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Publisher: Richard Harter, 306  
Thoreau St. Concord MA 01742. It  
is available by editorial whim on-  
ly. All material submitted, incl-  
uding letters of comment, is sub-  
ject to revision by the editor.

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# PERSONAL NOTES

## BLACK FLIES

The first black flies hatch when the water temperature reaches 39 degrees or the day before you go to Maine, Vermont, or New Hampshire, whichever comes first. The black fly season lasts for one month, except in any part of northern New England where there are trees. The first black fly season ends the first night that the ambient air temperature stays below 25 degrees for six hours or more, or the day after your vacation is over, whichever comes last. The best insect repellent is Hawaii.

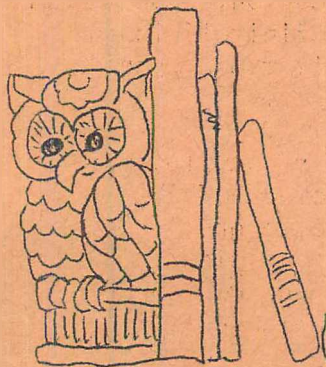
*M. R. Montgomery in the Boston Globe.*

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This is PERSONAL NOTES #9, the poly-unflourinated fanzine and journal of opinion. Please do not confuse it with the New Yorker or the Communications of the ACM. It appears erratically and is available only upon the whim of the editor. It is usually available by unarranged trade, for contributions, or upon request. It used to be available by subscription at ridiculous rates, but I discovered that people were willing to pay ridiculous rates.

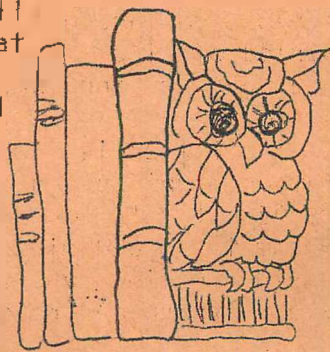
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So much for the usual noises that us big time publishers must make to appease the multitudes. PN is a personalzine, which means that it prints mostly material by the editor about what happens to strike his fancy. The format is junkyard informal, which means that stuff is put in in random order and in random layouts. Do not count on the table of contents to help you out, for it is probably inaccurate and may contain deliberate falsifications. In fact the entire magazine may consist of deliberate falsifications. In any case there may not be a table of contents. How should I know? I just started putting the zine together.



One further note on the artwork. There will probably be a lot miscellaneous artwork that has been traced from artsy coloring books. Artwork which is by individual artists will be attributed.

At this point I would insert a fascinating discussion of what will be in this issue but I am rapidly running out of space. Maybe it will be on the next page.



# THE ADVENTURES OF BONGO THE BARBARIAN

I fear that the adventures of Bongo the barbarian are not destined to see print. It was one of those half baked ideas that are best left out of the oven. It happens, however, that I have this stencil left over and, as they say, waste not, want not. (Recent government surveys have shown that 74.9% of all people who say "Waste not, want not" are poverty stricken. This, however, does not demean the nobility of the concept.)

I thought I would devote this issue or some substantial part thereof to telling my readers who I am. The major reason for doing so is that it has occurred to me that there are a number of my readers who have no particular idea who I am or anything about me. The recipients of the first few issues of PN were all people known to me personally or through prior contact in fanzines or in apas. Over time, though, I have acquired a number of readers who are not acquainted with me except through the pages of PN.

My first thought was to print, in effect, an inventory of my life and that is what I expect I will do. The question itself, however, is worthy of some comment. It is a popular question. The young person wandering in a mental or physical hogira in search of answers to the question, "Who am I?", is a cliché.

There are little games designed to bring out answers to that question. For example, suppose you are going to be stranded on a desert island for an indefinitely long period of time. You can pick one companion and three books. Who is the companion and what are the three books? Or, describe yourself in one sentence.

The latter is more informative than one might first imagine. For example, my father might have described himself by "I am a farmer in South Dakota." This would not tell you anything about him as a person but would tell you a great deal about the boundaries of his life and his probable activities and interests. I could describe myself by "I am a scientific programmer residing in the Boston area who was born and raised on a ranch in South Dakota." Make of it what you will.



It is an interesting sort of question. If I do an inventory of myself, am I answering the question. Fine clothes, they say, do not make the man. What, then, does? Am I defined by the clothes I wear? Hardly. If I list the schools I have attended, the jobs I have held, the women I have loved, my hobbies and interests, have I defined myself. Perhaps not, for I could abandon all of these things and remain myself.

The ultimate answer to "Who are you?" is "I am me." One can compare the problem of answering the question to peeling an onion. On the outside are the most peripheral and transient aspects of oneself - ones clothes and personal possessions. One can peel these off and be left with things that are more integral to oneself. These in turn can be peeled off until one is left with the basic aspects of one's personality. At this point there are two schools of thought. One is that one eventually arrives at an irreducible core of one's self that is variously known as the soul or one's true self. The other theory is that, like an onion, one can keep peeling until there is nothing left - there is no irreducible self. The resolution of this question is beyond the scope of this fanzine.

The question can be taken in several ways. For example, suppose that you have arrived home late at night and somewhat the worse for wear and you discover that you have forgotten your keys and that the house is locked. Undaunted you decide to crawl through a half open window. While you are wriggling through a strange voice within the house says "Who are you?" Less dramatic but more common are two principal forms of the question - the private and the public. The private form is internal and personal; the form of the answer and the meaning of the question varies a great deal from person to person. The public form is really a request to identify oneself within the context of society. It is the latter form of the question that I intend to answer. *(But note that the discussion so far already tells you something about what sort of person I am.)*

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Enough of Chitchat. Let us begin.

First of all, family and such. Like David Copperfield I was born. Unlike David, I was born in Highmore South Dakota on June 29, 1935. My parents are Morris and June Harter. *(This is one of those vexing questions - should I say are or were? My father is deceased, having died in 1964. My mother still lives at the family place. I suppose it depends on one's opinion of the hereafter or somesuch.)* I have three sisters, Lynn, Nanci, and Lois, and no brothers.

Lynn is the oldest. She was born in January 1938 and was originally named Doris Harter. *(Our parents did not give any of us middle names. It was their theory that we could pick ones we liked when we got older. The three girls all adopted middle names but I never did. It is one of my standing jokes that I was a depression baby and that we couldn't afford middle names.)* As it happens she never liked the name Doris. She took the middle name Lynn which she now uses exclusively. We were Doris and Dick in school, though.

Lynn attended grade school at North Eagle township country school (as did I) and High School at Highmore High School. She attended two years at Augustana college in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She then transferred to Boston University. She spent one year there and one year at Aix in France as an exchange student. She needed one more term at BU to finish her degree. Instead of returning immediately however, she spent a period of time in France where she held an assortment of jobs such as modelling and being a governess. Eventually she landed a job as a hostess in a US army base in France. It was there that she met Dick Sisson, whom she was eventually to marry. Dick was and is a Doctor. He was stationed there during the

tour of military duty that almost all doctors got stuck with in the late unlamented days of the draft. Lynn returned to BU to finish her degree and they got married. They lived for a while in Pittsburgh (Dick is from that area) while he was working on his residency. He started as a surgeon and then switched to radiology. Once that was done they moved out to California. They now live in Palmdale. They have two children, Mark and Robin who are both in Junior High.

Lynn and I were quite close although we quarreled a great deal as kids. We were both raised on the ranch and had no other playmates at home. We tended to invent our own pastimes which included such things as playing tag on the roofs of the farm buildings. We also dug holes in the back yard until we got down to the clay which we mined for gold. (Well, it was yellow.)

Nanci is the middle sister. She was born in 1945. We moved from the ranch to the place south of town in 1948 so she attended grade school and high school in Highmore. She had just started grade school when I left home in 1952 to start college and I saw very little of her in her school years. She attended a Lutheran college in Minnesota whose name I can never remember. On the other hand I can recall that she majored in Spanish. She became (and still is) a teacher in California. She married a boy named Tom Adams. They were very happily married for awhile but are now separated and have been for some time. (If I am not mistaken they are still technically married.) Nanci is into skiing, ornithology, and teaching. Nanci and Mary and I once spent an evening singing camp songs while having an elaborate dinner at the Cafe Budapest. She is a founding member of the Cliche of the Month Club. Nanci is another name changer. She was born Nancy and settled on Nanci Ann. Nanci is the only one of the four of us to go straight through college in four years - rebelling, no doubt, against the example of her elder siblings.

Lois is the youngest. She was born in 1950. Like Nanci, I saw very little of her in the years that she was growing up. She was the least drastic in the family pastime of name changing since she added a middle name of Ann and that was it. Lois is the frippie heck of the family. She went to college at Wisconsin U in Madison. She recently graduated in some variety of biology. I never really understood her explanations but I believe it was under some kind of build your own major plan; in any case it involved a lot of botany. Her scholastic career was interrupted by the usual tour of duty of youth wandering about the country. Lois has just moved to California where she is discovering the delights of having a job and not being poverty stricken. Lois refers to PERSONAL NOTES as a strangezine. She is not destined to live long.

All of my sisters are wonderful people.

My father was born and raised, lived and died in Hyde county, South Dakota. (Highmore is the county seat of Hyde County.) His operation was typical of our area - a mixture of farming and ranching. He liked the life and was good at it. It was always a disappointment to him that I had no inclination for farming or to carry on with the place. He was a good man, always willing to help others, and mostly good natured and friendly. He was very well liked and had many friends and few enemies. He also taught me to drink whisky and play poker - what more can a man do for his son. He died at 52 of cancer. Some things are not right. Oh yes, his name was Morris Wilson Harter. *(Lynn and I were raised to call our parents Morris and June; Nanci and Lois were raised to call them Mother and Father.)*

My grandfather, George Harter, was a curmudgeon. That, I think is fair enough. He was born in 1881 as one of a large family, mostly boys, of Pennsylvania Dutch extraction. *(The family name was originally Heartter.)* He moved up from Nebraska to South Dakota and started the ranch. He started out from scratch and kept working and improving until he had built up three places. There was the ranch, another place south of it, and some land just south of town. He had two children,





Morris and Frances. Frances married Hugh McKelvey. They farmed for many years in Hyde county and are now retired. My grandmother Mary Harter, born Mary Wilson was also from Nebraska. She had an incredible store of detail about all branches of the family which she would spin out for hours. Unfortunately I remember very little of it.

My mother was, I believe, born Vera Eileen Hanson. She has always been called June and sometime ago changed her name legally to June. June is a neat person. She lives at the place south of town in the brick house that she designed and paints and gardens and watches birds and edits an ornithological quarterly. She subscribes to English periodicals and keeps track of her scattered children. She is the resident guru of an oasis in the parched brown grass of South Dakota. She was born in Chicago in a year that I am not at liberty to reveal. Her parents wandered a bit and she always claims that she is an Okie.

June was the eldest of eight brothers and sisters, all of whom are involved with religion except her. Most of them live in Oregon and I have long since given up on keeping track of them all, let alone my cousins on my mothers side. Her mother is my only surviving grandparent.

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So much for the family tree. I could go on at great length - in fact I do go on at great length, all too often. I expect that all of my kin folk who read this will say "Is that all you found to say?" whereas those who do not know my kin folk will wonder who all of these people are.

