at him inquisitively.

"Yeah, so have I." He frowned. He was a tall, well-built man with a dark complexion. He also had sandy hair. Tess guessed this because every time he moved his head a fine sand-like substance dislodged itself and settled on his shoulders.

Yaggi decided to make his presence known, just in case any of the prisoners decided to do something rash, like try to escape and get them all killed.

"Since we're all in this together, I guess we'd better make introductions. I'm Third Lieutenant Yaggi. This is Flight Lieutenant Tess. We were on a surveying mission when we were captured."

The sandy-haired man spoke up. "Well, it's all very well for you to be prisoners of war, but I'm not even in the army. I'm a mercenary. Name's Shan Olo. Gobbies just picked me up for no reason."

"There must have been some reason," Tess said. "I mean, the Gobbies aren't likely to make a mistake, and they wouldn't assume that just because you were human you were an enemy of theirs."

"I don't know! Dirty backstabbers, after the time I risked death and personal injury on Vaseline while selling weapons to the Vaselineis. What would they find wrong with that? I mean, another time I..."

Shan suddenly realised that he was locked up with seven dangerous humans, most of whom had probably lost close friends in the Vaseline deserts. He tried another tack. "Oh! I've just remembered, there was that time when I destroyed thirteen Gobbie ships before they could attack a human colony. What bastards they are! I suppose that must be why they've captured me." He deftly shuffled along the bench, and tried unsuccessfully to sink into the woodwork.

Yaggi stood and walked over Shan. He leaned very close, their noses almost touching. He grinned a very fiendish grin, his yellow teeth gleaming evilly. "What was that about Vaseline? I buried several of my closest buddies there. Well, I would have buried them had I been able to find all the pieces."

By now Shan was sweating so profusely that the dandruff on his shoulders was starting to look like porridge. He was saved by the arrival of another group of guards.

Yaggi growled deep in his throat. "I'll deal with you later, kurk."

Tess, Yaggi, Shan and the other prisoners stood in line in the court-room as the charges against them were read out. By virtue of being the senior officer and of having thrown his weight around the most, Yaggi had been elected the spokesman for the prisoners.

The judge was an elderly Gobbie who looked amicable enough. The greying scales around his temples gave him a dignified air, and his greeting of "Hello everybody!" seemed rather pleasant.

Yaggi had a good look at the jury. "They look honest to me," he whispered to Tess. "I think we'll get a fair trial from them. It's just a pity that they're all Gobbies."

"Hey! You're right! We can call for the jury to be changed, after all there's not a human among them! Brilliant, Yaggi! Well spotted!" Tess grinned. In her mind's eye she could see a light at the end of the tunnel.

Never one to forfeit an opportunity to dwell on praise, even when it was as uncalled for as this, Yaggi smiled, and shrugged off the compliment as if to say it was nothing.

"It was nothing," he said, "To one such as I, with a mind even sharper than, sharper than..." Metaphors failed him. "Sharper than a mind that's really sharp, such an obvious conclusion does not require thought."

He stood, and signalled for the attention of the judge.

"Your honour, I would like to point out that there are no humans among the jury, therefore they are biased to Gobbie ways, and that does not constitute a fair trial."

The judge regarded Yaggi with a weary eye. He didn't consider Yaggi to be worth the energy to use both eyes.

"Shut up and sit down, you flesh-faced bastard," he growled.

Yaggi sat, and in Tess's mind's eye the light at the end of the tunnel became a man with a torch looking for food.

The trial continued. The prosecutor listed dozens of crimes by humanity against Gobbledom, and indicated that since the humans were all enlisted in the army, and the army represented the forces of humanity, they could be held responsible for those crimes.

Shan listened to this and called for attention.

"I'm not in the army! I avoided the draft, and have never had anything to do with any military forces. So by your arguments I can't be held responsible for any of those crimes you've just mentioned!"

