

This is PERSONAL NOTES #7, a personally oriented magazine of distinction (make that prize-worthy magazine of distinction) brought to you by Richard Harter from 5 Chauncy St. #2, Cambridge MA 02138.

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So much for the formalities. Nominally PERSONAL NOTES is a personalzine, whatever that is. Supposedly a personaizine is a fanzine in which most or all of the material (except for letters of comment) is by the editor and which is oriented towards the personal interests of the editor.

Ultimately all fanzines are published because the editor wants to publish them - because they fulfill some need within him. Now it happens that publishing a fanzine involves a considerable amount of work. There is the effort associated with the creation of the physical magazine and there is the, ah, intellectual effort of creating material and editing. It is not insignificant. It can, although it need not be, a reasonably demanding hobby as far as time and effort go. It is worth asking why. It is a question I ask myself.

It is probably not worthwhile seeking an ultimate motivation for publishing fanzines. Recent archaeological evidence indicates that, in one form or another, they are as old as written language itself. Indeed certain evidence I have seen recently indicates that fanzines came before literacy. It is true, however, that the fanzine did not become popular until the invention of paper - there are certain technical difficulties involved in stapling stone tablets.

It is true that one can construct coherent rationalizations for publishing fanzines. One can point out, for example, that one should exercise one's freedom of press. There is much to be said for venting one's creative impulses. There may even be something to these noises.

Regardless of the reasons why one publishes, the fact remains that a certain number of people do publish amateur magazines. It is not enough, however, to make the decision to publish; having done so, there is a magazine to construct. The freedom one has in choosing what sort of magazine one is going to publish is terribly broad. Fanzines are a form of vanity press.

The ordinary publishing house is constrained by economics. It cannot and does not publish a book unless it has reason to believe that it will make money by doing so. There are many things it cannot publish for that reason. A vanity press can and has much more freedom in its publishing for that reason. One might suppose that vanity press publications have the prospect of special merit - they are, after all, freed from commercial constraint. In practice vanity press publication is synonymous with trash; the refuge of those who cannot write and crave to see themselves in print. This is the reputation of the Vanity press; there is much too it, but it is not entirely just. Sometimes the Vanity press does redeem its promise and provide an outlet for material which is worthy but not commercial.

One might suspect that, since vanity press books are mostly pretty dreadful, and since fanzines are a form of vanity press, that most fanzines are pretty dreadful. One would be right, but for the wrong reasons. Vanity press books are dreadful because no one except their deluded authors will pay money to print them. The market is there but they aren't good enough for it. The situation is otherwise with fanzines which offers a home for a large variety of material for which there is no place at all to publish it. Fanzines need not be dreadful.

Now those are words for our times - FANZINES NEED NOT BE DREADFUL.
Pass it on.

Brave words for our time, indeed. Unfortunately the freedom to do as one pleases includes the freedom to do the second rate, the not-worth-doing, and the freedom to babble endlessly. These freedoms are exercised with great energy.

For example, PERSONAL NOTES is dreadful. It is shoddy, both in its production and in its content. Reading it will not make you wiser or more thoughtful; it will not cure warts. Creating it has not made me richer - either intellectually or financially. *(There are those who claim that it could not it could not impoverish me intellectually, but it does cost money.)* Here and there may be found a nugget of something intelligent; a worthwhile point concealed among the sludge and babble. On the whole it is raw ore rather than processed metal - and low grade ore at that.

In short, it is no better than it should be. There is a distinct limit to how "good" something like PN should be. Now I do not mean to say that one should do things deliberately badly, but I do agree with the old saying that "If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly." This is not true for all things, but it is true for things like PN.

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=====	<i>So much for the philosophy of fan-</i>	
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=====		<i>zines - never a really enthralling</i>
=====		<i>topic. Actually PN does exactly what</i>
=====		<i>it is supposed to do - it amuses me</i>
=====		<i>and keeps me in touch with my friends</i>
=====		<i>and relatives. It satisfies an prim-</i>
=====		<i>eval urge within me. For its purposes</i>
=====		<i>it is excellent and not too demanding.</i>
=====		<i>What more could I ask?</i>
=====		
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You may wonder what that batch of = signs is doing up there. That is known as layout, or possibly graphics design. I'm never too sure which. In any case it breaks up the solid areas of text and is a good deal. Now you know.

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One of the best newspapers in the United States is *The Wall Street Journal*. I make no such claim for the whole paper - most of it is the dry details of financial reporting. However the front page of the Journal has more news and is more interesting than many an entire issue of many another paper. All of which brings me to Twinkies.

You may ask - what does the Wall Street Journal have to do with Twinkies. Well, on January 22, 1976 the Journal ran a lead front page article on them. It was very interesting.

Let me quote the first paragraph:

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J. - Here in one of the more obscure crannies of International Telephone & Telegraph Corp.'s far-flung industrial empire, a mere 19 employees tend one of ITT's key processing lines. Emerging in big baking pans from a 190-foot-long oven, at the rate of 50,000 units an hour, 3 million a week, is a large part of the northeast U.S.'s output of Hostess Twinkies."

A Twinkie is, I gather, two pieces of pound cake with a cream filling inbetween. To some nutritionists the epitomize everything that is wrong with the American diet. I would not want to argue the matter. However, I do find it fascinating that it seems to be a factory produced food par excellence. Nineteen people!!!

The article continues with all sorts of fascinating trivia. For example there was a First Annual International Twinkie Festival last April at Rochester Community College in Rochester Minnesota. It included a Twinkie treasure hunt, a Twinkie sculpture contest, and a Twinkie derby, in which students raced Twinkies equipped toothpick axles and wheels. Some more quotes:

"Wonder bread, Continental men say, is much more nutritious than Twinkies. But a retired executive recalls a man in Los Angeles who was reputed to have lived seven years on a diet of Twinkies and Cutty Sark. I think he was killed by a car when he was under the influence of Twinkies or Cutty Sark or both."

"To Craig Claiborne, food editor of The New York Times, Twinkies are 'Twinkies? They sound like something out of my childhood, and I'm happy to tell you I have no idea what they're like.'"

But then, Mr. Claiborne is the fellow who recently blew \$4000 on a dinner for two at Chez Denis in Paris. Counterinspired by this feat, a man in Chicago managed to get a 13-course dinner for two for only \$11.97 at the Billy Goat Inn. Where Mr Claiborne, for dessert, ordered 1835 Madeira and French pastry, the Chicago man chose a 1975 muscatel - and Twinkies."

The Claiborne dinner, incidently, was footed by Ma Bell, who got taken on the deal. Ma Bell had donated a dinner for two to one of the TV auctions. Claiborne one the dinner with a bid of around a hundred dollars or so. He noted that the offer did not have two qualifications that it really ought to have had: (a) there was no price limit, and (b) there were no restrictions on where the dinner was to be eaten. Most of us, perhaps, would be hard pressed to spend \$100 on a dinner for two. Mr. Claiborne was considerably more imaginative; he went to one of the top restaurants in France and asked for the best meal that they could prepare, with expense being no bar, and giving them as much time as they needed to prepare it. Claiborne wrote the whole thing up, of course, and it got quite a bit of play in the papers at the time. It was a good dinner, but it failed of perfection - probably wasn't worth four thousand dollars unless someone else was paying for it. Such are the disappointments of life. *(I must admit that my sympathy is less than overwhelming...)*

The Foul Weed

Sometime in 1953 I started smoking. For twenty three years I was a chain smoker, averaging three packs of cigarettes a day. In December of 1975 I quit, and have averaged zero a day since then.

There is only one real reason that I quit - the usual one of health. There are collateral reasons - cost and dislike for being on the receiving end of a certain amount of fashionable bigotry. The collateral reasons would not have induced me to quit. However it is true what they say in the little warning and I decided to pack it in.

There is only one difficulty with quitting smoking - it is almost impossible to do so, and it is equally difficult to stay quit once one has done so. I should qualify that statement by noting that it applies to the heavy smoker, which I will arbitrarily define as being anybody who smokes over a pack a day. This is something that is hard for - a nonsmoker to appreciate - just how difficult it can be. It is even hard for smokers, who indulge in large amounts of self deception in all matters related to tobacco.

Most attempts at quitting smoking fail. Among those who do quit nine out of ten will be smoking again within two years. Tobacco, particularly in cigarette form, is heavily addictive, both physically and emotionally. Unlike heroin and similar addictive drugs it does not interfere with ones ability to deal with the world - indeed it may (although probably doesn't) enhance it. The difference is important - the disadvantages of smoking are mostly remote, which removes much of the immediacy from ones motivation for quitting.

I do not wish you to believe that I am blessed with any superior amount of will power - I am not - quite the reverse. Very few people who are heavy smokers have anything like the amount of will power required to quit. I flatly am not one of them. Then how, you may ask, did I quit?

Briefly I quit by following a program for quitting which was detailed in a book entitled *The Cigarette Habit: an easy cure* by Arthur H. Cain. The title is overambitious - it really wasn't all that easy - but it worked. For those who wish to try it here it is, in brief.

1. This program is a two part program with two lines of attack, one physical and one psychological. Both are equally important. It is divided into two stages, a pre-quitting stage and a post-quitting stage. The pre-quitting stage is a three week period of preparation and conditioning. The post-quitting stage covers the first three weeks of having quit, of which the first five days are by far the most important.

A key part of the period right after having quit is that one will be on mild medication for the first four days. This medication will be for the purpose of counteracting and ameliorating the physical withdrawal symptoms.

2. The Preliminaries

The first thing to do is to pick a date for quitting. This should be a day when you have several days free in a row - it is preferable that you have a week free. (*Think of it this way - quitting smoking is going to make you sick. Schedule some sick time.*) It should also be at a time when you are under no great stress.

Get a prescription for:

- a. Five amphetamine sulfate tablets, 5 mg.
- b. Ten pentobarbital sodium capsules, 1/2 gr.

Note that this is for pentobarbital and not phenobarbital. There is an alternative to this which is 5 caffeine tablets and 10 antihistamine tablets.

Get 51 throat lozenges and a notebook. Read through the entire program and be sure that you understand what it is that you will be doing.

In your notebook make a list of reasons why you are quitting smoking. Presumably, if you are following this program, you wish to quit. You have reasons that mean something to you. Get them down on paper where they are available for review.

You must also prepare your suppression techniques. That is, after you have quit, you are going to have, from time to time, thoughts about smoking and about cigarettes. It is very important not to indulge these thoughts - to immediately think about something else. *This is very important.* As soon as the thought of smoking occurs to you, in any form you must have something else to think about and you must think about that something else. Immediately. You must not play around with the idea of having a cigarette. It is considerably easier to do so if you have prepared this in advance.

3. Pre-quitting

For the three weeks prior to quitting you will continue to smoke as much as you like with the following exceptions: (a) eliminate smoking one hour after each meal, (b) eliminate smoking one hour before retiring, and (c) eliminate smoking one hour after arising. Of these, the latter is by far the hardest if you are a heavy smoker. To make this possible prepare a glass of fruit juice (preferably lemonade) the night before and have it available immediately upon awakening. Have your cigarettes hidden and not available.

After breakfast and after each meal proper start a regimen of dental hygiene: Immediately after eating clean your teeth with dental floss, brush your teeth, rinse your mouth, and gargle with a solution of one part hydrogen peroxide to three parts water. That will do two things. It will disassociate the taste of food with smoking, and it will make it easier not to smoke after meals.

You will do these things every day for the three weeks before quitting. You will do one other thing which is to change brands three times in the three weeks. When you start the program change brands from what you currently smoke - it doesn't matter what. You are never going to smoke your old brand again. (*I realize that this brings a protest. However*

the object is to quit. If you aren't going to smoke anything, then you aren't going to smoke your old brand either. Part of the whole game is to adapt yourself to the idea that you are going to be a non-smoker, and that the things that were important to you as a smoker are no longer of any consequence.)

At the beginning of the second week you will switch brands to the brand you like the least. Granted that you won't like them, but you will be smoking. Your object here is not to enjoy smoking but to quit.

At the beginning of the third week you will change brands again, this time to the mildest brand that you can stand without being actively twitchy. Remember: you are on a scheduled program that will lead to your quitting and that this is a damn good thing.

On the last day have your last cigarette without any special ceremony. Don't make a big deal of it. Throw out what cigarettes you have left. Prepare the usual glass of juice.

4. Quitting

On the first four days that you quit you will be on the following schedule of medication:

- Day 1: Take four pentobarbital tablets at the following times: (a) one immediately upon arising, (b) one after lunch, (c) one after dinner, and (d) one before going to bed.
- Day 2: Take one amphetamine tablet immediately upon arising. Take three pentobarbital tablets at the following times: (a) one after lunch, (b) one after dinner, (c) one before retiring.
- Day 3: Take one amphetamine tablet upon arising. Take two pentobarbital tablets at the following times: (a) one after dinner and one before retiring.
- Day 4: Take one amphetamine tablet upon arising. Take one pentobarbital tablet before retiring.
- Day 5: Take one amphetamine tablet upon arising.
- Day 6: Take one amphetamine tablet upon arising.

You will consume the lozenges on the following schedule: On the first day you will take eight lozenges at the following times - one hour after breakfast, two hours after breakfast, one hour after lunch, two hours after lunch, three hours after lunch, one hour after dinner, two hours after dinner, and three hours after dinner. Follow the same schedule for day two. On day three eliminate the one one hour after lunch. On days four, five and six also eliminate the one one hour after dinner. Thereafter take one less each day. (You will note that this adds up to 56. Don't blame me, I'm only quoting.)

That constitutes the medical side of it. Cain distinguishes between two types of heavy smokers - the heavy smoker who is not an addict and the true addict. The heavy smoker may substitute caffeine for amphetamine and antihistamine for pentobarbital. He has a test questionnaire for distinguishing

between heavy smokers and addicts. If there is any question in your mind you are an addict. The real difference is that an addict needs prescription drugs to get through those first few days; a heavy smoker can get by with non-prescription drugs.

In addition to the regimen of drugs and lozenges you will continue the fruit juice in the morning and the dental hygiene. You will also avoid having any alcohol during the first week and preferably during the first three weeks.

So much for the physical regimen. Equally important is the psychological regimen. Starting the first day you will keep a journal of your reactions and thoughts. This is to be a strictly private journal - let it all hang out. It is important to keep this journal faithfully for the first week and it is well to do so for the first three weeks. Run through the list of reasons for quitting at least three times a day. You will also practice the psychological suppression that I mentioned earlier.

The first few days - the first four or five - should be programmed as a vacation. You should plan to be doing something that is not work, that is not physically or intellectually demanding, and is not emotionally demanding. You should figure that you are not going to have that much to do with people. If you are a heavy smoker quitting is a severe strain on your system at first; it is something that you will have to accept and allow for.

All aspects of the program are important. Do not slight them. Do not assume that any portion is silly or unimportant. The object of the program is to (a) to quit, (b) to make quitting relatively easy and pleasant physically, and (c) to make it tenable psychologically. It is a serious mistake to take a cavalier attitude towards the program or any aspect of it.

Oh yes, one other thing. It works. It really does - something I still find remarkable. Remember that as you go along. It is physically and psychologically sound.

There is only one thing that is required - a genuine desire to quit. Now mind you, I am aware that that statement can be a copout. It is an old game - "Use the Plotz system to disemfabulate. All that is required is that you really want to." So you try the Plotz system and it doesn't work - well it must be your fault because the Plotz system is infallible. So let us be honest - as a smoker you are ambivalent. You may want to quit but you also don't want to quit and the idea of actually doing it and being without cigarettes for the rest of your life scares the shit out of you.

You are not being asked to want to quit in your innermost soul for you don't. Don't worry about it. All that is required is that you take quitting seriously and that you take the program seriously and that you execute it as faithfully as you can. One of the things that it will do for you is to make being a non-smoker as natural and comfortable to you as being a smoker is now.

But you must want to quit. You must want to quit badly enough so that you take the risk of starting a program that will lead to your having quit. And you must start the program and carry it through. Don't worry about the program not working - it does. It will work despite a fair amount of bungling and fudging.

So much for the theory. The above is a summary of the program as it is given in Cain's book. Cain claims that it is easy and comfortable if you follow directions exactly. Perhaps it is. I did not find it all that easy and comfortable. On the other hand I bungled things considerably.

However I managed to quit - cold. Once, in over twenty two years, I quit for about ten days. At no other time other than that once was I able to quit for more than a day. I had long ago given up the idea of quitting at all. I have no particular will, force or character in the matter. And, you know, that is fairly remarkable.

How did the practice go. As I say I bungled things a little. To begin with I never did manage to keep to those prohibitions about not smoking right after a meal or before breakfast or before going to bed. I tried - I really did. But I just wasn't up to it. I came close to an hour part of the time, I made it a few times, and a lot of the time I did well to make it last a half hour. This got worse as I went along - it really was just about impossible for me.

Secondly I did not pick a good day. My original schedule was for the weekend of December 13th which was not a long weekend. Not only that there was a party Saturday night so I decided to start on Sunday. Not only that I had futzed around and hadn't gotten the prescription.

I lasted a day...

I didn't give up. I said, "Okay lets do this right" and reset the date to December 27th which was a Saturday. I went ahead and saw my doctor and got the prescription. Of course I messed that up and got the prescription for phenobarbital instead of pentobarbital. Phenobarbital is considerably stronger. I also misread the directions for when I was supposed to be taking this stuff.

I hung in there smoking my "mild" cigarettes at the rate of three packs a day. Came the big day. I smoked my last cigarette which was the last of the pack. (Convenient.) I got up and took my first tablet - an amphetamine. The day went nicely for a while and I putzed around - no problems. Eventually I started to get rather jittery and I checked the directions again and discovered that I had completely misread them - this was the day I was supposed to be taking four barbituates. (Note that I hadn't tumbled to the fact that I had gotten the wrong kind.) I took one. That took care of the jitteriness for a while. The only problem was that I would lie down on the floor and go to sleep for an hour. (Actually I wouldn't sleep; I would just drowse.) That was the pattern for the next couple of days - I wasn't bothered by not smoking at all. However I just kept falling asleep every so often. It was the damnest sensation. I would be talking or reading or something and all of a sudden I would just have to lie down and flake out just like that. I can well believe that one shouldn't operate machinery under the influence of barbituates.

This was alright for Saturday and Sunday but Monday was a work day and I went to work. Fat lot of work I got done. Not only was I falling asleep every so often but I couldn't concentrate at all. At this point I decided something was definitely wrong and gave up on all of the medication. (I had started with a total of the number of barbituates by one tablet a day.)

The next couple of weeks were not entirely pleasant. There were some unwelcome side effects to quitting. I suffered from recurring headaches which aspirin did not seem to do anything for. These were of two kinds - a pain at the base of my skull which sort of felt like the itch one has before one sneezes and a hard pressing pain in my temples. The latter reminded me very much of the headaches I had after my car accident when I had banged my head.

