

PERSONAL NOTES

oo

I was talking to my mother the other day (Hi June) and was quite entranced to learn about the deer. It seems that in the last ten years (and particularly the last three or four) deer have become a major pest. Back home, for those of you who don't know, is Highmore South Dakota, which is smack dab in the middle of the great American plains. You know, "Oh give me a home where the buffalo roam, and I'll show you a messy house." It is flat, grassy, and dry. To convert New England into country like South Dakota (perish the thought) you must do four things. First you must strip off all of the trees. Secondly you must run over the whole area with a giant roller and squash it flat. Thirdly you must cover it with twenty feet of top soil. And fourthly you must cut the rainfall by a factor of five. Outside of these small differences and the fact that South Dakota is about fifteen hundred miles as the crow flies (but then, what crow can fly fifteen hundred miles) from the ocean, South Dakota is very much like New England.

Deer are not a plains animal. Deer have never been a plains animal. Deer are an animal of the forests and woods. When I was a boy (ah, the ominous signs of age signalled by the ease with which those words come to my lips) there were no deer in the area - none, but none. Ten years ago there were deer, an occasional deer, but they were a great rarity. Today they are a major pest. What happens is that a herd of deer, thirty or forty or so, will climb on top of a haystack in the winter and rip it apart for hay and shit all over it. As it happens cattle are not particularly fond of deer shit. Deer will also graze on the crops, an activity frowned upon by the local farmers.

This sudden abundance has had its natural consequences. There are people back home who have stopped buying meat entirely, subsisting on illegal venison instead. Jacking deer, far from being a moral crime, has become both profitable and estimable, being practically a civic duty. One of our neighbours, whose hay lot had been infested with the critters, took out his shotgun and proceeded with a wholesale extermination. News reached the local game warden that he had half a dozen deer hanging in his barn. The game warden dropped by, allowed as how he would like to take a look in the barn, observed the deer carcasses hanging there, and said he'd have to give him a ticket for hunting out of season (to say nothing of being considerably over the limit.) Our neighbour replied that if he was going to do that, he might as well come back the next day too because, if he could help it, there were going to be a dozen more of the damned things hanging there.

ooooooo continued on next rock oooooooo

Oh yes, this is PERSONAL NOTES #6, a personalzine brought to you by Richard Harter, from 5 Chauncy St. #2, Cambridge MA 02138. Somewhere in this zine will be a statement of editorial policy, etc.

You may ask, as I asked, where did all of those blooming deer come from. One answer, which is not sufficient, is that there are no natural predators left. This is true enough and, together with the tendency of deer to multiply rapidly if given the chance, accounts for the rather startling explosion of the last few years. However, the fact remains that deer are not naturally a prairie animal, they must trees for cover, and that there is no natural cover for them in the plains. Trees are very rare in the great plains.

That is, of course, were very rare. About thirty years ago or so, the shelter belt program got going in earnest. A shelter belt is simply a patch of trees near the farm buildings of a farm. It's purpose is to break the wind and trap the snow during winter. The federal government supports the planting of trees. Basically the government supplies the trees and the farmer supplies the labor. This is directly good for the farmer because of the weather protection and also good for the whole country - in their own way the trees reduce the prospect of another dust bowl.

Like most good deeds this one had unanticipated side effects. The proliferation of shelter belts has created new local ecologies and has altered the general ecology of the region. It is not just deer that are appearing where they had never been before. There are many species of bird and animal that are showing up that are not originally native to the region. (June is the editor of a bird-watchers quarterly and is a reasonably serious amateur ornithologist, so she has some knowledge of the change in the number and variety of birds.) There are species of birds which had a distinct western variety and eastern variety which had been separated by the prairies and which are now merging together again because they have moved in.

Trees, by the by, tend to create a self-supporting micro-ecology. That is, the existence of a patch of trees tends to make the area around that patch of trees more favorable to the existence of the patch of trees. Basically they do this by (a) trapping the local precipitation, and (b) by shading out light from competing plants. A forest, once established, tends to maintain itself. A forest can exist, by virtue of the fact that it exists, in places where it could not become established if it did not exist. Trees do not naturally occur in the prairie except along streambeds - the country is far too dry. However they can exist and support themselves quite nicely if man helps them along a bit by planting trees and weeding them and maybe giving them a little bit of fertilizer when they are young.

The pheasants, on the other hand, are in a decline. The ring necked pheasant is an import from China, I believe. It is an excellent game bird, and is very good eating. It exists marginally in New England. However the place to find pheasants in the United States is in South Dakota. It is so common, so much the state bird, that one tends to forget that it is not native. In fact, the tourism resulting from pheasant hunting is one of the major sources of income in the state. Lately, however, the pheasant population has suffered a sharp decline because of an apparently minor change in farming practice.

Briefly, the old practice was to put a fence around fields and leave a swath around the field bordering the field. The new practice is to not put up a fence and farm all the way out to the edge of the field. Under the old practice there was a vigorous growth of weeds along the fence which was a major source of cover for wild animals. Grassland is not nearly as good a cover because grassland is either grazed or cut for hay or both. Grain fields are not good for cover because they are plowed and for most of the season provide no cover. Neither provides good cover in the winter. Fence weeds, on the other hand, do.

[NOTES,,PERSONAL]

No, you don't get the promised statement of editorial policy just yet. Keep reading, though, it's bound to be somewhere. Instead you get a letter or two. I have a whole lot of letters to type up and comment on. Here's one now:

.....
. Tom Whitmore . Greetings, Richard
. 14120 Miranda Ave. .
. Los Altos Hills . I wonder if the reason for printing page 18 twice
. CA 94022 . in #5's page numbers and the reason for sending me two
..... copies of #5 are the same ... (yes, common klutziness)
You didn't think you'd sent me one 3, one 4, and one 5
did you? (Hardly. I can't count that high without taking off both shoes and I
can't take the smell.) I just got them today; not entirely the USPOD's fault,
as the address you have is my parents' and I only get down here once every two
or three weeks. This time I've an unprecedented freedom: I am taping some early
Harry Partch records from my father's collection, which includes the first
half-dozen or so of the records himself... but I digress.

(Well, yes; you do. But, then, so do I. And the way I figure it, somewhere
among my readership there are some Harry Partch fans and somewhere there are some
Tom Whitmore fans, and, by gum, that's good enough for me. And if it isn't, it
ought to be.)

I'm very glad to see the infamous PERSONAL NOTES: it's as enjoyable as I'd
been led to expect. (Now that is one of those little bits that I am fond of.
At first blush it sounds like praise, but then the nagging thought occurs: How
enjoyable were you led to believe it was?) The discussion of local vs universal
mathematics is an interesting one, at least what there is in #3. There is a
rather obvious analogy in the subgroup of math called geometry, where the surface
of a sphere has properties quite different from those of a plane. If one wanted
to define a square as a figure with equal sides and angles whose angles sum to
 360° , it is possible to have a three sided square. (Alternatively a square is
a figure with all of its sides equal and at right angles to each other - again,
three sided. Um, yes, I like that.) Quite possibly there might exist a Riemannian
surface where, if a triangle is defined as a closed plane figure whose angles sum
to 180° , one could have a four sided figure with equal sides that fit this definition.
(And in Lobachevskian geometry ((constant negative curvature)) one could have a
five sided polygon with all angles being right angles.) I haven't got quite enough
math to demonstrate this myself, and my tame mathematicians are not anywhere near.
If one neglects to include the term "closed plane figure" in one's definitions
of square and triangle, one can do all sorts of things. I'm surprised this wasn't
discussed... Probably was in the first or second issue. This entire discussion
is conducted at about the level I am capable of, and is probably somewhat infantile
to anyone with any formal knowledge of esoteric geometries.

Well, no, the original discussion did not revolve around mathematics per se
but around the proposition, yea or nay, that God can conceive of a four sided
triangle - more generally are logic and mathematics necessary (in the sense of
inevitably true) so that the creator (if any) must, of necessity, have obeyed
them in devising the universe or, conversely, are they merely imposed upon the
universe by the creator and that God could have chosen other laws. To this well-
known and ancient conundrum I added the possibility that for this universe the
laws of logic and mathematics are, in fact, false and that God got around this by
cheating - by arranging things so that they appeared to be true in any given locality
but that they were false in the aggregate. To go to a mildly esoteric example of
the possibilities, let me give an example from mathematical logic.

PERSONAL NOTES

One of the objects of mathematical logic is to formalize Mathematics and Logic; that is, to devise a set of axioms and rules of procedures from which all of mathematics can be deduced. It turns out that there are a number of ways to do this, some of them mutually exclusive. Once we have done this and constructed a formal system from which we can deduce all of mathematics there are a number of questions that are natural to ask.

For example, we might wish to know if the system is consistent. This question has been studied and the answer is a little disturbing - if Mathematics is consistent then its consistency cannot be proved. (Consistency means that you cannot prove a theorem and its converse. Inconsistency means that everything is both true and false.) This is bad enough. There is also something known as ω -inconsistency.

A system is ω -inconsistent if there is a theorem about integers, say that n has the property P , such that it is false for 1, it is false for 2, it is false for 3, etc and yet there is a theorem that that some integer has the property. In short, a system is ω -inconsistent if there is something that you can prove to be not true for any particular integer and yet there is, nonetheless, a theorem that it is true for some particular integer (unspecified). Example

Theorem 1: 1 is not blue.
Theorem 2: 2 is not blue.
Theorem 3: 3 is not blue.

.....

Theorem X: There is a blue number.

This collection of theorems is consistent, because no particular finite group of them taken together can be proved to be inconsistent. They are inconsistent if we could consider them altogether at the same time - if we could operate with a proof that had an infinite number of terms in it. Such is ω -inconsistency.

Now it turns out that it is impossible to rule out ω -inconsistency. That is, given any formal system which is strong enough to develop arithmetic in, there is an interpretation (i.e. a model) of the system which is ω -inconsistent. There is no way around this; even adding an axiom to the effect that the system is not ω -inconsistent does not help. (Again the problem is one of finiteness - you can't prove that the system is ω -inconsistent (within the system.))

Even within the framework of mathematics and logic as we understand them there is nothing that stops the universe from being ω -inconsistent.

As for defining SF, I haven't seen your definition; but I don't really want to go into that. I'm having too much trouble with getting hooked on mysteries. Such things as Fredric Brown novels and Donald E. Westlake (under all his pseudonyms) stories have captured me. I'm also getting into strange associated books like Sorority House and the other three novels by Jordan Park. The first three were published by a NY pb house whose books are hard to find, and the 4'th (The Man of Cold Rages) posthumously in 1959 by Pyramid. He was better known in the SF field under his real name, C.M. Kornbluth. You might want to try reading the Modesty Blaise books, if you haven't - they're much better than their publicity would lead you to expect.

Your remarks about the Kornbluth books are maddening. Why are they "strange associated book"? Associated with what? - the field of mysteries? SF? Strange in what way? Tantalizing tidbits, designed to intrigue the imagination without satisfying, like mock food.

PERSONAL NOTES

I have never really been into mysteries, per se, although there are several mystery authors whom I read regularly and enjoy. Among them are: Emma Lathen, Agatha Christie, Leslie Charteris, and Nicholas Freeling. I'm afraid that I don't think I have ever read a mystery either by Brown or by Westlake - which is an odd lacuna in my reading when I come to think of it.

.....

There are, he says, a lot of letters to catch up on. On the other hand there are a lot of other things that I wish to write up. For example, there are my various and sundry dealings with the stock market; perhaps no one else finds them interesting, but I do. Then there is the apartment redecoration. We (Mary Cole and I) completed redecorated the apartment; we repainted and re-wallpapered everything. It looks quite nice; it was a lot more work than I had anticipated (and I was pessimistic); and I know a great deal more now about such things than I had ever wanted to know. Some day I should write up the tale of my career in the Marine Corps. Career, hell, three years and damn glad to get out.

Also I should do a statement of editorial policy somewhere. However this isn't quite the place for it; look for something a little later on in the zine. At this point I only want to say that the format and style of this zine is, and is intended to be, junkyard informal. Nothing need come in any pre-ordained place. There is no pre-imposed order or system, no definite rules on place or type of content.

And now, another letter:

[illegible]

. Dear Richard:
 . Harry Warner Jr .
 . 423 Summit Avenue . It's so nice to get a fanzine and find in it an
 . Hagerstown MD 21740 . an apology from the editor for being so late in pub-
 . November 11, 1975 . lishing instead of a letter from me in the letter
 column apologizing for the long delay in commenting.
 This fifth PERSONAL NOTES emerged tonight by osmosis
 or something similar from deep under a pile of fanzines awaiting attention, and
 I thought the least I could do for it, in return for its having shown such
 initiative, was to respond.

Someday, Harry, I am going to bring out the collected Harry Warner Jr paragraphs of apology for being so late in commenting on fanzines. Be warned.

I think I'm doomed permanently with respect to DISCON reports. They keep trickling in, and by some mysterious law of nature or fate, every new one that arrives provides me with the news that yet another fan I wanted to meet was at that event and I didn't know of his presence until the most recent conreport mentioned him. In this case, it's Tom Schluck, whom I don't remember seeing mentioned elsewhere as having been at the DISCON. As far as I can determine, Donn Brazier is now the only remaining fan who did not attend that convention. Beyond all doubt, someone will publish within the next six months a DISCON report which will contend that Donn really was there in disguise despite his insistence that he stayed home. I wouldn't mind this so much if one of the DISCON reports that came out back in the summer hadn't commented on my failure to attend it.

PERSONAL NOTES

Anyway, I liked Sheila Gilbert's conreport very much. The only fault I can find is really a fault that others might find many years in the future. I can theorize or guess the identity of most of the people mentioned in it only by their last names, and I imagine your mailing list is compact enough to permit most of the other recipients of the issue to do the same thing. But what of the fans of future decades who will be looking for DISCON information for fan history projects or for a new compilation of worldcon facts or for other reasons? How much energy will be expended by the middle-aged and elderly people who were youthful fans in 1974, as they strive to remember whom all those given names belonged to, through the mist of years and the uncertainties of memory cells?

That's a grim picture that you paint there, Harry, mighty grim. Look at it this way, though. What are the odds of even one copy of PN surviving as much as a decade. Come to think of it, the chances are pretty good. Despite the fact that PN is limited circulation ephemera there are some among it's readers who are insatiable collectors and will save anything.

Mike's pictures pages (behold, the malady is contagious. Now you've got me doing it) were fun, once I had figured out the best system for looking at them, which seems to be not a systematic examination of the full pages in a preordained pattern but a gradual immersion of the eye into the pages, letting the eyetrackks sort of bounce and splatter for a while until the full content has been sopped up through the optic nerves.

I have no idea what your mother's dog was doing with its meals during that mysterious period of time. But dogs seem to have considerable abilities in this respect. I know a local family who emigrated from Holland to the United States a few years back. When they came, their crossing was by liner, and not in one of the fastest, but in a ship which required eight days for the trip across the Atlantic. They had a big, intelligent dog whom they had just finished housebreaking a few weeks before they moved to the New World. The dog was so conscientious about restraining itself until it reached a large patch of turf that the family found themselves with a serious problem aboardship. No amount of persuasion would cause the dog to backslide on its training temporarily, and nowhere aboard the big liner was there anything even resembling a patch of lawn or even a bare piece of earth. The dog acted more and more worried as the ship proceeded westward, the family members were certain that their pet would never live to see port, but somehow it did, and it was the busiest individual in the family as soon as the boat docked and everyone went ashore.