The judge considered this for some time, and decided Shan was right. "You are free to go. We will transport you back to where you were captured, and reimburse you for your troubles. This war has seen enough atrocities without the imprisonment of innocents."

The guards unlocked Shan's handcuffs, and led him towards the exit. He turned and shouted back to Yaggi.

"Ha ha! Kurk you, Yaggi! Have a nice time in prison!"

Yaggi thought about this and decided that Shan wasn't going to get the better of him. "Since I am the senior officer present, I can take on the role of any other officer, as I see fit. I am now Recruiting Sergeant Yaggi, and you have just been drafted into the Emperor's army. You are now trooper Shan Olo."

The judge looked from Yaggi to Shan and back. He sighed heavily, and spoke to the guard who was leading Shan away. "Put the cuffs on him and bring him back."

Yaggi thought about his new rank a bit more, and then came up with a brilliant idea. "In my wisdom, I have decided that I am now acting Admiral Yaggi, and in light of my excellent service in the troopers, I have decided to give myself an honourable *discharrgh!*" He said *discharrgh!* because one of the Gobbies smashed him over the head with an iron bar, rendering him unconscious.

Yaggi woke to find himself lying on a cell bunk, his head in Tess's lap as she wiped his forehead with a damp cloth. She looked down at him and smiled sweetly.

"Yaggi? Are you okay? You received quite a knock."

Yaggi sat up slowly, his head spinning, his stomach on fluff-dry cycle. He watched Tess as she rinsed the cloth in a bucket of cold water.

"I think I'm okay... What happened? Who hit me?" The words felt like broken marbles in his mouth.

"One of the Gobbies. They didn't like the way the case was going, and decided to remove you from the proceedings. You should have been listening to the judge as you were appointing yourself admiral. He said 'strike that comment from the records', and when you kept talking he said 'strike that prisoner from above'. Then they sentenced us to a prison planet they called Ringsend. I guess that's where they're holding Sergeant Wayne. Are you sure you're okay? Nothing damaged?"

"I'm great, I'm fine. Thanks." He stood up to stretch and flex his muscles, which was a bad move since he turned his back on Tess and she belted him across the back of the head with the bucket.

"You bastard! Because of your conduct we've all been sentenced to life imprisonment on one of their prison planets!" She swung the bucket again, and he rolled under the bunk to avoid her.

"Tess! Stop! It was all I could think of! I would have discharged us all, then we'd no longer be liable for those crimes they listed!" He pushed himself as close to the wall as he could. She reached under the bunk and made a grab for him, and he was relieved to find he was just out of reach. She stood back up, then began pacing back and forth along the length of the cell.

"Okay," she said eventually. "I believe you. You were only doing what you thought was best. They probably would have sent us to the prison planet anyway. You can come out now."

Yaggi slid himself from under the bunk, and climbed to his feet.

"Hey, this is the same cell as last time!" He observed.

"Yeah, great. So what?"

"No, I mean, if this is the same cell, we must be on the same ship!" He ran in excited little circles, rubbing his hands, his eyes wide with inspiration.

"Of course! You must mean that since this is the same Gobbie ship that captured us, our own ship must still be attached, and still broadcasting our position all over the galaxy, so someone might hear the message and rescue us! Or we could even escape by ourselves! Excellent, Yaggi. You've done it again."

Yaggi didn't admit that he'd never thought of that. He'd just been excited because he knew there was a couple of unopened six-packs of Heisenberg on their ship.

"Guard! Help! Come quick!" The Gobbie guard rushed from his post to Yaggi and Tess's cell, jumped up to the hole in the cell door, and looked in. Tess was lying curled up on the floor, clutching her stomach, drooling and moaning.

"She needs a doctor!" Yaggi said. "She's dying! I think I can save her if I have the emergency supplies from our ship!"

The Gobbie looked from one to the other, sighed and shook his head slowly. "Do you think I'm stupid or something?" He said. He gave them one last disgusted look as he jumped down and went back to his post.

Tess sat up and wiped the dribble from her mouth. "I guess it was worth the try."