Besides the headaches I had some trouble with jitteriness and edginess. In addition my skin would feel numb at times. In addition I had trouble with insomnia. In addition I needed more sleep than usual (I still do.) But worst of all, and it was actually frightening for a while, was that I had lost most of my ability to concentrate. I really couldn't get any work done. That was scary.

Eventually it all went away - I think. I still need more sleep than I used to. I regained my ability to think - such as it was, of course. I don't know whether I am more edgy and less able to take stress than I used to be; I feel that I am less able to do so, but I just don't know.

If I had it to do all over again I would do it differently. I would allow a certain amount of time for the whole thing and I would get the medication correct. I would also take the psychological elements of the whole thing more seriously. Fortunately I don't have to. The price has already been paid for any errors I might have made.

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So it goes. There remain those ominous statistics. Nine out of ten don't make it. I know a number of people who have quit for a few months or for a year or for two. It is easy enough to suppose that I will be among their number. Somehow I don't think so.

The thing is that I really do find smoking cigarette after cigarette, pack after pack, day in, day out, incomprehensible. I can understand the urge to have a cigarette - I still feel it now and then. But I can't understand being a smoker any more - I sit and watch people smoke cigarette after cigarette and it boggles me. So, maybe not. Maybe I won't start up again.

I have considered taking up a pipe again. I always enjoyed a pipe - it is a very different kind of thing from smoking cigarettes. I may well do that. It is much less expensive and not nearly as dangerous to one's health. On the other hand I can't really believe that any kind of smoking can be all that good for your respiratory system. And my lungs have suffered enough from twenty years of cigarettes, and they deserve a break. So I don't think I'll rush into it just yet. Someday. Maybe - or maybe not.

I can't wholeheartedly recommend to anyone that they quit; I found it somewhat trying. I wouldn't push it anyway; people don't quit until they feel like it. On the other hand there are some awfully good reasons for quitting - you might say it was even a matter of life and death - and you might just think on it. And if you really want to - it can be done

In its own way this is an important subject. I have saved the stencils for this article and have run off some extra copies. If anyone wants an extra copy write and ask for one.

some locs

I have a number of letters of comment to print - some on no. 4, some on no. 6, and one on no. 5. The latter was presented to me by Jon Singer at Boskone (regional SF con in Boston). I was, apparently, the subject of a regular manhunt of people who were trying to find me for Jon. To make a short story long, Jon finally found me and presented his, ah, letter of comment. I read it, made an enigmatic comment, and stuffed it away in vest watch pocket. (This is particularly difficult when you aren't wearing a vest.) Some time later Jon wandered up to me again with a horror stricken look on his face, and said "Say, you aren't really going to publish that, are you?" To see why he was worried read on:

= Jan 18, 1976 = Harter--
= 167 Vine St. =
= Middletown CT 06457 = Word reaches us of recent archaeological work
= Jon Singer = concerning a peculiar set of panels found in one
 of the pyramids (I believe the famous 'bent pyramid')
which relate a strange and terrible tale. It seems that over the course of
a half month or so, several priests in the great temple of Ss-Tuf-ittup were
struck to the ground by flying dogshit which came from noplac. This
occurred with no discernible regularity, and was regarded as an evil omen.
The temple was shut down, the priests mutilated and killed as an offering
to Isis, the priestesses sent out into the desert to make their own way
as best they could, and, eventually, some Pharoah or other had the whole
thing commemorated by the construction of the panels.

Now where the hell could that dogshit have come from?

By the way, speaking of dogshit, how is the little bugger? I don't believe I have ever met you mother's dog, except in print, but somehow....maybe I better not finish that....

The dog is fine, and, yes, maybe you had better not...

Anyway this belated letter should tell you that I received the #5 issue of Personal Notes, and I would like to continue receiving PN as it comes out. (Rest assured, you'll not be getting it before it comes out.) (I have probably missed two or three of them by being so late responding, but there it is: I have been snowed under with school crud.)

No, no, Jon. This is crud. Your school work is fine and brave and serious....

I read your review of Mote in God's Eye, although I haven't read the book yet; I think that on the strength of the review, I will make an effort to read the book, flawed though it may be. It definitely sounds worth looking at. In any event, I hope this finds you well, and that you had a pleasant holiday set. (Matched, boxed, and giftwrapped!!!!)

Ah yes, Jon Singer, well known primary source for obscure and improbable facts.

..... Haiku Department

Matsuo Basho Tries Again

Luminous flutter
Of wings over grass. Oh - a
Cellophane wrapper!

Gerda Mayer from
Encounter, Mar 1975

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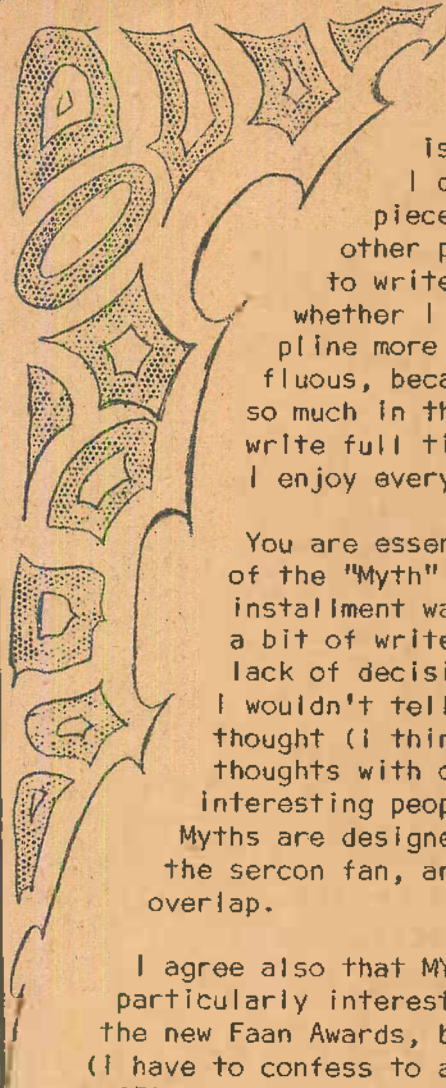
I received a rather long letter from Don D'Ammassa who had a great deal to say about the last issue. I was tempted to cut the letter strictly on the grounds that it was so long. Unfortunately for any such policy Don not only writes at great length but he is also writes interestingly. Look at this way - Don has an unofficial column this issue.

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. Don D'Ammassa . Hello:
. 19 Angell Drive .
. East Providence . It certainly is gratifying in many ways to
. Rhode Island 02914 . be the subject (target?) of the longest fan-
. Feb 23, 1976 . zine review ever, if PN's review of MYTH-
. OLOGIES really does hold that title. And I
suppose if you're willing to devote that
much time to the the review, I ought to devote something similar to
responding to it. After all, it's one of my favorite subjects. It had
better be; it speaks for about 600 hours of my year.

* Now there's an interesting point - one I've never thought about. Fan-
* zines and and Fanac can be time absorbing hobbies. 600 hours a year
* is almost two hours a day - just for your fanzine. I expect that PN
* runs more like a hundred hours a year - and that much mostly because
* I am slow at typing stencils.

Firstly, our mimeo is a rebuilt Speed-O-Print, not an AB Dick, although we do get better results than is apparently normal for that machine. The office supply place where we bought it is essentially a one-man operation and he apparently loves machines for their own sakes and can't bear to see one operating incorrectly. So we figure we made out pretty well with the mimeo.

You're absolutely correct that MYTHOLOGIES is not graphically oriented. I'll leave that to the Glicksohns and Bowers among us. I have a hard enough time as it is editing letters and getting them all to fit without sacrificing more space for illos I'm not particularly interested in running. I run a few, good quality illos as a means of illustrating an article, to break the monotony of page after page of solid text, and to fill up awkward spaces at the ends of articles. That's it.



One of the purposes of MYTHOLOGIES was to force myself to write and I set up the format to diversify my writing.

There's a serious piece of writing in every issue, and generally at least one humorous piece. I don't feel that I have to write an SF critical piece in each case, because I do enough of that for other people. By scheduling things this way, I have to write something in the two modes every 2-3 months whether I want to or not. This is a form of self-discipline more than any thing else, and is now largely superfluous, because my writing for other fanzines has expanded so much in the interim that I could easily quit my job and write full time seven days a week and never get caught up. I enjoy every minute of it, needless to say.

You are essentially correct about the relative shallowness of the "Myth" section. First of all, that particular installment was the weakest to date, primarily because of a bit of writer's block. Partly, however, the vagueness and lack of decision is by design. Even if I knew the answers, I wouldn't tell them. I hope to use Myth to stir others to thought (I think I've been rather successful) and share their thoughts with other readers. I've brought together some interesting people in interesting juxtapositions, because the Myths are designed to stir the interest of both the fannish and the sercon fan, and in most other fanzines these two rarely overlap.

I agree also that MYTHOLOGIES is not a Hugo type fanzine. I'm not particularly interested in a Hugo. I wouldn't mind having one of the new Faan Awards, but I'm not particularly an award oriented person. (I have to confess to a self-satisfied smirk when the results of the NESFA short story contest were in, though. Sigh. Guess I'm not perfect after all.) But for me, the purpose of a fanzine is to garner some egoboo, and to see some interesting people talking about interesting subjects. Running my own fanzine tends to let me choose the subjects.

Don, who is more modest than he lets on, had two stories in said contest. One of them placed first and one placed third. Yours truly also had a story in the contest, which received an honorable mention. This does not seem quite right to me. One explanation, which is obvious, and which I have firmly dismissed is that Don writes better than I do. Instead I am inclined to credit these otherwise inexplicable results to a lamentable decline in the critical faculty of story contest judges. It is one of the purposes of PERSONAL NOTES to rejuvenate the local critical faculty. In the meantime I suppose there is nothing to do but to put a good face on it - Congratulations Don - you dirty rat'

As to the title, you should check the quote from Leonard Cohen on the title page (of every issue, in fact.) Cohen says, "Let us compare mythologies; I have learned my elaborate lie." (BS, says I, but more on that later.) In other words, everyone has his own mythology/worldview, and each of them is equally true or false, relative to that particular purpose. Truth or falsehood really aren't applicable. The letter column is therefore

titled, appropriately, "Elaborate Lies", to indicate that while each person might be writing what he/she considers to be the truth, it's not the same truth as that believed by someone else. I suppose it's an extension of the old saw that the more we know, the more we realize how little we know. I have very strong opinions, many of which I strongly believe in; but I still recognize that they are opinions, and might well turn out to be false in the terms of anyone else, or even in the light of new data. The terminology - myth, fable, parable - are all designed to reinforce the concept. I'm surprised, actually, that no one has picked up on the terminology before, particularly the explicit reference to the lettercolumn as "lies".

* *I may spend three or four pages discussing the propositions advanced*
* *in that paragraph. Suffice it for the moment that I would reword*
* *Cohen as, "Come, let us banter about our delusions; I have mine in*
* *shape for verbalization." // I doubt that other people haven't*
* *noticed; it is more likely that they haven't found occasion to comment.*

Yes, I've started calling MYTHOLOGIES a "personally oriented genzine" because it has transformed itself somewhat from what it was originally intended to be. Improvements, I think. I don't solicit articles either, except that I've occasionally asked Mark Keller for a specific piece, and I have a regular humor feature from Paul Di Fillippo. The few articles that I have run - Collins' piece on Lovecraft, Curlovich's piece on the SCA - have arrived mysteriously in my mailbox, and were interesting enough that I decided to run them. But I really have no interest in publishing another GRANFALLOON, and prefer to keep the bulk of each issue (excluding the letters) editor written. I keep more complete control that way, and as you mention, I have designed things to keep fairly tight control over the content, more so than in most fanzines.

There used to be a term in pretty wide use that might fit more closely what MYTHOLOGIES has come to be, a "discussionzine". I detest that term, as a matter of fact, and don't have much nice to say about "personalzine" either. But the fact remains, again as you suggest, that I'm not tremendously interested in writing about me, but about general topics. There are exceptions. The first issue was much more personal, and the opening of issue #8 is as well. But for the most part, I prefer to keep myself to myself, except where parts of my experience can help illuminate, instruct, amuse, or further the discussion of other subjects. It's not that I don't have sufficient ego to talk about myself, but it would put me at a somewhat unfair advantage over my readers, most of whom have never laid eyes on me. (*Pooh. What's the point of being an editor if you don't take unfair advantage over your readers. You do the work; you're entitled to. It's one of the job benefits.*)

No, I don't know how well it is succeeding at some of its purposes. It certainly results in enough letters to keep me happy, over 100 responded to the 7th issue, plus a dozen or so reviews. And I've garnered enough egoboo to last me some time. It tickles my fancy to go to a convention and have various people come looking to meet me instead of vice versa. I never pretended humility. I think it is succeeding reasonably well at making my readers think. Several have commented that one or another conversation in the lettercolumn occupied their thoughts for a great deal of time, some even say that their opinions have been changed. I find this very gratifying. I'm a thwarted teacher cum propagandist, and these crumbs of

ενωιλητενμεντ αθε ξεθυ δεωψομε~ Σο ιιμ σξθε ιτςσ σξψσεφινλ ατ σομε
enlightenment are very welcome. So I'm sure it's succeeding at some
level, even though I've known all along that I'd never know just how
much it would accomplish. If every issue make two or three people uncom-
fortable with their preconceptions, I'll be satisfied.

I'm glad you enjoy it. Issue #9 will be about technology.

As to the rest of PN6:

My recollections tell me that Jordan Park was Kornbluth and Pohl, not CMK
alone. I have VALERIE, a Lion paperback, which is a relatively competent
novel about psychological witchcraft and a fake satanist cult. Novels
were not Kornbluth's strong point, though, and without Pohl, I don't think
he could have been quite this tight in his plotting. His three SF novels
were rather chaotic, particularly THE SYNDIC, probably the only one worth
preserving in any case.

By all means read Fred Brown's mysteries, though, particularly THE FABULOUS
CLIPJOINT, and NIGHT OF THE JABBERWOCK.

I ahve to agree with your response to Harry Warner about the paucity of
"deep" SF (rotten term, but I know what you mean.) As an obsessed reader
of the stuff for the past 16 years, I suppose I should be blinded to the
field's shortcomings, or, alternatively, so aware of them that I swear off
the field for the rest of my life. The truth is that I do find about 50%
of the SF being published totally worthless, and most of the remainder
worth little more than light entertainment. But, as Sturgeon told us,
the percentage is probably jsut as great in the mainstream, and I have a
better chance of finding that elusive ten percent in a relatively small
pool. An there are exceptional works in the field: A CANTICLE FOR LEIBO-
WITZ, A CASE OF CONSC' ENCE, DYING INSIDE, DAVY, Ballard's "The Drowned
Giant," (all heavily overated within the field - RH) much of Sturgeon
himself, bits and pieces by others over the years, and there is currently
the bright promise of a wave of new writers like Michael Bishop, Gardner
Dozois, Gene Wolfe, and others who seem determined to develop their own
talents beyond the limits imposed by the genre. So I'm hopeful,
and I keep on plugging.

- * Remind me to advance and defend the proposition that Science Fiction
- * is trash. To put is more generously - for a work of fiction to succeed
- * as Science Fiction it is necessary that it fail as literature - and
- * vice versa.

I don't really agree that reviewing has to be the activity of low level
morons, though I confess that it often appears that way. I'll also confess
my own conceit. When I was 14 and first discovered SF, all I wanted to do
was become a professional SF writer. I filled notebooks with stories, and
through my college years began submitting and collecting rejection slips.
I still do occasionally, but the burning desire has been supplemented with
a new goal. I want to be Damon Knight. (I can't resist - Why not try
being Don D'Ammassa?) I want to write IN SEARCH OF WONDER. I want to be
the best darned reviewer the field ever had. I don't want to write reviews
that rival the works being described. American Literature is riddled now
with stream of conciousness reviewing, reviews and critiques that are more
complex and demanding than the works they discuss. I reject these. I see

the role of the reviewer as an interpreter, a person who helps the reader to better appreciate literature. This can be done in several ways. The reviewer can provide information not generally available to the reader, place the author's work in the context of his previous work, or within the field as a whole. The reviewer might have particular knowledge relevant to a novel or story not explicit in the story itself, which the average reader has not the time nor inclination nor sources to discover for himself. The reviewer may offer a new insight. I seem to have some ability to detect underlying themes and symbolic underlays, the methods by which the author tries to implant subliminal cues. If this ability is something more than the average reader possesses, my explication of my insights might be useful.

- * *One danger in all of this sort of thing is that it can become all*
- * *quite mechanical. Obscurantism versus pedanticism, so to speak.*
- *
- * *Actually there are two well defined extremes to reviewing. One is the*
- * *buyers guide - this is good, that is middling, and that is awful. It*
- * *may consist solely of a rating or it may be augmented with an indication*
- * *of why the rating was awarded. The other extreme is the essay about a*
- * *work or author. This is essentially a matter of someone saying, "Here*
- * *are my thoughts on such and such, which I would like to share with you."*
- * *Either extreme is well defined. Inbetween is a thing neither fish nor*
- * *fowl, the review.*

Of course there's a revulsion (carefully cultivated by well meaning but incompetent high school English teachers) against this sort of in-depth reading, and I think this is partly responsible for the dislike of the critic. It is furthered by the in-groupishness of most critics as well, their unwillingness to write clear English. In your mention of my article on Sarban, you point out that I make no attempt to force my style or personality onto the review. Except in certain cases, I think this is a bad idea. I'd rather that I talked someone into reading something he might otherwise have overlooked, or that I showed someone some value in a work that he otherwise would have missed or somehow contributed to the reader's enjoyment of a work, than that I be praised for the cleverness of my biting sarcasm or my elegant turn of phrase. I'll never make it with the Litcrit journals, but I'm not sure I'd want to.

I personally keep away from the "killer review" as much as possible, although it's not always possible. I do reviews for two editors who provide review copies, and I'm honor bound to review anything they send me gratis. Well, Delap sent me a copy of Don Pfiel's *THROUGH THE REALITY WARP* just before Boskone, and I read most of it in odd moments at the con. And let me tell you, if ever a book deserved a killer review, this was that book. I really tried hard to find something good to say about it, honest, but nary a thing could I espy. The dialogue was laughable, the plot cliched, the science on a grade school level, the characters purest grade cardboard, the motivations sketchy, the book rife with self contradictions, and infused as well with a glorification of brutality and machismo that exceeded the bounds of good taste. Did I write a killer review? (Yep, just now - RH) I did point out most of the major faults, as I saw them. Sometimes you just can't avoid it unless you avoid reviewing the book altogether.

Ah, yes, pottery and such made by the shopkeeper has long since disappeared. in most places. But I'm only thirty and when I was a sub-teen in North Providence, I could go out and watch pottery being spun and glass blown at one or another small gift shop. Italian districts are more primitive than the overculture. But alas, even those are gone now.

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There are innumerable points in Don's letter that are worthy of comment. Let me comment at some length on one of the points I tossed off - that Science Fiction is trash. To elucidate:

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For the past half dozen years the book review column has been consistently, surprisingly good. The reviews have been by a variety of authors, all of whom seem to have been determined to be good. The quality has remained high regardless of who was doing the reviewing. Among my favorite reviewers are Joanna Russ and Harlan Ellison.