And now, a brief chronology of my life:

The first six years of my life were spent at home on the ranch. The first two years of grade school I attended in town and lived with my grandparents. *(The ranch, incidentally, was 13 and 1/2 miles southwest of town. Town was Highmore, South Dakota, population 1100, and county seat of Hyde county.)* For the third through eighth grades I lived at home and attended the country school in North Eagle township. This was about three and one half miles from our place. The usual attendance was about eight or ten for all grades. I spent five years there, skipping the fifth grade.

In 1948 we had completed building the new place which was one mile south of town. This was convenient since I started High School that year. I graduated from high school *(Harters law of capitalization: When one starts High School it is capitalized; when one graduates it is lower case.)* in 1952

That fall I started college at South Dakota school of Mines and Technology. This was not one of the more distinguished periods in my academic career. After four quarters I had acquired a good bridge game, a fair chess game, an excellent poker game and an astounding number of incompletes.

After this inauspicious beginning I returned home and worked on the ranch for a while. This was not entirely to my taste and I looked for something else to do. Something else was joining the Marine Corps. I became a radar technician and was stationed at Cherry Point, North Carolina, with a brief sojourn in Panama.

In the fall of 1957 I got out and returned to South Dakota with no great notions as to what I was going to do next. As it happens one of my lieutenants had told me that I should go to MIT so I got in my car and drove out to Cambridge Mass to take a look at the place. I discovered Harvard Square and fell in love with it.

I then got a job as an electronics technician with Raytheon. This lasted a year. To be precise it lasted until my second winter. Not liking it much, I got a job as a radar technician with RCA on the Atlantic missile test range. While there I made enough playing poker to finance my way through college.

Not being too bright, I left Grand Bahama Island *in the winter* of 59/60 . to go to college at South Dakota State College in Brookings South Dakota. I spent two and one half years there and left, being just short of having a degree.

In the fall of 1962 I returned to Massachusetts and began job hunting. I found a job as a contract programmer working at AFCRL (Air Force Cambridge Research Laboratory.) I worked there for a couple of years and then returned to Brookings to complete my degree.

I again returned to Massachusetts, this time with a job offer waiting for me. I worked at NASA-ERC for about a year and a half running the scientific programming section. I also was taking courses at Northeastern for a doctorate.

I then dropped out and became a full time student. I must admit that being a full time student does not necessarily mean that one is necessarily taking a lot of courses - I was living very cheaply and doing a lot of studying of things that interested me and taking an occasional course. Summers I would work for a company called Geoscience as their staff mathematician. Eventually I started working for them full time in 1969. The company folded shortly thereafter....

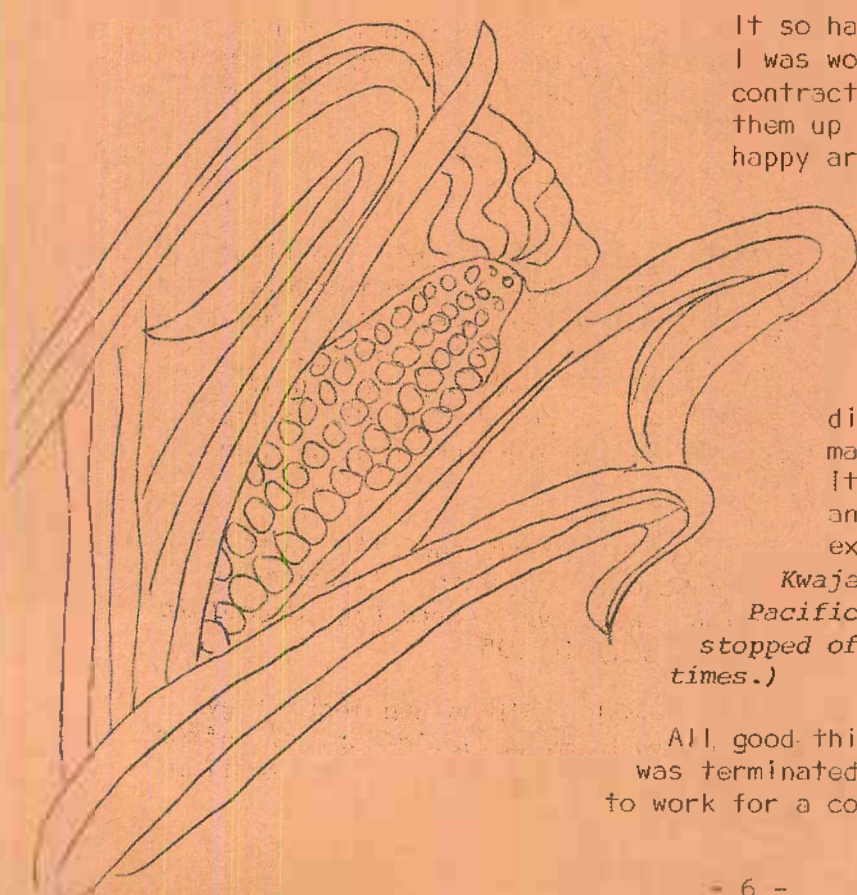
It so happened that when the company folded I was working on the few active research contracts that they had. I simply picked them up and became a consultant. This happy arrangement lasted until the spring

of 1971 when I ran out of contracts and money. I got a job at AFCRL again. This lasted only a few months. A

friend of mine talked me into applying for a job at Lincoln Labs, again as a contract programmer. I did and went to work on a large and magnificently useless software project. It was good for much valuable experience and two trips to Hawaii at government expense. (Actually I was going to

Kwajalein, which is the terminator of the Pacific missile test range. However I stopped off in Hawaii for several days both times.)

All good things come to an end and the project was terminated in June 1974. I immediately went to work for a company in Texas.





The general arrangement was that I was working in Cambridge and would make occasional trips down there. After six months I switched over to working for Bolt Beranek & Newman in Cambridge. This in turn ended this spring and here we are at practically now and I am working at Lincoln Lab again.

So much for brief chronologies....

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And now for a brief diversion. In one of my favorite Broomhilda strips, Broomhilda is standing on a mountain top addressing the powers that be. The conversation goes like this:

Broomhilda: *Oh, powers that be, why do all the bad things in life happen to ME?*

' Powers: *Well, you just look like someone that bad things oughta happen to.*

Broomhilda: *LOOK like?*

Powers: *Yeah. That's our system. We go by looks. Not too good, huh?*

Broomhilda: *It's AWFUL!*

Powers: *Well, it probably would be better to go to a merit system. Y'know, do the bad stuff to the ones that deserve it.*

Broomhilda: *I should say so!!*

Powers: *But, gosh... That would take so much bookkeeping and legwork! Private detectives and all that stuff!*

*We'll stick with looks. It's a lot easier. Drop a rock on her!*

THUD

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#### DRAMATICS:

I have done a fair bit of amateur dramatics in my day. I have been in:

High school: I was in the Jr and Sr plays. One was Seven Keys to Baldpate. The other wasn't.

College: A variety of stuff. Medea, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Emperor Jones, and George Washington Slept Here were some of them. I also did the villain in Dirtyworks at the Crossroads which was produced the dramatics fraternity. There was a German one act play, Einer must Heiraten, which we did on play tour. There was a play produced in a local coffeehouse in which I played the Id of a female writer. And I did a summer of summerstock melodrama.

Since Then: Not much. I was in the Firebugs which was put on by the MIT community players. And I have been in two SF Gilbert and Sullivan parodies, Captain Future meets Gilbert and Sullivan (1972) and Mik Ado about Nothing. (1977).

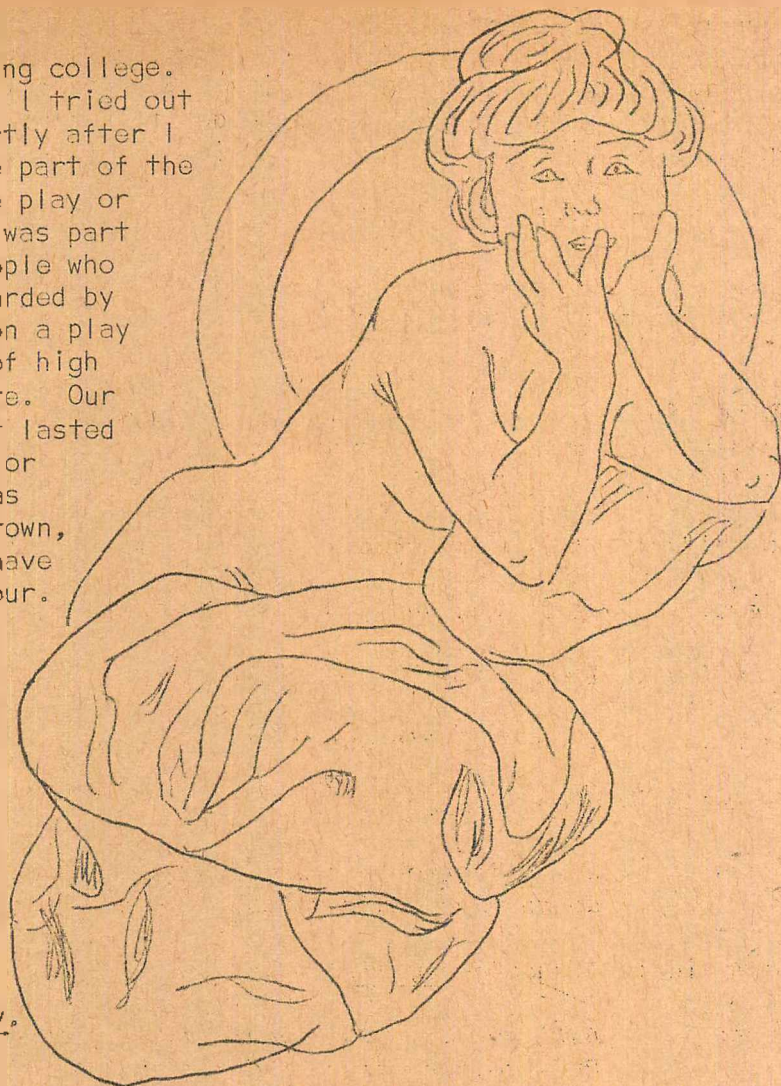
Most of my acting was done during college. It all started innocently enough. I tried out for a play, mostly as a lark, shortly after I got there and was hooked. A large part of the time I was in college I was in one play or another. The German one act play was part of an interesting deal. Those people who were active in dramatics were rewarded by being given an opportunity to go on a play tour which was a tour of a group of high schools in some region of the state. Our tours were in the Black Hills. It lasted about a week and we would hit two or three high schools a day. This was tricky because we would get into town, locate the high school, and then have to be able to perform within an hour.

We had two one act plays and a pantomime. The latter was a melodrama skit which was performed in time to Rhapsody In Blue. The German one act was a satire on the Brother's Grimm and was performed with subtitles. (This was managed with a projector.)

The other one act play, which I was not in, was Madame Butterfly. It turns out that there are three versions of Madam Butterfly - the short story, the one act play, and the light opera.