It wouldn't be proper for me to comment on the comments on The Mote In God's Eye because I haven't read the book. I'm not quite sure why I obey the old convention which forces people to wait until they read a story before passing judgement on it. After all, almost every issue of every fanzine contains remarks by various fans about people whom they know only in the most sketchy manner or have never met at all, and nobody takes exception to that. Just the other day I read Tarzan of the Apes for the first time and it seemed awfully familiar because I'd read so much about it; I probably could have done as good a review of that book before reading it as I could do now.

Tis a good point about people making remarks about people whom they know little or not at all. Tis a point that I's been made much of around here these days. And it is all too true that people will comment at length on persons, situations, or works of which they know very little. A natural question is, is this bad? I submit that, on the whole, it is not.

To be sure, there is much room for innocent and not so innocent hypocrisy in this territory. There are people ready to pontificate at great length on works which they have never read without ever once intimating that they have never read them. Often people will comment on other people's marriages, their affairs, their actions without the slightest understanding of what the situation really is. In doing so they can generate the most extraordinary misapprehensions. (Although I do believe that less can be done to hurt people's reputation by gossip than is commonly believed. If X tells me a nasty story about Y I will tend to accept it readily if I already have a distaste for Y. On the other hand, if I know and like Y, X will be discrediting himself rather than Y in my eyes. In one sense, then, malicious gossip can only succeed if it is planted in fertile soil. The trouble is that malicious gossip can succeed against people who are good people but who are not particularly well liked. On the other hand people who are quite likable have a certain amount of undue immunity.)

None-the-less, I think it would be legitimate, for example, for you to discuss my interpretation of The Mote in God's Eye, not because you are discussing the book directly but because you are discussing what I have to say in my review. For example, it would be legitimate and proper for you to disagree with my views of Jerry Pournelle's works, solely on the basis of what you had read, even though you had not read the work at hand. It would, of course, be dishonest to disguise the fact that you hadn't read the work in hand while you were doing so.

Similarly I believe it is perfectly legitimate to discuss someone's public persona and the public appearance of someone's actions. For example, a few months ago the president of NESFA saw fit to issue a presidential proclamation which met with some rather negative comment, much of which was sharply ill-informed. The situation which provoked the said proclamation was rather complex and both the circumstances and the event were subject to widely varying interpretations, if one knew the facts involved. However, I think it was perfectly legitimate for outsiders to express themselves pungently on the event itself. One may well judge the taste of a fruit without knowing the plant that bore it.

Or let me be personal, and consider the case of Ted White, a man of whom I have, shall we say, mixed opinions. As it happens I do not know Ted personally at all, to speak of. We have met a few times in passing; we were in a dinner party together once many years ago; other than that, nothing. For all I know I might find that if I knew him personally I would enjoy his company very much. I might find him a truly delightful companion - and, of course, I might not. I have no real evidence on the matter. On the other hand Ted has written at great length in a great many forums. His public persona is well fleshed out. His expressed attitudes, opinions, and thoughts are there as a matter of public record. I am surely entitled to comment on the public record and draw my own conclusions from it.

However I liked the thorough way in which you went into some of the problems raised by the book, and I hope you've found out by now if you guessed correctly about who did what in the manuscript. Your last paragraph is particularly important. I wonder if the failure of science fiction to do more than mainstream fiction about ideas is linked to the current emphasis on putting current problems into the near future and selling what results as relevant science fiction. There are so many ideas that just aren't suited for insertion into this type of science fiction.

(Mr. Childers is the restaurant and food reviewer for the Apastani Times. The following material from his column dated February 29, 1975, is brought to you by Richard Harter from 5 Chauncy St. #2, Cambridge MA 02138. All material excerpted here is copyrighted by the Apastani times and is reprinted by permission.)

Recently yours truly checked into the old Beantown and dined at Boston's hauteut of haut cuisine, the *Cafe Burgerpest*. Simply scrumptious, let me tell you. The *Cafe Burgerpest* confirms everything you have ever heard about Boston's good food.

First let me say a word about the particularly excellent service. Many restaurants are in a boorish rush to serve you, but not the *Cafe Burgerpest*. For example, most posh restaurants have a rather snooty character who won't let you sit down where you please, but instead very officiously makes you stand in line and then sits you where he wants you to sit. It wasn't like that at all in the *Cafe Burgerpest*. We wandered in, picked out the place at the counter where we wanted to sit, and sat down. Again, many restaurants will have someone hovering over you trying to take your order right away. At the *Cafe Burgerpest* there is a nice leisurely two hour wait before ordering which you can devote to scintillating conversation before someone bothers you about ordering. The only flaw in the service was a slight overeagerness which led to our counterspace being wiped while our food was still in front of us.

Excellent service, however, means nothing unless the food is first rate, and the food the *Cafe Burgerpest* is truly distinguished. No word other than distinguished will do.

First we began with clear rock soup, a delicacy not really found. It was, as a good rock soup should be, thin but tasteless. Next came the salad. This was a *Cafe Burgerpest* specialty, organically grown wilted lettuce with rancid mayonaise. The fact that the salad was organically grown was attested to by the delicate specks of night soil still adhering to the lettuce.

Next came the wine. This was an apple cider Sangria. This was Tuesday's vintage; the wine steward explained that Wednesday's vintage was still too young. (We were dining on Thursday.) He was certainly right - Wednesday's vintage would have been too young.

Then came the main entree, Roast Hogs' Nose fillets, individually wrapped in sour dough pastry shells. This is a dish that you will seldom see in even the finest of restaurants. Despite its unusual nature it was everything one might expect it to be. In praising the main dish, one should not neglect the vegetables. There was the standard dish, gooey mashed potatoes with cigarette butt gravy. The distinguishing touch here is that the cigarette butts were aged - a touch overlooked by most restaurants. Another delicacy was the radishes stuffed with fish paste, a delicacy which cannot be found in many four star restaurants.

Then came desert and coffee. One of the many points of class was the use of fresh dishwater in the coffee - a point skimped on by many restaurants who let their dishwater get stale. It is my feeling that the house specialty, turnip strudel, is the most fitting cap for the meal. However those who wish to finish off with something light will find a wide selection of hard cheese, moldy fruit, and sanforized cotton candy to choose from.

The Cafe Burgerpest - the eating experience of a lifetime.

If by chance I didn't comment on the issue before this one, my apologies. I did little or no loc-writing for about three months of last year and three months of this year, so I could get the first and final drafts of a new fan history book written. This threw me so far back that I can't remember by now what I did do and didn't do, except for the fact that I didn't do more than I did do.

RH: First let me quote myself by reprinting that last paragraph that you mention.

"It is one of the promises of Science Fiction that it offers a larger stage for the treatment of ideas than the restricted stage of mainstream fiction. One might hope for great philosophic richness. It is a promise that, for the most part, remains unredeemed. SF is usually much shallower, much less deep than its possibilities. Not always, but usually. And it is a delight to read something that, in some measure, redeems that promise and puts something on the stage besides wooden puppets."

No, Harry, I cannot agree with you about current problems etc. The problem is the more basic one that you cannot pour water from an empty pitcher. Science Fiction before relevance was equally sterile. (Well not sterile, precisely, but certainly it did not live up to its potentials and does not now.) To write a novel which has interesting, deep ideas the author must put some interesting, deep ideas in. And the truth of the matter seems to be that SF authors, on the whole, run fairly short on deep and interesting ideas.

SF tends to be strong on formula treatments, with interesting gadgets and settings thrown in. A novel of relevance is, as you imply, all too often a formula novel. The novel of action is, all too often, also a formula novel. It not a matter of SF drying up because of a loss of vision; it is merely a matter of changing formulas with changes in the times; there is no great loss of vision because the depth of vision is not and never has been there.

This is not too surprising. An SF author lives by selling stories; he is producing entertainment at a price. He cannot write one masterpiece and stop; he must write and keep writing and keep selling. It is enough that he has mastered the craft of writing and constructing stories, that he can continue to devise characters and settings to roll the stuff out. It is almost irrelevant to his success as a commercial writer whether or not he has any depth.

To put big, exciting ideas into SF you must first of all have ideas. Not only that, they must be big, exciting ideas. Not only that you must get excited about them. And most SF authors do not have those kind of ideas very often, or if they do, they don't know what to do with them.

oo

I think, he says, that I am going to adopt the policy of putting my initials at the start of paragraphs of comment that I insert into letters and put the letter writers initials at the start of his/her paragraphs. Using two type faces does break it out, but it does leave room for confusion. I do think, upon thinking on it, that it is best to keep injections within the body of a paragraph as short as possible. As far as the general policy of breaking into the letter is concerned, I am going to keep to it. Some people object strongly; others like it very much. I happen to be one of those of who like it. One reason is that I first draft my replies directly onto stencil as I read and type up the letter. What you see is directly out of the subconscious of RH himself. I like to think of it as a snapshot of a serious conversation.

MYTHOLOGIES #7
Don D'Ammassa
19 Angell Drive
East Providence
RI 02914

I should like to do an ordinary conventional
fanzine review this time around. For my victim
I have picked MYTHOLOGIES, a personalzine
published by Don and Sheila D'Ammassa. First
let me get the rock bottom basics out of the way
by mentioning that it is available for the usual

or one a one time basis for 75 cents. For those who aren't familiar with the
phrase the usual is a letter of comment, an accepted contribution, or editorial
whim. It also ordinarily includes agreed upon trades, but Don's logo does not
mention the matter.

First let me admit to a certain amount of editorial bias. Some years ago
I was the editor of Proper Boskonian, the NESFA clubzine. While I was putting
it out it was big, colorful, and not overly frequent in coming out. It was
never a first class zine, but it was, in my opinion, fairly good. It was also
a lot of work and for one reason or another I lost the drive to put it out and
the job of putting it out was passed on to others. Since then three rather
skinny issues have come out annually. In the mean time I decided I wanted to get
back into fanzine publishing again, albeit with a less demanding and less imposing
zine. As you may imagine it did tickle my ego a little bit that PN not only
came out more frequently than PB but that it has had more material. Pleasures
of vanity may be low ones, but nonetheless sweet.

Also sweet was the knowledge that I was the NESFA fanzine fan. That is
not to say that there were not members who were into fanzines - a number of members
are out there writing loc's, doing reviews, etc. But quite evidently there was
no one in NESFA who could or would publish a fanzine regularly. I was the man.
I was it. I was THE NESFA fanzine pubber. I was the token representative of
a major segment of fandom within NESFA. It may seem like a stupid thing (and it
is) but there was a distinct amount of pleasure in the knowledge that I was
the one and only.

And then Don D'Ammassa came along.

Damn the man.

I barely knew the chap when I got the news. Don is going to put out a
fanzine they told me. "Oh," says I, with a sinking feeling. "But then," says
I to myself, "It will be a genzine whereas I put out a personalzine, and besides,
he lives in Providence and I live in Boston." "Yes," these dubious friends
inform me, "it's going to be a personalzine." That tore it. My ego protecting
cloak of uniqueness had been stripped from me. Not only had I lost my corner on
the local personzine pubbing racket but there was going to be a direct standard
of comparison around. No way around it, deep in my heart I knew that THIS WAS NOT
A GOOD THING.

So much for editorial bias. On with the fanzine review.

First of all let's look at the technical side, the quality of production.
Sheila, Don's wife, is in charge of production. She is good at it. The repro
values are simply and unspectacularly good. Repro is mimeo (A.B.DICK, I believe),
black on hard finish green paper. The lettering on some of the titles needs to
be cut more cleanly. There is some of the usual problem with quilting in the
black and white illos with large black areas. (Quilting is a quilt like
appearance in the solid black areas. It is due to an inability of the machine
to provide enough ink in a localized area. To a certain extent it can be over-

[fanzine review, cont.] [PERSONAL NOTES]

come by running the artwork separately - i.e. putting the artwork on a separate stencil. If one does this one can overcome quilting on a silk screen machine completely. This isn't sufficient for drum machines, however, even though it does help.) Whether one wants to go to extraordinary efforts to overcome the problems of reproducing art is an editorial decision. It is extra work and it may well not be worth the effort, given the objectives of the zine.

The general layout is pleasant and functional without being particularly exciting. This is not a graphics oriented zine; it is a contents oriented zine with functional graphics that permit the zine to be read easily without getting in the way.

The cover is on a good grade cover stock and is, I assume, quality offset. It is a representative Bonnie Dalzell, entitled "The High Priest". It probably is one of the print series that Bonnie does. It is fairly good and is definitely typical in style.

Having disposed of the appearance let us turn to the contents which are the meat and purpose of the zine. This particular issue is heavily weighted to the letter column. There are eighteen pages of general content and thirty one pages of letter column. Most of the general material is by Don. There is a one and a half page humorous bit by Paul Di Filippo. There is a three page graphics piece by Jim Young, entitled *Impressions of the East*. The rest is Don D'Amassa.

There is a three page editorial, an essay on the spirit of competition. There is a two page book review entitled *Embellishments*. There is a three page essay on the works of SARBAN. There is a three page satirical piece entitled *An Artist's Life*. Finally there is a description of an event in his army career entitled *Rules of Engagement for Motor Pool Combat*.

What can we make of this? Well first of all it should be said that Don writes well. That is a great deal in its own right in these days of declining SAT scores and ever increasing functional illiteracy. (Not only does Don write well for his own zine, he is a prolific writer for other fanzines as well. I should not be at all surprised to see him cop a fan writer Hugo one of these days.) It is noteworthy that his writing in this zine falls into three distinct categories; humour, the review, and the general essay. Let me expand a bit on those three categories.

Humour, "fan-humour", is one of the traditional standbys of fannish writing. The pieces here are entirely typical of the genre. The army bit is representative of what I am wont to call the Erma Bombeck school of humour. One takes the trivia of life and looks at it with a low keyed humour. This type of humour is frequently known as faanish humour (number of a's optional). The other piece is also a representative piece of fan humour. It details the effects of the rise and fall of the artist William Easel and the consequences of his having been a house painter and a center strip painter. Both pieces are gentle, mocking, and wry. There is no sharpness, no biting and caustic wit in them. There are no cutting epigrams.

The reviews might be anywhere and by anyone. Well, perhaps not by anyone, for the blunt truth is that most people cannot even write a competent review. But they aren't particularly distinctive; they are not stamped with the flair of the personality of the reviewer. They are ordinary competent prose.

I called the editorial a general essay. By this I mean an essay which treats a rather large, rather general topic, in a fashion which is not too specific. The topic treated - the spirit of competition vs the spirit of cooperation -

[PERSONAL NOTES][fanzine review, cont.]

is an interesting one in its own right. It is what I call a level 2 treatment. That is, it is not at the gosh wow level of "cooperation is good; competition is bad", which I shall call level 1. Nor does it have any great depth of thought; there are some for instances, some examples but there is no real sharp analysis. It may well represent intensity of conviction (I have no idea) but it does not represent an effort to think the topic out thoroughly. It is the sort of thing that a thoughtful person writes off the top of his head.

As I remarked, the bulk of the zine is in the letter column. Don uses the fragmented, topical format for the letter column. That is, the letters are broken up into various topics and the pieces concerning a particular topic are gathered in a section. Don has this to say on the topic of format:

"As should be obvious, I use the fragmented, topical format for the letter column. I have recently received a letter from one fan who objected to having letters edited in any way. The advantage of the topical column, I believe, is that it enables me to present the best parts of letters in a format that suggests a conversation. I'd be interested to know if anyone else feels I've done dirt to their letters."

The great advantage of this approach is that it gathers everything that everyone has to say on a particular topic in one place. The disadvantages are that it disrupts the style and content of the individual writers and that it makes it difficult to say something on a topic other than that selected by the editor.

As should be obvious, I don't use the fragmented, topical format for the letter column. In fact my approach is just about at the opposite extreme from Don's approach. Neither approach is "better". They represent two different approaches to what a letter column is about. I like to believe that my approach is, in effect, the transcript of a conversation, an exchange between me and those writing loc's. Don's approach leads to a sampling of views and thoughts on a variety of topics which tend to be controlled by the editor. His approach has a coherence of topic; mine tends to have more a coherence of personality. (Well, in my case, an incoherence of personality.)