This, if you are at all familiar with their discourse, will tell you something about me - I have a taste for acid. I also have a taste for literacy and good writing. You may be surprised to learn that I do not, for the most part, care for their Science Fiction. Let me leave Harlan for a moment and turn to Joanna Russ.

Ms Russ is quite brilliant. She is also a crank. The latter is not terribly important, directly, although it does have some bearing on why she is a bad writer of science fiction. Her, ah, crankiness has several aspects, the most prominent of which is that she is a feminist, and that she is into feminism as a cause. She is also "literary". She may or may not have an academic position in a literature department; she may or may not have a PhD in literature; but she writes as though she were and did.

As I say, she is brilliant, and her reviews are delightful to read. Any time I see a copy of F&SF and the book review column is by her I look forward to an extra moment of pleasure in life. Her wit is sharp and her analysis is acute. She makes many valid points and sparkles with insight. And, best of all, my enjoyment of her writing is unaltered by the fact that she does not understand Science Fiction. Fundamentally she doesn't understand what Science Fiction is about, and why people read it.

It may well be that I do the woman an injustice - I don't know her, and I am only reporting an impression from limited writing. Nonetheless I do not believe that she understands what Science Fiction is about. I will tell you why I think that. It is a small thing. She does not believe in engineers and gadgets. I do not think that she believes that engineers are human beings - at least insofar as they are engineers.

Now it is easy enough to be contemptuous of engineers. They are, collectively, the modern Babbit. No, I take that back - Babbit was an entirely different sort of fellow. But here is a group of people who exemplify the faults of the middle class. The engineer conceives of his college career as an occasion for converting himself into a salable piece of merchandise; and he usually takes an overly narrow view of utility.

Each course, each topic, is evaluated in terms of whether it is practical. Art, literature, science, all are weighed on the scales of practicality and found wanting. (*This is not irrational. The typical engineering student has limited resources - time, money, and intellect. Before the luxury of education comes the necessity of secure employment and job skills.*) But it is after their graduation and their entry into the, ah, real world that engineers become most exasperating. It is then that they attain their heights of narrowness, blindness, and mediocrity.

Consider an engineer. He does not, to begin with, have any real understanding of his field - he never wanted understanding, he wanted a bag of tricks. He commands, typically enough in these days, a large salary. He does not really understand why he commands a large salary; he cannot for he is ignorant of the sociology, the politics, and the economics that by happenstance have elevated him above the crowd. He believes his good fortune to have come about because he has worked hard and is bright - in sublime indifference of the accidents of fortune that have favored him and of the millions who were also bright and worked hard and found that fortune favored them not. He infests the suburbs. He is full of the cant of pioneer times - valid enough in itself - but he is a wage slave, bought and paid for. He is a collection box of archaic prejudices, which he gets indignant about if they are questioned. Still and all, most engineers are nice people. Why some of my best friends are engineers...

I get carried away at times. It is easy enough to poke fun at the failings of engineers as a class. But it is also well to understand that engineers are important in the work of the world. It is well to understand why they are important in the work in the world. It is well to understand what it is they do and that they, on the whole, enjoy doing it, and why they enjoy doing it.

I do not believe that Ms Russ understands any of this very well. These things are not *important*. It is a fact that many people spend a large chunk of their waking hours dealing with things, machines, and bureaucratic paperwork, and that they enjoy this more than they let on. And, if you do not understand that people do this, and if you do not understand why people do these things, then you do not really understand people.

One of the things that drives the engineer is the love of the gadget. By the 'gadget' I mean the neat, the interesting device or artifact. It may be a squeeze play in bridge, it may be a *Ringworld* in Science Fiction, it may be a clever piece of computer code, or it may be a sophisticated argument in Aquinas. Whatever. There are a million gadgets. They are fun. Their social relevance is irrelevant to their status as gadgets. And one of the important human motivations and actions is the playing with gadgets. It is, I believe, one of the failings of the *literary* set that it does not recognize and admit the validity of this class of motives.

Enough of that for the moment. Recently several prominent writers, whom I reluctantly concede to be good writers, have made public pronouncements of how they were disillusioned with Science Fiction, and that they were abandoning the field. I am thinking, in particular, of Robert Silverberg, Barry N. Malzberg, and Harlan Ellison.

Surely this is somewhat curious - that several of the most able and distinguished authors of science fiction should renounce and denounce the field in terms and in language suitable to disappointed lovers. And what do these gentlemen say about the genre?

Well, they say that trash is what sells SF. They say that if one is labelled as an SF author one is put in a box that is hard to get out of. They say that Vonnegut was right in adamantly insisting that his work not be labelled SF.

They are probably right...

I would argue that Science Fiction depends on several strands, which are: (a) the sense of play - the good gadget; (b) SF as a literature of social prophecy; (c) psychological displacement; and (d) straight adventure. I have already referred to the good gadget. When I speak of Science Fiction as a literature of social prophecy I am not referring to the sociological gadget story. Rather I am referring to the fact that it was the literary response to the perception that the future is being shaped by science and technology.

Since World War II the world has been altered rather drastically by Science and Technology. It is not just computers, television, atomic power, pocket calculators, digital watches, space travel, communications satellites, antibiotics, lasers, heart transplants, etc. These are only the gadgets, the products. It is not even that Science and Technology have become important issues in current affairs. It is that our current policy and politics must take into account the future development of technology. The policies of today are shaped by the technology of tomorrow.

Today, this is commonplace. Today we take it for granted that we plan technologies. Today we take for granted an endless stream of new gadgets, materials, problems created by technology, and problems solved by technology. This is new. It is a product of the last thirty years.

One of the driving forces of early Science Fiction (i.e. the 30's, the 40's, and the 50's) was this vision of the future as something radically different from the present - a difference that was conditioned on technology rather than on religion, or politics, or ideology. SF was many things, but I believe that it was this act of social prophecy that was the key thing about it.

In this respect Science Fiction was a body of literature that could only occur at a critical time. Before, say, 1930 it was premature - the future was too far away. Now it is obsolete - the future is already here. The function of SF as an avant-garde literature of prophecy has been destroyed by the prophecy coming true. The future has become part of the normal business of the culture.

Science Fiction is also a literature of escapism - a function for which it is admirably suited. One might even say ominously well suited. It allows for the maximum psychological displacement from the here and now - one can literally go to the ends of space and time to get away. It also permits the maximum displacement of position. Here and now may be acne and unpopularity at school. SF allows you to concern yourself with the fate of the world, or of the galaxy, or even of the entire universe. Big potatoes.

And, of course, Science Fiction is a literature of adventure. In part this is because Science Fiction was confined for a long while to the pulps, which were mostly action adventure. Despite the fact that SF was not constrained to be action-adventure it ended up being that for the most part - after all many of the writers and editors worked the whole field of the pulps. SF was just another category, much as mysteries, westerns, war stories, exploration, and flying were categories.

Even without the influence of the pulps in general, SF would be action-adventure oriented. It is only natural. With all of time and space to play with, one can construct whatever gaudy background one wants for staging. If one wants to write Science Fiction, one may not wish to write action-adventure. If one wants to write action-adventure, Science Fiction is a natural. Ring in an alien planet with the appropriate settings and go to it.

None of these strands make for great literature. They do make for stories that people read and enjoy. Some people, that is. They do not make for literature because none of these strands are about people as people. Technology is important to people and is important because it is important to people, but a story about technology is nonetheless about technology and not about people. A story whose appeal rests in psychological displacement cannot be psychologically acute or profound. The appeal of the story requires a systematic blindness. A subtle pandering to fantasies of omnipotence is inconsistent with insight.

Another factor which works against Science Fiction being literature is the overwhelming presence of jargon. There are many ideas which are well worked out; many conventions which have been adopted. This is useful if one is a professional SF writer - one does not have to keep reinventing the wheel. In fact it is necessary - after all the reader has waded through the necessary and conventional handwaving, and can well do without it after the fiftieth reading.

The jargon and the conventions are useful. The result, however, is that one cannot successfully write Science Fiction unless one is a specialist. Some SF is written by nonspecialists. It is usually much more naive and much more alive than the stuff written by the SF pros. The outsiders are only sporadically successful at using SF, but they reach a wide audience. The insiders are quite successful because they understand what the SF audience wants and write for it. Indeed, most of them are a part of it.

In short, there is a well defined SF market. And what that market mostly wants is for its fantasies to be stroked...

Which is alright in its way. I'm not complaining. I like neat gadgets. And my fantasies can do with a little stroking now and then...

This is not an exotic and novel discovery of mine - or of the disappointed lovers whose plaint we have been considering - It is rather obvious. SF is a specialized market with a special appeal. SF authors are labelled as such and are shunted off to the SF corner because that is where their market is.

And what of our disappointed lovers? Their problem seems fairly simple. They want to write something there isn't any real market for. They are SF authors - all of them - all insiders. They are talented. And they want to write about things which are not in domain of SF. The SF audience is not really interested in what they want to do. This would not be a problem - one can write for other audiences - except that these gentlemen want to eat their cake and have it. They are SF junkies - they are hooked on the stuff like the rest of us. And they want to go mainstream, but not kick the SF habit.

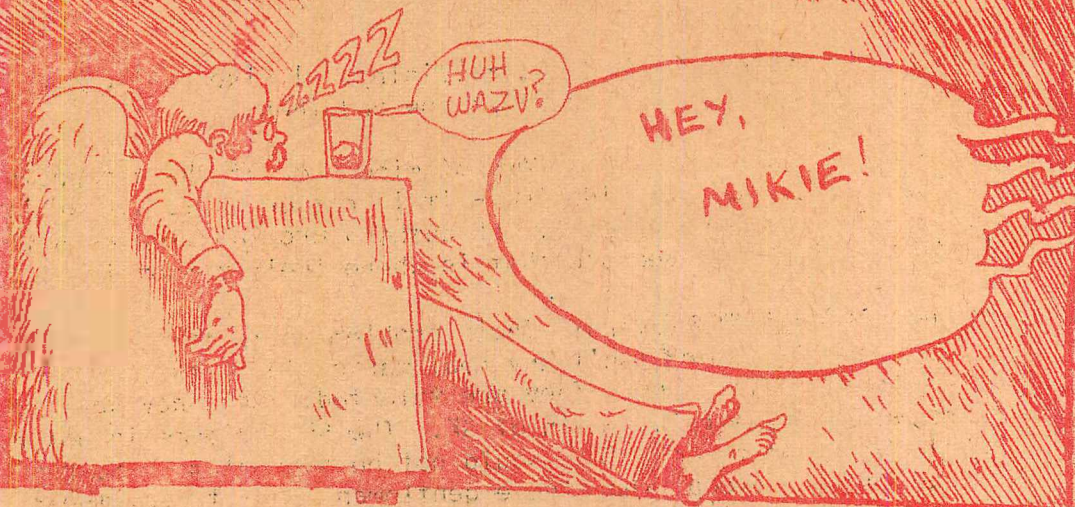
A TRIP? YES FRIENDS A TRIP
WHICH MANY OF MY DEAR READERS
MAY NEVER HAVE TAKEN. IT ALL
BEGAN WITH LOTSA VODKA AND
TONICS, A WARM SUMMER NIGHT
AND A BAD CASE OF
"CITY PARANOIA"



I KNOW ALL ABOUT THE CITY, THAT DAY I HAD TO GO INTO THE BIG
APPLE FOR ART SUPPLIES: MUGGERS, KID GANGS, FAIRYS, PERVERTS
STRANGOS, LOTSA STRANGOS. EVERY TRIP TO NYC GIVES ME BAD
VIBES, WHICH ALL LEADS UP TO HOW I WAS...

RIPPED OFF BY FREAKS

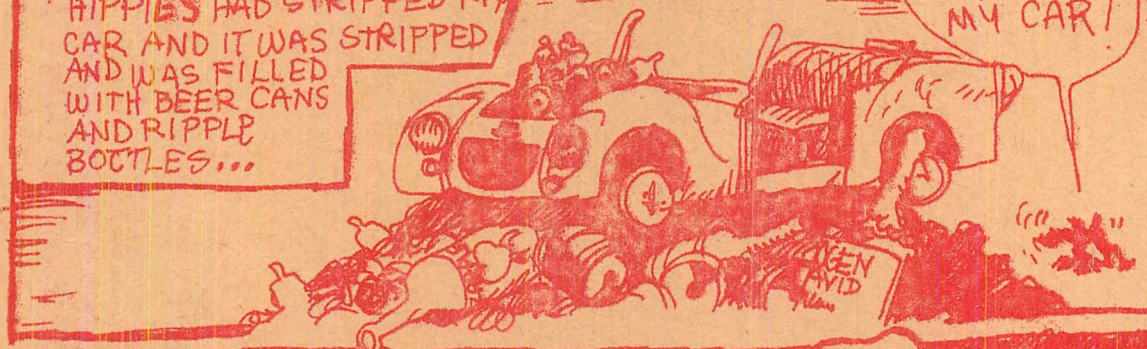
I WAS DOZING OFF AFTER A BUNCH OF
DRINKIES WHEN...





THE HAIRY HIPPIES, RE KING OF WEED
AND RIPPLE, CARRIED ME THROUGH THE
PARKING LOT WHERE MY WORST FEARS
HAD COME TRUE. A ROVING BAND OF
HIPPIES HAD STRIPPED MY
CAR AND IT WAS STRIPPED
AND WAS FILLED
WITH BEER CANS
AND RIPPLE
BOTTLES...

OH GOD
NO NO, NO
MY CAR!



QUICK!
INTO THE HARI
KRISHNA INCENSE
PORTAL © WITH
HIM

NO, NO
NO,



OUCH, ASS
FIRST NO
LESS.

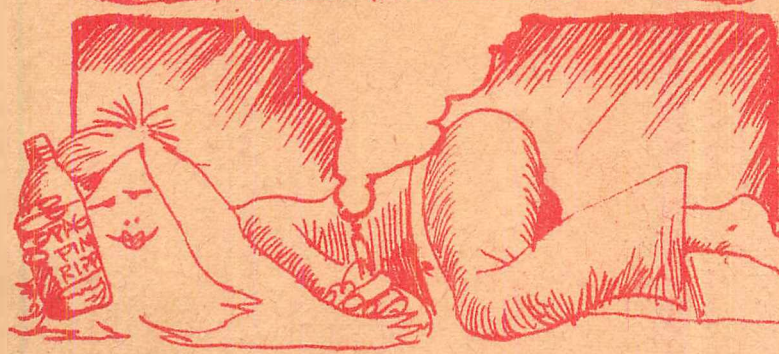
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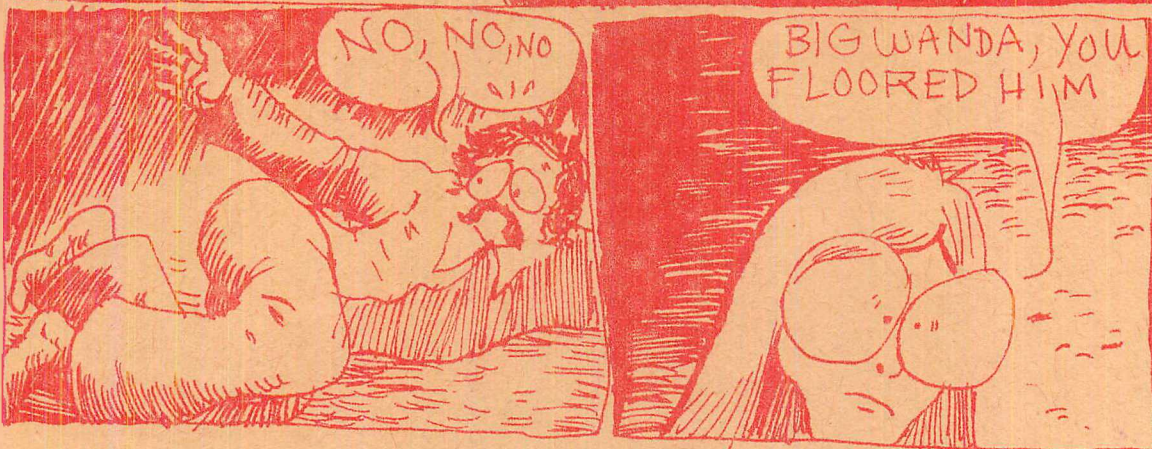
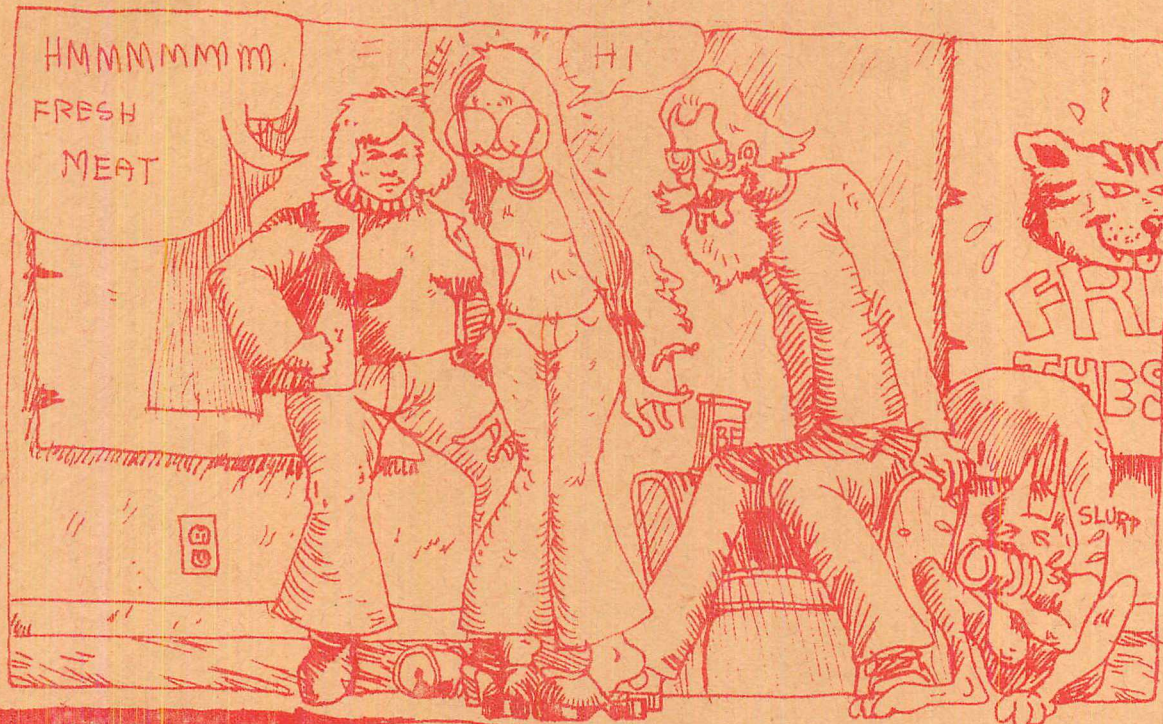
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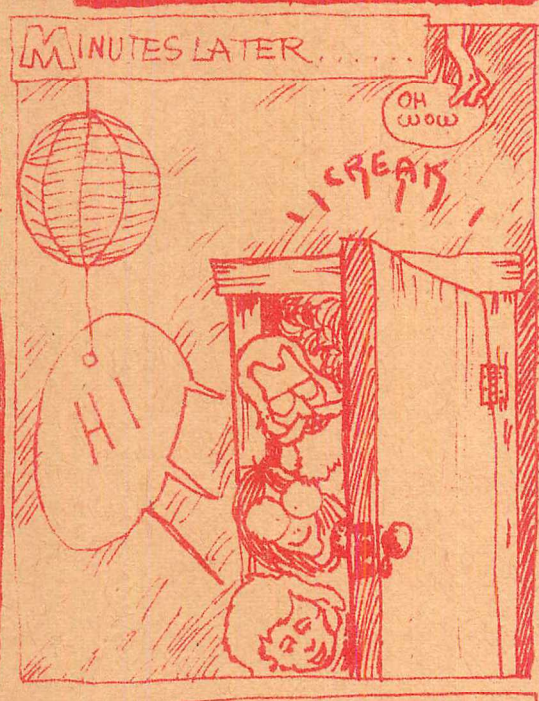