Yaggi sat down heavily, which really was the only thing to do, and besides, he was getting good at it. Tess sat beside him, not

quite as heavily, but much more prettily. Eventually they lay down, and fell asleep in each other's arms.

They woke to the sound of the cell door being blown in by an explosion. Years of conditioning had Tess and Yaggi rolling to their feet even before the bits of door had stopped falling. Through the clouds of dust he could see a Gobbie on the far side of the door, a smoking blaster in his hand. They stared at each other for a few minutes, until the Gobbie spoke.

"Greetings, humans! You have been rescued by the League Against Unethical Grabbing of Humans! I am Pawrik, but I fear we have little time for introductions, come with me if you want to live!"

Tess and Yaggi looked blankly at the Gobbie. Tess, who could read a lot better than Yaggi, finally worked out the acronym. "LAUGH?" She said.

"Yes!" The Gobbie replied. "Now follow me, to freedom!"

Tess and Yaggi continued looking blankly at their rescuer.

The Gobbie decided a more direct approach would be needed. He grabbed them by the arms and pulled them towards the door.

Like it or not, they were being rescued.

To Be Continued...

In the next episode of *The Gobbies Plan*, Yaggi, Tess and Shan - accompanied by their rescuer Pawrik the Gobbie - face the terrifying Debt Star, wherein lies a rich, beautiful princess awaiting salvation.

But loyalty to the army presses heavily on Yaggi and Tess, and a visit to the Gobbie's prison planet of Ringsend seems inevitable.

And all the while, the mystery surrounding Pawrik the collaborating Gobbie deepens...



VIEWS OF DEBTED No 12:
Pawrik the Gobbie's Story

DRABBLE CORNER

A Christmas Story

(with apoogies to spe-checkers everywhere)

"Go to hell!"

"But it's true," Barry insisted, "they're stealing our anguago, eller by eller. Try saying the eller eh. Anything."

"Eh."

"See?"

"No I don't see."

"You said eh. No eller eh. Sucked out."

George's tongue banded up. "See you ater aigator." It was true!

"But why?" He asked.

"Create chaos. Take over."

"But who?"

"Don't know. Aliens. Back magicians. Omputer whizzkids."

"Ant bowieve it."

"Jesus. It's wore ah the time!"

George trie to scream, but the ony wors elt were shriek an moan, the he cou not eve moa, a the waite uti eve thei thous bea iopchesib.

Michael Cullen

You Never Know When It'll Come In Handy

The altermeter - his invention - bucked like a cartwheel. Martin gripped the arms of the parallel transporter, feeling like the test-tubes in his centrifuge.

If altering had taken a moment longer he might have imploded. It ended suddenly.

His lab, through blurred vision, was the same. But different colleagues came to answer the fire alarm triggered by his smoking transporter.

"Martin!" a bearded man yelled. "What is that thing?"

Martin stared blankly. He knew the language, but not much. He cursed himself for bunking off every class of Leaving Cert English.

All he could do was stare and sputter "Ni thuigim."

Michael Cullen

Album of the month: YULE TWO - Gott In Himmel, Groovy Chick

A departure from their previous album Raffle and Floops, this finds the Dubliners reassorting not only their European roots, but also their Californian surtans.

'I was lost in the desert, I was lost in the Square,

Then Jesus came and found me, and we went for a pizza'

Mono sings in 'The Nil', Sledge's ambient guitar cutting through the molee like a Krupps carving knife.

The band reject accusation of hype. "We planned to show up at the Virgin Megastore, but we got lost in a forest," Mono says.

Michael Cullen

LETTERS

Dear sir,

I must protest strongly about the issues in the last letter. I'm sorry, the letters last the in issue. Anyway, to the point. No, forget the point. I know I have.

Yours sincerely, O. Neil Derekk

PS I didn't vote two referenda ago.

Dear sir,

What is a referenda?