One of the schools that we played at was at Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. When Madam Butterfly opened the play with the line, "Suzuki, Suzuki, where is my little Suzuki," there was a low snigger that ran across the auditorium. This kept up for the entire play; each mention of Suzuki was good for a certain amount of snickering. We learned afterwards that Suzuki is very close to the Sioux word for Penis.

Summerstock melodrama was fun. I had played the role of the villain in the melodrama produced at college which won me a spot in the cast of the Rockerville Mellerdrammer. We alternated two plays, Lily, the Felon's Daughter and East Lynne. (Yes, the East Lynne of "Coming Next Week - East Lynne"). We left for Rockerville immediately after classes let out and had one week to learn our lines and construct the stage. The plays were performed inside a large tent; the footlights were old tomato cans cut in half. There was a spot which was equally primitive. The audience was encouraged to boo the villain and cheer the hero which they usually did with great abandon. They were also encouraged to throw peanuts at the actors, particularly the villain. There were two reasons for this. One is that it is traditional. The other is that the management made it's profit selling peanuts. (So now you know the origin of the phrase, "Working for peanuts".) I was the Villain in East Lynne and the father of the heroine in Lily the Felon's Daughter. (Part of the reason for not having one person play the villain in both plays is that the role is a very demanding and exhausting one.)





For the first week or so we were fighting the battle of getting our performances down cold. Once we had done that we felt free to ad lib and invent all sorts of little bits of business, some of them quite spontaneous. These sometimes cracked up the cast as well as the audience.

For example, there is a choice moment in East Lynne towards the end where most of the cast is gathered onstage, except for the villain who has just been exposed for what he is and has dashed off stage. The heroine expresses concern that the villain will escape. At this point her brother is supposed to reassure her with the line, "Don't worry, Lady Barbara, his goose is cooked. The place is surrounded by police." One night, however, he popped out with, "Don't worry, lady Barbara, his goose is cooked. The place is surrounded by goose cookers."

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It has just occurred to me that I haven't been supplying page numbers. Here is a page number: 19. Use it when you get to page nineteen.

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#### SCIENCE FICTION AND FANDOM

Recent studies in the physiology and psychology of addiction have shown the SF addict is born an addict. Until he makes his first major encounter with SF he remains a latent addict. Once contact is made, however, addiction is automatic and violent. Typically first contact addiction is followed by a period of intense SF consumption which will eventually decay into mild or complete loss of interest. People who have lost all interest in Science Fiction and never read it anymore, are known as Science Fiction fans...

Except for the fact that these studies are completely fictitious they would seem to cover my own case, except to the extent that they do not. All of which is a complicated way of saying that I was attracted to SF at an early age and took to it immediately.

I remember the first SF magazine that I ever read. It was a wartime pulp that was in a box of magazines at a relatives place. The only thing that I remember of it is a story about how the Germans and the Japanese had been exiled to two separate asteroids after the war. I have no notion which magazine it was and if anyone can recall it for me I would appreciate it.

It wasn't until I was in high school, however, that I really discovered the SF magazines. Those were the days when the pulp boom was at its peak and distribution was still good. Our local drugstores carried Amazing, Famous Fantastic Mysteries, Fanatastic Novels, Planet Stories, and some other odds and ends. They didn't carry the Thrilling magazines but I could get those in a nearby town, along with an occasional Astounding. I became, in short order, a haunter of the newstands. Later on I became a fledgling letter hacker and tried my hand at writing. (No stories sold, but a number written.) I was just starting to get involved with fanzines when I joined the Marine Corps.

This led to a long hiatus. I lost all contact with fandom and my SF reading became desultary. I never lost interest, though. I would visit the newstands to pick up the latest Ace doubles and whatever magazines were available. In part this was because

the other activities of my life left little time for SF and in part it was because I didn't know anyone else who was actively interested. This hiatus came to an end in 1962 when I discovered MITSFS (the MIT Science Fiction Society.)

This happened by accident. One of my coworkers discovered that I was interested in SF and suggested that I visit the MITSFS library. It turned out that she had been an MIT cood and was secretary of MITSFS. This sounded moderately interesting so I did. It was there that I met Anthony R. Lewis for the first time. At that time the evil Arluis was the librarian. He had built the library pretty much up from scratch to the size of a major collection. Today the MITSFS library is almost certainly the largest open library collection of SF.

I found MITSFS to be utterly fascinating and began hanging around there about every night. There were endless discussions of SF and related topics. There were all sorts of miscellaneous insanity, including a game called Insanity. This was played with coke bottle case and coke bottles. The rules of the game were that each player in turn would move bottles around with great verve, making gamesmanship comments while they were doing so. The object of the game was to fool observers into thinking that a real game was being played.

In those days MITSFS had little contact with SF fandom. (They still don't.) It was their proud motto that, "We aren't fans, we just read the stuff." We used to go off on group eating expeditions. These usually consisted of the Evil one, Bob Tove, myself, and a variety of others. Tove was and is a colorful character. He once stopped talking to Fuzzy Pink Wisowaty (now Marily Niven) on the grounds that he had to cut his list of people that he talked to and she was at the end of the alphabet.

A typical Tove story is of the time he and Tony Lewis (also known as the Evil one, or Arluis) went to Jack and Marions, a local late night eating spot that we visited regularly. There was a rather inebriated lady standing in line with them. She addressed some rather drunken and slurred comments to Tony, who ignored them. She then turned to Tove and said something like, "I'll bet he thinks I'm drunk." Tove immediately replied, "I don't know what you're talking about, Lady. There's no one there."

Tove was also fond of telling someone on the phone to take a message and then telling them to wait until he got a pencil and paper so he could take it down.

These days of innocence lasted until about 1965, when Dave Vanderwerf introduced us to fandom. Dave was one the usual crowd of undergraduates who found extracurricular activities more interesting than his collegiate career. He was also interested in such activities of organized fandom as putting out fanzines and putting on conventions. He conceived the idea of bidding Boston for the worldcon in 1967. As part of this master plan he and others organized the late unlamented BOSFS (Boston Science Fiction Society) which put on the first four Boskones. Concurrently Irwin Strauss (a.k.a. as Filthy Pierre and also a very colorful character) decided to produce an index to the SF magazines to carry on from where the Day index left off. The latter had ended in 1950. The new index covered the period from 1951-1965. This project was to have been under the auspices of MITSFS and MITSFS and Pierre were to have split the profits.

The MIT index and the Boskones were an illumination to the MITSFS crowd. A number of NY fans came up and we got our first look at conventions and fandom. We fell in with the CCNY crowd and quickly became jet set con goers. In 1966 Boston put in its bid for the worldcon at the Tricon bidding session and failed markedly. This actually had the effect of stirring more interest in fandom and worldcon bidding among the rest of us - the 1967 bid was only sparsely supported in Boston. This time we going to do it right. There were two offshoots from this renewed determination.



One was LOCUS which was founded by Charlie Brown, Ed Meskys, and Dave Vanderwerf with the idea of creating a newszine which was friendly to Boston. For a short time LOCUS was coedited by the three but it quickly became Charlie's zine and evolved to become the newsletter of the SF field.

The other was the formation of NESFA (The New England Science Fiction Association.) The purpose of NESFA was to create a strong local club which would put on Boskones and supply the base for a new worldcon bid for 1971. (There was also the consideration that a lot of the people who formed NESFA were no longer MIT students and shouldn't be running MITSFS, which was nominally an undergraduate activity.) The NESFA of then was scarcely the NESFA of today.

It did not have any money, and it didn't have any schedule of activities other than putting on the Boskones. In some ways it really was an attempt to formalize an existing situation. One thing it did have was a constitution, which had built into it the "NESFA work ethic." Briefly we had observed that most SF clubs were functionally rather ineffective and that most of their activities were carried on by a handful who did things almost in spite of the club. The trouble was, as we diagnosed it, that those who did nothing for the club and didn't understand what was involved in it's various activities had an equal vote with those who were doing the work. They were, so to speak, dominated by the drones. We decided to avoid this by making voting membership contingent on activity - you had to work for the club to get the right to vote on its affairs.

We very quickly acquired a big chunk of purpose with the index. It seems that Pierre was persona non grata with the Institute and that they did not cotton to the idea of an undergraduate making money using the Institutes name and materials. As a result the deal between MITSFS and Pierre fell through and, after a settlement, Pierre retained the Index and the printers bill, which MITSFS was going to pay. Pierre didn't have the money, and got drafted; the printer repossessed the remaining books. One of the first things that the newly born NESFA did was to buy up the remaining copies of the Index from the printers. This put NESFA into the book selling game. Pierre had also put out a couple of annual supplements. NESFA picked up on this also, and, presto, we were in the indexing game.

The period from 1967-1971 was, to my mind, the heyday of NESFA. (A purely biased and personal opinion.) We were involved in the worldcon bid, which meant going to a lot of regional conventions and hosting parties. We were running Boskones which were much smaller and much less formal in those days. The club was still pretty much comprised of the original members, who had been self selected as a compatible group. Everything was new and exciting for us in those days. And, for the most part, we all were friends - the club had not yet been racked with feuds.

In 1969 we won the Worldcon bid and 1971 we put on Noreascon, which was the largest convention ever at that time and which was distinguished by being one of the smoothest running conventions for years. I think that was the point at which things started to go wrong for the club, at first imperceptibly and then more and more rapidly. To say that things began to go wrong is, of course, a personal reaction - I am saying that I became less and less satisfied with things. But it eventually became more than anyone person's reaction.

In the years 1967-1975 NESFA pretty much was Boston fandom. In 1975, however, the club was wracked with a major feud and Boston fandom splintered, although NESFA remains a very strong club. I was caught in the middle of the furor and didn't think much of it. Since then my interest in NESFA and in Boston fandom has been considerably less than it used to be. Although I still have friends on all sides these really aren't my people anymore.

In general, my social fanac has declined. I make a couple of cons a year. In fact my fanac in general has been reduced - the most visible sign of life is this zine and I rather suspect I am not a very typical fanzine fan. I've never been an APA hacker although I did contribute APA-L for several years and have been a steady irregular in APA:NESFA. In general, the APA scene does not enthrall me.

You know what. It must be getting time to get on the FAPA waitlist.....

=====

#### CLICK?

As the only female engineer in a fairly large chemical plant I am often asked how I am accepted by my colleagues. I never quite knew how to answer that question until the day my office partner returned to work after watching the birth of his first child.

"I'm really surprised more people don't try to participate," he said enthusiastically. "It was the most meaningful experience of my life! Really, Judy, if you ever marry and have children, go into the delivery room. You'll never regret it!"

I stared at him in disbelief. "If I every marry and have children," I said slowly, "I have a feeling I'll be there."

My partner looked at me as if seeing me for the first time. "Oh! Oh, yes," he choked as his blush lighted up the office. And from that moment I've easily been able to explain how I'm accepted. I just tell this story.

*Judith Shattuck, Readers Digest, Feb 1977.*

NOTE: If memory does not fail me, she was a classmate of mine.

=====



Incidentally, the line, 'A rose red city half as old as time' is from Petra by John William Burgon. It is generally considered to be the only good line of poetry he ever wrote.

Erwin S. Strauss  
9909 Good Luck Road, T2  
Lanham, MD 2000  
June 12, 1977

Dear Dick,

Thanks for ssnding me Personal Notes. I agree with the point Suford was trying to mak, and I think your reply to her agues past her rather than to her.