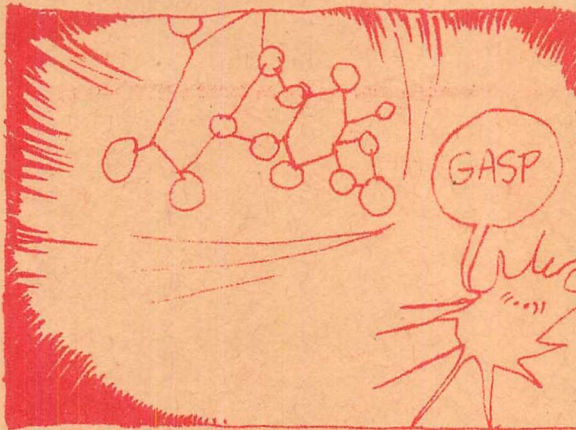




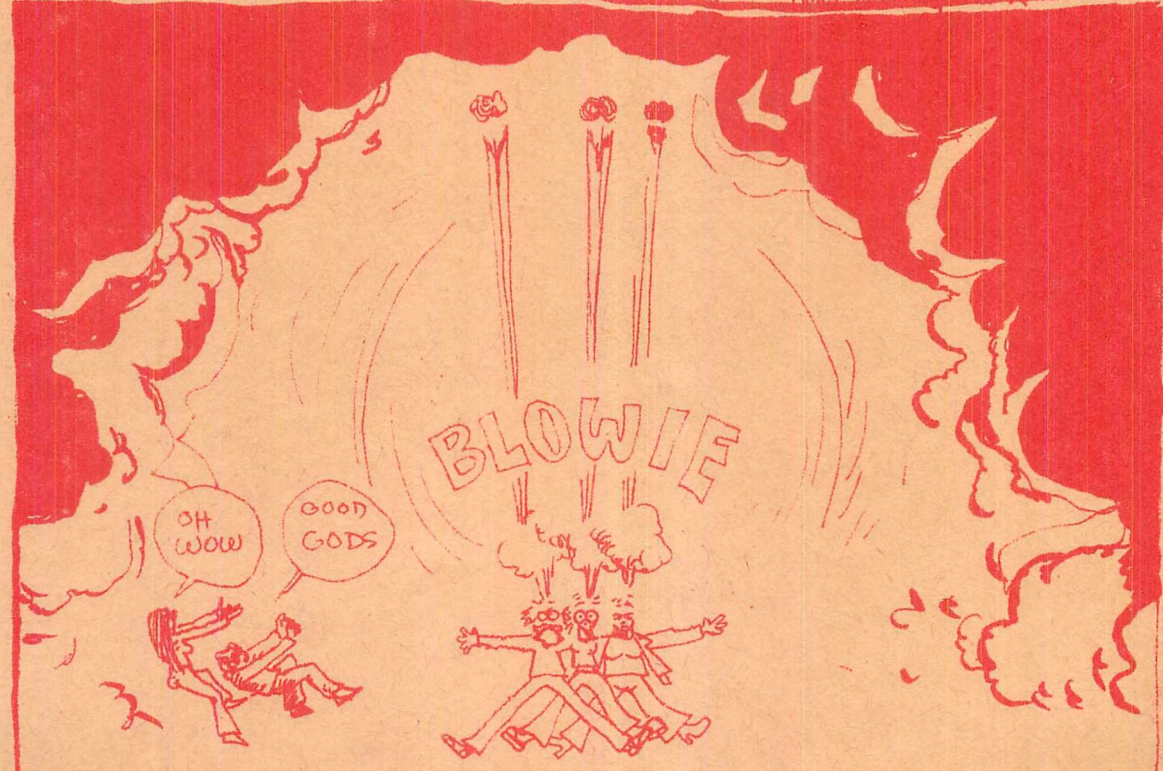


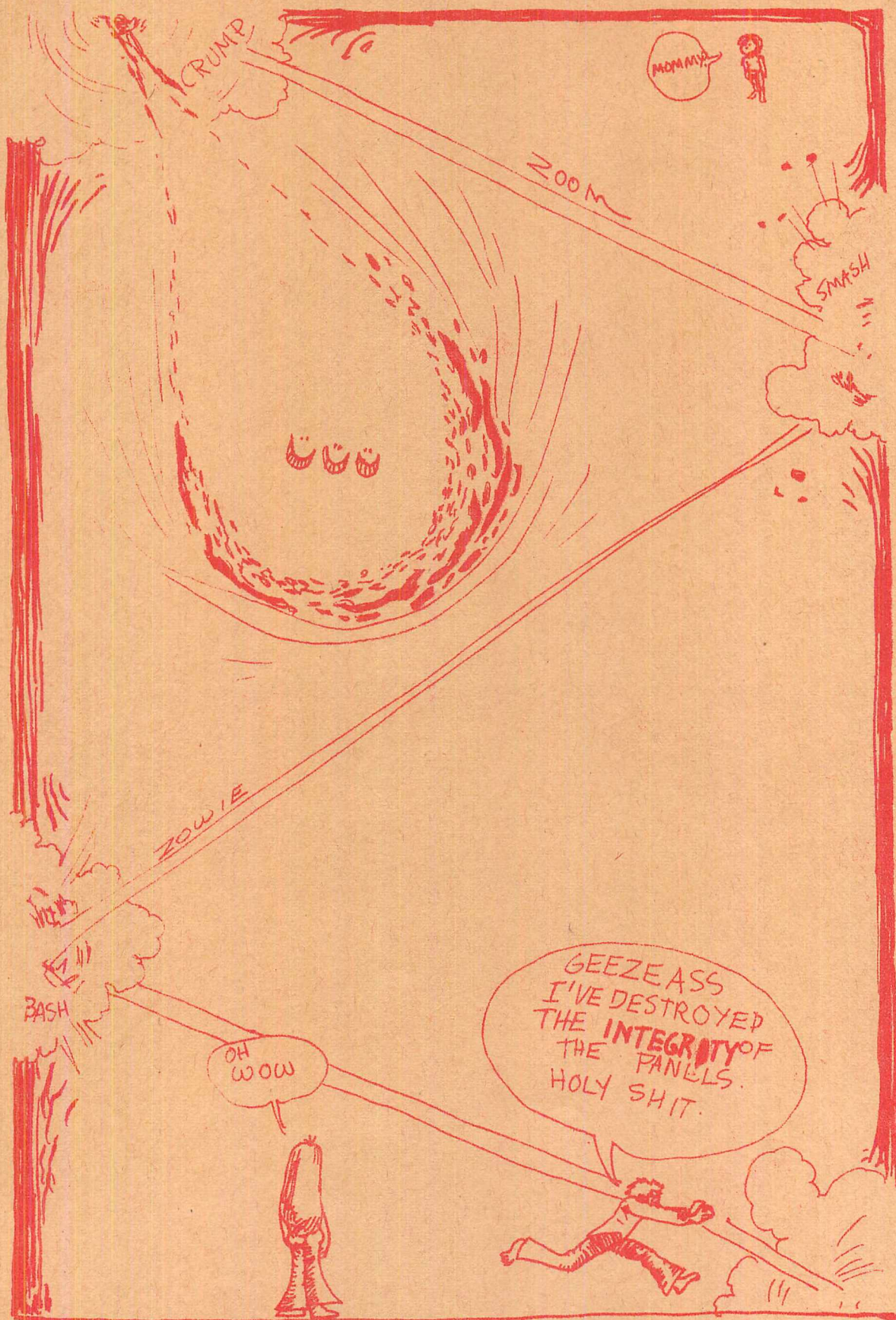
THE WINE IS CONSUMED RAPIDLY BY THE HIPPIES TO SOOTHETH EIR MARIJUANA DRIED THROATS-LITTE DO THEY KNOW WHATS IN STORE FOR THEM



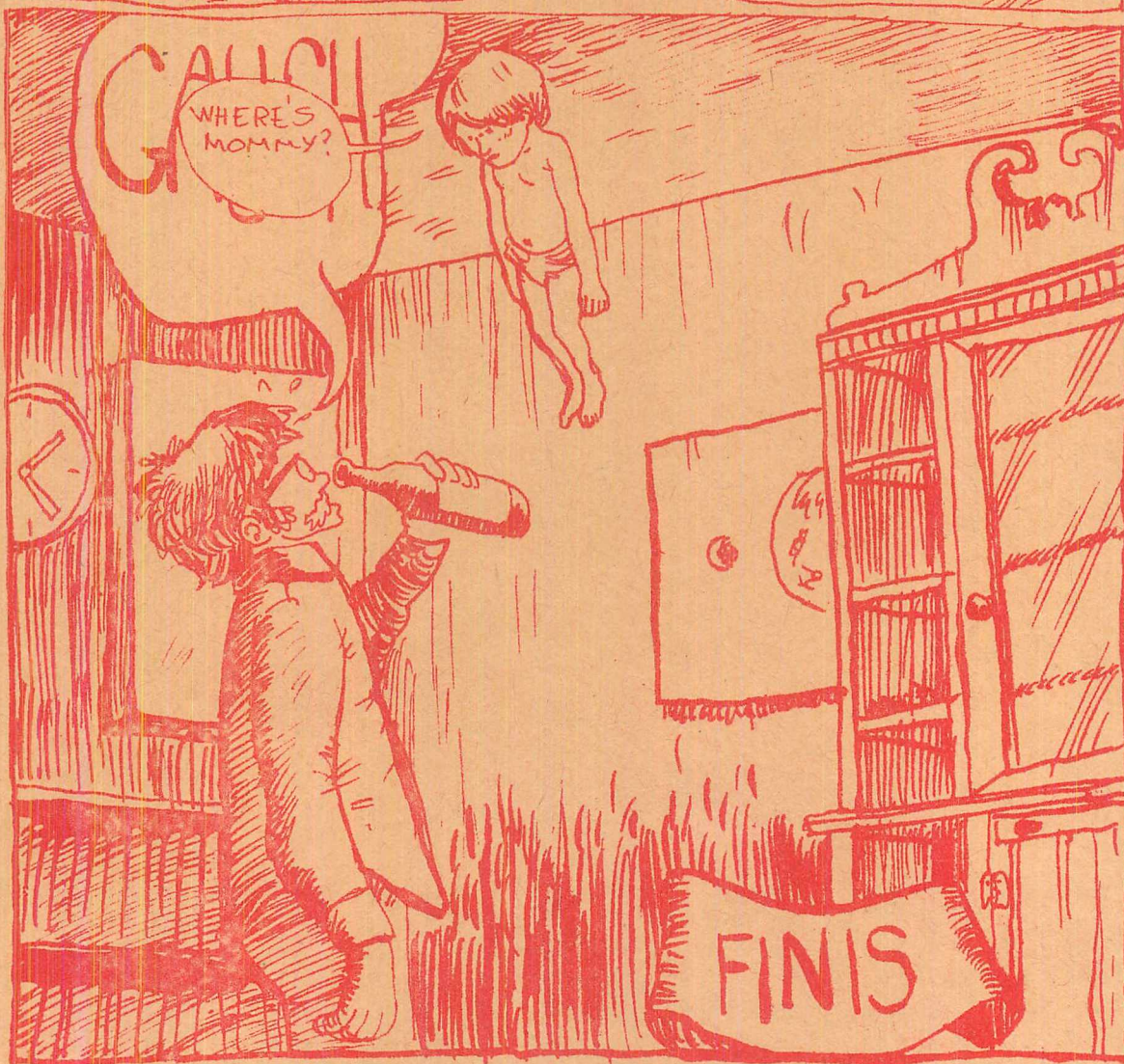


WITH THE SPEED OF BLOOD THE LUST
CRAZED MOLECULES LATCH ONTO THE
DEFENSELESS DRUG CRAZED SYNAPSES









ENGLAND

Recently (April 19 to May 9) Mary and I visited England. Mary's trip was partly business and partly pleasure. Mine was strictly a vacation. It was the first time over there for me and this hyar is to tell you all about it.

It is, of course, impossible to describe a trip to another country. A chronology of events does not give the impact of the actual events and, to boot, is often boring. Descriptions are only words and cannot replace the actual experience. Now words will give the actual impression of the lush greenness of .. England. Still, one can try ...

Briefly, our trip went as follows: We left America at eight o'clock on a Wednesday evening, spent six or so hours in the air, and arrived in England at eight in the morning on Thursday. We spent Thursday we stayed in London. Friday we drove up to Manchester and spent the weekend at Eastercon. Monday (which was a bank holiday) Mary drove down to Reading to go to work and I went over to Liverpool with Jan Finder to visit Marsha and Eddie for a few days. Thursday Jan and I drove down to London and then over to Reading where I was reunited with Mary. Friday I looked at Reading. That weekend we went into London and shopped and went sightseeing. The next week was devoted to me having a cold, going into London, and to Mary working. That weekend Mary and I drove over to Bristol where we met Marsha and Eddie. The four of us visited Bristol and Bath. Mary was taking the next week off which we spent driving around Cornwall and Devon and then up to Oxford. Friday we spent in London again, and Saturday we took off. We flew out Saturday morning at eleven thirty and arrived in Boston around one thirty.

So much for the bare bones of chronology...

England is food. Yummy, yummy, infinitely caloriferous food. By continental standards English food may be bad. I wouldn't know - although it is really hard to believe that food in Europe can be even better than that in England. As far as I was concerned, however, the food was an order of magnitude better than the food here.

The English are dotty on cream. Their ordinary cream is somewhat thicker than cream is here. They also have something called double cream which is essentially a thicker cream. And then they have clotted cream...

Clotted cream (also known as Cornish cream) is probably the ultimate expression of cream fetishism. One thinks of cream as being a liquid, with heavy cream being a thick, viscous liquid. The limit in this direction is cream that is so thick that it is no longer liquid. Such is clotted cream. Imagine, if you will, cream that has the texture of whipped butter. You don't pour it, you spread it.

Clotted cream is principally a product of Devon and Cornwall, which are, by the way, that little piece of land that sticks into the Atlantic ocean on the bottom left of England. Cornwall is the first to intercept the Gulf stream and is much more temperate than the rest of England as a result. Because it's climate is more moderate it seldom freezes in Cornwall and the precipitation is even higher than in the rest of England. The grass grows green and lush and it is prime dairy country.

Speaking of the English climate: You may have heard the sentence. "The sun never sets on the British Empire." This is not, as you might suppose, a statement about the extent of the Empire. It is simply a commentary on English weather. England has winters but it is not as cold as it is here. England has summers but they are not as hot as it is here. England is also reputed to have sunny weather - I even saw a day or two of it. Mostly it has drizzles, fogs, and mists. *(There is also rising damp, but it is better that you not know about such things.)* This is all a bit unfair - there must have been sunshine at least a third of the time that we were there.

Anyway, England is food. In particular, England is pastries. I am not, in the ordinary course of things, a desert person. I don't care for cakes, pies, etc. Cookies leave me cold. Gloppy glorps do not turn me on, as a rule. But I was turned on the pastries that we got over there. They were light and airy, full of complex taste sensations that melted together, rich with cream and sweetness. Marvellous, marvellous, marvellous.

The English don't believe in water with meals. They do believe in strong black coffee after meals, with brown sugar. Fish and chips are fish fried in a batter with fried potatoes. Fried potatoes, whether French fries or not, are almost uniformly superior in England. They don't believe in, or really understand about salads. Chinese restaurants serve curry dishes. It is all different.

England has history all over the place. It is sort of a vice with them. The thing is, all those things that one reads about in the history books really happened (well, are written about as though they happened) and a lot of it happened in England. And even if nothing particularly notable happened at a spot, It may simply have been there for a good spell.

One of the things about England is that they keep using their buildings. Just because a building is a few hundred years old is no reason not to keep using it. Old buildings do not mean just government and church buildings. You see pubs, houses, etc which are obviously quite venerable which are in current use.

It was a good time to go. The English are passionate gardeners and all the spring flowers were out. Particularly striking were the Kensington gardens. The typical English garden is quite different from the formal French garden. The English garden has a well designed formal informality. In an English garden things sort of merge together. It is as though the beauty of natural disorder has been intensified by careful placement.

And, yes, the British do have very old lawns and gardens. For example there is a lawn at Westminster Abbey which has been under continuous cultivation for the last nine hundred years.

British crows are big ...

One of the small shocks of the trip occurred when we visited the British Museum. *(It is, by the way, neat to look at things like the Magna Carta and a real Gutenberg bible.)* We were looking at the Elgin marbles, which are the friezes from the Parthenon. It was while I was looking at the exhibit that I learned that the Parthenon was still standing in essentially perfect condition until the late seventeenth century. What happened was that the turks were storing ammunition in it and a stray shot by the Venetians during a war set off an explosion which ruined it. Imagine - it stood for almost two thousand years, to be demolished by accident.

Driving in England is, ah, interesting. It is not the problems of driving on the left hand side of the road which make motoring in England so interesting. For the most part that is something that one can adopt to quite readily. No, it is the English roads that make life so exciting.

They are quite sporting about it. They tell you what kind of road it is by the road number. The classified roads have a letter and a number. Thus, the M4, the A30, and the B3316. The M roads are modern super highways, just like the ones here. There aren't too many of them. They suffice, however, for getting from one part of England to another in a hurry. The A roads are two lane highways. The B roads are one and a half lane roads that masquerade as two lane highways. In general, the higher the number the less desirable the road. This is not to say that the roads are in bad condition - quite the contrary, they seemed to almost uniformly in good condition. Not only that, they were much better marked than US roads.

They aren't too much for straight, however ...

No way...

They are narrow and winding. There is also no way to get off the road. They regularly have stone walls, buildings, and hedges forming the boundary of the wall. Exciting. Very.