Yours without wax, Noah Webster

Dear sir or madam,

I wish to reply to the advertisement in the Irish Times dated the fourteenth of last month. Unfortunately, I can't find my copy of the paper, so I'm writing to you instead. Do I win £10?

Yours sincerely, Mary Robinson

Dear PFJ,

It gives me great pleasure, and I don't mind talking about it in public.

Yours sincerely, Grendan Billeen

Dear PFJ,

I read the last issue of your magazine, especially those articles by Robert Elliott. I think you should give him a rise. He seems to be about twenty-three and, unless I miss my guess, seeking a woman between eighteen and thirty interested in science fiction, pizza and sex (in no particular order, and in any possible combination).

Yours sincerely, Robert D. Elliott

PS When are you starting a classified section?

Editor's reply : Yes. We hope to start a classified section, as soon as we have a sufficient number of penguins. Not penguins - those things that look like penguins, but with more words. Ads. That's it.

Dear PFJ,

Why oh why oh why?

Yours sincerely, Jack Lord.

Dear PFJ,

I think that today there must be something, intrinsically wrong with our education system today when young people, who come out with only the barest grasp of the English language and its finer points, such as grammar, punctuation, and, most, if not all.

Yours sincerely, Mary O'Rourke.

Dear PFJ,

I think divorce should be allowed in Ireland.

Yours sincerely, Kitty O'Shea, Legal
co-respondent

PS But 2 Live Crew should be banned.

Dear Editor,

What time will you be home for your tea tonight?

Love, your Mother.

Editor's reply : It all depends. Anyway, I'm busy, so I don't know.

Dear Editor,

Don't you dare talk to your mother that way.

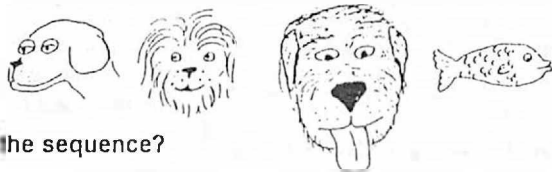
Yours sincerely, your Father

Editor's reply : I'm sorry, Daddy, I didn't mean it. Can I come out of the coal shed now?

MENSES

Menses is a society for people who think they're brainier than the rabble (you). If you want to be one of these self-proclaimed geniuses, try this test, or ask your Dad to buy you in.

1. Which is the odd one out?



2. What is the next number in the sequence?

592 592 592 592 592

3. Which is the most accurate definition of "tedium"?

- a. The most amazing, fantastic thing in the world.
- b. Lots of flashing lights and music and stuff.
- c. Aliens landing and stealing your brain.
- d. Blind Date.

4. Solve the following puzzle:

John is twelve. Michael is two years older than Bill, but one year younger than Fred, who is Welsh. Bill comes from Scotland, but once shot a rabbit in Norway who was grey. John is a Sunni Muslim and thinks Fred is an emissary from Satan, who is 46. Bill tries to restrain John but John nuts Fred and Michael is late for the pictures, which causes Max to think he is a transvestite.

The question is: What is the capital of France?

5. Solve the following anagrams:

- a. Disestablishmentarianisms
- b. Ineffectuality
- c. Technologicality
- b. Total and utter con-jobo

6. Solve the following puzzle:

A man takes four minutes to cross a river. The current is south-west, at 60 miles an hour, and the man has one arm. If the current was 30 miles an hour, how long would it take the customs official to figure out what this guy is up to?

If you answer four out of five questions, then you may be eligible for membership. Send this form and £25 to:

Menses Limited, C/o Michael Carroll, 44 Leeson Park, Dublin 6.

Answers:

- 1. b. All the others are badly drawn.
- 2. 519. This is a list of darts scores achieved by one of our members at a recent outing.
- 3. c. Tedium is defined in The Oxford English Dictionary as "that sensation which arises when aliens land and steal your brain (maybe)".
- 4. Bill did it. I saw him myself.
- 5. a. All the rest are palindromes.
- 6. F* tang bong hoop hoop.