Defining Literature pragmatically as "that at which people are pointing when they say Literature," it can be traced back to the stories told around the primeval campfire. In order to qualify as Literature, it has been traditionally accepted that the work must have something to say about The Way Things Are--bein "mere entertainment" or "a good read" isn't enough. In the beginning, the subject addressed could be anything - as late as Dante, an entire system of cosmology could be posited, and, if the Literary values were up to par, the author could expect to be taken seriously. Ah, yes - "Literary values." Just what are "Literary values?" Again, using the pragmatic method of definition, those values are essentially forensic - the ability of the work to convince the greatest possible audience to the greatest extent in the greatest possible number that what the work says about The Way Things Are is the truth. Billions of people through history have been convinced that the Bible is the literal truth about everything in the Universe - and the Bible is the greatest piece of Literature ever written. Nowadays, a writer may have to settle for convincing readers that, while the specific incidents of the story are fabrications, the work as a whole reveals some Underlying Higher Truth.

\$ Intermission Time: (\$ sign in honor of our libertarian friends.)

\$ Your first paragraph reminds me of one of my prejudices, which is a disapproval  
\$ of capitalizing words or phrases that are not ordinarily capitalized. It  
\$ seems to me a practice to avoid; one that tends to lead to obfuscation and  
\$ muddy thinking. The late John W. Campbell was fond of the practice.

\$ Capital letters are reserved in English for the first words of sentences, proper  
\$ names, the sacred, and a few miscellaneous usages. It is also commonly used  
\$ for emphasis, or to indicate that the capitalized words are being used in a  
\$ special sense, or that someone (perhaps the writer) wants the phrase to be  
\$ understood to be sacred.

\$ These latter usages are suspect. If one's intent is to emphasize there exist  
\$ two standard devices in the language for that purpose - italics and underling.  
\$ Capitalization for emphasis merely nudges matters. In any case I rather feel  
\$ that the use of devices for emphasis in written tends to be abuse and overuse.  
\$ If one wishes to learn to write prose well I would suggest that they give  
\$ themselves a lifetime quota of italics, underlining, etc to be used for  
\$ emphasis. Three instances seems about right. If you are young, that is...

\$ What, for example, is the difference between "literary values" and "Literary  
\$ Values"? I dare say I could a good guess as to how most people would interpret  
\$ the difference, if they were pressed to do so. It would go something like this:  
\$ There is something called Literature which is distinct from literature. Literature  
\$ is the provenance of the college professors and literary intellectuals. I am  
\$ not so sure what literature is supposed to be - probably everything else.  
\$ This is all guesswork though, and I can't immediately think of any good reason  
\$ for the capital letters. If there is a real distinction which I am missing  
\$ then there is a real failure of communication which might be better resolved  
\$ by using clearly written prose instead of using typographical tricks. There  
\$ is no justification at all for capitalizing "Underlying Higher Truth". It  
\$ adds nothing to the content. I suppose the reason for capitalizing "The Way  
\$ Things Are" is to draw a distinction between statements such as "There are steel  
\$ mills in Gary" and "Life is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
\$ signifying nothing." The former is merely a statement about the way things  
\$ are, the latter is a statement about The Way Things Are. (On the other hand,  
\$ there are those who contend that the former is a statement about The Way Things  
\$ Are.) This is an interesting phrasing. At first sight it seems obvious what is  
\$ meant; upon reflection, though, it is much less obvious and clear. This is  
\$ particularly true if one attempts to paraphrase it in any simple fashion. For  
\$ example, one might try "the nature of reality", or "the important questions of  
\$ life", or some similar construction, which all fail to retain the same flavor.  
\$ The trouble is that the expression sounds clear cut and colloquial, but is actually  
\$ rather vague. As soon as we attempt to paraphrase it, we run into the question,  
\$ what sort of things are Things?

\$ This is nit-picking, insofar as it is direct commentary, and shouldn't be counted  
\$ for that purpose. This merely happened to be a convenient point to mount that  
\$ particular soapbox. As far as the actual propositions advanced are concerned I  
\$ note:

\$ a. The proposition that literature should be rooted in an underlying higher  
\$ truth is at least as old as Aristotle. It is hard to argue with this if the  
\$ notion of higher truth is extended enough; a sufficiently elastic definition  
\$ will save everything. However the underlying higher truth in, say, Dickens  
\$ is pretty nominal.

\$ The assertion that literary values are forensic as a pragmatic fact is outrageous.  
\$ (Color me outraged.) The proposition that literary values are essentially  
\$ forensic is an interesting one, highly debatable, dubious, and probably false.  
\$ In any case, this is not the pragmatic method of definition, although it is  
\$ obviously the Strauss method of definition.

\$ That whole bit about the Bible is simply silly. (And that is the most charitable  
\$ term that springs to mind.)

In the beginning, the audience didn't have any way to check what a word say  
about The Way Things Are, no matter what it said. Therefore, the name of the game  
became the kind of forensic skills we associate with lawyers or debating teams -  
regardless of facts, how persuasive an argument can one put together? (Note: much  
of classical literature, indeed much of literature in general, is addressed to an  
audience that already believes the, ah, higher underlying truth expressed - persuasion  
is not needed.) The criterion of value was the ability to leave the audience wanting  
to believe what one was saying. Later, the methods of science were developed as an  
alternative source of information about The Way Things Are. And, just about every-  
where that the versions produced by Literature and Science conflicted (e.g., Galileo  
vs. Dante, Darwin vs Genesis), the latter view has pretty well prevailed. As a result,  
the aspects of reality addressed by Literature have retreated into those areas where the  
state of the art in science isn't adequate to give answers (e.g., psychology), and those  
areas where no real answers are possible (e.g., morality).



That last crack about morality is likely to raise a few eyebrows and I think an explanation of it will help explain why people remain interested in Literature. For the first few million years that the human race existed, people lived in small hunting/gathering bands. In this setting, relatively simple, comprehensive world-views were developed. A person in the group learned this world-view early in life, and it gave answers to all of the questions that might confront a person living such a life-style. Fairly recently (about 10,000 years ago) agriculture was invented, and the changes that led to the present were set in motion. As the world became more complex, the old simple world-views didn't work any more. However the desire for such a simple world-view was, by that time, deeply ingrained - at least culturally, and I'm inclined to think genetically as well. At least as early as 2500 years ago (classical Athens) people were making attempts to consciously formulate world-views that would once again satisfy that inner longing. But the genie was out of the bottle, and there was no way that any world-view could again be both simple enough and comprehensive enough to satisfy. As a result these attempts to formulate Man's Place in the Universe or whatever have continued for these two and a half millennia without notable progress.

One of the aspects of the old simple world-views was the code of ritual and taboo - the list of Thou Shalt's and Thou Shalt Nots that guided people's lives. Once again, using the pragmatic definition, the study of ethics and morality as it has been practiced for the last two and a half millennia is the attempt to concoct consciously a substitute for this code of ritual and taboo. As I've shown above, this is a search for the Philosopher's Stone, for the Holy Grail, for that which (if it ever existed at all) will never exist again.

Today the market for Literature is those people who, in one way or another, reject science. These are people who will not accept that the state of human knowledge isn't up to answering certain questions yet, or that the questions do not have satisfactory answers. They are people who want to be sold Answers. For example, compare O'Henry's "Gift of the Magi" with Tom Godwin's "The Cold Equations." In "Gift," there's no physical reason, or reason in the psychology of the characters why, after the woman has sold her hair to buy the watch chain, the man should turn out to have sold his watch to buy her combs. Not knowing of each other's actions, it can only be classified as coincidence. But by the conventional rules of the literary game, there is a "rightness" or "poetic justice" that practically requires that ending. On the other hand, Godwin deliberately set up "Equations" so that the conventional literary values would "require" that the pilot find a way to spare the girl and land the ship safely. To the connoisseur of Literature, it would be up to Godwin to find a way to convince the audience that the pilot could do both things - or to abandon the story. The fact that the physical laws of the universe require the ending that he used is no excuse to such people. They come to Literature to tell them what they want to hear (even if they aren't sure just what that is.)

From the time of the Greek tragedians on, the market in Literature has been for situations in which the outcome is determined by the internal makeup of the people involved, rather than being primarily determined by external circumstances - thus the simple situations, complex characters of Literature. By these standards, SF (at least the hard-core, hard science traditional SF) doesn't qualify. In principle, the outcome of situations will depend on both internal and external factors. To be sure, SF has tended to shortchange the internal factors; but this is getting to be less so in more modern SF, and I look forward to the trend continuing. However, for the last few centuries, non-SF ("mainstream") Literature has almost pathologically avoided the external factors - to a large extent, I think, because the prevailing method of demonstrating truth in such matters (science) restricts the scope of their use of the traditional forensic techniques of Literature. That is, a development that is artistically "right" but depends on external factors is subject to being refuted by an argument based in science. Since the authors don't feel competent to counter such argument, or to take them into account in setting up the

situations so that the internal workings of a character's mind aren't critical to the work - or just don't enjoy doing so. - they tend to avoid having such factors be critical just as, in reverse, SF authors have tended to set up the situations so that the internal workings of a character's mind aren't critical to the outcome.

Because SF seems to be prepared to take all factors (internal and external) into account while "mainstream" literature does not, I'll take SF.

\$ Um, well, yes. An interesting and controversial letter. I'm afraid much of it  
\$ is rather dubious though. To discuss in detail the various doubtful propositions  
\$ advanced is rather more than I want to launch into right at the moment. However  
\$ I suppose that I can at least list some of them.

1. "In order to qualify as Literature, it has been traditionally accepted that the work must have something to say about The Ways Things Are." Since this is a proposition upon which much of the rest of the discussion rests it is worthy of a bit of comment. The trouble with this statement is that there is a sense in which it is true but that is not the sense in which it is being used. The traditional test of literature is that it be concerned with important matters. (Excuse me, Important Matters.) What is important is a question whose answer depends on the answerer - different people have different opinions as to what literature comprises. The way things are is among the important matters, so such topics are part of the legitimate territory of literature. However a work of literature may merely be about something which is currently deemed important - a Grecian urn, say, or a skylark. In any case, whether or not it about "The Way Things Are" it need not be prescriptive - that is, it is not necessary that any given work of literature make a case for any particular version of "The Way Things Are" whether implicit or explicit. There is a considerable amount of literature which is prescriptive, of course. However much of the time "The Way Things Are" is simply assumed. One writes about the gods, not to establish a case for them, but because everybody knows that there are gods and that it is important to write about them.
2. "Again using the pragmatic method of definition, those values are essentially forensic". Proposition debatable, probably false. Use of pragmatic in this way is fallacious argument.
3. Paragraph three en toto.
4. The last paragraph en toto.
5. And, in particular, "...Literature has almost pathologically avoided the external factors...".

I could continue, but my heart isn't in it. Instead let me discuss that extraordinary comparison of "The Cold Equations" and "The Gift of the Magi." Let me dispose of the latter first. Pierre notes quite accurately why this is formula fiction without quite perceiving that he has done so. If O'Henry didn't invent this particular class of formula fiction then he perfected it to the point that he may be regarded as its effective inventor. To argue that the formulas of O'Henry are characteristic of literature in general is simply dishonest argument.