Which brings us to the green tunnel effect. The English don't use fences - they use hedges. Along the minor roads there will be a hedge on each side of the road which is several feet high - high enough so that you can't see over it. As a result one is sort of driving through a green tunnel. You don't see the landscape - all you see is the road and its green walls.

Imagine, if you will, the following scene. You are driving along one of the B roads in Cornwall. The road is comfortably wide enough for two minis and a bicycle without handles. You are driving a Capri, which is a compact over here, but which seems to be a tank on these roads. As you drive through a small Cornish village the road narrows as it makes a blind turn between two stone buildings. You successfully navigate the corner and when you have made the turn you see a tour bus whipping around the similar corner just ahead of you. Aren't you glad you and the bus weren't taking the same blind corner together. Aren't you glad to find out that your heart was stronger than you thought it was.

Roads and driving reminds me of what Jan Finder was telling me about the Italian safety campaign. (Jan works in Italy for the US Air Force.) Italians have a deserved reputation for adventurous driving - the theory is that as long as you miss the other guy it doesn't matter how far you miss him or how fast you are going. Nor is there any reason why you can't have four cars abreast on a two lane highway as long as they all fit. Etc. The Italians are used to this sort of thing and are quite good at it. Nonetheless the accident rate is high and many of them are dillies, so the government sponsored a safety campaign. One of the slogans was, "Don't pass someone who is passing someone else."

Well, yes, that does seem to be a good rule to follow.

England is a land of tourists. One of the favorite English pastimes is going somewhere else in England and play tourist. Since the average income in England is about half of what it is over here, they can't afford expensive travelling and have evolved a number of ways to travel less expensively. One of these is the institution of the bed and breakfast place.

The typical bed and breakfast place is a farmhouse which has a few rooms which are used for guest. You get a room for the night and breakfast in the morning. The heating is often nonexistent, and the loo (john) is down the hall. The food is usually good. Likely as not you can visit with the family with whom you are staying.

We stayed at a couple of such places while travelling around Cornwall. We also stayed at a marvellous little hotel in St. Ives. St. Ives (*The St. Ives of "As I was going to St. Ives I met a man with seven wives..."*) is a large fishing village and artists colony. It is also a popular tourist trap. It is reminiscent of Rockport except that (a) it is larger, (b) it is a fully functioning community, (c) it is still a fishing village, and (d) it is infinitely less tacky. The hotel we stayed at had central heating (heavenly at that point in the trip) and rooms overlooking the ocean. (I.e. you would get spray through the window in heavy weather.)

I suppose that I should mention Eastercon, the SF convention in Manchester. It was held at a ~~university~~ college (?), using the school facilities. One could stay in rooms at the school. It turned out to be a major error to do so. The dorm was economically constructed. For example they saved money by only having stops at every other floor in the elevator. The beds were narrow pieces of board with a thin mattress on them. The convention was fun. There was a small art show, and a small hucksters room. They had a premier of the movie The Man Who Fell to Earth which was fairly good and very strange. Robert Silverberg was there. He read readings from one of his books - he is a very good reader. Most of the action was in the bar which was downstairs from where the program was being held.

Food. I forgot to mention the delightful custom of having pate as an appetizer. Pate is a rarity here. Over there it is a commonplace. There are basically two types of pate - chunky and smooth (not to be confused with skippy peanut butter.) Smooth are the liver pates; chunky are the ground meat pates. For lunch one goes to the local pub and has a pint of bitters, some pate, and a bowl of soup.

London is an incredibly neat city. It has a number of very large, very beautiful parks. It has an excellent subway system. It has, for the most part, a low skyline. I saw most of the obligatory things: 10 Downing St. is a rather modest residence; there are Pandas in the zoo; stars in the planetarium; speakers in the speakers corner at Hyde park, etc.

And there is the Albert Memorial. I will be honest. My reaction upon first seeing it was a startle "Oh, my God!" It is one of the most ornately baroque pieces of architecture in existence. There are two or three friezes. There are two sets of steps. There is statuary at the four corners representing four continents. Each corner has several figures and a couple of animals. There are little gilt painted curlicues. There are big gilt painted curlicues. There are little spires and bigger spires. There is a vaulted ceiling painted pale blue with red stars in it (plus extra decoration.) There is also a statue of Albert somewhere in all of this. It is not modest. It is not restrained...

At that it is not out of place in England. The English have made a practice of elaborate decoration of buildings for centuries. They have not, up to now, been enthusiasts of the clean stark simple lines school of architecture. They do not feel embarrassed to have fancy patterning in brickwork.

Then there are the little differences. For example the English have their light switches upside down. That is, you throw the switch up to turn the light off and throw it down to turn it on. They also mark their hot and cold faucets with red and blue dots. I believe red is hot and blue is cold (cold color for cold water and hot color for hot water.) However they blow it a certain percentage of the time.

One of the prides of England is the London theatre. Live theatre (and the arts generally) are subsidized in England. There are, at any particular moment, dozens of live productions going on which cost no more to attend than the movies. I saw four plays while I was over there, Murder at the Vicarage, Mousetrap, Equus, and Very Good Eddie. The first two are dramatizations of stories by Agatha Christie. Mousetrap has been running for twentyfour years (a longevity record in a class by itself). Equus is simply brilliant. The play is about a teenager who blinds six horses - not, one would think, a promising topic. In a world filled with sordidness ones reaction might well be to skip any play which offered such sordid potential. It would be a mistake to do so.

What the play is about is very simple. It is the attempt to find out how and why a somewhat disturbed young man could come to do such a thing. The principal characters are the boy, his psychiatrist at a childrens mental home, his parents, a girl who was interested in him, and the magistrate who referred him to the psychiatrist.

The young man, who is only semi-literate and not especially remarkable, has invented for himself a passionate religion around horses and the god slave, Equus. (*They are bigger than we and more powerful, yet they bear us and accept our abuse.*) In a world where mythology has faded and imitations are peddled in the marketplace, the young man had found for himself the real thing.

From the sublime to the ridiculous...

Very Good Eddie is a turkey. Gobble, gobble, gobble. I mean a real turkey. We saw it the last night we were in London. We picked it almost at random, as something that looked like it might be good from the little that we knew about it - which was mostly that it was written by Jerome Kern and P.G. Wodehouse. It was a musical - a 1910 Broadway musical. They were, ah, less subtle in those days. After two minutes you knew how the whole play was going to turn out. You knew that the two couples who were newly married and were ill assorted by size were going to get reassorted by size. You even knew that it was going to turn out that the judges license had run out. The plot was hackneyed, and the humor was broad and musty. The music was not distinguished. It was fun in its own way - Mary and I enjoyed it for what it was - but it was very corny. It was obvious that quite a bit of the audience really didn't know what to make. What was not obvious was why on earth this ancient gobbler was dug up from the dead.

One of the differences between England and America is that the English do not use frame construction. Everything is brick, stone, or cement. This is comprehensible enough - they simply don't have the lumber for it. They also live in much less space than we do. The typical English house is what they call a semi-detached. We would call it a duplex, consisting of two houses with a common wall. The size of the building, however, is no larger than a typical one family house in the states. Despite the fact that two families may be sharing a single building they regard themselves as living in two separate houses and feel under no obligation to coordinate in time of painting or choice of colors. The results can be quite startling.

One of the popular modes of modern awful is something called pebble dash. What you do is take a brick house, cover it with cement, and strew the wall with pebbles while it is still wet. It may or may not be painted thereafter. It begins life as a blah gray, and goes downhill from there. It quickly stains and streaks and takes on various less than lovely shades. There must be a reason for it...

The skies of Manchester glow orange at night. Strange.

Speaking of Manchester and the Science Fiction convention, it was held at some of the worst facilities for a convention that I have ever been at. (*And I was chairman of Lexicon I*)

Whoops, I said that already...

We did a fair bit of viewing of churches and cathedrals. The great cathedrals are impressive. There is no way about it, they are impressive. I had not previously really appreciated how beautiful stained glass windows can be. It was interesting to see how different modern stained glass is from medieval stained glass. The colors in the modern glass tends to be much more brilliant. It is much less detailed, however, and less rich in choice of colors.

Like Isaac Asimov I, too, stood beside but not on the stone that covered the remains of Isaac Newton...

One of the differences between England and America is that in America the premier clothing stores are for womens clothes whereas in England the premier shops are for men. I ended up getting a couple of jackets in Liverpool and a suit in London. This despite my well known aversion to clothes shopping.

I also ate at Simpsons on the Strand on the ground floor which is for gentlemen (well, males, anyway) only. Mary had insisted that I eat there for lunch. The first time I tried having lunch there I was politely informed that tie and jacket were obligatory (the English are big on this sort of thing.) I returned the next day suitably attired and was duly rewarded with a fine lunch. The details of the lunch are lost from my memory now except that I had some excellent roast beef and a small carafe of claret. It is, by the way, one of those places where carvers go around with carts on which there are large pieces of meat and carve off servings for you. My stomach smiles in remembrance.

Then there was the random book store in Covent garden that had a copy of a Hannes Bok portfolio put out by Ned Brooks...

And, speaking of bookstores, we visisted what are probably the two best bookstores in the world. These are Foyles in London, and Blackwells in Oxford. It is a matter of some debate which is the better. There is no doubt that Foyles is the larger - it is the largest bookstore in the world, after all. On the other hand Blackwells is more extensive in its nonfiction and particularly its scholarly works. At least I would judge so from sampling the Mathematics and Philosophy sections in both stores. Incidentally, Mary found in Blackwells a book published by a small press in Cambridge (Mass) which she could not find in Cambridge. The real trouble with Blackwells is simply that it is not here. We only browsed for a couple of hours. Even several days would not have been enough, however. What one really needs is the chance to browse in it over a period of years. You need more time than is available in any single visit. Sigh. It is a magnificent book store. With all of these bookstores I really didn't buy many books. I got two books from the Rhada trilogy, a complete (?) set of Thelwell cartoons, a book by Reece on bridge, and a book on the philosophy of paradoxes.

A description of English roads is not complete without a description of what I call virtual roundabouts. A roundabout is what we call a rotary. For those of you who are unfamiliar with this atrocity in traffic design, a rotary is a poor mans cloverleaf intersection. You have a circular road (small circle) with a number of roads leading into it. The idea is that you drive from one road into the rotary and off on another. This serves very well as a traffic interchange, except that there is a continual conflict between those entering and those exiting the rotary. In Massachussettes rotaries are used as training grounds to teach people how to become Mass drivers. (Reputedly the worst in the country.) In England they are much more civilized. Whoever is in the roundabout has the absolute right-of-way. In fact, there is a balk line before entering the roundabout.

"Virtual" is computer jargon. A common thing that is done nowadays in computer systems is to pretend that one thing is something else. Thus we have "virtual memory" and "virtual machines." The point of this is not just the unending quest of industry to palm off ersatz as the real thing. The idea is to avoid duplication of effort and to use resources more efficiently - a goal that is only to be commended (and ignored.) The idea is to use clever interfaces to make one thing look like another because the simulated thing is more readily dealt with. "Virtual" is thus being used in the sense of "not real", "abstract." For example, computer people often speak in virtual English.

What then, is a virtual roundabout. Well, the ordinary roundabout has a circular plot of ground in the middle, usually ten or more meters in radius. Lately the English have taken to taking a round piece open ground, painting a dot in the middle of it, and painting circular arrows around it. The notion is that you drive up to the round area on one road, zigzag around the dot (to the left of course), and exit on another road. On no account are you to drive straight accross the round space because that would be violating the integrity of the roundabout.

Which reminds me - Picadilly Circus, Oxford Circus, et al, are not carnivals. Circus is simply a good old fashioned Latin word meaning ring or circle. The British use the term to refer to the meeting place of several streets when it is approximately round. The American usage is a corruption of the Latin corruption. The Romans called their ampitheatres, which were round, names like *Circus Maximus* and *Circus Minimus*. It fairly quickly became the thing to refer to ampitheatres in general as circuses and then in turn to the show within the ampitheater as a circus.

I expect that I should say something about Bath. The thing that makes Bath a big deal is that it has natural hot water springs. These are mineral waters and it was believed that drinking them was a restorative. Soaking in the waters was also popular. The waters are about 85°F and are just about ideal for soaking. The heat, incidentally, comes from passage through radioactive rocks. The waters, however, are only very faintly radioactive and are not supposed to be dangerous.

Bath was started up by the Romans, who found a hot water swamp and decided that something could be made of it. They began by clearing the swamps and constructing basins to form pools. These became more elaborate and more popular. Eventually they ended up putting in the traditional Roman baths as well - complete with furnace rooms worked by slaves, etc.

After the Romans left, things fell to rack and ruin. They picked up again a dozen centuries or so later when Bath became very fashionable. There was a period in the seventeen hundreds when Bath was second only to London as a haunt of high society. The Assembly Room and the Pump Room are still there, although they are museums now.

Here and there one is reminded of the damage the Germans did during the war. No part of England was exempt and the targets were the historical monuments. Many cathedrals were extensively damaged. The object of the bombing was to "terrorize" the population and destroy their morale. Sort of on a par with blowing up the Parthenon, except that the Germans were doing it deliberately. The English have done a marvelous job of restoration. Except for things which are replacable, one would not know that it had been bombed so heavily.

We got to Bristol which is the home of Harvey's (Cream Sherry, Milk Sherry, and Directors Bin, etc.) Unfortunately we got there during the weekend and the vaults at Harveys were not open. They are, I am told, well worth visiting. We did have supper at Harveys where the four of us (Mary, Marsha, Eddie, and I) blew fifty pounds. Admittedly over half of this was for wine.

Speaking of wine, I never did get out to Hallgarten's. They are a firm of wine shippers who specialize in German white wines. In 1972, Fritz Hallgarten came over and personally sponsored wine tastings of the 1971 German whites, which are some of the best German whites of the century. I had ordered several cases in advance orders at that time. They are (what's left of them) lovely. Naturally I wanted to stop in and visit.

However it turned out that they were well on the outskirts of London, and that there really wasn't much to see, according to the people I talked to there. I did, however, confirm the rumor that '75 German whites were particularly excellent - particularly the Moselles.

So much for wine. Onto to Bubble and Squeak. The English speak English which is much like unto American, except that they talk funny and they use different slang. Among these different expressions are such things as Chip Butties, Bangers and Mash, and Bubble and Squeak. All refer to varieties of food. A chip butty is a french fries sandwich (upon which the cognoscenti put vinegar.) Bangers and Mash are sausages and mashed potatoes. I am pleased to say that I have no idea what Bubble and Squeak is. It has been explained to me, but the explanation does not take root in my mind. If you really need to know, I'll put you in touch with someone who can tell you what it is.

Although I toured several Cathedrals I didn't get to any castles, properly speaking. That is, I went through the Tower of London (which is not a single Tower but is, instead, a group of buildings surrounded by high walls.) We looked at a couple of ruins. We stopped by a castle that was in good shape but was closed by the time we got there.

There are wild ponies in the Exmoor forrest...

The British have BBC. They also have commercial stations with commercials as awful as the ones here. I recall a particularly delightful jingle that went "When it's roundabout eleven, it's elevenses for me." Elevenses, I gather, are a particular brand of chocolate covered wheat crackers. I sang this little ditty to Mary twice. The second time she hit me sufficiently hard so that there wasn't a third time.

Double decker busses are neat. Their advantage for sightseeing is enhanced by the fact that the major streets of London are quite open and by the fact that almost all of the buildings are people sized - i.e., not more than a few stories high.

And our Avis rent-a-car died completely in the middle of nowhere.

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Dear Harter

George Flynn
 46 Highland Ave.
 Somerville MA 02143
 April 19, 1976

It's really about time that I responded to the copy of PERSONAL NOTES #6 that you handed me at Boskone.

I should hope so.

Fredric Brown and Donald Westlake have, for the most part, written "crime novels" as opposed to mysteries.

I like the way you handle letters; on the other hand, I also like the way Don D'Armassa does his lettercol (except, of course, that he doesn't print enough of my locs.) After pondering this inconsistency, I have decided I mean that you both have appropriate policies for the kinds of locs you respectively receive. Certainly no one could accuse you of conducting a salon, and your locs reflect the randomness of your editorial non-policy. -- "Res ipsa loquitur," by the way. -- You say that Mythologies is not "a Hugo class zine." This may be true, but I would like to distinguish between "Hugo class" (the sort of thing which is in fact likely to get a Hugo) and "Hugo quality" (what might get a Hugo in the best of all possible worlds, in the unlikely event that such a world contained anything like fandom.) -- Also the perfect review does not terminate with a review of itself.

A Hugo class zine (in your sense) falls into one of two categories: (a) it is a newszine; or (b) it has a column by Ted White.

Although I recognize your distinction, I suspect that the classes are not all that far apart. Generally speaking, the Hugo candidates and winners are premier fanzines - Locus, SFR, Algol, et al are indeed very good. They belong in both categories. It is presumably true that there are fanzines which are of "Hugo quality" which are very unlikely to get nominated. It is easy enough to suppose that there are low circulation fanzines which are very very good which are being shortchanged when the awards are being handed out. Examples do not spring readily to mind. For the most part the excellent small fanzine is a myth.

Let me propound a test. Take an issue of SFR. Take an issue of a fanzine like Mythologies (or Personal Notes). If you were sitting down to read a fanzine, which would you pick? Would it not almost certainly be SFR? Would you not expect SFR to be better constructed, more thoughtful, more meaty, wider in scope, and just plain more interesting? When you come right down to it, isn't SFR just a plain better fanzine? And isn't it reasonable that this should be the case - Geis is just flatly a better editor, more experienced, more talented, and more dedicated than almost anybody.

To be sure, there are many small, low-key, fannish fanzines. Some of them are quite good in their way. They are fun. But they stack up against SFR about the way local amateur theatre stacks up against Broadway.

As you say, the trappings of feudalism have had a longer life than feudalism itself. I can well conceive of some future state reviving those titles for the lingering power of their names, without the systems' having any real relationship with feudalism.

Stan Burn's memory is faulty: Nova was indeed nominated for a Hugo in '69 (and lost to Stand on Zanzibar). I think Pavane may have fallen afoul of the prior-publication rule, since all the sections had appeared earlier in British zines.

Yes, it's true what you say about the evil practice of editing locs (exceeded only by the evil practice of printing them complete with stupid parts.) (*Better than printing only the stupid parts - RH*) Consider, for example, Mike Glicksohn, who never printed more than two sentences from about ten locs that I wrote him. (Of course, this may have had something to do with Energumen's high quality.) I wouldn't have minded this so much if he hadn't once printed a full-page loc refuting one of those snippets.

Shouldn't your introduction to the Boskone report have mentioned good ol' Uncle Howie? -- "...not really a cat but a vengeful alien." But what of Fritz Leiber's theory that all cats are aliens?

Yes, what of Fritz Lieber's theory? The truth of the matter is quite the reverse:
All aliens are cats. Some cats are not aliens, however. Don't ask which is
which - it is far far better that you don't know.