The topics in this column are: Censorship (12 pages), Collins on DeCamp (2 1/2 pages), Maslow (2 1/2 pages), Childhood (3 pages), Miscellaneous (10 pages). It is interesting to note that the miscellaneous material draws by far the most editorial comment. On the whole there is a lot of meat in the letter column, a lot that is interesting and thought provoking.

Well now, we've laid out the bare bones of the zine. I have described, in a rather wordy fashion, what the zine looks like and what is in it. This is the irreducible minimum task of the reviewer (other than the chap who lists zines received and rates them on a scale from 1 to 10.) Now what? There are two further tasks that a reviewer might want to undertake. The first of these is to evaluate the quality of the zine. The second is try to understand what the zine is about and whether the editor is achieving what he set out to do and all that sort of thing.

Evaluating the quality of the zine is a two fold task. It can be done from the standpoint of the reader or the editor. That is, we can ask how good it is, either from the viewpoint of a particular reader or from the viewpoint of a mythical average reader. On the other hand we can inquire into the purposes for the existence of the zine, either implicit or explicit, and ask how well the execution matches these purposes.

The answer to the first of these questions is fairly simple to determine. MYTHOLOGIES is not a Hugo class zine and it is not a crudzine. It falls into that vast inbetween area of inbetween zines. It is not marked by sharp peaks. It is pleasant and interesting and enjoyable but it has no dramatic qualities. Better than average, but not great.

That, however, is a consumers verdict. Let us ask instead what this zine is all about. We are helped in this task by considering the title, MYTHOLOGIES, and the statement of purpose that Don gives

"MYTHOLOGIES is a personally oriented fanzine dedicated to the mutability of all realities."

That seems definite enough. There is only one thing wrong; that doesn't seem to be what the zine is all about. It is a personally oriented fanzine; I shan't question that (for the moment.) First of all the zine does not seem to be literally concerned with mythologies. There is no direct discussion of any of the mythologies or even the content of the great mythologies either by the editor or by those writing in comment. But then, he didn't say it was. A few years ago it was fashionable to write in terms in myth-making. We might ask if the zine is conceived in that particular cast. Here I am less certain, but I do not think that it is. I do think that there is some element of this and I do think that it is a theme that is consciously exploited. For example, two items are labelled, respectively, Parable and Fable. Terminology may be a trivial matter but it indicates the editors awareness of the theme. More importantly the tales of army life have mythic content - it is as though he were taking incidents from his life and treating them as incidents from a saga. This is a common treatment in fan writing (and among non fans also.) In most cases it is quite likely that the authors are quite unconsciously of the literary and psychological significance of what they are doing. In this case I think it is fair to speculate that the author knows exactly what he is about.

Nonetheless mythmaking and the mythic approach to man, life, and literature cannot be said to be a dominant theme of the zine. And I would say that if it is supposed to be, then the zine is a relative failure on its own terms. But, then, he never said explicitly that that was what the zine was about. We are left with "the mutability of all realities." Now what are we supposed to make of that? To tell the truth, I don't know. It may mean, for example, that nothing is as certain as we think it is and that he means to explore that uncertainty. Then, again, it may not. It certainly sounds grand, but it just doesn't mean much too me. If this reveals a deficiency in my understanding, so be it. Someone else will have to explain it to me, if they can.

The thing we want here is *Res Ipsa Loquitur* which is, I am told, Latin for the thing speaks for itself. That is, we should look at the zine itself and its contents and let it speak for itself as to what it is and what it is supposed to represent.

Nominally this is supposed to be a personal zine. Now fanzine come in many flavors and varieties. For example there are clubzines, newszines, genzines, letterzines, and special interest zines. This is evidently not a newszine or a clubzine. It also is not a review zine or a fan fiction zine. It is not a special interest zine, i.e. a fanzine dedicated to one particular special interest topic (Dragons and Dungeons for example.) It is either a personalzine, a genzine, or a letterzine or some combination thereof. First of all, is it a letter zine. The idea of a letter zine is this - the loc's of the readers provide the material for the zine. The editor will toss in a little material at times to introduce new topics, but basically the readers and their letters

make the zine. It is much more common (I believe) in letter zines to use the fragmented, topical format. I would say that, in part, MYTHOLOGIES is a letter zine. Is it a genzine? I would say no, but that it uses some of the formatting and material style of a genzine. A genzine is a fanzine which is in the style of a general magazine. It has material by a number of authors and artists. The balance of material may be different from Analog or the Saturday Evening Post but the essential idea is the same. The genzine is typically broken up into well defined segments. It is typically concerned with good appearance as well as a variety of interesting material.

MYTHOLOGIES does have some of the attributes of a genzine. There is a table of contents, a number of articles, artwork scattered about, used in the usual way, etc. But these are, I believe, mostly a matter of formatting. Don is not publishing a magazine, he is publishing his magazine; most of the articles are by him and that material which is not is minor in the context of the zine. If he started hustling material from other authors it could easily shift in that direction.

Is it a personalzine? Of course it is. Personalzines are very varied, because they are meant to be a direct expression of the editor and people are very varied. In a personalzine most of the material is by the editor and is a direct expression of the personality and interests of the editor. (I can hear someone asking, "Is SFR a personalzine?". The answer, of course, is that, yes it is, at least in part. I expect that others besides me have pointed this out.) But certainly MYTHOLOGIES is, and is intended to be, a personalzine.

The interesting thing is that I don't think that Don is entirely comfortable with the personalzine style or concept. His zine shows disconcerting signs of trying to become something else, several somethings else's. It is not really a personal statement - the material he has put in this issue is the sort of material he might write for anybody's zine. (That is, he is writing for his own zine as he would write for anybody else's zine.) He isn't really talking very much about Don D'Amassa except insofar as his life is a source for humorous narrative. He is not talking about his personal interests and activities; he is talking about general topics. He is not, so to speak, revealing himself. (The comparison with SFR is revealing here, because Geis does reveal himself in an intimate personal way; in some senses SFR is more of a personalzine than MYTHOLOGIES is.) This is not criticism, by the way. It is merely the observation that the effective purpose of MYTHOLOGIES is not to serve as an instrument of self revelation for Don D'Amassa. In short the zine is mixed in effective concept - a mixture of personalzine and letterzine with some genzine trappings. "Personally oriented" will do quite nicely.

You will notice that I still haven't really pinned the zine down. I have put it in a pigeon hole and revealed some of its characteristics (as I see them.) But I still haven't answered the fundamental question of, "What is this zine about? What is the object of what is being done? And how well is it succeeding at what is being attempted?" Let me try to answer these questions.

What is this zine about? What is the object of what is being done? Briefly the purpose of this zine is to serve as a forum for the discussion of topics that Don D'Amassa is interested in discussing. It also presumably serves to give him the pleasures that all fanzine editors are heir to. (Those, however, are secret. Even Mike Glicksohn won't tell.) This is one of the reasons why it is not a straight letter zine - Don wants (I believe) people do discuss things; he wants a guided discussion.

And what of that last question? How well is it succeeding at what is being attempted? As far as I can tell, quite well. This, of course, is a question that only Don can answer, and even he probably cannot. But, if I have judged the effective purpose of his zine correctly, then it is my opinion that it is succeeding at it quite well.

There is one final question that may not be entirely within the critics purview and that is, "Is it worth doing?" One answer must be "yes" because he keeps doing it. Speaking more generally, I believe that it is. In effect, what he is doing is creating a Salon. I believe that creating a forum for discussion is a good thing; I believe that creating a successful forum for intelligent discussion is a better thing. This is not a Hugo class zine; given its present editorial policies it will never be a Hugo class zine. But it is interesting and, given its apparent purpose, eminently successful at what it sets out to do.

EDITORIAL MATTERS

No, no, no. This isn't the statement of editorial policy either.

Whew!! It is not, I admit, customary to spend five and a half pages on a fanzine review, even if you are as prolix as I sometimes am. As some of you may have perceived that was somewhat in the line of an experiment.

Several of my readers have written complimentary letters about some of the reviews that I have put in this zine. (I am not, by the by, a reviewer and the principal interest of this zine is not reviews.) I have been, rather naturally, flattered and pleased by these comments. My object was not, originally, to try to create good reviews; it was simply a matter of writing about things that interested me.

The comments, however, led me to try an experiment. It is a commonplace that SF reviewing is atrocious or, to misquote Salvor Hardin, "Reviewing is the last refuge of the incompetent." It is even more commonplace that the fanzine review is almost uniformly awful, lacking the slightest perception. These allegations may be true. Therefore, says I, let me try to a review of a fanzine in depth. Let me see if it possible for me to write a review that is not just a statement of like or dislike. Let me try to write a review that tries to get at what the fanzine is about, it's essential character. Let it try to be a review that is perceptive, witty, and interesting, and all that good stuff that reviewers are supposed to put in a review.

That was the idea. You will note that I did not pick a zine like SFR, which is (excuse me, Don) much richer in potentiality. I wanted a relatively ordinary zine to work with. You will also note that the review was a first draft; it was written off the top of my head. This has the great advantage of exhibiting my train of thought as it developed. It has the disadvantage of being insufferably wordy.

Did it work? Is this a blockbuster review; a model review that others should look to as a model? Some, I am sure, will think so. Frankly, I do not, but then it is notoriously hard to judge one's own works. Is it a good review? Yes, I think it is. Is it really a review in depth? It is not as deep as I wished it to be, and I don't think I know how to do what I wished to do. Is it right; is it a valid assessment of his zine? Ask Don; ask his readers; judge for yourself - don't ask me; I've already said my say.

I just went back and read the review. (Remember, I'm writing this stuff off of the top of my head and some of it comes as much of a surprise to me as it does to you.) (Er, that's remember.) There are two things that strike me about it.

The first is that it is linear. That is, I start out and I describe the zine in a rather straightforward way. Then I go back and I ask what is the zine all about and come up with some answers at a certain level of characterization. Then I go back and ask the same question again and answer it at a slightly deeper level. It is all logical and straightforward, one, two, three. I don't believe that you can write a really good review that way. A good review is an essay chock full of ideas that are about and are suggested by a particular work. It is a vision, a perception of thing reviewed. It is not a schematic.

The second thing that I noticed is that, despite its length, I was left unsatisfied; I wanted more. Now this is an extraordinary thing. This is a five page review, a length much greater than normal. Yet I was left with the feeling that there was much more to be said, that what was said was incomplete. This might mean that my prose is entrancing (at least to me.) More likely it means that it is thin. The ratio of content to wordage is too low. In part this is a consequence of first drafting it. In part it is because I really wasn't saying too much. I should have been saying the things that I was saying. I should have been saying other things that these ideas suggested. However I should have been saying the much more in the same space that I used.

Do you want to write the perfect review? Do you want to know how to do it? I will tell you. First pick a work to review. Any work, a book, an anthology, a fanzine, whatever. Then tear it to pieces. Think about the things that reviewers usually worry about - characterization, plot, philosophic themes, objectives, appearance, whatever. Try to get as many slants as possible. Try to find a unifying perception of the whole thing. Write the whole thing up. Get everything down on paper; write at least thirty pages on the topic. Now take that thirty page analysis and boil it all down to two or three pages. In doing so, retain all of the essential content of your thirty page critique. In fact you should not only retain the essential content, your two page condensation should suggest further thoughts that were not in the thirty page critique.

Is this the perfect review? No, this is an exercise to learn to write with the necessary richness and without wasting words. Do it again. Keep doing it until you can do it easily and naturally. You will not write the perfect review this way because your two page piece will be a warmed over rewrite and it will show. But you will be learning to write rich, dense, suggestive, and illuminating prose. Once you can do this sort of thing well, do it without the initial thirty page critique. Keep doing it until you can write the two pages without having to write the thirty pages first. When you can do this and do it so that those pregnant two pages come naturally and so they reflect the inspiration that the work at hand inspires in you - then you are ready to start writing reviews for real.

Sounds good. I guess I'll let someone else do it.

As you may have noticed, this is a lazy man's zine. That is my form of personal statement. Mostly I make up the layout policy as I go along and it shifts without rhyme or reason. One of the objects of putting out this zine is to put as little thought or organizational effort into it as possible. This may not make for the world's greatest zine, but it is a hell of a lot easier.

Roy Tackett
915 Green Valley Road NW
Albuquerque, NM 87107
24 September 1975

Richard....

I was standing at the desk at the
Leamington Hotel checking in, you see.

"I have a reservation," I told the clerk.

"Yes, sir," the clerk said. "Your name?" "Tackett," I said. "Tackett?" said
a sweet young thing who was standing along side of me. "Are you Roy Tackett?"
I admitted as much. "You write weird letters to Richard Harter," she said.

*RH: At first I thought you were putting me on. Then it dawned on me that, yes,
the incident could well have happened just as you related it. Color me something.*

*RT: Which is to thank you for PERSONAL NOTES #5 which appears to be a genuine
this time around. (Mere accidents of timing - there is no real consistency from
issue to issue.) I skimmed Sheila Gilbert's con report mostly because I'm not
all that fond of con reports. Some are interesting but most are boring. Sheila's
falls into the latter category.*

How do proponents of the science-christianity connection explain the
exploitation of nature that took place in pre-christian times?

*RH: They don't have to. The claim is that systematic universal law is one
of the hallmarks of science, and that this framework of thinking evolved from
Christianity. *** Whoops, I missed your point and started to answer the wrong
question. You raise a good point. Exploitation of nature, unthinking greed,
and arrogance towards the world are scarcely a Christian monopoly. I suspect
that an exploitive attitude towards nature goes along with civilization anywhere.*

*RT: Wouldn't you think, considering the advances in biological engineering
that would surely take place in a thousand years or so, that it would be poss-
ible to alter the Moties' physiology so that the biological necessity for
breeding could be eliminated?*

In a vast interstellar empire feudalism might not be an anachronism. It
has been put forward, for example, that Rome had to become an empire because
it had become too unwieldy for any other sort of government. And don't most
of the people of Earth live under that sort of government now?

*RH: First, feudalism. Feudalism is an unnatural form of government which is
of importance mostly because of what evolved from it. Feudalism proper existed
only in Europe and Japan, and, to a certain extent, in pre-imperial China. I
say it is unnatural because the preconditions for feudalism are (a) there are
no natural levers of power for the central state - no major roadworks or
waterworks demanding mass labor under centralized control, (b) the geography
militates against tribal conquest - it is broken up into small areas that can
be controlled by a few armed men, (c) there are no significant sources of
economic or political power other than land and armed force, (d) formal education
and/or social mobility are not required for the masses, and (e) almost all
people are working on the land full time with little leisure. Unless these
geographical and economic preconditions are met feudalism cannot exist or come
into being (although the trappings of feudalism were retained long after feud-
alism itself had vanished.) There is almost no way in which feudalism is
compatible with the existence of a technological society.*

This is not to say that Imperialism and Empires, Despotism, and the Total-
itarian state cannot exist; they can, they have, they continue to do so, and
they can be expected to do so for the foreseeable future. Actually the totalit-

[PERSONAL NOTES] [Roy Tackett, cont.]

arian state seems ot be much more stable as a form of government that the western style democracy. To be sure we have to distinguish between styles of absolutism. The pre industrial absolutist states were not well structured for a technological society. The great social discovery of the twentieth century is the development of modern forms of absolutism that are compatible. Much of the leftist agitation of the day is concerned not with democracy (economic or political) but with the replacement of obsolete forms of absolutism with modern relevant forms.