As it happens I have discussed "The Cold Equations" at some length in the pages of APA:NESFA. I argued there that the story is over rated, shoddy, and dishonest. I shan't mind making the case again, with more detail. I am even prepared to draw a little moral from it.



THE COLD EQUATIONS: By Tom Godwin, first published in Astounding Science Fiction, August 1954, pp 62-84. Illustrated by Freas.

Synopsis: The story is set in the early days of instellar exploration and settlement. There is an ftl drive. Interstellar travel is expensive but not prohibitively so. Large liners make regular scheduled trips to the main colony worlds. Unscheduled stops at minor colonies are very expensive and are not regularly made. To handle the problem of making unscheduled deliveries to colony worlds they have developed a system of dropping off eds vehicles (EDS = Emergency Dispatch Ships.) These are minimum configuration ships, small and collapsible, made mostly of light metals and plastics. They are dropped off with the minimum amount of fuel necessary for landing pilot, cargo, and ship (due allowance being made for atmospheric disturbance.) Because they are minimum configuration ships they do not carry enough fuel to land if there is a stowaway. Hence the policy has been adopted that any stowaway will be jettisoned. To make sure that noone stows away the EDS compartment is marked with a sign: UNAUTHORIZED PERSONNEL KEEP OUT! The pilot carries a blaster as a matter of course and is under strict orders to jettison any stowaways discovered.

The story starts when the pilot of an EDS vehicle realizes that there is a stowaway aboard his ship concealed in the cargo closet. He forces the person out and discovers it is a young girl, aged 18. If she had been a man he would have been ready to shoot on sight, but this is different. He calls the liner which dropped him off to see if there is any alternative to jettisoning her - there isn't. He explains the situation to her - either she dies or she, he, and a number of colonists die. She is granted an hour until course change to write letters to her parents and to call her brother who is on the destination planet. In the end she enters the airlock voluntarily and is jettisoned.

The bulk of the story is about the fact that she is from the protected environment of civilization where the violation of regulations result in man made administrative punishments which she was prepared to accept and deal with. Here, however, she has stumbled into the cold equations (In particular those governing fuel usage) and is condemned to die without regard to her personality but because that is the way the universe is.

The situation is quite dramatic. The ship is carrying fever serum for the colonists. The young girl is quite appealing; there is a section where she reminisces about her brother (who is a colonist on the target world) and her kitten when she was a young child. The final lines of the story are:

"It was not yet time to resume deceleration and he waited while the ship dropped endlessly downward with him and the drives purred softly. He saw that the life hand of the supplies closet temperature gauge was on zero. A cold equation had been balanced and he was alone on the ship. Something shapeless and ugly was hurrying ahead of him, going to Woden where his brother was waiting through the night, but the empty ship still lived for a little while with the presence of the girl who had not known about the forces that killed with neither hatred nor malice. It seemed, almost, that she still sat small and bewildered and frightened on the metal box beside him, her words echoing hauntingly clear in the void she had left behind her:

*I didn't do anything to die for - I didn't do anything - "*

... It is a tearjerker ...

Comments: This is a quite famous story and it is a powerful one. It is often cited as a great story and as making a profound point. It is my contention that this is a bad story and that it is much worse for being powerful. It is also my contention that the praise that this story has received is characteristic of what is wrong with Science Fiction as a genre.

It is a sloppy story....

Basically the trouble with the story is this: from the internal evidence of the story we must conclude, not that the heroine died because of the cold equations of nature, but because of criminal bureaucratic stupidity.

In making this charge it is important to be careful about being fair. For example it would be unfair to point out that the assumptions made about aerodynamic entry are unrealistic. If the same story were being written in 1977 rather than 1954 it would be a flaw in the story. A more debatable proposition is whether it is reasonable to assume that the EDS ship sets out with such a narrow margin of fuel. It is, in fact, bad design practice. One may be forced to operate at the limits of safety or beyond them but it is bad policy as a general thing. (It is clear in the story that this is standard policy.) Operating without reserves leads to ships being lost with much greater costs than the costs of carrying reserves. The real cold equations of the universe say that you can't get away with assuming that every thing goes right.

In APA:NESFA I have cited this as a major flaw in the story. However I am now inclined to believe that I was wrong. An author should be granted his premises. It is not hopelessly implausible that engineering practice at that time would be so solid that they could afford to design to limits. It would have been nice if the author could have made that point explicit and it represents, I believe, ignorance on the part of the author about what he was writing about. Still and all, it is a tangential point - minor carelessness in setting up the situation.

On the other hand I do not think that it is nit picking to point out that the pilot made no effort to determine whether or not the mass of the ship could be reduced in any other way. The girl weighed 110 pounds. Could he find 110 pounds of other mass to get rid of, or less - depending on his narrow reserves. There was his blaster, his notepad, his and her clothes, the dorr to the supplies closet, the communicator microphone, etc. Perhaps it was impossible. Although there was a certain amount of detachable mass aboard ship (another flaw in the story, by the way) it may not have been enough. However it is quite clear that the pilot never considered the policy. One might justly ask what sort of man this pilot was.

The more important point is that no serious effort is made to keep stowaways out. (We will ignore the fact that no mass check is made before launching.) Consider: It is official policy that stowaways be executed. (Paragraph L, Section 8 of Interstellar Regulations: *Any stowaway discovered in an EDS shall be jettisoned immediately following discovery.*) To enforce this policy the pilot is issued a blaster with which to execute any hapless stowaway. Serious business, indeed. You might suppose that a serious effort might be made to avoid the possibility of people stowing away. None is.

Our intrepid pilot is issued a blaster with orders to kill. From this, and other internal evidence in the story we gather that stowaways are not an unheard of problem. Nonetheless the pilot did not make a routine check for stowaways before launching and feels no remorse for doing so. Stowing away is fatal - yet no effort is made to stop stowaways except for a rather uninformative sign. (In the story the girl just wanders on board without any problem..)

In law there is a doctrine known as the doctrine of the attractive nuisance. It arose (or became prominent) in a case where a company maintained a pool of sulfuric acid with an easily climbed fence surrounding it. Some kids climbed the fence and dived in. Their parents sued the company and won. The essence of the ruling was that someone who maintains an attractive nuisance has the obligation to secure it safely.



in this story the EDS ship is portrayed as an attractive nuisance. Things are such that being a stowaway is fatal. However the people concerned with running things make no real effort to prevent stowaways. They post an uninformative sign and issue the pilot a blaster and let it go at that. This is why the heroine died. If she had been warned - she wasn't - she wouldn't have stowed away. If that sign had been more informative she wouldn't have stowed away. If the pilot had made a minimal inspection of his ship she would have been found and her life would have been saved.

I am reminded of the history of industrial safety. At the turn of the century factories were gruesomely unsafe places to work. People worked at low wages in unsafe conditions. Hours were long and the pressures to produce were high. Naturally there were a lot of accidents. People lost hands and worse. If one suffered a severe accident that was your problem. You were careless - therefore it was your fault.

Times have changed for two reasons. Laws were passed to make safe equipment obligatory, and workmen's compensation laws were passed which meant that the factory operator had to pay for the accidents that happened to his workers. Financial liability made safety become economic sense and all of a sudden ways were found to reduce industrial accidents.

One of the interesting things about this is the attitude of industrialists at the time. Fundamentally they took the position that accidents were the fault of the individual worker and that he should therefore bear the responsibility. And they were right. In each individual accident you could go back and point out where the person involved had been careless. Ergo, it was his fault. This position was often padded out with a good bit of social Darwinism.

Nonetheless their position was false. The individual worker may have been responsible in part for his mishaps. The industrialist was also responsible in part for creating unsafe conditions. When he was forced to become liable for this responsibility he was able to find ways to remove the unsafe conditions.

The attitude of the administrators and the pilot in this story are similar to the attitudes of those early industrialists. They are responsible for administering a dangerous situation. Yet they feel no obligation beyond putting up a sign and issuing a blaster with orders to kill.

There are several possible conclusions that one can draw from this, granting that the premise of the story is invalidated by the execution. It is, after all, simply a story written around a given philosophical point. We might conclude that it was sloppily written. We might suspect that it was written on consignment to make a point and that the author snuck in a rather savage indictment of the point supposedly being made. Or we might suppose that the failings in the story fairly represent the attitudes of the author and those readers who praised it so highly.

It is tempting to suppose that the story is simply sloppy - the economics of writing short Science Fiction militate against care in thinking out stories. It seems that it is unlikely that the author was pulling a fast one, although it has been done. Fritz Leiber snuck in a savage satire on the Viet Nam war and the Johnson administration in Analog (The Price of Simery!). I think, however, that the third alternative is correct. Neither the author or his readers genuinely saw anything wrong with the way of doing things portrayed in the story.

If the story is simply sloppy it has been overpraised and its readers are blind. If the author was being subtle he overestimated his audience. And the third alternative is the most discouraging for it bespeaks a deplorable moral obtuseness.

This is a flawed story. If it is to be taken seriously as a premier Science Fiction story making a profound point then it must stand in part as an indictment of Science Fiction as a literature of ideas.

\$ The above discussion is also intended for APA:NESFA where I have been having  
\$ a running argument with John Turner about the story for the last six months  
\$ or so.

\$ There are a few further points that are worth making. The situation in The  
\$ Cold Equations is not really novel - analogous situations are common in the history  
\$ of pioneering and exploration. (I am reminded of Shorty in The Virginian.) Nor  
\$ is the point made a novel one - it recurs in fiction about the West. The great  
\$ advantage of Science Fiction is that one can construct a situation to explicitly  
\$ illustrate a thesis. The tragedy of Science Fiction is that most such attempts  
\$ are seriously flawed, either by carelessness, or by intrinsically shallow thinking.

=====

Hmmm. I did run on a bit there, didn't I. Oh well, chalk it up to another view  
through the idiosyncratic microscope, as Mr. Glicksohn would put. At the pace I am  
going this promises to be another long and rather late PN. I fear my comments on  
the Hugoes and the FAAN awards will be rather out of date by the time this comes out.  
We have launched into another remodelling project. This time it is the kitchen. As  
of this writing it is almost down to the bare bones. We have stripped out the original  
cabinets which were built at the time of the house and were somewhat primitive and  
removed the plaster on three walls and the ceiling. We mean to rewire, put in new  
plumbing, and new cabinets. In short, the works. We also plan to take off the lin-  
oleum and sand and polyurethane varnish the floor, which is rock maple. It should be  
very pretty when we are all done.

Among my interests are chess, computers, and artificial intelligence. (Machines  
are even less intelligent than people.) It is not surprising, therefore, that I have  
an interest in chess playing programs. There are some recent developments on that  
front that I may report on later. My interest in the subject has been sparked recently  
because DAvid Levy, a British master who made a famous bet that no computer could  
beat him in a match before August 1978, has come out with a book on computers and  
chess, and because a recent issue of Chess Review had several articles on Chess 4.5,  
a program which has done rather well in several minor tournaments recently. One  
of the results of this renewed interest is that I have finally gotten around to  
writing a chess program. I don't expect this program to ever be very good - I don't  
plan to put that much time in on it. It may, however, be the only chess program  
extant that is written in PL/I. I would run it through PN but it's just a bit too  
long.