The substantive basis for the "What is a fanzine?" controversy is that the Hugo rules refer to "amateur magazines", not "fanzines." My reaction to this has always been, "So much the worse for the wording of the Hugo rules." Of the major "offenders", Locus isn't much of a fanzine any more, but Algol has the flavor of a fanzine (especially with its extensive lettercol,) and SFR is very fannish (just look at all those feuds.) I wish them all well too, and I don't see why people with different tastes can't live and let live instead of mounting crusades. And yet... there is this nagging feeling that something like Gresham's Law may apply to the commercialization of fandom. But, if so, there's not much to be done about it, anyway.

My sentiments exactly. I suspect that part of the reaction to the "semipro-
fessional" fanzines has to do with their not being folk art or being too good
to be folk art. That is, part of what makes fanzines enjoyable and worthwhile
both to the creators and to the readers is that they are a form of folk art.
The line between folk art and other forms of art can sometimes be hazy. In
general I would say that the real distinction is in the motives of the creators
and their intended audience. Folk art is created for use within a particular
community and is structured within the context of that community. It is the
difference between creating something for those one knows and creating something
for an impersonal audience - between writing for ones friends and writing for
posterity.

Your remarks about "the artificial values of fandom" could be countered by a discussion of the extent to which all the values of society are artificial. This could be quite interesting; I think I'll let you write it. - In saying fandom "is politically inconsequential", though, you neglect the point that fandom is essentially part of the SF microcosm (now there's an oxymoron if you think about it,) within which it has had a "political" influence out of proportion to its size.

But Science Fiction does not have any direct political importance. That is,
those concerned with control of the society and the exercise and accumulation
of power. SF is pretty much irrelevant as far as politics is concerned.

The point that I was concerned with is that the fanpress is a free press -
 # an extraordinarily free press in many respects. It is unconstrained by the
 # economic and political considerations that limit an ordinary newspaper -
 # there are no advertisers to worry about, etc. People in fanzines can and
 # do talk about anything and everything - an admirable situation. This kind
 # of free press is very much a political thing. No autocratic or totalitarian
 # would tolerate this sort of uncensored free press. The interesting thing
 # is that this freewheeling exercise of the freedom of press is so politically
 # inconsequential, so irrelevant. One usually thinks of the freedom of press
 # in its political context - that is, in connection with what the press says
 # about the doings of the state and its agents. This is the cutting point -
 # it is political reportage that is always the immediate target of those
 # who would throttle the press. One of the nice things about freedom is that
 # you can do things you happen to want to do, even if they have no general
 # importance. The fanpress is an example of this exercise of freedom. But it
 # wouldn't exist, wouldn't be allowed to exist, unless the more strictly political
 # freedoms are there also.

Portions of my loc are obsolete. (*I fear that there is all too good a chance that any loc that I receive will be obsolete by the time it gets in print. But I persevere.*) Consider the confusion engendered by your printing as my address what was not the place I wrote the letter from (thus giving the curious impression that I was living in Cambridge but getting to Harvard Square only "every couple of months"), has never been my mailing address for fanzines (with a very few exceptions), and - alas - had become obsolete by the time you got into print. Clearly one or more of your causal discontinuities has been operative here. -- In the "tapestry interpretation" God also knows in advance which prayers will be offered and can adjust matters accordingly. But such terms as "in advance" or "already" are misleading given the premise that God is outside of the timestream. One can as well imagine Them as existing at the end of time and reaching back to make adjustments (hmm, a uchronian theology?); in fact, those models in which God is becoming or yet-to-be rather than already existing can be interpreted in this way. It is, of course, obvious how free will then becomes a feedback mechanism. -- As for your model, it can clearly be made to sound as though it could not be made clear. (*Is that clear?*) (*No, but it's marvelous.*) Once a miracle has taken place, there must be at least two "versions" of all subsequent dates, even though, say, the two versions of 1976 do not exist at the same time. This is unsatisfying for the same reason as all alternate-present theories, as violating one's conviction of one's own uniqueness. Your example may also be unsatisfactory: are you sure that if New York were destroyed that we'd notice the difference. (*Er, I thought that was what I was implying - it was, and we haven't.*) -- I would like to see you and Earl Wajenberg get into a theological discussion on all this. -- I note that your rule against rereading what you write in an APA does not apply to this zine. (*Oh, but it does.*)

I decided I'd better check what I had said on the matter, so I reread the
 # the relevant portion of P#3. I regret to say that it is lamentably clear
 # and is open to the objection that you make. This is because there is one
 # further point which I should have added and didn't. That is, there is only
 # one 1937 which actually is. All other 1937's are potential pasts or futures.
 # It is not your uniqueness that is in question - it is your continuity of
 # existence.

The last time I chose to get somewhat heavily involved in the market was early 1969 (also the last time I could afford it); since then I've been waiting for a chance to break even.

CONFESSIONS OF A BOOZE FIEND

OH BOY, WHERE THE
HELL AM I THIS
TIME?

BOOM

BOOM

GOOD GOD, IT'S
THE NAPOLEONIC
WARS - I'M A
DUTCH LANCER
HELP!

CHARGE

ARGH

GALLOP

HELP, HELP, HELP

GALLOP

CHARGE

GALLOP

CRASH

HOLY
SHIT

OH BOY, A
HANGOVER
FOR
SURE!

Dear Richard Harter (Boy Wonder):

Stanford Burns

PO Box 1381

Glendale CA 91209

Feb 11, 1976

Thanks for the issue of PN #6. First off, the George Flynn letter was illegible because of see-threw or something. Slipping, Dick. How can I nominate you in good faith for a Hugo if you've got repro problems. Seriously....

It warnt see-threw problems, it war feed problems.

You might say that the Gestetner was off its feed. What had happened was
that the piece that pushes the paper had worn to the point where it stopped
feeding properly. Any time the machine fails to feed a piece of paper through
the pressure roller gets ink on it and the next several sheets get overprinted
on the reverse side. The machine had gradually been getting worse over time
and was on its last legs by the time I got to the last few pages of PN#6.
It has been fixed since then and I hope you find the repro a little better.

Since you and several of your readers are horse freaks, and if you don't know about him already, let me recommend to you a British mystery/suspense writer named Dick Francis. Francis used to be the jockey for the Queen Mother in the fifties before he retired, and now he writes about the British racing scene, and one of his other loves, flying (he was in the RAF during the Big One.) His lead characters include jockeys, flyers, horse trainers, and - once - an actor. Let me recommend FLYING FINISH to start. They just came out in paperback in new editions recently, so they shouldn't be too hard to find. I think you'll like them... (I see that Whitmore is into mysteries now. I've heard that Heinlein wrote some during the fifties under a pseudonym. Any idea what???)

You've done it again. Run another con report. I'll forgive you this time 'cause I know some of the principals this time, so that it isn't so confusing. I didn't mean to tell you in my last letter that you shouldn't run con reports (after all, it is your zine,) just that since I didn't know any of the people involved, I found it difficult to figure out what was going on. I like Gilbert illos too...

Doing as much reviewing as I do, I have a few comments to make. One of the problems I have is that I get review copies through Glycer's PREHENSILE. This may not sound like a problem, but it is. Most of the review copies are books I never would have bought or read. I'd say 60 to 70%. So how do you review such books? Since they gave me a free copy, I feel required to read it. Usually I can tell within ten or twenty pages whether or not it's worthwhile to finish a novel or just give up. But what do you do when you feel required to finish a novel you hate. It doesn't exactly give you good thoughts about the author or publisher. It's gotten to the point now that I just state that I was unable to finish reading the novel, and then state my reasons for that. I guess that's fairer than reviewing a novel that you haven't read - at least you aren't misguiding your readers. Then we come to killer reviews. There are novels that are so bad that they deserve this type of review. And I have, on occasion, written them. For example, I read one novel called THE BODELEAN WAY. About 25 pages into it the author states that it is forbidden to make any kind of image representation of a Bodelean; twenty five pages later he has someone come up to a Bodelean and state that he recognized her 'cause her picture was spread across the galaxy!!! I killed that novel, and by Ghod it deserved it. Generally, though, I just recommend that my readers spend their money elsewhere.....

I see the problem and I sympathize. To review books on a regular basis that
you read only for the purpose of reviewing can be positively mind-numbing.

I suspect that one problem for the staff reviewer is that one tends to stop
reading for pleasure (the approach of the typical reader) and shift to reading
for the review that one is going to write.

Er, I hate to break it to you, but I'm far from being a boy wonder. I might
do as a superannuated boy wonder, but I'm many years from the real thing. By
the time you read this I will have turned 41.

oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

.
.
Dainis Bisenieks .
The Hobbitat .
. 2633 Dupont Ave. S. .
. Minneapolis, MN 55408 .
.
.
.
.

Dear Dick,

Thanks for PN 5 and 6. Let me impress on you
one thing. Love, or whatever we LoCcers or fan-
zine publishers have, means NEVER HAVING TO
APOLOGIZE. (But Dainis - What if I like to
apologize?) I know that I'm blaspheming against
an old fannish tradition, but I don't want to know the reason or excuse unless it's
interesting enough that you'd tell it anyway. Just resume the thread of discourse
as nonchalantly as SPACEWAYS continued its serial after a lapse of how many years?

I do enjoy conreports with fannish illustrations.

Where else but in a fanzine would I read about the physiological peculiarities
of people's mothers' dogs? But since this is an acceptable fannish subject: the
Hobbitat's dog, Snuffy, is taken for a walk by whoever happens to be around or to
enter the house. If entering, he can deduce much from the dog's manner of greeting
him. If the dog spins around at 60 rpm or more, he had better be taken out at once.
30 rpm or less means that the excursion can be put off for a bit, and if the dog
does not spin at all, he has just been out.

I see.

The review of Mythologies was too long by far. After the first two paragraphs
I began to skip.

A disappointing comment, but an honest one. I expect that I got over enthus-
iastic about the idea of doing a review in depth. I have a large ego and the
slightest hint of praise can induce in me delusions of grandeur.

GOBLIN TOWER, yes, an enjoyable book. Notice how cleverly DeCamp found a
reason for his hero to be possessed of the skills needed to extricate himself from
trouble? I would dearly love to see a third (though it be final) book, for which
I have offered the title THE BATHTUB DJINN. (Ugh.)

Notice too that DeCamp's justification of his hero's talents removes him from
the category of serious sword and sorcery writers. Too rational. It is
essential to S&S that you don't explain these things - the heroes powers are
part of the myth to be re-enacted.

Mike Gilbert's wine label reminds me of the perfectly genuine King Snedly's
Beer, something they have (or had) in the Bay Area. The cans, which are alleged
to be worth a buck apiece to collectors, declare they contain twelve ounce's of
King S's swell beer, and there are medallion portraits of the King's worthless
relatives and ministers. The beer, of course, is indistinguishable from any other.

Of course.

As I understand it, one mounts horses from the left because in former days cavalymen and officers wore their swords on the left hip. The rest is left as an exercise for the reader.

Stock market? Have you read a book titled WHERE ARE THE CUSTOMERS' YACHTS? ? Where, indeed, is your yacht? (*Would you believe a toy sailboat in my bathtub?*)

Ah, yes, where are the customers' yachts? The line comes from the old story
about the prospective customer who was being shown New York by his broker-to-be.
At one point they were inspecting the harbor and the broker proudly pointed
out the yachts of various prominent financiers - bankers and brokers, everyone
of them. And the prospective customer asked....

And then there was a stock market advisor who advertised, "Our Customers have
Yachts." - while they last, no doubt.

Studies on the stock market have conclusively shown two things. First of all
one can obtain an average return of 9% simply by buying stocks at random and
holding them. Secondly, over half of the people who try to make money in
Wall Street end up breaking even - at best.

As you may have noticed, some of the preceding material has been printed in brown ink. I would appreciate any comments on preferences in color of ink. My feeling is that brown is preferable to black - that it is somewhat more readable and somewhat warmer a color. I am curious, however, as to what other peoples reaction is.

Harry Warner Jr. . Dear Richard:
423 Summit Avenue .
Hagerstown, MD 21740 . I must apologize for writing a prompt loc. It makes
February 18, 1976 . me very sorry to think that I'm ruining your kind
effort to accumulate excuses for late locs. I even feel
apologetic for fandom in general, because it has proven
again in this particular way that I can't win, whether
I'm late or prompt, since someone is bound to suffer. (*All I can say, Harry, is go
read Dainis' letter and what he has to say on the matter.*)

Deer have been causing trouble in this general area, too. Most of Maryland's commercial apple crop is grown in a section of this county west of Hagerstown, near the point where Maryland's neck is the narrowest. Orchardists have been driven into the status of Bambiphobes by the way deer have been multiplying and nibbling their young trees in a damaging manner. I don't think that the deer splurge in this area results from anything mankind has done just recently. There's a hunting season every year which is longer than it used to be, and still the deer multiply. The only possible explanation that occurs to me involves the water table. The level of streams and rivers have been dropping very slowly ever since the first Europeans began to settle in this area more than two centuries ago. I keep wondering if it isn't increasingly easy for deer to get across the Potomac River without swimming difficulties, thus permitting local concentrations of deer to move further afield when food starts to run low in a given area, thereby reducing the effects of poor nutrition.

But I can't think of any reason why it should be traditional to mount a horse from only one side. All I can do is guess. If I remember my Ken Maynard movies correctly, the accepted method in this country involves putting the right foot in the stirrup first and swinging the left leg over. (*Your memory has betrayed you. If you mount in that fashion on the left side - which is customary - you will end up facing the horse's behind. This is not a style of riding recommended for beginners.*) Maybe it just happened that way because of the instinctive way the majority of people, who are right handed, would automatically use the right leg for elevation purposes, just as cameras always have the viewfinder where it will accomodate the right eye. Another possibility might involve the way a rifle or a sword was normally slung around the horseman's body. Perhaps the accepted method of climbing up lessened the danger of gouging the horse in the ribs with the barrel of the gun or the scabbard's bottom end.

The latter explanation seems to be the correct one. A righthanded swordsman
will wear his sword on his left side. (You have to draw a sword from the
opposite side it is worn on.) On mounting a horse you don't want to swing
the sword across the horses body. Therefore the rider will want to swing
his right leg over the horse. Which inevitably means that he will mount on
the left side, with the left foot in the stirrup.

I can't agree with you on the matter of publishing locs complete. In fact, if your philosophy should suddenly sweep triumphantly through all fanzine fandom, I imagine my loc production would wither and die because I would be so inhibited at the knowledge that everything I wrote would probably see print. The way things are, I don't try to be careful, knowing that there is a better than even chance that the clumsy or improbable or cliched words that I'm writing at any given moment won't see print. (*What an awful thought. You mean to tell me that there are people that don't print every word you write. How shocking!*)) On the other hand I agree with you that it isn't such an awful thing for a fanzine like Algol to pay for material, if that's what the editor really wants to do, and can afford it. The whole dispute could be wiped out if fans would agree to call such fanzines by a different term, like semiprozines, and if the contributors who don't want to make money out of fandom would simply refuse payment or turn it over to a cause like TAFF. Certainly nobody imagines that nay of these fanzines makes enough moeny to pay a minimum wage salary to the staff members as a regular prozine normally does. There's always the problem of whether a person who contributes to them becomes a pro and therefore ineligible to receive votes in the fan categories of Hugo balloting. But I see no reason to ban anyone for this reason, as long as almost all the people who get nominated in the fan artist Hugo category are making money by sales at art shows.

But Harry, your semiprozine proposal finesses the issue. That is what the
dispute is about. Some argue that Algol et al, are fanzines, others are
saying they are not. You are saying, in effect, agree with me and there
won't be any disputes.

Traditionally, making money in SF has not disqualified one from the fan
Hugos - e.g. Ted White and Jack Gaughn.

I enjoyed your Mythologies review, except for concern over the effect it might have on Don D'Ammassa. I keep remembering the centipede who pulled up lame after hearing two spiders conduct a learned discussion on exactly how he manipulated all those legs while walking. I suspect that it's a better review that the briefer one with the dross burned off that you propose.

The finest thing about Sheila Gilbert's contribution was the wealth of evidence it contained about various fans getting sick. I keep reading about all these incredible feats of endurance and wakefulness at cons, and I begin to imagine myself the only person in fandom subject to the normal limitations of the human body until something like this comes along. *(So what is this normal limitations that only you feel. Are you using normal in the normative sense - i.e. normal is what ought to be, regardless of whether anything is "normal" or not. In that case can we regard you as the platonic ideal of poor health?)* It made pleasant reading and I naturally felt an extra amount of pleasure at remembering from Noreascon the surroundings of this con, thereby getting the delusion that I'm an inveterate globe-trotter after all. (I started feeling this way when my city of birth, Chambersburg, PA, got mixed up this winter in ABC's Almost Anything Goes, and I watched it with the smug sophistication of knowing that I am probably one of only two people in fandom who have travelled extensively enough to recognize those Chambersburg scenes. Paul Ganley is the other, because he taught at a college there for several years.)

But Harry. If they have a college there, they must have a Star Trek club
and maybe even an SF club. There must be fans there. They even know about
you. They just don't know that you know about Chambersburg.

You're right about the unimportance of fanzines in the sense of real impact on the world. But I think all fans would do well to realize the potential of fanzines for changing the world. Fandom contains some people with dubious mental balance, a fair quantity of very talented individuals, some potentially great writers. There is the ever-present possibility that one fanzine in particular or fanzines in general might be a trigger that caused someone to become a President or to assassinate a president or to find within himself the ability to write something as influential as the Communist Manifesto. I still think that fanzines might have had enough power to keep this nation's space program vigorous and productive, if they had egged enough people to write letters to congressmen in the way that the Star Trek fans kept their series on the air after cancellation had been decreed. There is also the grim fact that the way the nation is going it's conceivable that participation in fandom could ruin a fan's ability to get many kinds of work in the future. One Manson emerging from fandom might put all fans on the untrustworthy list, if the future brings the stepped-up efforts to control violence and subversion that seem probable.

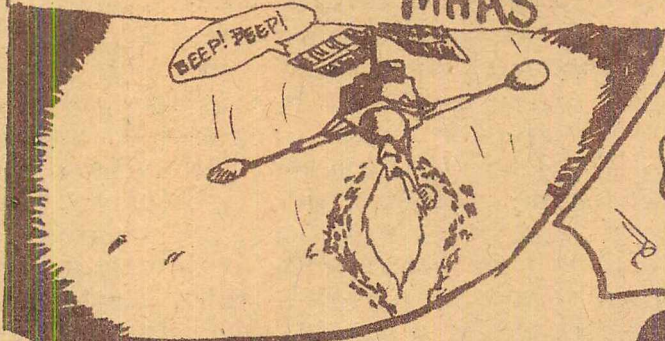
Well, no, I can't agree. To be sure, a particular individual may be influenced
by fanzines or a particular fanzine in such a way that he does great and
wondrous things. But this would be entirely fortuitous - a matter of striking
an idiosyncratic chord. Any book, any play, indeed any action at all that
affects others might do so.