* The idea in the book was that it didn't matter whether methods for eliminating the necessity for breeding were developed or not - competition would make them useless. This seems like a dubious proposition to me; it seems to me that at some point immediate population control would be to the positive advantage of the masters and that they would enforce it. (Much as modern China is enforcing population control. Increased population would be a political and military disadvantage at this point.) I.e., even though the master class may not cooperate when the chips are down, localized population control would be to the benefit of individual masters, and this would be enough to establish population control, if it were possible.

Interestingly enough, it is within the terms of the book without any postulated advances in biology. Attend. The only signifigant population control problem is in the population of the whites, i.e. the masters. The masters are portrayed as being willing to be ruthless about the other classes, if necessary. Therefore, the only population control problem that is signifigant is the problem of controlling the population of the masters themselves. Is there a cheap, completely effective, and painless method of populations control for the masters. Yes, there is. They need only cross breed with the browns to produce mediators which are sterile. It doesn't matter how many offspring you have if they are all sterile. (This also provides a convenient method for controlling the population of browns.) Thus any particular master can control how many fertile offspring he/she has without any inconvenience, biological or personal. Therefore there is a safe natural method of population control that works.

This is a big hole in the box that Niven and Pournelle have put around the moties. I'm not sure that it matters that much, any more that the physical improbabilities of a RINGWORLD spoil that novel (except for incurable nit-pickers, and those eaten by incurable professional envy, who find it a convenient handle.) The important thing is the idea of a species like the Moties caught in an incurable biological trap. It is not the details of the trap that are important; it is the consequences of being caught in a trap of this kind on the attitudes, the culture, and the philosophy of the race that are important and that make this novel exceptional.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

Stanford Burns
PO Box 1381
Glendale CA 91209

Dear Richard:

Got the copy of your latest PERSONAL NOTES. Found it to vary greatly in quality - but I guess on some sort of weird ego-trip lately. Still, reading a con report that is by someone I don't know, and about others I don't know and who are only mentioned on a first name basis, confused me to a great degree - and obscuring a dialog is no way to achieve anything approaching communication. I take it that you mostly sent this issue to those that know the participants.....

Actually, I think you over estimate both my abilities as a reviewer and the quality of my 'reviews'. (Although flattery - excuse me, honest forthright opinion - is a strong inducement for me to ply the racket.) If they are better than the average it is probably more a matter of my not writing about something unless I have something to say about it - unless it has already sparked some specific reaction or thought in me. This puts me one up on the average reviewer who is writing a review with the object of writing a review, not with discussing the work at hand.

You may well ask, isn't that what a review is supposed to be? Nominally, yes. Actually it is a writing assignment; words ground out to fill a space. "This book is by..., I liked it because..., I disliked it because..., The publisher is..., I don't like the authors politic..." Etc. You cannot write about ideas you don't have. And if a work does not spark a reaction in you, then you can't put it in words.

This, then, is the formula review. It is born of hacking (grinding them out like sausages), of adherence to the standard formula, of a lack of creative response to the work in question, and of a lack of imagination. There is also the critical review or critical essay and it's omnipresent bastard, the killer review.

The killer review is deceptive because it looks more profound than it is until one catches onto the game. It is another type of formula. The game here is to cull the work at hand for a number of absurdities (Political beliefs that offend the reviewer will do as well) and say "look how stupid the author is" in as many ways as possible. In the hands of someone witty this can be a great deal of fun (albeit, painful for the author.) The reason that this kind of review is deceptive is because it sounds like a thoughtful review of a genuinely bad book - a book with major structural flaws.

I really can't say if there is much good critical reviewing going on these days - there are a lot of fanzines I don't get and I simply haven't been keeping tabs. I suspect (when I think on it) that there are a lot of people attempting profound critical analysis and that most of it isn't coming off. I suspect I know why: Most people who have ambitions to be good review writers are thinking too much about being good review writers and not enough about what they are reading.

Re wider audiences and all that sort of thing. I don't think I'm cut out for writing columns for other people and that sort of thing. I'm already on Andy Porter's shitlist - he liked my reviews in PN #4 and asked him to do a column for him. I promised him one and never got it to him. He wasn't too happy about it, with rather good reason. Part of the trouble is that I have a constitutional aversion to deadlines and schedules, mine or anyone else's, an aversion that seems to have grown stronger over the years. And besides, my 'reviewing' has mostly been off the top of my head - rewriting would be work. Almost, you tempt me, though...

- * GOBLIN TOWER, oh yes, indeed, a marvelous book. I wouldn't call it sword and sorcery, though. Someone once remarked that the difference between Howard and De Camp is that Howard believed in his fantasies and De Camp does not. Tis true. De Camp is far too civilized, far too urbane, far too sane to write good sword and sorcery. What he writes is much better (to my way of thinking.) De Camp is closer to Cabell than he is to Howard. I agree with you; I think it's good. In fact I think it is one of the best things that he has written and have reread it a number of times with pleasure.

[Editorial nattering][PERSONAL NOTES]

This shows distressingly good signs of being a very long zine. I'm up to twenty pages and I've gone through four letters of comment on #5. I have a whole pile of letters on number four and I feel honor bound to ~~get through~~ print them all. At the rate I've been babbling, I figure that I ought to run about a hundred and fifty pages or so. Doesn't your mind boggle at the idea - mine does. Why that is enough to fill a small book. (I can see them moralizing now - "Pity about Harter, spoiled all his chances when he got hooked on putting out PN #6.")

Part of the trouble is that I really do hate to cut or suppress any part of a letter unless it is of the "please send me your zine, I've heard so much about it" sort of thing. There is, I understand, a clever little solution to the problem of a letter column getting out of hand. It runs as follows: One determines beforehand how long a letter column one wants. One then excises pieces from the letters, perhaps a little, perhaps the whole contents. (The latter victims are listed in the WAHF's column which is a memorial monument similar to the lists of people killed in World War II. Some zines have a WAHF's column longer than the casualty list of World War II. There is even one zine where you are considered to have made it into the big time if you get onto the WAHF's list.) This little practice is known as "editing". It is my devout desire to have nothing to do with such a low, nauseating, and filthy practice. True enough, I am told that it is practiced in the best circles. But consider the crushing blow to the poor hapless writer. Here he is glowing with pride in his ingeniously perverted analysis of the phallic symbolism in PETER RABBIT, looking forward to his words appearing in print, like a bombshell bursting upon the collective intelligentsia of America. He has bragged to his friends - both of them. He has nursed in his heart the vision of the acclaim that will be his from his schoolmates, his teachers, and his parents when his words, his words appear in print. And then it comes... NOTHING. One cold line ... "We Also Heard From ... Joe Nurdheimer, 144 East 5th st., Armpit NJ." They even got his address wrong...

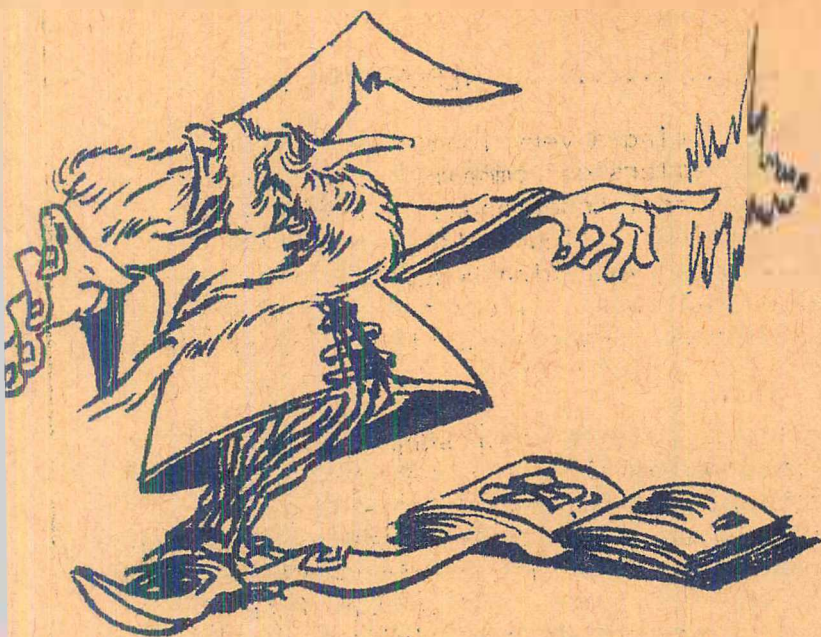
Imagine the despair, the humiliation. Imagine the psychic trauma. That young man might have become anything, been anything. That initial encouragement might have been the spark that he needed to carve out a great literary career. He might have become a great poet, a new Rod McKuen. *(Well, after all, how much can you expect of someone who does pornography based on PETER RABBIT. Ambition is one thing, talent is something else. You have to remember, this guy Nurdheimer couldn't write his way out of a paper bag.)* Do you think I want that sort of thing hanging over my head?

And yet... I grow harder and more calloused. The trials and tribulations of life, the perils of living in the city, the pressures of the rat race have taken their toll on me. Once I was filled with the milk of human kindness, but it has failed me. Today I machine gun down cripples in the gutter in case they might be muggers. If necessary I too will take out the butcher knife and join the ranks of those who use those heartless words ... "We Also Heard From."

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

Incidentally some of you may have been wondering why I have been making such a big deal about reviewing. Well when I wrote PN #4, I put in some fanzine reviews and made a big deal about how I was doing this because Mike Glicksohn told me to. I said that I didn't know whether I was up to the quality that he was expecting and asked if these reviews were what he was expecting - was it OK. A number of people commented on them favorably, including Mike, who said

(see over)



mike glicksohn

141 High Park Avenue

Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3

It's okay.

[Still more nattering][PERSONAL NOTES]

That "it's okay" was a little more pronounced in the original. Such are the vagaries of reproduction. But then, maybe the electro-stenciller is trying to tell me something.

Starting on the next page is a belated Boskone report by Sheila Gilbert, illustrated by Mike Gilbert. When I say it is belated I mean that my printing of it was belated - not that the report was belated in being produced.

Some explanations are in order, I suppose, for people who are reading this who are not acquainted with the principals. To begin with Marsha is Marsha Elkin; she and I kept company about four or five years ago. She was once married to Charlie Brown, editor of LOCUS. She is now married to Eddie Jones, a prominent professional SF artist residing in England. Eddie is an old time fan, a member of the order of St. Fantasy, and a former TAFF delegate. Marsha and Charlie Brown ran the Lunacons for several years and founded LOCUS (with Ed Meskys and Dave Vanderwerf) which is still published by Charlie and Dena Brown (his second, her first.) Marsha and I are still good friends.

Sheila Gilbert is Marsha's youngest sister, formerly Sheila Elkin. (There were three sisters; Marsha was the eldest, Sheila the youngest, and Paula the inbetween sister. Paula has never been particularly connected with fandom.) Marsha and Sheila are lookalikes and at one time used to pass for twins - an effect that was enhanced at conventions by borrowing each others clothes.

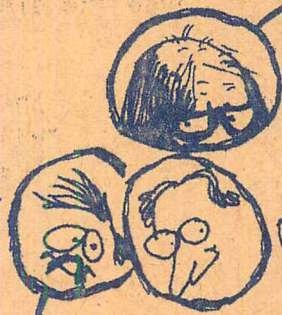
Mike Gilbert is a struggling young artist. He has done some professional SF work, a quantity of fan art, and has been a regular at convention art shows. He has published one work of illustrated children's fantasy, *The Day of the Ness*, and is publishing a second. Mike is into a number of collateral fields such as making models for wargamers, etc.

There is also a cast of thousands or maybe even dozens. This, however, is not the Biographical Encyclopedia of Absolutely Everybody, so you will have to take your chances on knowing or on figuring out who people are. And if it all doesn't mean very much to you, you can always look at the pictures.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

No, no, this isn't that promised statement of Editorial Policy either. You will just have to keep reading and looking for it. And, remember, there is no guarantee at all as to where it will be. Since even I am not sure where it will be or what will be in it, let me cover a few things that ought to be in it, in case I forget.

First of all there is no way at all to guarantee getting this zine. All copies are distributed by editorial whim. However my general practice is to give copies to anyone who requests it and to anyone whom I wish to receive it. I have abandoned the notion of posting mock subscription rates because I have discovered that people will believe them anyway and take them seriously. Trades, loc's, or a simple request will probably get you on the mailing list. Laziness is one of my firm principals. For this reason I will accept no responsibility for unsolicited material - I will try to credit it, use it, or return it, but I guarantee nothing.



a dirty dickie production

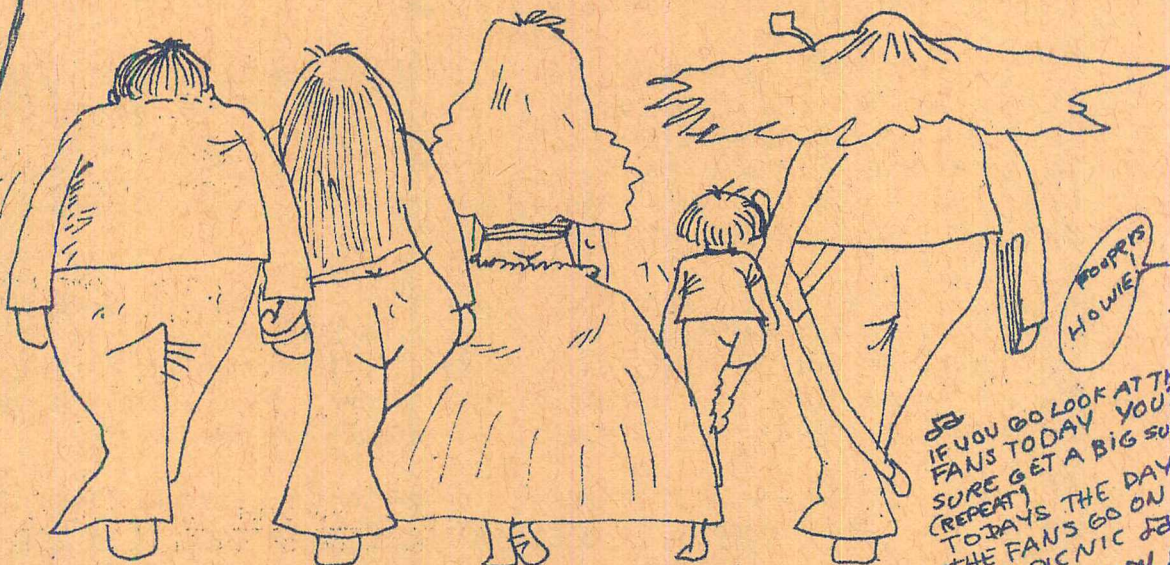
WIN

Uncle MIKIE
and good
Uncle HOWIE

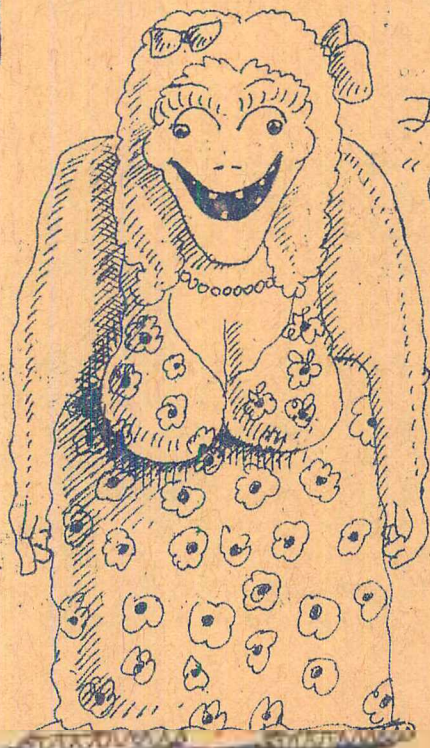
see it all
(ugh)
see leslie's
cheeks glow
(see to many
cheeks - ugh)
FANS ON
PARADE