At this writing Suncon has not yet been held. In fact, at this writing, it is  
not clear whether or not Suncon is going to be held. A convention which is being  
held in a bankrupt hotel and which does not mail out the Hugo ballots until August  
is, I suppose, a novelty. It ought to be interesting. As, for example, Waterloo  
was interesting.

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#### INTERLUDE:

This zine has been interrupted for a few weeks while I went to SUNCON and for  
tearing apart the kitchen. The convention was much better than I expected, although  
I must expect that my expectations were low. More on that later. (Mikle has an  
illustrated con report, done in his usual inimitable style.

At the present moment the kitchen has been stripped to bare walls. When I say  
bare, I mean bare. The plaster and xX lathes and the ceiling are all gone, along with  
the old cabinets. With luck there will be a little article about that also.



Don D'Amassa  
19 Angell Drive  
East Providence  
Rhode Island 02914  
July 15, 1977

Richard,

I have some minor comments to make here and there (my critics contend that all of my remarks are minor.)

For example, if Michael Shoemaker is correct that a prozine makes a profit and a fanzine doesn't, then GALAXY is almost certainly a fanzine, and I suspect that AMAZING and FANTASTIC are as well.

I refuse to get involved in the poetry argument. I am personally of the opinion that there are few absolute standards one can apply to poetry, that poetry is an intensely personal thing depending almost entirely on the reader's set when approaching a poem rather than the author's skill. The most skillful authors, of course, write poems that appeal to the widest range of sets.

# *There is much to what you say. For example, I once attended a Great Books Discussion club which was discussing and interpreting e.e. cummings. The experience was enough to instill into me a life time prejudice against discussion groups and cummings.*

# *There are technical standars that one can apply to determine whether a poem is well constructed verse. For example, verse which uses a rhyme scheme but which contains "rhymes" that don't rhyme is defective. Some judgements of style are sufficiently clear cut that it is not just a matter of personal preference. Beyond that, however, I suspect there is much in what you say.*

You mentioned to Peter Roberts that Swedish Ivy does not grow in Sweden. Sheila pointed out to me that Swedish Ivy is not an ivy either.

On the "SF as Trash" controversy, I'll offer just a few tidbits. First of all, it appears now that you are saying that most SF written is trash, and that the genre probably will remain primarily trash, but that under other circumstances, it could be literature. If this is truly a representation of your opinion, I endorse it, but point out that most mundane fiction is trash as well, and that the proportions probably aren't all that different. For every Hemingway, there are a dozen Stratemeyer's, Michael Avallone's, Dorothy Daniels, Bliss Lomaxs, and Barbara Cartlands.

I'd be curious as to what novels you consider as great literature. There are a few mainstream writers whose work is far above anything SF has produced, like Hemingway, Faulkner, Salinger, and a few others. But if you include as great literature the works of people like Malamud, Bellow, Dickens, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Joyce Carol Oates, Sherwood Anderson, and such, then I'd say there is science fiction that is just as good.

= *Always there is the joker who asks the pregnant question. What do I consider great literature, huh? I dunno as I ever really considered the question. To begin with, I haven't read novels which are considered classics. (novels is a contraction for most novels.) My reading of contemporary novels is very spotty.*  
= *I am not sure where I would draw the line between "great" literature and literature. (And then, people's lists vary - I wouldn't put Salinger as far above Dickens and Fitzgerald.) If you phrase it as "What novels have you read that you would consider great literature?" I suppose I would have to cop out and pick things like*

= things like Vanity Fair, War and Peace, Les Miserables, Crime and Punishment,  
 = Madame Bovary, and the like. This is safe enough and probably wouldn't spark any  
 = great controversy. Beyond that it is more murky. For example, Sinclair Lewis  
 = is a Nobel prize winner. Is he substantially greater than, say, Robert Penn Warren,  
 = or Michener? I forbear to try to answer.

An SF story with two real characters: "The (Widget), the (Widget), and Boff" or  
 MORE THAN HUMAN by Sturgeon. A MIRROR FOR OBSERVERS by Pangborn, THE SHINING by Stephen  
 King, A CANTICLE FOR LEIBOWITZ.

= Or how about Rogue Moon by Ludrys?

Roy Tackett is his usual irrational self on the subject of Malzberg and Ellison.  
 Ellison is as successful as most short story writers in the mainstream. Malzberg is  
 very successful in the mystery genre. He is "Mike Varry", author of the Lone Wolf  
 adventrue series. A couple of his mainstream novels received good reviews, particularly  
 OVERLAY. Roy's problem is that he's not willing to accept that a style of writing  
 he finds personally unreadable might be good to other people.

= I'm surprised, sir, that one of your peacable nature would go around tossing off  
 = phrases like "usual irrational self". Tsk, tsk. At that, I think you do Roy an  
 = injustice. (Perhaps, on mature reflection, you would have not quite said that.  
 = However we don't allow mature reflection around here - PN is a haven for immature  
 = flights of fancy.) Roy's comments were, I would suppose, in the line of a literary  
 = judgement. Er, artistic judgement? Of the three, he judges Silverberg to be most  
 = promising as a writer of mainstream literature. He judges Ellison to be more of a  
 = showman than a writer of substance. Of Malzberg he says Nada, nothing. (Which may  
 = mean merely that he has nothing to say about Malzberg, or, more probablu, he judges  
 = Malzberg to be a nothing, alightweight.) I submit, sir, that these are defensible  
 = positions. I submit, further, that one can hold these positions regardless of one's  
 = tastes in style. I would agree with Roy about Silverberg and Ellison. I don't  
 = think I would agree about Malzberg. I think it is possible that Malzberg could  
 = write one great novel - but only one. Having read Herovits World (which I had  
 = looked forward to on the strength of Ellison's review) I think it is fair to say  
 = that (a) Malzberg owns a rather modest competence in the mastery of writing English  
 = prose, and that (b) he is psychologically obtuse. (after that last phrase I am  
 = inclined to be quite charitable on the subject of being inept in the use of prose.)





- We are given samples of Herovit's prose who is a hack. It is not terribly different quality from Malzberg's prose. When I say that Malzberg is psychologically obtuse I mean simply that the character he portrays is not the sort of person who would write the particular kind of hack writing that he is portrayed as writing. This is, I rather suspect, a general failing of Malzberg. His characters have a life of their own which may have nothing to do with the kind of person who would be in the situations they are portrayed as being in. All of which does not mean that Malzberg couldn't write a great novel of a certain type.

.....

Jodie Offutt  
Funny Farm  
Haldeman, Kentucky 40329  
6/20/77

Dick: (I love your address!)

Is the cover a sample of some of the paper you've used in your house? I like it. The MU course of study is very good. About the footnote: SF fandom often is a lot of B.S.

I thought you'd get a lot of response on smoking and SF as trash. You did, too. It was all interesting reading. What I have to contend with often, now, are smokers who are self-conscious. They'll ask if you mind if they smoke, and when told No, can't accept that without more reassurance. Are you sure you don't mind? Are you sure it doesn't bother you? Interesting phenomenon.

... Actually there were two different versions of the cover. I used wallpaper  
... leftover from two different rooms. As of this writing we have just finished the  
... the kitchen wall papering. If all else fails you may yet see another Harter  
... wallpaper cover.

.....

Karen Pearlston  
132 Hove St.  
Downsview, Ontario, Canada  
M3H427  
]4/6/77

Dear Richard,

Thanks very much for PN #8. It's truly an enjoyable zine. What's this about \$1.50 for paper and \$2.25 for ink. Ghu, up here paper is \$5 a ream and a tube of ink is about \$6.

... Somewhere in this zine I will publish the address of Mishek's which is mail order  
... office supplies house. The prices you cite are typical retail prices. You can  
... do a lot better by going to bulk supply houses, and buying in quantity. I'm not  
... sure whether you could get stuff as cheaply as I suggested anymore or not.

At my last job I was grossing about \$530 a month and lived fairly well on it. What's your definition of living well? I could pay my rent and eat plus buying books, doing zines, going to cons, seeing movies, buying records, and doing all the other stuff I enjoy. Of course, that's just for one person - perhaps you were thinking of supporting a family?

... Now that's an interesting question. My first reaction was that it seems to me ... that it would be awfully hard to live well on that income. Actually that depends ... on where you live and what restraints you are willing to live with. In the ... Boston area it would be difficult to find a decent apartment for less than \$200 ... a month. Food will run you at least a thousand a year - provided you do your ... own cooking and rarely eat expensive cuts of meat. Then there is transportation ... and clothes and laundry and things like that.

Re Victoria's comment about liking to spend time with men rather than with women. She's right - it doesn't sound too good. There should be no difference between men and women as groups in so far as which group one wants to spend time with is concerned but there is. Our sexist society stifles both women and men, but it stifles women more. It's much more difficult to find an interesting woman, but when I do find one it's soooo terrific! I would like to spend more time with women and to this end I'm probably going to get re-involved in the local women's movement. At this time I have more close male friends, though, because fandom - where most of my friends are - is predominantly male. There are almost as many women Derelicts as men but I don't seem to have much in common with most of the women.

... Well now I think that proposition about how there should be no difference between ... men and women as groups etcetera is so much hooey. Nor do I think you really ... believe it yourself, not really. It is one thing to be for a sexually integrated ... society, but it is quite another to insist that people should behave as though ... there were no difference between men and women, which is what that "should" ... amounts to advocating.

A women's APA is helping a lot, though. It's real nice to have a place where the people I'm talking to are mostly women. (enough said.)

Hmm. I'm a fanzine fan, though most of my fanac goes into the half-dozen apas I'm in. I'm certainly more interested in doing things for apas than for genzines. However I also loc a number of zines. I suppose someone who is only in apas and who gets few or no genzines shouldn't really be considered a fanzine fan, though. At least not one as defined as being qualified to vote for the FAAn awards (by the spirit of the law, not the letter.)

... Could it be that fanzines represent the wave of the past? I get the impression ... that most people find APAs more rewarding and less demanding. There aren't too ... many genzines around these days and most them are put out by people who were around ... during the last genzine boom. Nowadays you have a lot of people hacking around ... in APAs, personal zines, and discussion zines.

I'm a smoker and I was rather astonished to hear Jodie Offutt say that she was not a heavy smoker and then say that she'd reduced her smoking to about fifteen cigarettes a day. I consider myself a moderate to heavy smoker and smoke about fifteen a day.

... Probably a generation gap. Teenagers who do smoke tend to smoke substantially ... less than adults who have been smoking for some time. If, as I would guess, you ... are in your early twenties, you are probably still using a different scale. A ... light smoker is someone who smokes less than half a pack a day - moderate is half ... a pack to a pack. Heavy is a pack on up.



I do agree, however, on anti-smoking bigotry. Phil Paine has the most violent reaction to smoke I've ever seen. If he's exposed to too much smoke (which is apparently not very much in his case) phlegm collects in his throat which cuts off his air supply and causes him to pass out. Phil combats this by taking anti-histamines and drinking a lot of Coke and stuff when around smokers. Even with all this I've never heard Phil get obnoxious to smokers. Actually, I think he should, just a little. I try to keep my smoking to a minimum around him and to make sure I sit at the other side of the room, etc., but sometimes I forget and I would much rather have Phil remind me or ask me not to smoke than have him pass out.