I am a little skeptical about the chance that fans and fanzines could have
done anything for the space program. A TV network is somewhat smaller
potatoes than the U.S. Government, and it exists for public response. The
thing that kept Star Trek going was that it was proven to the network that
it had an audience - which was all that was asked of it. To the government
SF fandom was and is only a rather tiny voice in the bewildering cacophony
of special interests. Look at the NRA for example - they are able to pro-
duce a million pieces of mail on gun legislation, which is the more readily
affectable because it doesn't cost anything.

Well, I don't know of any Mansons emerging from fandom but there have been a
number of fans who have run afoul of the law. I expect if things get as bad
as you suggest, that half the country will be on the suspect list, so it
won't really matter.

1976

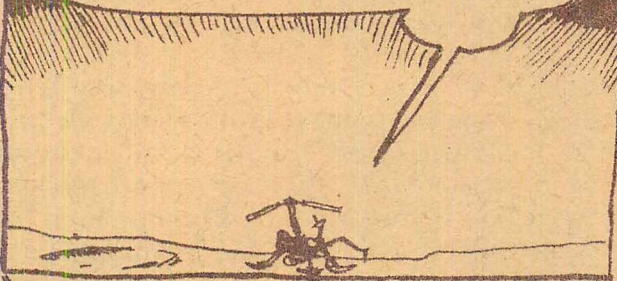
THE VIKING HEADS FOR
A SUCCESSFUL SOFT LANDING
ON MARS



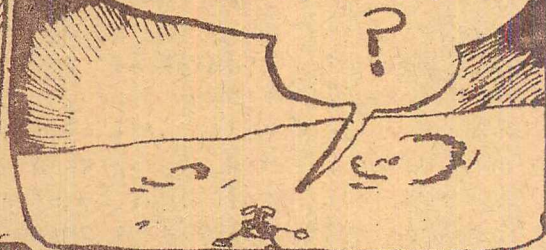
CRUNCH



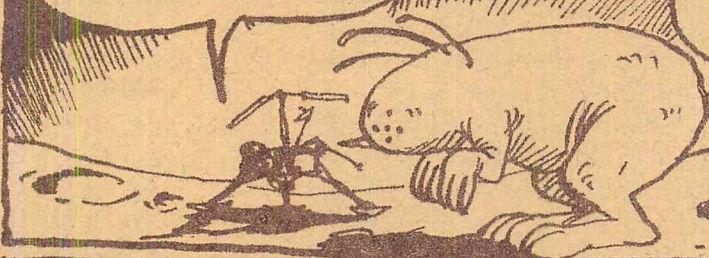
HI, I'M A MARS LANDER.



COME ON, I'VE TRAVELED
LOTS A MILES TO GET
HERE. WHERE IS
EVERY BODY

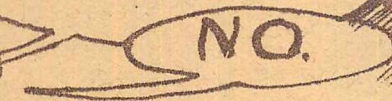


I'M SEARCHING FOR LIFE
AS WE KNOW IT!



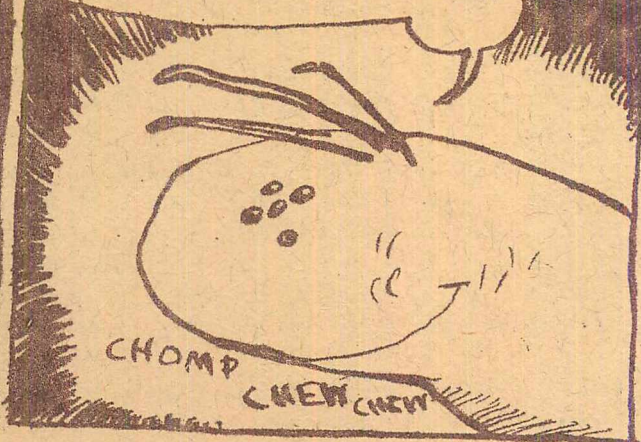
ARE YOU LIFE AS
WE KNOW IT?

NO.



GUMMP

TO BAD WE WERE NOT INTRODUCED
HE'S NOT BAD AT ALL!



. Dear Richard,

. Mike Glicksohn . Have just finished PN#6 which you handed me
. 141 High Park Avenue . but a day or so ago at Boskone and I can hardly
. Toronto, Ontario M6P 2S3. remember when I've enjoyed a forty-eight page
. February 17, 1963 . statement of editorial policy quite as much.
. (That seems safe enough to say - how many forty
. eight page editorial statements do you read?)

Your writing matches the level of your thinking
and both are considerably above the fannish average; the result is a personal-
zine that I enjoy even when it's dealing with topics I usually have no interest
in.

Thank ye kindly, sirrah. I suppose modesty should forbid one from printing
Words of praise by others, but my modesty certainly doesn't.

There's a wealth of commentable material here but if I were to attempt
to reread the issue making remarks whenever something interesting caught my
eye I'd never get this letter finished, so I'll pick out a few choice fannish
type topics and leave the trivial subjects of ecology, ethics, and finance for
the rest of the readership.

There's quite a difference, as you point out, between commenting on a person
one doesn't know and a book one hasn't read. One can - although many don't -
confine one's reactions to the activities of another person that one has seen
or read or heard but discussing a book really requires personal experience with
the book itself, else one can only report hearsay. I've seen Alfred Bester
at parties, for example, heard him speak and read some of his books: I think
that qualifies me to offer occasional remarks about him, even though we've
never really met. But I wouldn't comment on his last book because I didn't
read it.

Another part of the matter, of course, is the vast difference between the
public and private personas of many fans. On many occasions I've read the work
of another fan or heard him on panels or in speeches and decided that he/she
was a fugghead, only to later discover what a splendid person he/she was when we
finally got to know each other. It works the other way, too: how else could
one explain how come a nice chap such as myself makes such a regular idiot of
himself in print.

Oh now, as long as you have nice things to say about me, I'll stoutly
deny that you ever make an idiot of your self in print.

Your comment about public and private personas reminds me of an interesting
phenomenon that I have noted - namely the frequency with which fans,
particularly young ones, pretend to be someone (or something) else. Joe
Nurdheimer, for example, calls himself old barf ears, to the extent that
many know him only by that name. The game of, 'I'm not me, I'm somebody
else' is one that the mundane world makes uncomfortable, except, perhaps,
in adolescent peer groups. It is a game that is met with acquiescence in
fandom. I have always had some doubts about it being all that healthy.
In fandom this tendency is erratic, idiosyncratic. In the Society for
Creative Anachronism it is one of the important features of the Society
for those in it, and there I am even more dubious about its healthiness.
#

The inveterate defenders of this sort of thing (assuming that there are
such) may well point out that this sort of thing is not confined to fandom
or the SCA. He may point at the various fraternal organizations such as

the masons as examples of the same sort of thing. He might also point
the confusions of role and identity that afflict many - like the multitude
who can not deal with things except in terms of what they cost.

I cannot accept this sort of defence. I will concede that there are many
who cannot deal adequately with the question, "Who am I?", and that this
inadequacy extends far beyond fandom. It is not, however, a defence of
a failing that others have the same problem.

I also think that it is not sufficient to say that the SCA is merely a
seamier version of the Elks. It seems to me that it is a dangerous thing
to be attempting to make a fantasy world the real thing and that is what
many are doing. Americans are big on wearing funny hats, and this tendency
has its analog in fandom. There is nothing particularly wrong with that.
The danger arises when one loses sight of the fact that one is wearing a
funny hat and attempts to live in the real world as though it were the
funny hat world.

I found your in-depth analysis of MYTHOLOGIES remarkably well-handled.
(Don't tell me, tell Dainis.) You realize all the right questions to ponder
and you appear to have reached sound conclusions when thinking about them
with respect to Don's fanzine. Of course this is far more than simply a re-
view of a fanzine, it's the start of a whole treatise on the nature of fanzines
both in terms of establishing guidelines definitions as well as investigating
the motivations behind the actions of fan-pubbing. It's the sort of thing
that few faneds would want to publish, just because few fanzine readers would
care that much for the topic. (Most "fanzine review" columns are simply glorified
buyers' guides, of course, or sometimes excuses for not looting other people's
fanzines.) But the hard core of fanzine fans will undoubtedly approve of
both the idea and the execution. I sure did; it's a much more thoughtful and
valuable piece than anything I've ever done in the field!

And, again, thank you for your kind words. Actually I find the whole idea
of fanzines fascinating and, in its own way, important.

I feel slightly better about not yet having published, or even written, my
Aussiecon report after reading Sheila's Boskone report just after the Boskone
after the one she was writing about. (Much of the delay is my fault - RH)
I kinda enjoyed it, although I expect that's because I know the people involved.
Roy will probably find it boring, and it could have been written more tightly:
hopefully the film version, "The Perils of Sheila", will take care of these
minor defects.

I agree with just about everything you said about ALGOL and even go one
step further and say that if some of the activities of fandom can be made to
pay that's good as far as I'm concerned. But when that happens they are no
longer activities of fandom, at least not until the majority of fans are doing
the same things. So I too hope ALGOL will support Andy Porter but I'm also
of the belief that what he's doing is no longer a fanzine, at least not in
what is still accepted to be the general concept of the thing. You make this
very point but seemingly believe that one or two exceptions to the rule ought
to change the rule. I fail to see why. Let the exceptions remain outside
the rules until they aren't quite as miniscule a minority as they are now.
Sure times change, but one swallow doth not a summer make, nor one ALGOL demand
a new definition of fanzine. The old ways haven't passed yet, Dick (Oh, but
they have, Mike, they have. The old ways have always passed.) and I'm not
turning my back to the changes either; but until they become the norm, I'll look
on them as aberrations. Delightful, of course, and worthy of praise, admiration,
respect and participation, but aberrations nevertheless.

Yoicks. I suspect we shall have to agree to disagree. You don't think that
that ALGOL is a fanzine. I do. Now there are all sorts of convoluted arg-
uments and criteria that one can go into. But one can also approach the
question rather simply. Instead of depending on the convoluted and infin-
itely debatable (and debated) standards of fandom (a beast that speaks with
many heads and even more tongues) one can approach the question with the
ordinary standards and criteria of the mundane world and ask - Is ALGOL a
profession publication? And the answer is, quite clearly, no, it is not
a professional publication. It is, rather obviously, an amateur publication
which is published as a labor of love. It is published by a fan, it publishes
the sort of things that appear in fanzines, it exists within the context of
fandom, it was a fanzine and it remains a fanzine.

The trouble with ALGOL et al is not that they are "professional", it is simply
that they are too good and too successful. Does fandom have a proscription
against fans making money from fandom? Of course not, people have been doing
it from the very beginning. Does fandom have a proscription against large
circulation zines? No, there have been many large circulation zines. Does
fandom have a proscription against paying for material? No, fanzines have
been paying for material for decades. (Very few do, but there are always
some.) Is there something wrong with puffing one's wares? Perhaps so, but
it's nothing new to fanzine editors. The real difference between Geis, Porter,
and Brown and, say, Joe Nurdheimer is that they have got it altogether and
Nurdheimer hasn't.

But then, that's my opinion.

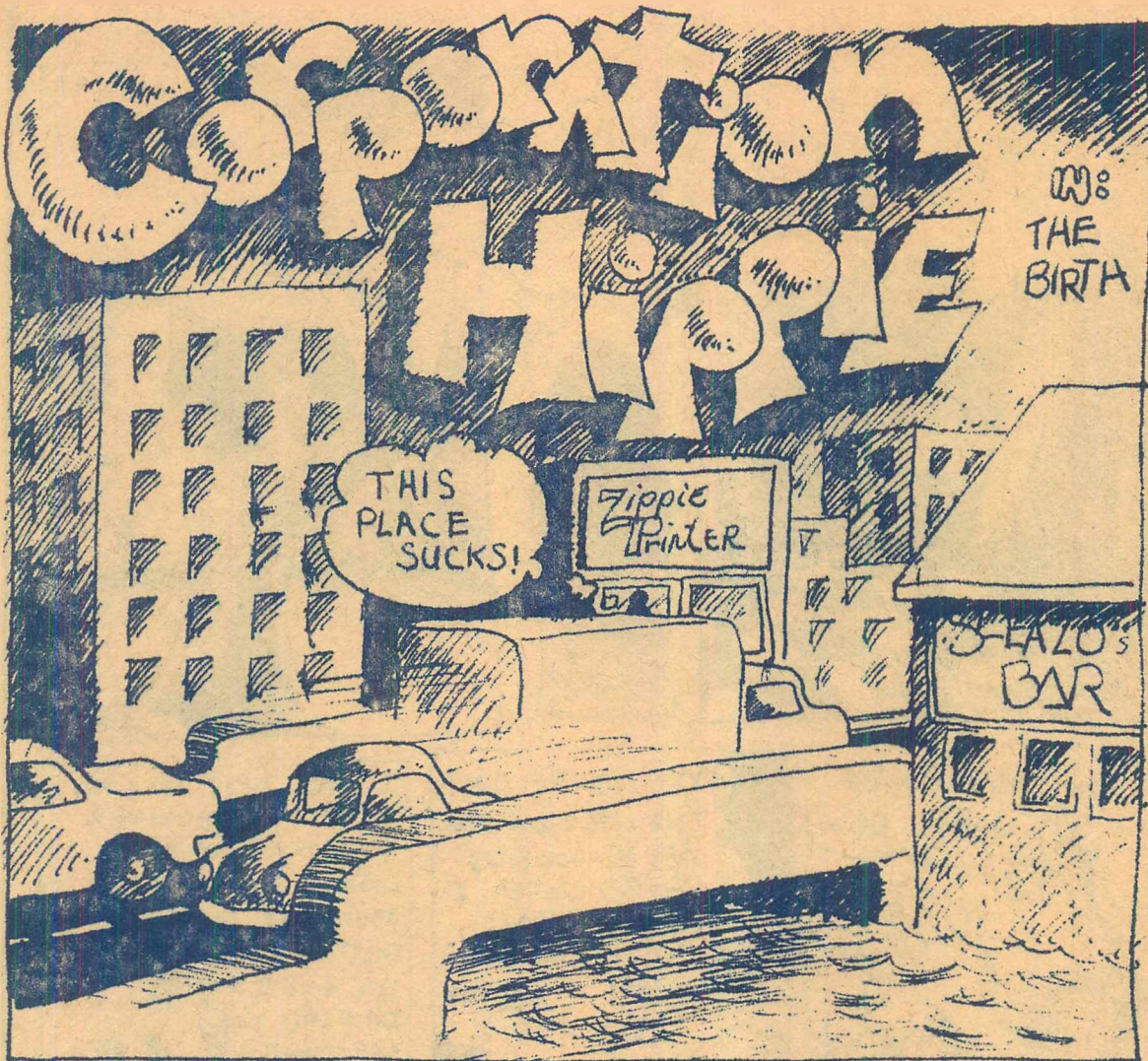
I always thought it was NIEKAS, not NEIKAS. (Right.)

I'd agree that SFR has more personality than OW or ALGOL, but I really don't
agree on the nature of the non-feuding content in the two. Dick Geis's (how the
hell does one do that? An extra 's' or not? Yes - RH) book reviews or economic
thoughts more interesting than a column by Susan Wood or an article by Dave Locke
or a fan history piece by Bob Tucker? Well, whatever turns you on, I guess, but
I find SFR useful and informative and OW entertaining and provocative so to me
OW is the 'better' magazine, much as I enjoy them both.

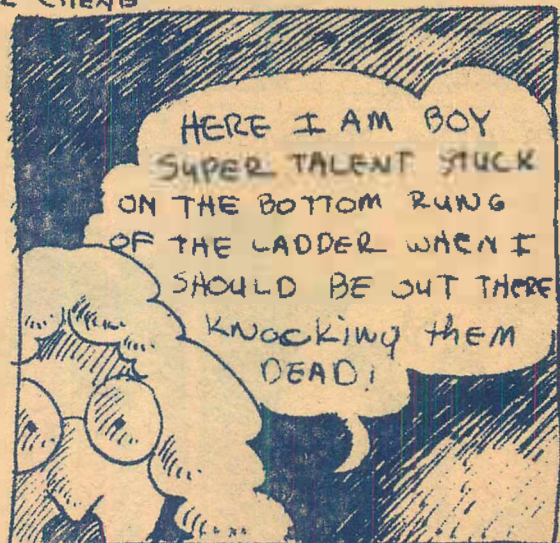
Apples and oranges, apples and oranges. Although it is true that some rather
corrosive vitriol has been slung in the pages of OW, it hasn't been Bill's
doing. Bill is a much more peaceable person than Geis and that mostly sets
the tone of OW, despite the feudists. I guess I prefer SFR over OW as far
as material goes, but that's mostly personal preference.

My old freshman english text says add "'s" to the singular to show possession
whether or not it ends in 's'. A "'" is added to the plural if it ends in 's'
and a "'s" if it does not. E.g. lady's, James's, ladies', men's.