AT Fooper-Con

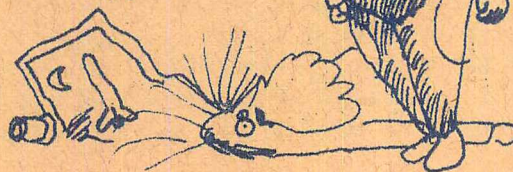
FEATURING UNCLE DICKIE BI-CENTENNIAL BITS



JB
IF YOU GO LOOK AT THE
FANS TODAY YOU'LL
SURE GET A BIG SUPRIZE
(REPEAT)
TODAYS THE DAY
THE FANS GO ON
THEIR PICNIC JB JB
(TO TUNE OF TEDDY BEARS
PICNIC! "I")



The Friday Night
"God Save Me From All This"
Award
To
The Fat Girl
at
The Party



ARGH,
HOWIE
ITS THE
VENUS OF
WILLENDOFF
MYA'TITE"
SWEATER
AND CUT
OUT
JEANS

Fooper

CON

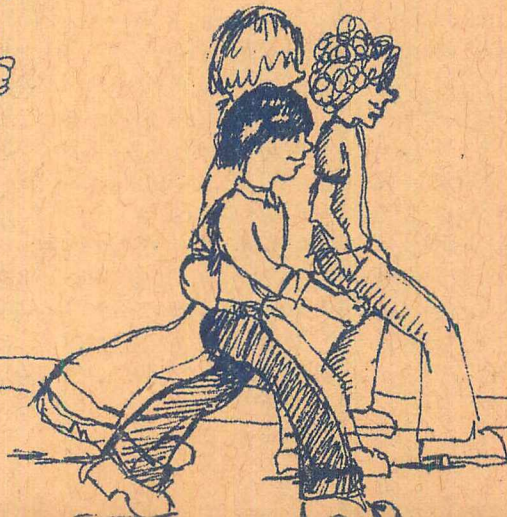
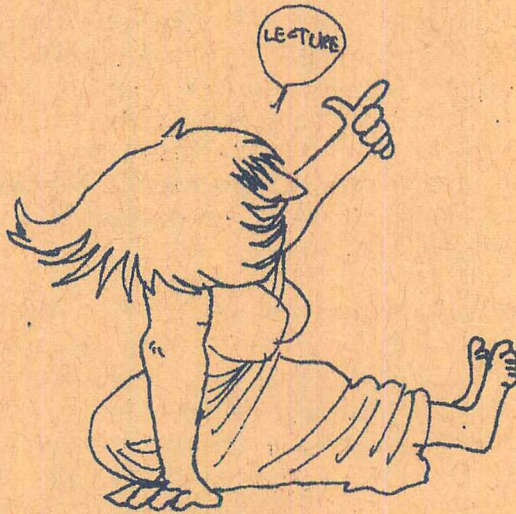
by

Sheila Gilbert

THE BRITISH ARE COMING!!! THE BRITISH ARE COMING!!! Or, to be exact, Marsha, our transplanted American, Eddie, the bona fide Liverpuddlian, and Tom Hogan, descended from generations of staunch Irish pub owners, were on their way to America for the first annual Foopercon. It all started the day before they arrived, when Mike was dying of some virulent throat infection (probably acrylic and mouth disease) and we had just decided to call Frank Prieto and ask him to pick everyone up at the airport without us coming along. Immediately upon our having decided to call Frank, the phone rings. It is Frank, calling to say that he can't pick them up unless they are willing to wait until around 11:00. Since their plane was due to arrive at 8:50 we gave up and decided to meet them after all.

On the day of the invasion, February 14th, I rushed home from work to find that Mike felt worse and that we would have to make a Saturday doctor's appointment for him. We then called the airline to see if the plane was on time. We were told that it would be 15 minutes late, and would arrive at 8:15 - thirtyfive minutes earlier than we had been told originally. Since it was now 7:45 we had half an hour to get from Edison NJ to Kennedy Airport on the Friday night of Washington's birthday weekend. Several traffic jams, hair-raising near accidents, and numerous toll booths later we arrived at the airport. At 9:00. We figured that with luck everyone would be just getting out of customs and that things would work out fine. Then we took a wrong turn and found ourselves trapped in not one but three wrong turn parking lots. At 10:30 we staggered into the International Arrivals building to discover it abandoned, except for our trio. We still had to wait because Marsha, not having been able to get ahold of us, had phoned Frank. Finally, at some point between 11:00 and 12:00 we made our precarious way back to Edison where food and goodies awaited us all.

Saturday was the surprise anniversary party. My father had decided to give my mother a surprise party for their 32nd anniversary and I had volunteered Mike's services to do the catering. Poor sick Mike had been dragging himself around making turkey and fancy hors d'oeuvres, and all kinds of good things to eat. Saturday morning we raced to the doctor where we discovered that Mike was suffering from two different types of bacteria holding a germ warfare competition in his mouth. Then we spent twice as long investigating every pharmacy to try and find the exotic medicine he needed. Meanwhile my father was busy getting my mother out of the house by taking her to see the longest movie he could think of, Godfather, Part 2. My sister Paula picked up the cake and the other party foods and we were all set to go when we realized that we had a problem. How do you fit five people, a turkey, and tons of food into a Datsun B210??? You don't. We called Paula and Donald, her husband, to form a car caravan, little suspecting that it will turn into a Keystone Cops episode. Donald said that they would be over at 3:30 and that the food and I will go with them. When they arrive at 5:00 Eddie is having a hernia attack and decided to stay home. After much confusion we loaded the cars. Mike decided to follow us, little suspecting what folly such an idea is with Washington sale day shopping. Donald stopped to put air in his tires. Mike stopped on



US 1 to wait for him. That's when the chaos took over. When we managed to get back on US 1, we noticed Mike waiting at the side of the road. However the traffic was so bad that he couldn't see us go by. So, at the first possible chance, we circled around to pass him again, only to find him gone. We drove on, hoping to catch up with him, but we didn't see his Datsun once on the trip, except when we arrived at my parent's building at the same time. Despite being late, and except for such minor mishaps as nearly blowing up the house, we got everything set up with the help of a capable neighbour, and were ready when the guests arrived. The only people who didn't show up were my parents. They were an hour late to their own party because the movie was even longer than my father had expected. But, once my mother recovered from the shock of finding all the people in her house, a good time was had by all...

Sunday, we relaxed!

On Monday we decided to brave the crowds and give Tom Hogan his first sight of our super shopping mall - there was a monster shopping mall a couple of miles down the road. Tom was thoroughly boggled and decided that as well as taking a fully stocked supermarket back to England he would also like a shopping center. I think what really got him were all the wild birds that live there all year round. That afternoon Cory and Alexei Panshin came by, and we had our new szechuan dinner. After all, we had to make Mike cook at least one meal at home.

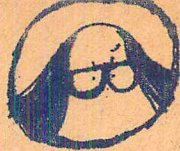
Tuesday I stayed home with a virus I had come down with on Sunday. To make the day exciting we received a letter threatening us with eviction if we didn't dispose of our cat. Then came Wednesday.

On Wednesday Mike discovered that the car wouldn't start unless you pushed it down a hill; Eddie felt so poorly that they all had to rush off to the hospital to make sure he wasn't having a heart attack. We had planned to take Tom into the city to see New York but, needless to say, no one went into the city that day.

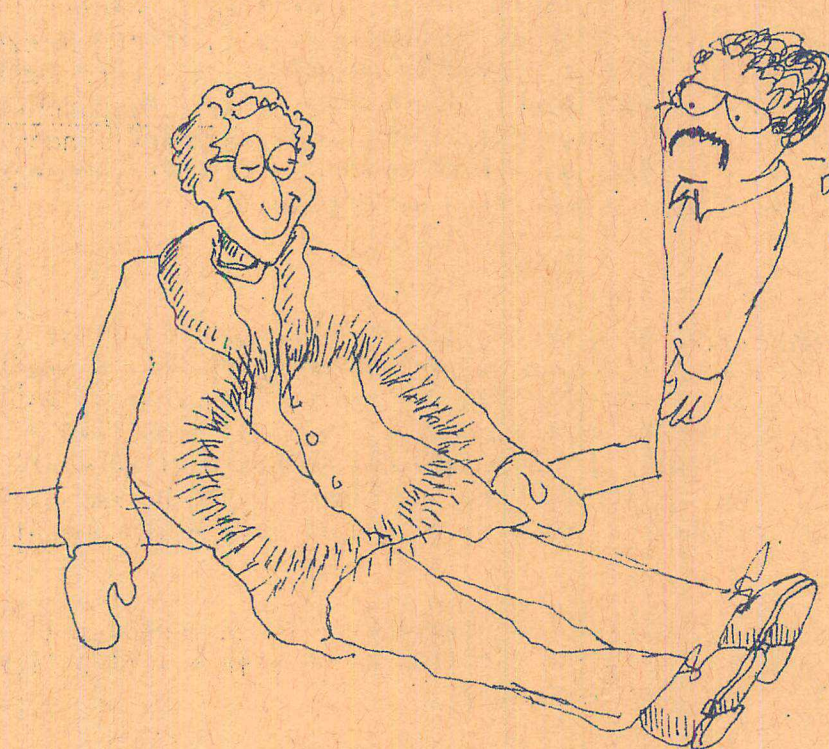
On Thursday Marsha and I took Tom into town to play "see the city, Tom." We introduced him to a New York deli corn beef sandwich, which he loved, and to celery soda, which he despised on taste. On Friday Marsha had lunch with her old boss and invited him to Boskone, while Tom ate corned beef and toured the city on his own. Naturally he ran into two people from Liverpool whom he hadn't seen in five years. Why else do people come to America???

Friday night we set out for Rochester to visit Mike's parents. This was a combined visit and cat abandonment ceremony. Titania, obviously knowing that we were up to no good, escaped from the car and had to be chased all over the parking lot in the dark. What with little delays like this we didn't get to Rochester until three in the morning. The cat wreaked her revenge on us for the whole trip by kicking litter on everyone's heads. This was the first time we had ever had trouble with her on a car trip so we naturally blamed it all on Marsha and Eddie.

While we were there Mike went to his third doctor in a week and got still another set of medicines. We took Marsha and Eddie to Hickory farms, where everyone bought tea, and cakes, and cheeses, and candies, and ... the fixings for a chocolate mint liquor milk shake for Tom, who had remained behind to sightsee in NY over the weekend. Sunday we sunck off to Edison with a guilty conscience about having abandoned Titania. We later learned that she hadn't even noticed that we had gone, and that she was already terrorizing the entire household. At five months she was learning rapidly how to get herself kicked out of all of the best places; there has been some speculation that she is not really a cat but a vengeful alien.

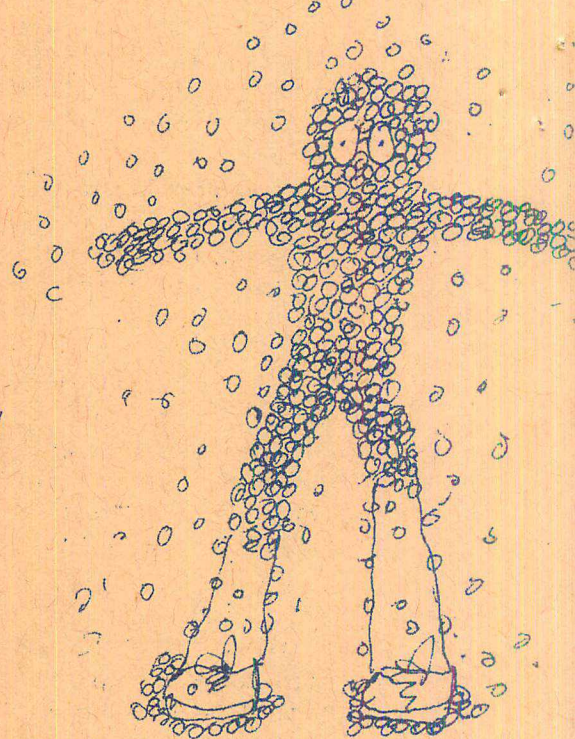


UNCLE DICKIE SAYS:
"ONLY USE PEANUT OIL
AND FINE CARBIDE
STONE TO SHARPEN YOUR
CORK POPPER FOOPERS..."



KON TIKI
HAROLD'S
AND
BARNEY'S
DOES IT
AGAIN

The Attack of The FOOPERS



The Catastrophe of The Vaster Blinded By E CLARE



AHHHHH

MONDO AIRBRUSH!



WOOSH



Oh yes, lest I forget, Marsha had given David, her ex-boss, Leslie's phone number to call her at if he decided to go to Boston. David, having decided to go that same day, had called Leslie to get our number so he could call Marsha in New Jersey to find out how to get to Boskone.

On Monday the intrepid travelers were all ready to set off to Boston - almost. They didn't make it that day because Eddie still didn't feel well enough to sit on a bus for four hours. (Eddie was suffering from severe muscle strain in his chest which was to plague him for the whole trip.) That night we made our big mistake; we let Tom loose in an IHOP (International House of Pancakes.) After having consumed soup, chili, and a mighty burger platter, he was ready to start on the pancakes. He had flabbergasted the waitress by this display of eating prowess. He amazed the rest of us by eating his pancakes like spaghetti. You've never lived until you've seen someone twirling pancakes around his fork. We were so shocked at Tom's performance that we made sure that everyone got on the Boston bus on Tuesday.

PEACE AND QUIET!!! Mike and I had three days of peace and quiet to recover from all of that running around before we, too, headed up for Boston in our cute little dirty green car. We had a pleasant drive to Boston with thoughts of Legal Seafood spinning in our heads, and had no trouble finding our way until we took a wrong turn at the last moment. That didn't matter much because we proceeded to make one wrong turn after another when we got to the Prudential Center, and ended up having to carry Mike's artwork half way across the Center.

We finally got up to the artshow room where we found Leslie moving tables around and people putting up hangings. It was then that we discovered our next calamity; a bottle of black ink had leaked all over the bag with Mike's paintings in it. Luckily only two maps and an introduction were ruined. As we were setting up, Marsha and Eddie arrived and we quickly abandoned the artshow for a trip to Legal Seafood, where we all made pigs of ourselves.

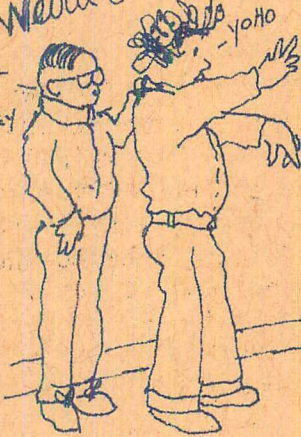
Needless to say, we got lost coming and going. Worse still, Mike started foopering at the other cars on the road. This was the start of a plague of foopers which, by now, has probably spread all over Boston, Liverpool, and New Jersey, and may soon infect Pennsylvania. For those of you who are unacquainted with the fine art of foopering, it is all a matter of intonation and proper conjugation. Thus, one could never confuse "Foop off" with "you're a pack of foopers", or "who left those foopers all over here". Now that you know, foop in good health.

I can't say too much about Boskone; Mike and I spent most of the weekend with Howie Green at almost any place but the hotel. There are, however, a few memorable things besides food which stick in my mind about Boskone. There were all of the films that we never got to. There were the dinners at Trader Vic's that Marsha and Eddie and a cast of thousands went to and gleefully told us about afterwards. There was Tony Lewis's outfit for the Heyer Tea, which was in very good ton. There was the masquerade, which we missed most of, but which I'm told had some nice costumes. And there were the parties...