... Urk. Now there is a genuine horror story if I ever heard one. I can understand why he might not want to say anything - he might find it embarrassing to have such strong and unusual reaction. It's the old 'too proud to ask for charity' syndrome. You're right - he shouldn't hesitate to ask people not to smoke near him.

David Stever  
168 Boston Post Road #1  
Marlborough MA 01752  
June 8, 1977

Dear Dick;

In the discussion of interstellar cultures, I would lean heavily in the direction of your third group - that there are people out there, but not talking to us. I think that #4 more or less spans from your first group into your third one, as it could mean that we have been examined in the past, but are not being looked at now (or, conversely, we were never looked at until recently, with the superculture recovering from the war or plague.) If I ever manage to sell SF (I suppose that that means that I must write it, dammit), I've got a cute little future history based on us finding some war relics and some items predating the war; it makes for a paranoid culture. (Like, for example, in stasis boxes?)

Your conclusion I accept until you got to c). OK, at least one was imperialist, but it was long ago? No! It might have first happened long ago, but the probabilities are that it happens from time to time, and is therefore likely to have happened recently, if it's not happening now. In your point d), I don't see where the logic change that got you there came from, just as I don't see the point you are attempting to make with it. e), I exist, I don't know about you.

... Let's get this straight, Stever. You may think you exist, but in the pages of this zine I decide who exists and who doesn't.

... To elucidate and amplify: Actually I'm not sure I understand what it is that you don't see - the argument seems straightforward to me. We observe that our biochemistry is native to this planet. (We cannot be certain of this but we have very strong reasons for believing it to be the case.) We can conclude, therefore, that our planet has never been successfully settled by alien race who replaced the local biochemistry with their own. There are two possibilities - either no race made the attempt or all who did were ultimately unsuccessful. Let us consider the latter case. We might readily imagine that it would be quite difficult to make over the local biochemistry now, even if we weren't on the scene. All niches in the ecology are filled. The case was quite different half a billion years ago. The continents were then empty, with open niches. The aliens could have simply settled, establishing their own life forms. Once they had, the native forms would be permanently locked out.

... If there are or were any races which practice this form of imperialism then it seems likely that they were around a long time ago. I.e. they would have arrived sufficiently early on the scene so that they would have colonized the entire land area of Earth and the native life forms such as us would have never developed.

... If you were thinking of imperialism in the sense of conquest of other races then we have had a small misunderstanding. Obviously any such race would have had to have been stable culturally for a long period of time. This does not seem unlikely to me - I would expect that any culture which reached a threshold would last indefinitely. Once you have reached the point where you can (a) maintain a stable planetary ecology which includes your technology, and (b) control and stabilize your genetics, and (c) stabilize and control your culture there is no reason that I can see that a culture wouldn't just continue. The former two contingencies seem to me to be almost certain. The latter also seems to me to be quite likely - if an industrial society can exist for, say, ten thousand years, then it has solved the problems of maintaining cultural continuity and should be able to go on for a long time.

I am pleased to note that you are one of the people (I am one, too) who believe that we will stumble out of what seems to be the impending doom of the human race. I think that if we were going to die a painful, radioactive death, that we would have done it by now, and that the signs point to at least some of us escaping the planet soon, extending the probabilities even more. One of the reasons that I intuitively believe that your third set of ideas on interstellar cultures is true is that to believe otherwise is to make the universe more boring. For the race to die on this little rock is also to make the place a bit more boring and the universe is never boring.

Terming things such as the SCA or D&D 'reality traps' is a good term, I believe. I am at least a bit interested in war games, but because of the people that I know or have heard of who are involved in the world of D&D, I'm not going to touch it with a fork. For much the same reason I will never go beyond grass and alcohol in the world of mind altering substances - I like my reality.

One paragraph of your response to Brendan aggravates me. That is that fanzines are not very good - the production control is poor, that the repro is cheap, and the contributors are amateurs; I say, so what? (So do I.) As an exbookbinder, I've seen newsletters of wierd little groups that are truly crudzines, and I've seen magazines with many thousands of dollars to spend on repro who have ended up with blurry printing, crooked titles, etc. There are higher technologies than dittos and mimeos and simple offset presses that can be used for production, but I submit that this doesn't mean a goddamned thing. If you think that the number of typos delimit amateur from professional then you should talk to Spike, who once awarded the Golden Typo award to Lancer Books for consistent stupidity, and you have never read TIME ENOUGH FOR TYPOES, the first edition in paperback of the Heinlein book that the title is taken from.

... I think we are getting at different points. I will grant, nay insist, that there is much that is professionally produced that is badly produced. I, too, will say so what? The standards for professional publication are, in general, much higher than those of amateur publication. When we judge a fanzine such as the Spanish Inquisition we apply different criteria than we do to The New Yorker. This is reasonable. But it well if we keep in mind that we are using different standards and values.

Stan's name goes on my master list of Jack Vance fans. The man has excellent tastes.

... Am I on your list also?



Good Christians. Who needs them? Thusly I prove that arguing in circles with Marty Helgessen in Minneapa for two years has not whotted by apatite. There seems to be within fandom an almost equal number of 'good Christians' and people who either follow their own beat or none at all. Marty is what I fondly refer to as a rabid Christian - one who, while not taking offense at every turn, never-the-less takes every opportunity to point out the viewpoint of the good Christian and, by doing this, has continued to push my buttons for two years.

Fan jokes! What do you call six Barry Malzberg fans sitting around a cesspool? A Banquet.

Being a Jack Vance fan (I bet you couldn't tell...) I would subtitle Not Making It, The Jack Vance Future. I find myself agreeing with his view that we are going to have to radically cut back on our energy usage in our day to day living. See any of the novels in his Alastor/Gaean Reach Universe or the Planet of Adventure series.

... More instances - *Son of The Tree*, *The Languages of Pao*. Jack Vance almost always writes about worlds which are colorful, anachronistic, and have extensive handicrafts.

Good point as to why smokers come across as being inconsiderate. For your average heroin or alcohol addict to get it on involves a ritual of spoons, flames, and hypoes in one case and just a bottle and a grimace in the other. In neither case do they effectively foul up the world of the person next to them. When a person next to me smokes he is doing something which, in my case, cuts out the autonomic motion of my breathing. When you smoke near me, I stop breathing, pure and simple.

The phrase used on page 36, in response to Mike Glicksohn, "inveterate letter hackers" was first read by me as "invertebrate letter hackers", which led my mind down any number of halls in the funny farm of life.

... Oh I get any number of crabby letters from, ah, crustaceans. Some of them, however, ... contains real pearls. I guess the thing about letter hacking is that it lets ... people (?) come out of their shells.

You should see the size of the dip that Walt Garrison's horse had in that ad. He can hit a spittoon at 20 feet, too.

... Walt Garrison's horse???

The differences between your values and mine result in my totally disagreeing with your conclusions to your comments on Suford's "Trash?", "cannot think of any writer within the SF field that I would consider a major writer with the stature of the great writers..." I will not trot out my arguments for you to beat on = let us simply agree to disagree.

Most safes found on the men's room wall are not so complex as the combination job in Memorial Hall. Remember, for prevention of disease only!

You err in your assessment as to why ROBINSON CRUSOE survived to this day. When written it was the first of that form now known as the novel (...wr -q...) and has survived as a great adventure story. It's only in the last three quarters of a century that it has come to be known as a children's book. The Foundation stories and the Lensman series were written as adult books, but they are being fobbed off on 12 year old kids now, as they enter the SF field. I question, too, Earl's notion as to what are 'people versus gadget' SF stories. What are the gadgets in Miller's novel, and LeGuin's Erumen history? (The ansible?)

Submitting one's self to a book is the great appeal of Cordwainer Smith, Jack Vance, T.J.Bass and, to a lesser extent, Ursula LeGuin. These people create worlds so real (a large amount of non trivial background material does it, I think) that to submit yourself is to immerse you in the fictional world. I think that the notion of SF as escape literature is not the perfect comparison that you might think. For the housewife who read Jacklyn Suzann to dream of people who got laid more often than she did is true escape; to read or dream of your position in your world being better. In SF, you are dreaming of a different world entirely.

No luck on getting PN on the Hugo ballot this year, but I've seen that Don D'Amassa has made it for his writing and his editing this year.

*... A piffle, sir, a piffle. The man got on for the quality of his work, nothing more.  
... I despair of the future of Western civilization if nominations and awards are  
... going to be made on the basis of mere quality.*

*... You raise an interesting point about escape literature. It is a term which  
... is used for several different kinds of motives..*

-----

Roy Tackett  
915 Green Valley Road NW  
Albuquerque NM 87107  
June 18, 1977

Dear Richard

So where are they? I don't know. It wasn't my day to look for them. You mean to sit there and tell us all out here in fanzineland that you don't accept all of these flying saucers whizzing around through the universe... they come from other galaxies, you know, or perhaps it is Saturn or Venus. I seem to have lost track. You know, of course, about the Great Teachers on Saturn? And their counterparts on Venus. Hmmm, they must be the ones who caused all those shadows on the Vererian rocks.... their brilliance lighting up the landscape, as it were. Yes.

So where are they? You present a number of interesting points. I don't feel up to going over all of them. You wouldn't either if you had worked outdoors all day in the New Mexico sunlight..

Considering the negative reports from the biological experiments on Mars I begin to get the feeling that this teeming galaxy we've come to believe in over the past decade or so isn't teeming. Life may indeed be very rare. I do not, as do all the good Christian Christians, hold that we are unique but I suspect that we have been building up this theory of a heavily populated universe more out of wishful thinking than anything else.

We have three planets (four, if you count Luna) in the so-called life zone and only one with life. Well, now, one for three is a pretty good batting average at that.

*... Or consider this - every solar system we have explored contains life. Actually,  
... I rather suspect that a strong case can be made for your doubts. The simplest  
... explanation for a lack of visitors is a lack of beings who can visit. All spec-  
... ulations about the development of life are at about the same state as the cosmo-  
... logists of the nineteenth century.*



Diane Crayno quoted somebody or the other in her fanzine to the effect that "this" generation (whatever that is) would either be the last to die or the first to live forever. And I doubt that. I don't think that immortality is a possibility which would seem to mean that interstellar travel is also not a possibility. As much as it pains me to say so I doubt that FTL is a possibility and without that there is no interstellar travel.

Er, that may have been me that she was quoting. At least I remember saying something of the sort in Apa-L a few years ago. I will grant that it is rank speculation. We do not yet know what causes aging and whether it is reversible or curable. However it seems likely to me that we will know within the next fifty years. This is part of a general contention of mine that the bulk of the advances and discoveries of science that things so will be accomplished together in the next hundred years - assum

So where are they? I don't know. They may be out there but I don't think we have to worry about them dropping in for Sunday dinner.

Where can you find mimeo paper for a buck-fifty a ream these days?

"The classical test for literature is that it survives;" Ah, so. Then I submit to you, sir, that the works of Edgar Rice Burroughs are Literature because people are reading them 50 or more years later. And will probably be reading them 50 years hence. Comment?