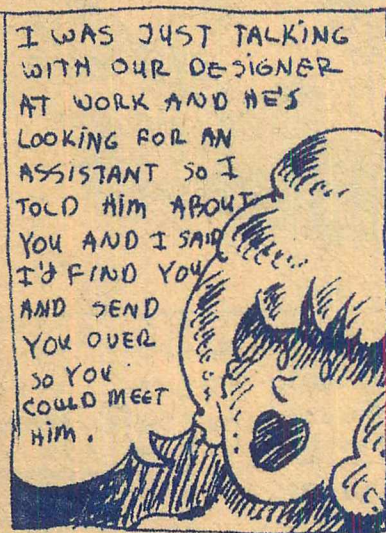
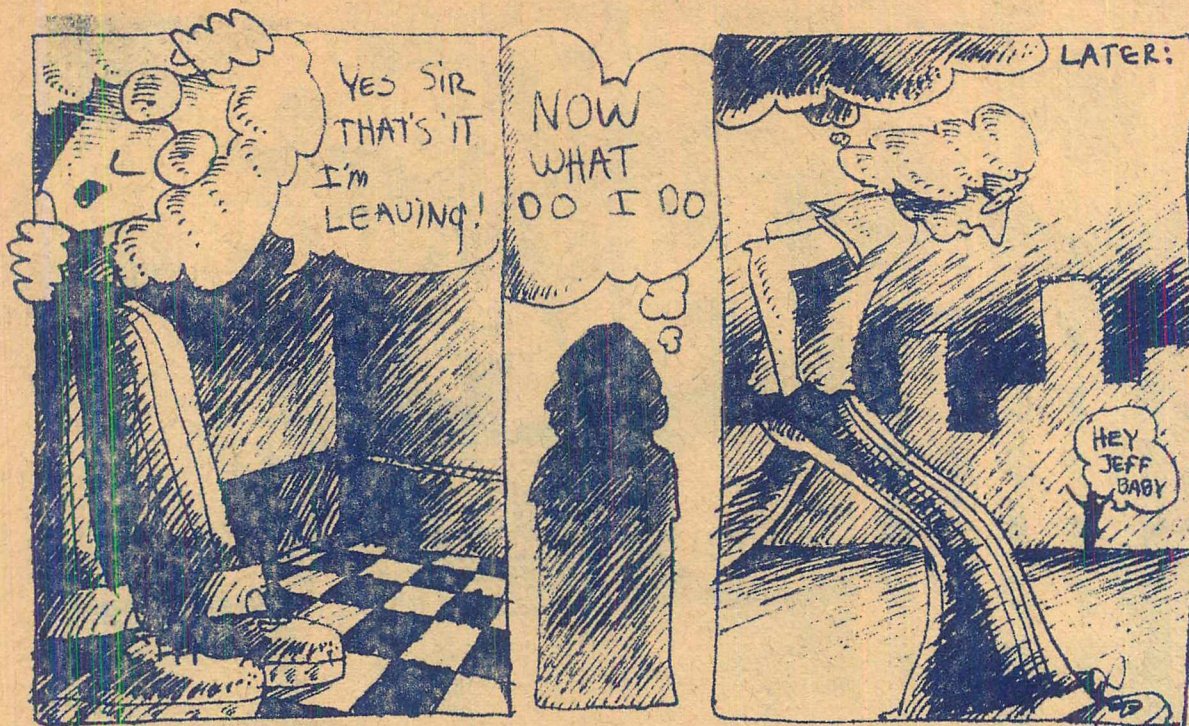
I suspect that the absence of Dena Brown would affect LOCUS much as the
absence of Susan would have affected NERG: both would cease to appear or at best
appear on a drastically reduced schedule. (But Charlie managed to switch wives
once already without it affecting the production schedule.) Or "appeared" or
whatever tense seems appropriate for a temporally compound sentence like that.
And the "occasional material now and then" that Susan contributed to the zine
consisted of sixteen articles in fourteen of the fifteen issues, many of which
were editorial in nature. Because of my own hangups at the time (although I sus-
pect I'd still have them if I tried to co-edit a fanzine even now) I suppose it's
true that editorially the zine was much more mine than Susan's as in such matters
as layout, replies to the lettercol, selection of material (although we always

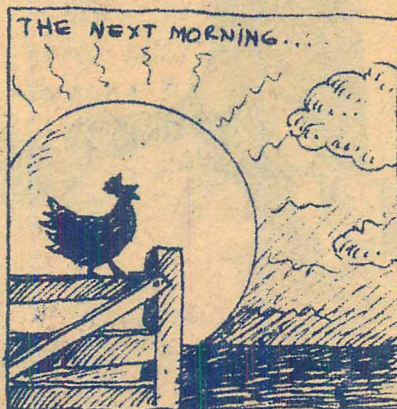
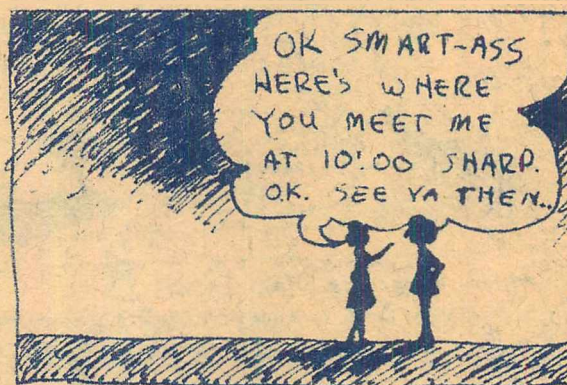


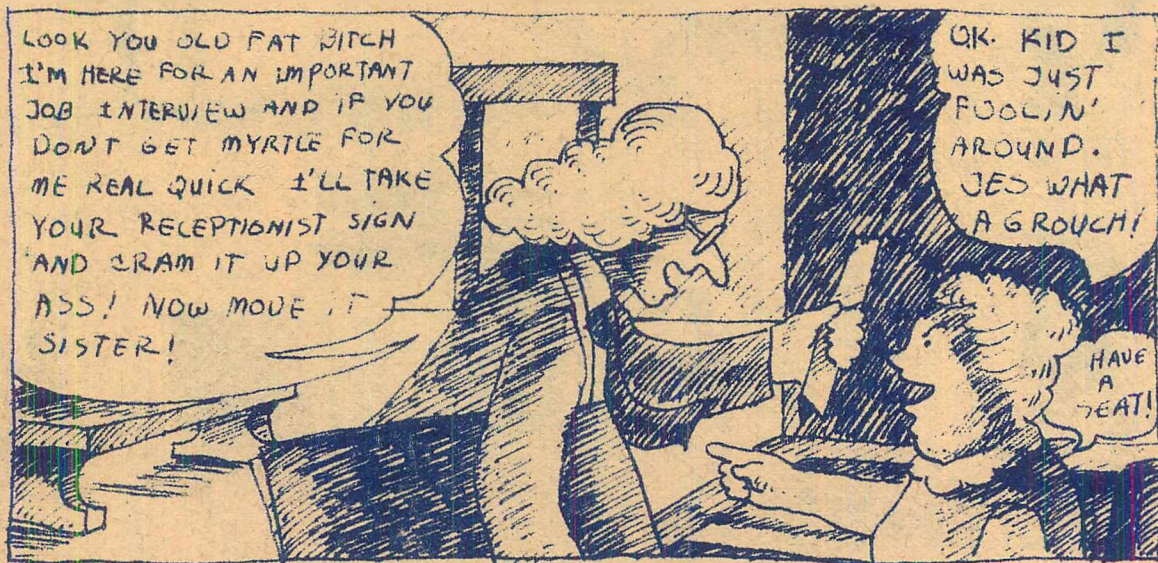
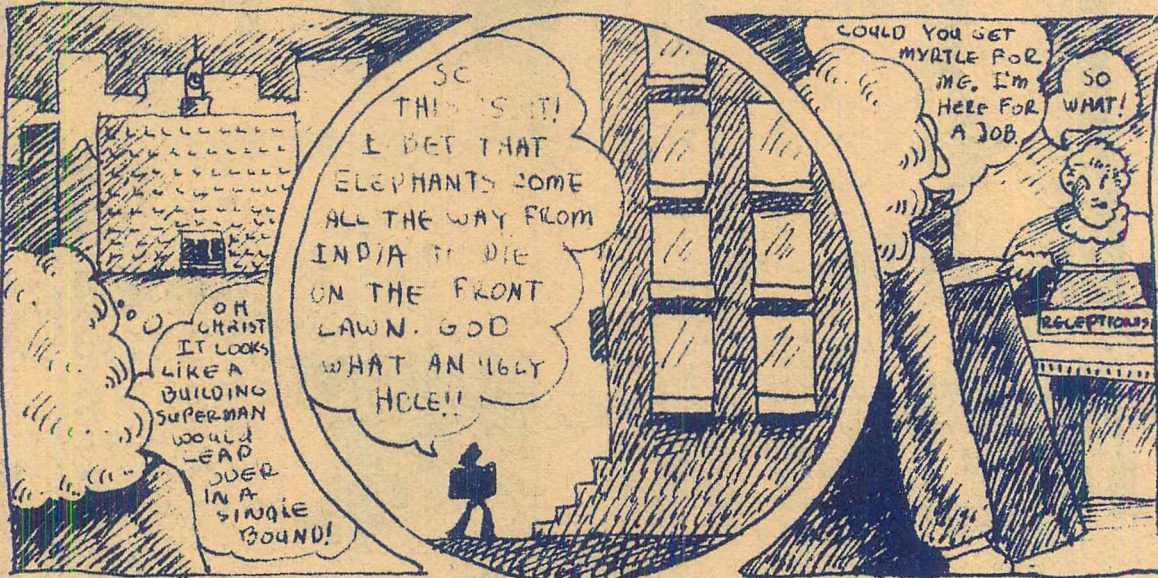
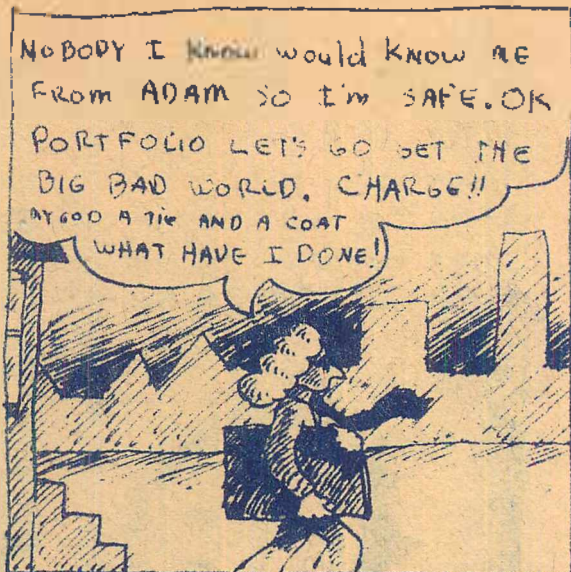
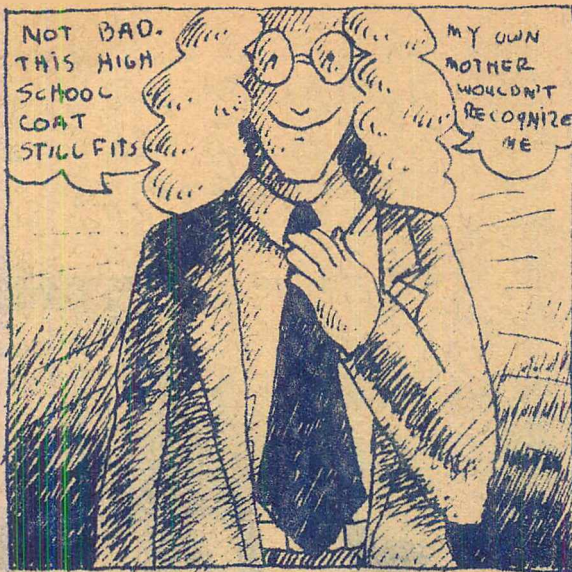
IN A SMALL, CRUMMY, RUN-DOWN PRINTERS OFFICE ON A DREARY WINTER DAY IN EARLY JANUARY, WE FIND OUR HERO JEFFERSON LIVINGSTON BLUE POTENTIAL BOY SUPER STAR COOPED UP PASTING UP FORMS AND DESIGNING STUPID BROCHURES FOR EVEN STUPIDER CLIENTS



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SO ANYWAY
GOOD OLE'
MYRTLE PICKS
OUR SOMEWHAT
HOSED-OFF
HERO AND
DELIVERS HIM
TO THE ART
DEPARTMENT
WHERE WE
JOIN HIM
MINUTES LATER...

WELL IT CERTAINLY IS NICE TO MEET YOU AT
LONG LAST. MYRTLE HAS BEEN TELLING ME
ABOUT YOU FOR SOMETIME.

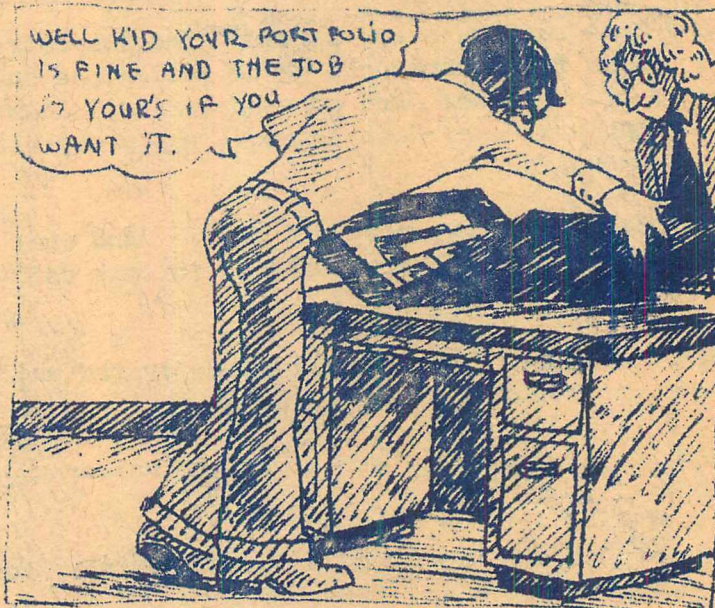


OH REALLY
WOW THAT'S
COOL. HOW
CAN YOU
GET AWAY
WITH THAT
BEARD IN
THIS PLACE

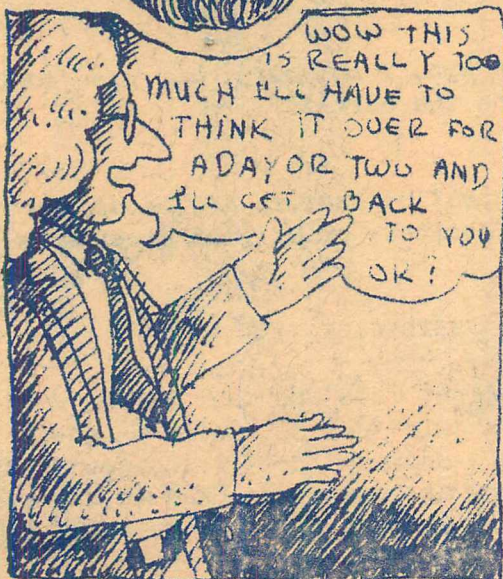
WELL WE'RE A FORWARD
LOOKING COMPANY AND
WE'RE MORE INTERESTED
IN A PERSON'S TALENT
THAN HOW THAT PERSON
LOOKS.... AND BESIDES
I WEAR BROOKS BROTHERS
SUITS AND GET REGULAR
HAIR CUTS..



WELL KID YOUR PORTFOLIO
IS FINE AND THE JOB
IS YOURS IF YOU
WANT IT.



WOW THIS
IS REALLY TOO
MUCH ILL HAVE TO
THINK IT OVER FOR
A DAY OR TWO AND
ILL GET BACK
TO YOU
OK?



WELL
DEAR
READER.
LIKE ANY
GOOD RED-
BLOODED,
GREEDY
YOUNG
AMERICAN
OUR HERO
GIVES IN
AND JOINS
THE BIG
CORPORATION
WHERE HE
PEAK IN
ON HIM
6 MONTHS
LATER....

WHY AM I HERE?
I'M BETTER THAN THIS. SO
WHY AM I HERE? GRUMBIE,
GRUMBIE, MOAN, BITCH....



OH WELL MORE LATER.

NOAH WAY

And the Lord said unto Noah: "Where is the ark which I have commanded thee to build?"

And Noah said unto the Lord: "Verily, I have had three carpenters off ill. The gopher-wood supplier hath let me down - yea, even though the gopher wood hath been on order for migh upon 12 months. What can I do, O Lord?"

And God said unto Noah: "I want that ark finished even after seven days and seven nights."

And Noah said: "It will be so."

And it was not so. And the Lord said unto Noah: "What seemeth to be the trouble this time?"

And Noah said unto the Lord: "Mine subcontractor hath gone bankrupt. The pitch which Thou commandest me to put on the outside and on the inside hath not arrived. The plumber hath gone on strike. Shem, my son who helpeth me on the ark side of the business, hath formed a pop group with his brothers Ham and Japeth. Lord, I am undone."

And the Lord grew angry and said: "And what about the animals, the male and female of every sort that I ordered to come unto thee to keep their seed alive upon the face of the earth?"

And Noah said: "They have been delivered unto the wrong address but should arriveth on Friday."

And the Lord said: "How about the unicorns, and the fowls of the air by sevens?"

And Noah wrung his hands and wept saying: "Lord, unicorns are a discontinued line; thou canst not get them for love nor money. And fowls of the air are sold only in half-dozens. Lord, Lord, Thou knowest how it is."

And the Lord in His Wisdom said: "Noah, my son, I knowest. Why else dost thou think I have caused a flood to descend upon the earth?"

ERA-Journal of Eastern Region of the
Royal Institute of British Architects

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Another modest issue of PN - sigh. The original idea was that PN would come out in issues of about 20 pages. Maybe I should just do that: Whenever I get up to 20 pages in an issue I break it there and continue in the next issue. Hmmmm. I any event there are a number of letters of comment on PN#4 which never got printed, what with one thing and another. It seems a bit late to print them in full (most being a year and a half old), so I thought I'd just spend a page mentioning who wrote and something about what they said.

Mike Glycer allows as how the Tone Scale strikes him as utter buncombe. He says, anent the fanzine reviews, "In such a prolonged and heated discussion, however, description unadulterated by perjorative interpretations almost approaches a political position in itself."

Dick Geis liked the fanzine reviews. He expressed shock at being called: an institution. Look Dick, if Isaac Asimov can sell radial tires on TV, you can be an institution. He goes on to say:

"I don't know about being the Macheide of fanzine editing... What I do is partly play, partly business. I may be the only fanzine editor to have had a dream in his youth of someday living off his fanzine. So I do - after a fashion. But the procedure is more compulsion and giving into the Inner Needs than good sense. I have ben considerable talents (I think) to what most consider a foolish way of life. But my fanzines serve my deep inner purposes and I'm 85% happy (a winning percentage) and I have a considerable freedom. What more could a man ask? Money? Yeeeeesss...."

Buck Coulson wonders what in the hell Mari-Mekko is. (*A Scandanavian clothing and design shop.*) Buck gives the best definition of Science Fiction I have read yet. It is similar to mine and to Delaney's except that it is clearer and more concise than either. Buck also doesn't think much of the tone scale.

Flieg Hollander wrote a long, lovely, letter. He suggests that a Large personalzine might have a shot at a Hugo, but that I would never make it if I didn't have a cover. He also gave a method for constructing triangles with less than one side.

Paula Lieberman wrote in her own inimitable style. I must say I don't feel adequate to the task of abbreviating her letter while retaining the style.

Mike Glicksohn also suggest that a personalzine could get on the ballot, although he expresses doubt about the chances that it could win the Hugo. He was surprised that I had so much clout as far as he was concerned. Of course you do, Mike - look at Bill Bowers; he pays close attention to what you say and look at what it's done for him. Mike also had a short not on number 5 which never appeared in print.

Archie Mercer sent a loc on PN #1 and #2 somehow missed publication. I had meant to try to visit Archie and Beryl on our trip, but misplaced the address and kept looking for Trenethick Parc instead of Helston. Archie relates a charming incident about possibly riding upside down on the stomach of a donkey.

Harry Warner Jr. also wrote a long letter on #4. He suspects that the margin between fanzines that get nominated and those that don't is not too large. From what I saw on the inside of Noreascon, this seems to be true - in a category there are a couple of obvious candidates who get a lot of nominations and a wide scattering of candidates who are fairly closely bunched with not many votes. Harry makes the point that LOCUS never fawns over professional writers and fiction and doesn't indulge in empty publicity fluffs - the news about the field is impartial, tightly written, and factual. Harry also discusses the beheading of swans in Hagerstown. It seems that about once every five years one or more swans were found beheaded in the lake in Hagerstown's main park. Strange...

- * Upon rereading these letters were all interesting and enjoyable, and I'm
- * sorry I didn't get them all into print. I expect I will be more organized
- * and less haphazard in the future. In any case, letters are always welcome.

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