...and the nasty hotel credit manager. The hotel credit manager was an unprepossessing sort of fellow who thought it was his special duty to close parties down, peer through keyholes, and in all ways possible, make himself a nuisance. We heard many rumors of his activities, but our only direct confrontations occurred in the hallway outside of the Washington party, where he hove into view, demanding to know if we'd rented this part of the hallway. Being polite people, we refrained from telling him what we thought of his

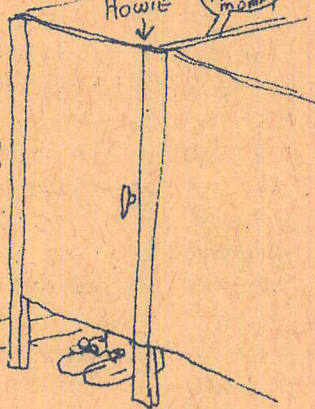
Weirdos In The Men's Room

OH WATER
YOU'RE
SO SILEY

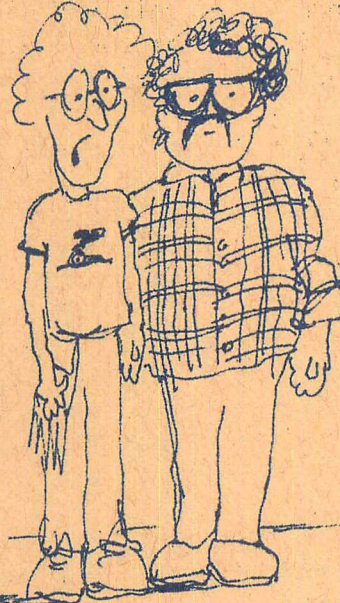


Howie

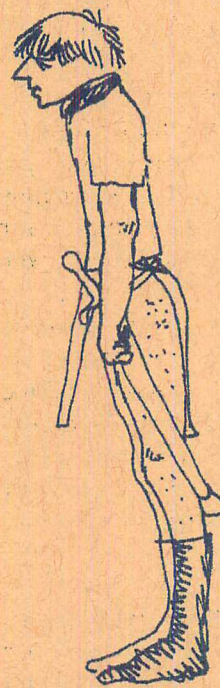
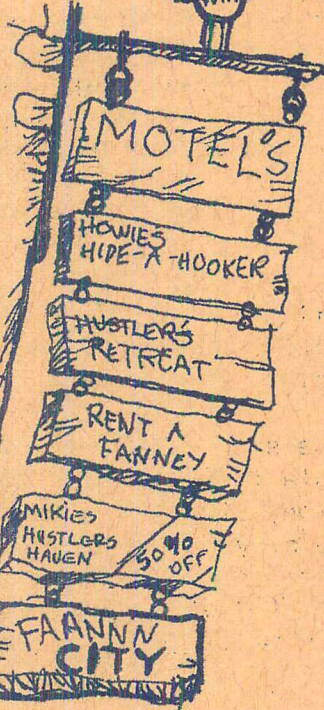
HELP
MOMMY



OH JEEZ GILLEY
HASNT HE DIED YET



I'M AN
SF FAN
AND I'M
I'M WE
ALL NI
AND I
STRAN
ALL
DA



HOWIE!
IT'S GOT
DIAPER
RASH

IF AFFECTATION WAS HOT AIR
THIS HOTEL WOULD FLOAT
TO THE MOON

UNCLE DICKIE SAYS:
"WHEN IT'S WINE,
KEEP THE LEGS UP!"

WIN



cleverly tactful remark. We thought we had seen the last of him when we left there. But, as we paused on another floor to talk to some people by the elevators, he rampaged along again, demanding to know if we were waiting for the elevators and, if not, that we had better move along. We later learned that this chap had been on the warpath all over the hotel until he was finally caught. After Stu had a talk with the management the credit manager was told that if he stuck his head above the third floor he would lose his job. So if you have a problem call the action reporter, Stu, and he'll get action.

Several other things of a highly amusing nature happened at the con such as the Hogan hat contest, and we are not going to tell you how it all came out lest we be sued by the participants. Having restrained ourselves on that subject, we certainly won't tell you the funny art related happenings because some people are better off not knowing about things like that.

Monday morning came and it was time to collect Marsha and Eddie, direct Tom to a bus, and head back to New Jersey. The return trip was so restful that everyone, including the driver, almost fell asleep, so we decided to play that party game that is all the rage - Boskone imitations. I leave it to your imagination to fill in the details. But the toll booth sitters certainly seemed interested. The only other outstanding thing about the drive was that we got to watch the police convoys go by. They must have been going to policeman's camp, or perhaps they were just trying to make all of the motorists nervous. It's amazing to watch what twenty police cars and busses can do to traffic patterns. We got home to find everything as it should be, except that Tom wasn't there. We figured he'd decided to stay in New York and twirl pancakes on 42nd Street. However he showed up at 9:30, just in time to eat.

Tuesday was rest and recuperation. We had another try at the Chinese restaurant which had decided to stay open this time. We stuffed ourselves on fantail shrimp, mo sho pork, spicy triple delight, and Mongolian beef. Then they had the nerve, if not the capacity, to go to Breyer's and buy five different flavors of ice cream. Groan! There's still some ice cream left.

Eddie's sightseeing had been curtailed because of health problems. On Wednesday he finally got into New York; Brentano's hasn't been the same since. Mike even came into the city as we were all scheduled to visit my parents that night. My mother said that she'd made a roast and a chicken so there would be enough for everyone. She didn't reckon with Tom - and we'd given him a filling lunch too! However he got the proper Jewish mother treatment and was told that he should find a nice girl and settle down. We all said we were working on it. Applications should be sent to...

Thursday night was the great disaster. Everything seemed to finally settle down and we didn't think much more could go wrong than already had. So it was with confidence that we ate our supper which consisted of chicken something-or-other (quite a nice something-or-other, too) and a delicious home-made soup that was sitting brimful on the stove. After all of us had eaten we were sitting placidly working on a mustery jigsaw puzzle when we heard a peculiar and rather horrifying noise. Brave Mike crept into the kitchen, and such foopers you have never heard. The giant pot of soup had neatly dumped its contents across the entire kitchen floor, up the wall, and on the cabinets and the oven. In this kamikaze flight the pot had also succeeded in wrecking itself. We were left with no soup (perhaps I mean too much soup), a ruined pot, and a disgusting clean-up job. Marsha and I got the privilege of performing it while those three sadists stood by clicking their cameras at us. In the middle of our creative play time Richard called up and got to hear the whole sad soupy tale. See what you get yourself into Richard - or was the soup-spilling your diabolical revenge for Mike's shiny jokes?



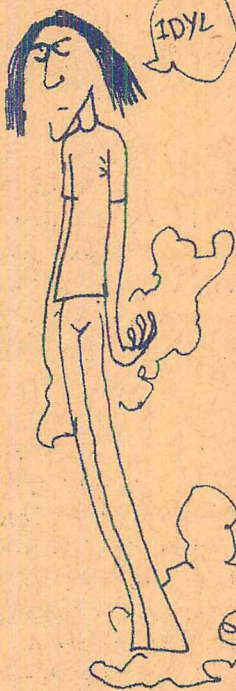
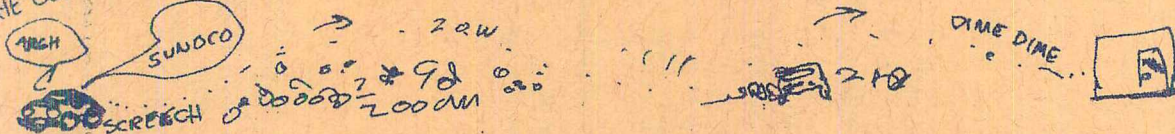
UNCLE DICKIE SAYS!
DON'T BREAK YOUR CORK
AND STAY TUNED FOR
BICENTENNIAL WINE



THE GERM



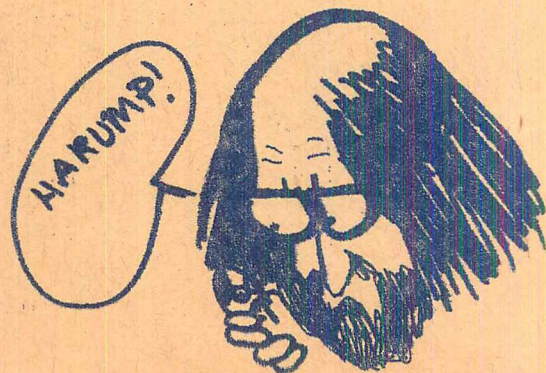
THE OLD ARTS TALE



4 Hours later...



BI-CENTENNIAL
FOOPERS



On Friday our weary and battered, but well-fed crew winged its way back to Liverpool. I got home from work to find everyone ready to go and Frank Prieto had just arrived to drive us to Kennedy. That was when we did one smart thing and one dumb thing. The dumb thing was to forget to call the airport to see if the plane was leaving on time. If we had, we would have discovered that the flight was postponed till 1:00 AM. The clever thing we did was to leave early for the airport - that is, it would have been clever if it hadn't been for the flight delay. It was just as well because as soon as we had left the parking lot we got a flat tire. Frank then cut his hand getting out all of the tire changing gear, so Mike and I started back to the house for first aid supplies. By the time we got back the tire was almost changed. With these little delays we got to the airport in what would have been on time if the flight hadn't been delayed. We had five hours to kill. Being sensible we went up to the bar/restaurant which is where everyone else wen. Much to our surprise and annoyance, at 10:30 all of the lights in the place started going out and everyone was kicked out to stand around and wait until boarding time. Mike and Tom, not about to put up with such cavalier behaviour, went over to American Airlines and patronized their bar. So there! At long last it was midnight, and we got to watch Tom make the security scheck buzz five times before it let him through. We waved them all goodbye and went home to foop out. So, merry foopers to you all, and to all a good night.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo
oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo
oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

Or, as Nathan Childers, author of the best-seller *Eating your Way Through Ruthenia*, once said, "Travel is so broadening."

I just happened to be glancing at *Dacey on Mutual Funds*, and a passage on the mutual fund float caught my eye. Mutual funds, you see, do not ordinarily handle the collecting and disbursing of monies and shares themselves; a bank will do this for them as a trust agent. Besides their fee they also get a bit of gravy known as the float. There is a period of a few days between the time that money arrives from a customer and it actually gets in the account of the mutual fund in which the bank has the use of the money. The bank puts it to work during the time it has its hands on it, thus making money on someone else's money - in short, getting the risks and profits of investment without having to put up any money.

Dacey was discussing the delays that sometimes occur in redeeming mutual fund shares and the conflict of interest that the float engenders. (It is the duty of the Bank as a trust agent to act swiftly; it is to the financial advantage of the Bank to be dilatory.) I quote, "There is nothing wrong with the bank's using these sums, but it is certainly wrong for the bank to increase the float, and thus increase its profits, by deliberately delaying payment of redemptions."

Dacey is a rather hardnosed and blunt critic of the financial industry. He has had some rather caustic things to say about the probate courts, the mutual fund industry, stock exchange specialists, the banks, etc. However he misses a point here, and I think it is an important point, for it is symptomatic of what is wrong with the ethics of the entire financial industry.

[continued on next rock]

The point is simply that there is something wrong with the banks using these sums of money. The bank is an agent of trust. I have, say, given the bank a sum of money with which to purchase shares of a mutual fund, and to hold these shares in trust. This money does not belong to the bank and for it to use these funds and profit from them is a violation of that trust. It is, in simple terms, both dishonest and unethical - whether it is legal or not.

It can be argued that there is no harm in this sort of thing. The argument is simple; neither the fund nor its purchaser have the use of the money during the period of the float; they cannot profit from it and the bank can so it may as well. Further, there is no violation of trust because the money is in no danger. The argument can be dressed up but that is the nub of it. It is a wholly meretricious argument.

These are the arguments of an embezzler, of any violator of trust. The embezzler contends to himself that his employer will not miss the sums that he borrows; that he means to put them to good use (for he has need of them and can use them and his employer obviously has no need of them at the moment) and that they can be safely replaced. He usually errs on the safety and the replaceability, of course. Still, most embezzlements do succeed. Most of the time the money is borrowed, used, and returned - no one is ever hurt, and no one ever knows. (How do I know this? It can be statistically inferred - most embezzlers are trapped by untoward and unusual events. Most of the time the accidents that expose the average embezzler do not occur.)

Now it can be argued that the cases are not at all analogous for the embezzler operates in secret (with an eye out for the auditors) and the banks are quite blatant and open about their little swindle (not their language, to be sure.) That much is true. However it is more a matter of the actions of the embezzler being illegal and those of the bank being quite within the law. (Banks have always had more pull with legislatures than embezzlers have.) The essence of the matter remains the same; a person (be it bank or embezzler) takes money which belongs to someone else and which is entrusted to it to be used for a purpose specified by that other party and it uses that money for its own purposes to its own profit. It remains dishonest.

It can be argued that the employers of the banks in these matters (the mutual funds and their patrons) have given their implied consent to these practices. In truth, they have. If I hire a man and he tells me before I hire him that he will steal from me, I have no cause for complaint when he does so. But one must remember that if one can find no honest agents than one must hire dishonest ones if one is to hire any agent at all. And it can be hard to find an honest agent when dishonesty is "accepted business practice." It must be remembered that most are all too ready to acquiesce, both because they feel powerless in the matter and because they perceive no direct harm to themselves.

It can be argued that the interest that the bank collects is only an indirect fee and that the same amount of money would have to be paid anyway. The argument may be made that it is perfectly normal for banks to borrow money which they use to make a profit on. What, after all, is the difference between borrowing money at 5% and lending it out at 10%, and borrowing money and using the interest to, in effect, reduce the handling costs of transmitting it? So it can be argued. It is a false analogy and a false set of arguments. First of all the bank does not pay interest on the float for the period of time that it has control. Secondly they are not being given this money as a loan; they have been hired as trust agents to transmit it. Their use of it creates an unavoidable conflict of interest, a situation which is in fundamental violation of the conditions of being a trust agent.

It is an essential element of being a trust agent that one does not profit in any way from the trust and the control of the trust except for the stated and agreed upon fees. As soon as the trustee can profit from the control of the trust a conflict of interest is created. (It must be conceded that there are many trustee situations where there is an unavoidable conflict of interest, but that is not the case here and is not relevant here.)

Dacey criticises the banks for yielding to the conflict of interest. It happens and they must be faulted for it. However the real fault lies in the use of other people's money as their own. It could be done differently; the redemptions and purchases could be strictly segregated and any money which the bank enjoys the use of temporarily (this is unavoidable) could be treated as a loan to the bank on which interest was paid. This would remove the inherent conflict of interest. It would remove the inherent incentive for the bank to be dilatory about handling purchases and redemptions.

The fiscal ethics of the financial industry are inherently defective. "Ethics" in the financial industry all too often means not exploiting the conventional conflicts of interest more than the amount dictated by standard business practice. For example, it was (and may still be) customary to use their customers money and stocks and bonds in the conduct of their own business. They did not maintain segregated accounts. It is still standard practice for stock brokers to act both as advisors and as salesmen. In fact there are numerous conflicts of interest built into the brokerage business, conflicts too numerous and complicated to go into.

It is not just a question of the ancient sin of greed and the inherent fallibility and greed of Man. The standard practices of the financial industry are streaked with dishonesty. The law accepts many of these practices as being quite alright. (Every once in a while some particularly vicious and blatant abuse gets legislated against in a burst of reform and everyone involved pats themselves on the back.) And the prevailing ethos is and always has been that sharp practice and working the angles is something to be achieved, not something to be rooted out.

November 27, 1974
Andy Porter
PO Box 4175
New York NY 10017

Dear Perceptice Richard Harter

Thanks for the review. It was one of the most interesting, astute, and reasonable reviews I've seen for ALGOL, and I thought you might like to know some things about ALGOL which you may not know. ALGOL's pressrun is now 3000. I'd originally planned to have it up to 3500 this issue but the growth curve has started to slow (helped in the last few months by the recession.)

Bookstore sales/distribution of the current issue is about 850 initially. I expect reorders to make that total go over 1000. The SF Shop in New York sold 160 copies of last issue. Foreign subscriptions are up and I now have 71 subscriptions in Canada, 40 in the UK, 35 in Europe, 24 in Australia, and another 20 throughout the rest of the world. In addition, bookstore sales in Canada now total 100 copies per issue, and through Dick Witter, who is now handling wholesale distribution, I've regained UK and Australian bookstore sales, and hope to have them in France, Italy and Germany soon.

I don't know if you're aware of it, but I do make my living in trade magazine production. Currently I'm production manager on MODERN FLOOR COVERINGS, CONTRAC, FLOOR COVERINGS, TOY & HOBBY WORLD, and NONFOODS MERCHANDISING. All are small

[PERSONAL NOTES] [Andy Porter]

trade publications with pressruns of 15-20,000 copies. I have one assistant, and worked previously on QUICK FROZEN FOODS, edited by Sam Moskowitz, and later BOATING INDUSTRY and ELECTRONIC PURCHASING (all published by Cahners Publishing.) I'm entirely self-taught, having no previous experience in production. The job I held before I began doing production was copy editing at Lancer Books.

Also, for what it's worth, I edit the hell out of the lettercolumn. Someone said once in FAPA that the ideal mailing comment should manage to say something about what you're talking about as well as being a self-contained article unto itself, and I think the letters should be the same thing, especially when you're dealing with a six month lapse between issues. Also, grouping the letters and interspersing broad subject groups with illustrations helps somewhat.

As should be evident, I don't edit the hell out of the letter column, but I can afford not to. One problem with sharp editing is that the letter column and the letters tend to become quite choppy. A single long letter is usually much more interesting than a number of fragments, it seems to me.

Finally, I'm now paying for all material. Make of that what you will. I share the honor with Geis's ALIEN CRITIC. The next issue features a four color cover by Mike Hinge, courtesy the power of money. Rather than make money off the magazine, like Geis, however, I'm using what money there is over and above expenses to do things, like four color covers and higher payments for contributors. I also tend to subsidize foreign subscription, although that may change in the future (inflation.) Also, I trade with fanzines like PERSONAL NOTES, and that's definitely not any form of professional conduct.

You pay for all of your material; What should I make of that? Why, one might well ask, should any one make anything of that? Because, sir, you have broken the tribal law. And it is well known that that is by far a more serious offense than any mere ethical or moral failing. (To be sure, many people confuse the two.) And there are those who make much of it as we both well know.

Nominally the complaint is that ALGOL, et al, are not fanzines and therefore should not be in contention for fanzine awards. Actually the real complaint is that ALGOL is not a fanzine within the traditional concept. There is a subculture called SF fandom; this subculture has various assumptions, taboos, and rituals. The old ways are changing; the subculture is all too successful, and the conservatives don't like it one damn bit.

The complaint really is that something like ALGOL (or SFR or LOCUS) exists at all. In the traditional matrix fanzines are relatively small circulation, inexpensively produced, and intensely oriented towards the fan subculture. They are supposed to be financially innocent - that is, they are not supposed to be produced as a commercial or quasi-commercial product. ALGOL violates most of the fiats.

It does so for two reasons. First of all you have a vision of excellence which you wish to pursue. The money, the circulation makes that pursuit possible. But, more importantly, the market is there. It is possible to have a press run of several thousand. There are SF bookstores in most of the major cities. High quality fanzines will sell in their own right. Given the existence of the market the existence of magazines like ALGOL is almost inevitable. It is also inevitable that they will be put out by someone like yourself or Dick Geis. Who else has the desire, the persistence, the experience, and the contacts, other than old time hard core fanzine fans who are semi-pros?

One has to concede to the conservatives that they have a legitimate point of view. Fandom has developed a subculture with a set of tribal bylaws that work. One of the precepts of the subculture, which has been developed into a moral fiat, is that Thou Shalt Not Make Money Off of Fandom. This tradition has certain well defined exceptions, but, on the whole, it is treated with the force of a moral commandment. This precept or commandment works, and was necessary for the existence of fandom as it existed heretofore. There are two factors involved. First of all, commercial considerations are destructive of the sense of community that is one of the prized features of fandom. Secondly, much of what is done in fandom could not be if money were a consideration. For example, most conventions could not be put on if it were not for the unpaid labor of those putting it on and the willingness of the panelists and speakers to appear without charge. None but a small handful of fanzines could exist if all paid for their material and all were run to make a profit. The entire network of association would collapse if there were a cash value placed on each connection.

In truth, fandom and the activities of fandom did not pay and could not be made to pay. (With qualifications, of course, but petty sharpening is not the same as economic feasibility.) It was easy, therefore, to make a moral duty out of a practical necessity. Times change. Today we have the convention run explicitly to make money; today we have the money making fanzine with its circulation list of thousands and its semi-professional appearance and quality. The activities of fandom, at least some of them, can be made to pay and are being made to pay. Is this good? Damned if I know. I should like to see ALGOL have a circulation of 15000 and earn enough for you to live on. I wish you luck. All I know is that time changes and the old ways pass and that they are not brought back by turning one's face to the wall.

November 29, 1974
Marsha Jones
25 Mount Way
Merseyside, Wirral
L63 5RA, England

Dear Richard:

PERSONAL NOTES #4 arrived the day before yesterday (only a week after #3) and I was quickly inspired to sit down and write a letter of comment to tell you how much I'd enjoyed it and that Eddie and I

have both decided to nominate it for the Hugo. And, if a batch of others decide to do likewise it will serve you right. (Anything within reason for a friend, after all.)

Promises, promises, nothing but promises. However I shall revive my nefarious campaign for a Hugo this spring. What do you think of the idea of taking out ads in all of the major fanzines, begging people to vote for PN? Or do you think that an ad in Galaxy will be sufficient?

I enjoyed your junkyard format and sympathized with the problem which resulted in the appearance of a letter column when, of course, we must realize that it was no such thing, and that the letters merely happened to occur sequentially. Had you ever thought of writing your comments first and then printing the letters?

I think that is an excellent idea. Should I do it before, after, or instead of reading the letters? And what about the idea of printing my comments instead of the letters? I do think that has some interesting possibilities.

I've given some thought to the matter of why horseback riding should be so strongly taken up by young women and haven't been able to figure out any rationale for it. I enjoy riding myself, but I didn't develop a passion for it as a teenager. I didn't have any idea that this was something I'd like until Leslie, wanting company, persuaded me that I wanted to try it about three years ago. Judging by the few times I've been able to get transport to one of the local riding schools, the female/male ratio seems to be more or less similar here, though perhaps not quite so strongly female dominated. But when you look at things like the show jumping field (show jumping is very popular on TV here) you find only a very few of the top show jumpers are women. Those who do participate at the top level compete on equal terms with the men and collect as many prizes as their male counterparts, but why aren't there more of them? Three day eventing (includes dressage, show jumping, and a cross country jump course) seems to be more equally divided between male and female participants. Hunting (foxes, it is still popular here) seems to be slightly male dominated but not as much as the show jumping is.

The disparate competition in equestrian events seems to be another instance of a more general pattern. There are a number of sports and types of competition where the superior strength and size of the male of the species give him an inherent advantage over the female. However there are many areas where both sexes can compete on equal terms. Most of these areas are dominated by one sex or the other, usually male. In bridge there is the curious situation that the lower levels are dominated by women but the highest levels are dominated by men. Chess is quite striking; there has never been a woman who played at anywhere near the level of the top male players. Much of this difference is cultural, I expect, but why are there these culturally determined differences. (One subtle bias is that if there are are culturally determined differences between the sexes as to which sports are more interesting then each will tend to think of the sports in which their sex is more likely to be dominant.) I have read, but am not able to place a source, that there is generally more variation among the male of the species than among the female, (e.g. more geniuses and more morons among the males, more defectives and superiors of all sorts.) It sounds reasonable, in view of the supposed greater biological stability of the female. If this is the case then it would not be surprising to find that the top of most sporting events is dominated by males. (And would imply nothing about the comparative capabilities of the average male and female.)

This does not, however, account for the differences that you have observed. There are as many, in fact more, top caliber female riders as there are male riders. They are fully as competitive as males, as far as I can tell. So why should they avoid some areas and flock to others? The answer is probably selection by accidental history. That is, men tend to go into areas where men are more common and women into areas where women are more common. There doesn't need to be any reason other than that and there may well not be.

Sorry to hear that Harvard Square seems to have been getting even more in-fashionable, though I suspect that the Harvard Square I'd be nostalgic about is a slightly more chic, less intellectual one, still it suited me fine as it was during the period I lived there and I get very nostalgic about it on occasion. The magnolias, too.

There have been a number of changes in the square since you left. One of the big ones is that the Garage (which was a parking garage on Boylston street) has been converted into a complex of little stores. There is a coffee store, a cheese shop, an ice cream shop (all very good), the Million Year Picnic, fine wood furniture, etc. Cave Atlantique has moved in there. Lots of neat shops.

I found the Tone Scale thingie interesting. I also enjoyed the fanzine reviews, which 's something I'm not usually interested in. (But, then, I'm not and never have been a fanzine fan, despite the various fanzines I've been associated with.) I was rather charmed by your recounting of the strange beginnings of LOCUS, something I'd not thought about in a number of years. On the whole I'm inclined to agree with your assessments of what makes LOCUS, ALGOL, and Geis what they are. It is also, unfortunately, what makes it so hard to decide which of the three to vote for for the Hugo or whether to vote for something else which might, in a different way, still be deserving of the Hugo. It will be interesting to see what happens if Ed does carry out his periodic threats/promises to revive Neikas. I can't help wondering how Neikas, a magazine which had a distinct, if slightly scrambled, personality would be compared with the current big three. The thing that I remember most clearly about it, besides all the quantities of stencils I typed and the paste-ups I did, was the friendly atmosphere of it, something the big three all tend to lack today. In a way, I think Neikas was a personalzine that just got out of hand and grew. Most personal zines that grow also turn into something other than a personal zine but Neikas always seemed to me to be a personal zine masquerading as a genzine in embarrassment at the zine it had achieved. I'd like to see it revive.

Well, so would I. That's an interesting thought about NEIKAS being a friendly zine. Now that I think on it, that is a rare characteristic in big time fanzines. Mostly the big zines become impersonal (although SFR cannot really be said to be impersonal) or suffused with controversy. (A major fault, by the way, in OUTWORLDS but not in SFR - Bowers cannot hold his own as an arena master and Geis can. Both are cockpits for feudists to snarl at each other; but Geis puts strength of content in the material which is not feudist and the contents of OUTWORLDS which are not the effusions of the feudists seems rather pallid by contrast.) It may be simply a matter that NEIKAS was always much more communal in its creation and spirit.

Another characteristic of NEIKAS that was quite unusual (and would be even more so today) was the blatant non-professionalism of its appearance. The big three are all quite professional (whatever that means.) To illustrate, consider SFR, which most people do not think of in terms of superlative layout - which it is. The layout in SFR is not slick and pretty; it is uniform and functional, designed to make the magazine easy to read and to direct and hold the readers attention to the text, without getting in the way. NEIKAS, on the other hand, always had a jumble of typefaces, layouts, etc., that were erratic individually, and mediocre collectively. This is good. I say it is good, because there is a danger in being too "good" in layout and format. Quality and consistency of format do not leave any room for the unexpected, the merely erratic expression of personal idiosyncrasy. Personal rambling is difficult when one is dedicated to a polished finished product.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

"He was the kind of man for whom everything seemed to go wrong all the time. Whenever he wanted to play golf, it rained. Whenever he seeded the postage-stamp lawn of his rickety little suburban house, it stopped raining. When he tried to beat the system once by seeding the lawn in the morning and planning a golf game in the afternoon, he dropped a 50-pound bag of fertilizer on his foot, incapacitating himself for a week. The sun shone the whole time."

... Description of an odd-lotter (small scale stock market player) quoted from Confessions of a Wall Street Insider ...

Bill Bowers
PO Box 2521
North Canton
OH 44720
1/1/75

Dear Richard [or whatever]

Many thanks for the four issues of PERSONAL NOTES,
which is rapidly becoming one of my favorite zines.
(Thank 'ee kindly, sir.) Your review of OW 20 was
the most perceptive in regards to what I'm trying to do,

and was therefore one of the most enjoyable I've seen. For that I thank you
sincerely.

Your examination of LOCUS/TAC/ALGOL in #4 was very well done (though I note
you seem to have aced Susan out of any influence on NERG, the same way a lot of
people think LOCUS is entirely Charlie and completely ignore Dena), and I, too,
would like to see you do more similar things. Somebody has to show Glicksohn how
these things are done...

*But did Susan have any influence on NERG? Other, that is, than working on it
and tossing in some occasional material now and then. Regardless of who
did the work, one very much got the impression that it was almost entirely
Mike's zine. The type of layout and the type of material reflected Mike's
previously expressed tastes and ideas. In the editorials and the letter col
it was Mike's hand that was most visible. Not saying, mind you, that it wasn't
jointly conceived and created - merely that one got the impression that it was
more Mike's zine. Case open to be heard.*

*On the other hand LOCUS is pretty much Charlie Brown. To be sure Dena does
most of the work (or may) and big chunks of the writing. Is her role in the
production of LOCUS anything other than that of chief coolie - the most important
of the many sources of labor that Charlie taps? Would the absence of Dena
affect LOCUS in any significant way? I doubt it.*

*I appreciate your kind words about the various fanzine reviews I have been
putting in. In truth, however, I really don't think that they are particularly
deep or profound. The one thing that I did do is touch on a question which
is interesting and does have some profundity - namely, why does someone put
out a fanzine at all? Fanzines are, by and large, rather dubious ephemera.
If one bears this in mind one can pose a number of questions, such as: What
do fanzines actually offer to their readers and creators? Do fanzines have
any merits that can be judged other than in the artificial values of fandom?
Er, that last is a little muddled. What I was getting at is that, in large
part, the values of fandom - what is important and why it is important - are
artificial. They assume their importance only if they are agreed upon by the
participants. (The fact that it is a game is not always recognized by all of
the players.) Within the artificial bounds of fandom fanzines and certain
aspects of fanzines assume great value and importance. It is in terms of
the artificial values of the game that they are usually discussed. The
question then is: Are fanzines in general or any particular fanzine worth
discussing in any other terms than those of fandom? For example, George
Orwell, who was both a socialist and a literary man, did literary studies
on a wide variety of subjects, such as humorous post cards, and boys adventure
stories, as well as more conventional literary topics because he felt it was
important to understand the literature that people were actually reading.
If George Orwell had written an essay on fanzines what would he have said?*

*A fascinating question. What would have Orwell said? What would have he
seen as important; what would he have noticed that fans have been oblivious
to? Fanzine fandom is a bastion of personalized journalism - probably the
most significant, largest, and longest lasting Samizdat. (Not quite true -
small magazine publishing embraces a good deal more than SF fandom these days.)*

[Bill Bowers][PERSONAL NOTES]

One can think of various things to say about fanzines as a class of expression. Quite often they are no more an exotic form of adolescent self expression - indeed this may be their principal function in practice. One might rhapsodize about them being the ultimate in a free press. One might concentrate on the relatively small numbers of people involved and the transientness of the involvement. One might take a close look at the social background of fandom (which tends to be resolutely middle class.) And one might consider the following proposition: Fanzines represent pretty much of an ultimate in a free press. The whole idea of a free press is of fundamental political consequence. Yet fanzines and the fanzine related subculture is politically inconsequential. (Unlike the underground press which came later, was much more extensive, and was consequential politically and socially.)

.....

Don Lundry
18 Karen Drive
Cherry Hill NJ 08003
Nov 3, 1974

Dear Dick

Thanks for the issues of PERSONAL NOTES.
I appreciate it and would like to subscribe forthwith so as not to miss any

of your scintillating prose. As a mathematician, I'm sure you will appreciate the enclosed check for \$0.01 computed per your implied formula of $(\$10.00/n + \text{sub fee.})$ This should entitle me to the next one thousand issues. On second thought, since checks cost me 10¢ each, I'll give you the penny the next time I see you. However, as a good businessman, I insist on a receipt...

There is one small detail which I forgot to mention. Although, as advertised, the sub fee is ten dollars for one issue, five for two, etc., there is also a handling fee. The amount of this handling fee is secret. If you want a subscription this is what you have to do: Send in the amount of the subscription and an extra amount to cover what you guess the handling fee might be. If you have guessed right you will have a subscription starting as of the next issue. If you haven't you won't have. Sorry, all monies tendered are non-returnable...

Your comments in #1 on horse back riding I found fascinating. I finally found out a lot of things about the theory that I never knew. I had the unfortunate problem of learning to ride on a farm in Illinois owned by my family. Never learned any theory, just how to ride.

My only encounter with a horse since then (pre-teen) was one that my daughter was going to ride about a year ago at a day camp. I was talking to the director and made some casual comment about not having ridden in many years and looked forward to my daughter riding. I made some gesture towards the horse we were standing beside and she stopped me with that withering look only ~~foxy~~ horse freaks can muster and pointed out that I was on the wrong ~~side~~. When I asked what she meant, she said that of course a horse could only be mounted from one side. I felt like asking her whether God or the horse had ordained this, but my repartee wasn't that quick. She apparently felt this was something ingrained into every horse at birth. It was tempting to point out that out in the real world where a horse was a means of transportation and work, they were usually trained to be mounted from either side. Of course, she probably

wouldn't have believed me if I'd told her it was only a question of how the horse was trained. Way back when I started riding, I remember being told that a horse was generally trained to be mounted from only one side, but it never really stuck since all the horses we ever had were trained to be mounted from either side. Probably the left side, since that's where we tightened up the saddle.

But riding was always fun. I'd always wonder on just what the problem was with the people I'd seen here in the east riding English style. Thanks to your explanation it seems somewhat more reasonable.

The real question is why horses are usually trained to be mounted on one side only, since it does make sense to train it to be mounted any which way. I think that the answer resides in the rider rather than in the horse. Granted that most horses are not very bright. Neither are most riders at the level of reflexive physical action. If the rider is trained to mount on the same side in the same manner each time, he will always end up facing forward. However, if he can mount on either side, there is all too good a chance that he will put the wrong foot in the stirrup and end up facing the tail of the horse.

[illegible]

Mike Gilbert is fond of poking fun at his wine snobbish friends and kin. (Mike is the sort who is up on vintage TAB.) To your right is a little letter of comment he did on the subject...

Dear Dickey:

Thought you'd like this wine label
from a bottle we gave Eddie last trip.

Uncle Mike



Personal-size for carstrippers,
6 addicts, muggers, pimps, and
street honeys

Don D'Amassa
19 Angell Drive
E. Providence RI 02914
November 26, 1974

Dear...Sir?

I had a problem with names once, while I was student teaching. The administration wouldn't allow the students to use my first name, and most couldn't (or wouldn't) learn to pronounce D'Amassa. I suggested that they call me "Mr. D.", but my supervising teacher thought that was too informal and lacking in respect. We compromised on "Hey, you."

Your lament for the changing character of Harvard Square struck a sympathetic chord. I'm old enough to remember when two different stores would carry almost totally different stocks, when you could walk out behind the store and watch the owner spinning pottery, or shaping wood on a lathe, or even blowing glass. All that seems to be disappearing lately.

When I was considerably younger (twenty years ago), I used to spend a great deal of time at a nearby farm, helping feed the animals, riding on the back of the tractors, gathering eggs from the henhouse, and dodging the dozen or so goats who seemed to have adopted an instant dislike for me. Next to the farm was an enormous mound of some sort of industrial ash, the side of which provided a forty or fifty foot slope down which we slid on trashcan lids. Beyond this was an open field where we flew kites, followed by a lightly wooded area that was overgrown with blueberry bushes and wild raspberries. I drove through the area a year or two ago. The farm has been converted to a home for the elderly, the ash heap is a shopping mall, the field was gobbled up when the road was widened to handle the increased traffic that resulted when they cleared the woodland and put in a housing development. There's no place for the neighbourhood kids to play now except in the streets.

Maybe it's our conservative sides that make us resent these changes, but then, Central Falls, Rhode Island, recently denied a license renewal to a used bookstore on the basis that it attracted undesirable elements to the city. I can't even begin to figure that one out.

* But what was wrong with a deferential Sir?

* The idea that a store keeper would spin pottery, etcetera, is from an older time. In ye olden times a shopkeeper was, to some extent, a manufacturer. Division of labor has gobbled up all of the old style small merchants. (Except for bakers - and even then I suspect the survival of the individual baker, producing for his own bakery, is mostly a matter of the larger cities.) However we have a new style of on the spot manufactureer. These are the doodad people who make junk jewelry etc (folk art, I believe they call it.) The other big on-the-spot manufacturing activity is the ~~plastic~~ fast food business. Perhaps this is cynical of me, but there is an awful similarity between shaping wood on a lathe and preparing Kentucky fried chicken. Now that I come to think on it though, I see that I may well be mistaken. I have allowed the similarity in products to confuse me. Actually there is a great deal of difference - the wood shaping, etc, was an individual product, prepared by an individual craftsmen in his own style. The vendor of plastic food, although he is engaged in a manufacturing process, is following a standardized product formula. Nominally he is a free entrepreneur managing his own business; actually he is another interchangeable part in the great plastic machine...

[George Flynn][PERSONAL NOTES]

George Flynn
67 Norfolk St.
Cambridge MA 02139
November 23y 1974

Dear Harter, :

The question of whether God can predict
His/Her/Its own actions is interesting.

According to traditional theology, God is outside time and perceives all of time simultaneously. The traditionalists, in Slaughterhouse-5, are given this promise: It would seem that from God's point of view, all God's actions are also simultaneous, so that "predict" would not be applicable. But this leaves the question of whether some of God's actions are themselves completely outside time, and, if so, what, if any, kind of sequence could be attributed to them. The only speculation I am aware of on this subject is St. Augustine's: When asked, "What was God doing before creating Heaven and Earth?" he replied, "Making the Hell for people who ask questions like that!" No doubt a lesson for all of us.)

Well now, Sir, I am going to answer the questions implicit and explicit in your first paragraph. At least I am going to suggest an approach, although it may be a little bit hairy.

First let me reject what I like to call the tapestry interpretation of God, Space and Time. This is the conception of the totality as a sort of four-dimensional space-time tapestry. In this view the whole thing is completed, done, and God has no place within it - She exists outside it. If this is the case then any action by God must be in God's time - an independent timestream in which God can perceive and act on our continuum. This sort of conception is not refutable and is one of common interpretations but it is also not very satisfactory. Prayer to such a deity would be most unsatisfactory. A prayer made to Her in our timestream would be perceived by her as a static event and, if answered, would be answered in her time which we would not perceive at all. Such a picture also presupposes a rigid determinism which is inconsistent with Christian theology: (Free will versus determinism is only really a problem if you must make moral choices in the face of a God who already knows how it turns out.)

Let me propound an alternate picture. First of all, picture time and causality not as a rigid structure but as something like an infinitely long train. The cars are individual events which are loosely couple by causality. The motion of the train corresponds to the motion of the universe through time. Each individual car has its own local time which is loosely connected to its position on the track. The way this works is something like this: Consider an event occurring on 1 January 1975 and the corresponding event on 1 January 1976. In the intervening year a year has passed for both events; however the first event has evolved into the successor. If we look at the train with the vantage point of an outsider it appears both constant and moving along the track. It is constant because the events that occur at any particular time (i.e. position on the track) are constant. It is moving because each particular event moves along the track and becomes all its succeeding events. This sort of picture is considerably more convenient theologically. In this model God exists at all points in time and is the same at all points.

In this model there can be miracles, answers to prayers, etc. Let us suppose, for example, that God decides to grant a miracle and that New York City was not destroyed by an earthquake in 1937.

[PERSONAL NOTES] [George Flynn]

Very well then, let us suppose that this miracle is granted in 1937, of course. But when is 1937? For the New York of 1937 it is right now. For the New York of 1975 it is 38 years in the past. (Without the miracle, of course, it is the Long Island shoals of 1975.) For the New York of 1837 it is a century in the future. These are all different New Yorks which are connected by the chains of becoming and having been.

When the miracle is granted there is a causal discontinuity. Like a shock wave this discontinuity will decay and smooth out into nothing. In 1937 the Miracle happens. In the 1975 which was separated thirty eight years from the miraculous 1937 there was no record of the miracle. In 500 years this will still be true. The New York of 2437 is the New York of the Miracle and the New York of 2475 is the New York in which it didn't happen. However in 500 years the causal discontinuity due to the miracle will pretty much have dissipated. There is a similar propagation of the miracle into the past.

All of this may seem somewhat confusing, but it can be made clear, or at least it can be made to sound as though it could be made clear. The relationship of this model of time and causality to your question of the self-predictability of God's actions is, of course, obvious and will be left as an exercise to the reader. (Hint: reread Aristotle and Aquinas.)

The Chip Delany statement that Alpajpuri cites was in the same article I quoted, which appeared in one of the later issues of SF Review and various other places. He did attempt to distinguish between fiction as a whole and SF, but I'm not about to look it up again. -- Your definition of definition is superb. Definitely.

I quote myself: "Definition may be defined as the process of translating one irreducible concept into another irreducible concept while removing most of the content." Is this the definition you mean?

Fie on Mike Glicksohn. It's bad enough that he wouldn't read that "loc" of mine in PN #3, but does he have to boast about skipping it? (Now that you mention it, it does seem a bit something or the other that isn't quite the thing. Have you considered filing a complaint with the rules committee?) Though of course it is hard to blame him. After all, that little essay on SF definitions wasn't intended for general publication and people who don't know me might get the horrid idea that I was serious (my "humour" being even drier than yours, if such be possible.)

George is referring to the fact that I lifted his APA comments on my original essay and stuck them in PN as though they were commentary for PN. There may have been some inadvertent violation of context.

Interesting discussion of Harvard Square. I get there once every couple of months and you explain a number of things I'd noticed -- in particular, the reason I seldom find anything interesting in Phillips' any more. And on my last visit I discovered the new quarters of Paperback Booksmith, which has completely lost that nice disreputable appearance. (Why they actually have room for one to move around!) But you failed to mention the further doom impending when the Kennedy Library opens; what is it they're predicting, another 5000 tourists a day descending on the Square? The Providence equivalent of Harvard Square, Thayer Street near

[George Flynn] [PERSONAL NOTES]

Brown University, has lately been deteriorating in a somewhat different way. The residents are up in arms because of a proliferation of bars, said to attract "outside troublemakers" and generally make the area unfit to live in after midnight. Things are tough all over.

Excellent fanzine reviews.

Have you ever noticed how trouble makers are always outside trouble makers? How come it is that nobody ever gets up and complains about how his kid is a rummy and all these bars give his kid a chance to get other kids into trouble?

Kennedy Library will never happen to Harvard Square. Never, never, never.

[] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] [] []

[]

BABBLE
oooooo

Which is to say that this particular issue of PN is being closed out with the remainder of this page and the next page. This is not because I have run out of letters of comment on PN #4. No, there are still some more to go. It is not because of any consideration of mercy for my readers; perusal of the contents up to this point will reveal that I have none. No, it is simply that it is January 31, 1976 as I write this and Boskone is February 13, 1976. I should like to get this issue out before Boskone.

Anyway I am cutting this issue short. What I may try to do is to get out a quick issue after Boskone which contains the remaining material in the file. Then again, I may not. My preference would be to put out a quick issue which finish off the back files so that I could start out the issue after talking about all sorts of things that I haven't even mentioned.

What sorts of things, you say? Well, for example, I might like to write about the stock market. A number of years ago I got interested in the market. As it happened, at the time I began to develop my interest I didn't have any money to put in the market (me and money have always had an odd relationship). One does not have to have money in the market to be interested in it, though. In fact, the general experience is that it is considerably easier to understand the market if you don't have any money in it.

Time passeth. By me by, I acquired a small library of books on wall street, and on investment in general. (It occurs to me that my interest in Wall Street is sparked by my childish enthusiasm for ingenious fraud.) It also happened that in due time I began to acquire idle funds which I felt ought to be put to work. Naturally, oh so naturally, they went into the market. It is quite surprising how easy it is to become an investor in the great American Dream. All it takes is one phone call, one check, one envelope, and one stamp. Unfortunately the moment at which I chose to get involved with the market was later 1972. For those of you not familiar with the recent history of the stock market, that was not a good time to get into the market. In January of 1973 the market touched

a peak and went into a long down hill slide. The first half of 1973 was rotten. The second half starred the Arab-Israeli war and the oil embargo. It was even worse. I, along with lots of other lacerated unfortunates, bled profusely at the wallet. Recently, however, it has all come back. Happiness is buying U.S. Shoe at 11 and watch it go to 25. (*U.S. Shoe!!!! I can hear some one saying it. I have heard incredulity in a Broker's voice as he said U.S. Shoe. But that is another story.*)

In any case it would be fun to write about. The stock market, under all that verdure of numbers, is fun. There are many interesting, exotic, fascinating, and peculiar things going on in the world of high finance. There is, after all, something infinitely exhilarating about satiated greed, even if it is only for a moment.

Actually, I would have to violate one of the great conventions of the fanzine field and of the American culture in general. One does not discuss ones finances publicly and in detail. (Unless one is a candidate for public office.)

Other things to talk about. I might write about quitting smoking. Actually, I might. In another two or three months I might have recovered from the trauma enough to be able to write about it objectively. At ~~x~~ this point it has been a little over a month and I am still not entirely prepared to treat it as a random topic of casual conversation. Suffice it to say that going from having smoked three packs of cigarettes a day for twenty years to nothing to nothing is non-trivial.

Interesting sidelight on people. At the level I was smoking at, I had a lit cigarette on hand about 50% of the time - it must have been my most noticeable feature, second only to my beard. Yet at Wintercon only one person (Joanne Wood) recognized and commented on this particular change. Which is its own commentary on how much we really see the people around us whom we think we know so well.

Perhaps I might talk about why I found *The Tombs of Atuan* so unsatisfying. After having read and been delighted by *A Wizard of Earthsea*, I was very disappointed with *The Tombs of Atuan*. *The Farthest Shore*, the third volume of the trilogy, is as good as the first. The question is why the quality of second sags so much (or, rather, why I think it sags so much.)

A topic which I don't particularly expect to explore is the variety of schisms and feuds within Boston fandom. Colour me yellow. I wanted to write an article about the great apartment redecoration, entitled *Paint The Trim Last*. I even thought I might talk about my work and stuff like that. Etc.

* * * * *
*
* *IMPORTANT NOTICE!!!!!!!!!!* *
*
* *The long awaited statement of Editorial Policy has been cancelled* *
* *due to lack of time, lack of space, and an unexpectedly heavy* *
* *snowfall in Bergen County, New Jersey. Sorry about that, gang.* *
* *Better luck next time.* *
*
* * * * *