To quote one of my favorite lines from Doonesbury, "Touche, you little monster."

\* If we are take that maxim as the sole test for literature then ERB did himself  
\* up proud. I doubt, however, that there are many who would seriously or even  
\* willingly concede that ERB wrote great literature, so we may take it that that old  
\* saw is not the entire story. Try this on for size. At any particular time there  
\* is a body of writing that is considered worth reading, works which have a high  
\* reputation. However the judgements of a particular time about what is worth read-  
\* ing are clouded by fashion and by novelty. At any particular time a style of  
\* writing may be in. A work which is new is not seen in the same way and is not  
\* read in the same way as one which is older. Therefore judgements on what is  
\* worth reading ~~as has been said by some of the great writers of the past~~ ~~are what~~  
\* ~~they are for ERB~~ But then, so do these of Agatha Christie, need to be seasoned. What  
\* , then, of ERB. Well, the fact that he continues to be read speaks for a universal  
\* quality in his writing. Or consider Agatha Christie, who was the best all time  
\* best selling author. How many would defend her works as great literature? I  
\* think that the difference is this - there is writing which is consumed and writing  
\* which is read. I.e. some writing we consume passively; some we read actively -  
\* it engages our minds and our emotions.

Your assessment of the more-or-less near future falls to take climate into account. Several climatologists predict continued cooling - another "little ice age" such as was around 700 years ago, perhaps. Which means that farming will be next to impossible in the north. Most of the world's great grain growing areas, except for the US, will be hit. And lots of people are going to starve.

I think a totalitarian future is almost assured. You will recall, of course, the comments from Washington DC a few months ago that another winter or two like the past one is likely to result in large scale civil disorder.

You will recall, of course; the comments from Washington D. C. a few months ago that another winter or two like the past one is likely to result in large scale civil disorder. Barring a breakthrough in fusion or something similar I think that it will all break down.

I am pessimistic these days.

=====

Eric B. Lindsay  
6 Hillcrest Ave.  
Faulconbridge NSW 2776  
27 September 1977

Dear Richard,

[The first paragraph consisted of pleasant nattering which Eric said was there so I could use my editorial skills and cut it. Since Eric's judgement in these matters is immaculate, I have done so. Beginning from there...]

The disadvantage of a two story house is surely the soft thud of feet above you, if someone else is living on the upper story? (Yes.) Or perhaps old homes have much better soundproofing. (No.) I know in my place there is a fairly high level of sound transmission between floors, but since I don't rent it out that doesn't matter. Every now and then I think of changing some aspects of the house - Insulating, sound absorbent packing, air conditioning, things like that, but then I couldn't travel as much, so it gets left as I designed it.

\* *Traditionally the Landlord lives on the second floor of a two family*  
\* *house for just that reason - although I have not, in my own experience,*  
\* *known of any landlord following tradition.*

Where are they? Consider a naked human on most areas of this planet. The survival time is limited. Perhaps they are here, and are within us? (As I understand it intelligent bacteria masquerading as Athlete's Foot are responsible for the recent great interest in jogging.) Seriously, I suspect that the only way through the environmental crisis is either the agricultural pastoral planet or a very much decreased population. Say 200 million for the earth. If this Tatter case is true, then it implies a stable and non-expansionist society with high technology, but not a galactic empire base. Still, it seems unreasonable that none have broken out of the limited technology/limited energy circle we are in, especially when even now we can see possibilities of so doing.

\* *You raise an interesting question - how large can the population of a*  
\* *stable post-industrial society be. There are at least three numbers to*  
\* *consider - the largest supportable population, the largest population*  
\* *which can be stably maintained, and the optimal population. Oh yes, there*  
\* *is also the minimum tenable population size.*

\* *The maximal population size depends on how people are to be fed. If we*  
\* *depend on agriculture for food we are within the maximal size by a factor*  
\* *of two or three. I do not think that agriculture can support more than eight*  
\* *thousand millions and probably not more than five thousand million*



\* people. To project an increase in agricultural output of more than 50%  
 \* is, I believe, unwarranted optimism. The amount by which the average  
 \* global calory consumption can be reduced is not much. Even when the abund-  
 \* ant diet of the American is added in the global average is barely adequate  
 \* for sustained malnutrition. We are already close to the limits of what  
 \* agriculture will supply, even with extraordinary efforts - efforts that are  
 \* even now being made.

\* If we assume exotic food production technologies the limit is much larger.  
 \* I would guess, on no particular grounds other than intuition, that the limit  
 \* in any case is on the order of one hundred thousand millions.

\* The minimum size would be, I suppose, that size for which genetic drift is  
 \* no longer significant. There are a number of factors involved and I shan't  
 \* go into it in detail, but some scratch calculations I suggest that a popu-  
 \* lation of one million would be sufficient for genetic stability.

\* It is desirable to have cultural diversity and there is a minimum population  
 \* required for social diversity. I would set that number at four hundred  
 \* thousand persons divided among four quite distinct cultures. If the popu-  
 \* lation is sufficient for genetic stability we may suppose it to be suffic-  
 \* ient for cultural diversity.

\* In many respects a larger population is better - there is a greater genetic  
 \* base, there is room for greater cultural diversity, and there are more hands  
 \* to work for the common good. I would suppose, therefore, that the optimal  
 \* population size would be the carrying capacity of the land, due allowance  
 \* being made for various safety margins. This figure I would put at one  
 \* thousand millions of population. The land under cultivation now could feed  
 \* the current world population well - the fact that it does not is a social  
 \* problem rather than an insufficiency of resource. However the world at  
 \* present is substantially overgrazed and it is for this reason that the  
 \* final world population should be about a third of what it is now.

\* This does not settle the question of how large a technological society  
 \* can be. However it is yet to be demonstrated that more than a few hundred  
 \* millions can live in the style that Americans live in - particularly when  
 \* one considers that Americans consume an inordinate percentage of the world's  
 \* raw materials in the course of maintaining their style of living.

Your page 16 point, that fanzines in general are not very well done strikes  
 me as very obviously true (I agree, in short), which implies the attraction of  
 them comes from causes other than the presentation. Don't know about you, but  
 I enjoy zines much more when they are from people I've come to know as people,  
 whether in person or via their writing. There are some very good science f  
 zines, but I can't really get all that involved with them.

Loved the subjects available at Miskatonic University. However, are they  
 relevant to the everyday concerns of our commercial society? Will they increase  
 your status and your income? Will they impress the people you meet? And  
 finally and least importantly, will they increase your ability to be an interest-  
 ing person? (Australian universities must be different from those in the states  
 none of these criteria are relevant to US college curricula.)

On smoking, I've just got through mentioning in some other zine that I gave  
 up holding parties at home because I found smoke too troublesome - gave me head-  
 aches and sore eyes - so I put up signs asking people not to smoke inside the  
 house. When that didn't work I stopped inviting people here at all - overall  
 I haven't missed them.

## CHATEAU STRIP MINE

**B**ordeaux may have its chateaux, Germany its vineyards on the Rhine and California its Napa Valley. But none produces a vintage quite so rare as Falcon Cascade, a red, or Falcon Aurora, a white--two new *crus* from Breathitt County, Ky., *mise en bouteille* in Bloomington, Ind. The little Appalachian vineyard is yielding the world's first known strip-mine wine. "Grapes harvested on reclaimed land," the cheery labels promise. So far, tasters have managed to contain their enthusiasm. But "this should be a quality wine," opines vintner J.L. Jackson, otherwise known as the president of the Falcon Coal Co., which stripped the hills. "It'll be higher quality than Gallo."

Strip-mine wine was the inspiration of William Oliver, a law professor from Indiana University. Oliver, a Kentuckian who runs his own winery in Bloomington, persuaded Jackson and the Falcon Coal Co. to plant 6 acres of French hybrid grapes back in 1972 as an experiment in reclaiming strip-mined mountainsides.

Bringing the wine to market, however, will take some time. Local liquor laws, the product of what seems to be a curious alliance of bourbon and temperance interests, discriminate against vineyards, and bottling wine in Kentucky is forbidden. The company uses the 3,000 bottles produced so far for promotion, but Oliver has bigger plans. Someday, he hopes, right up there with bluegrass and the Derby, they'll celebrate Chateau Strip Mine, Appalachian controlee.



... Er, well, ah... One of the advantages, if it is such, of being interested in wine is that people pass the little tidbits on to you. With a few snickers, of course. The trouble with these exotic items is that they usually aren't very good. Still, Chateau Strip Mine is bound to be better than the average Chilean red wine. Chile exports some of the most abysmal wine in the world to winestores of Boston where it is passed off on unsuspecting innocents. (I once had a Chilean red that tasted better in a plastic tumbler than in a wine glass.) It occurs to me now that the Chilean wine industry is probably secretly supported by the Vodka interests with a view to destroying interest in wine.

Enough of this chit chat, on with the zine. To tell the truth I sometimes despair of ever seeing another issue come out. But I press onwards.

WHAT DO MONSTERS EAT? ... Things.

WHAT DO MONSTERS DRINK? .... Coke.

WHY?? ..... Things go better with Coke.



Earl J. Wajenberg  
Nov 12, 1977

Dear Mr. Harter:

In PN#8 you published a letter from Victoria Vayne in which she rejoices over the use of "She" as the pronoun applied to God. In your comments, you say, "I would think that if one were a good Christian one would have to consider God to be male." I see this as an excellent takeoff point for a bit of exegesis, so I am going to take advantage of it.

First of all, what do you mean by "male"? If you mean having one set of gonads rather than another, then "good Christians" are committed to the view that God is not male, since long before the first schism, or even before Christianity developed out of Judaism, God was recognized as a noncorporeal spirit. Of course you probably meant to imply "Given the choice of calling God masculine, feminine or neuter, a good Christian is committed to opt for masculine." My answer to that proposition is lukewarm agreement.

One of your quotations, "God created Adam in His own image.", is incomplete. The original for that is Genesis 1:26-27. In the New World translation it reads: "And God went on to say: 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness, and let them have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and the domestic animals and all the earth and every moving animal that is moving upon the Earth.' And God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them."

Those two verses have been discussed a lot. They have been blamed for all our ecological woes. The "us" and "our" have been taken variously as vestigial polytheism, the royal plural, a conversation among the persons of the Trinity, and as God addressing the angels. I am only concerned with "male and female he created them.", however. To me, that would indicate that Adam is here considered as no more godlike than Eve. Rather, humanity is considered as an image of God, as contrasted to the animals.

There are several feminine images in the Bible. The most famous is Christ comparing himself to a hen protecting her chicks. (Matt. 23:27) In the 8th and 9th chapters of Proverbs personified Wisdom describes its relationship with God and men. Notably at 8:25, "Before the mountains themselves had been settled down, ahead of the hills, I was brought forth as with labor pains..." And since Wisdom has been talking about its creation by God, we may take this as an image of God as mother. (Note: In the King James version Proverbs 8:25 reads "Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth:". King James has no labor pains.) Furthermore, I believe that "wisdom" is a feminine noun in Hebrew, as it is in Greek, so that where my translation calls Wisdom "it", a Hebrew would read "she." This Wisdom is often equated with Christ by church commentators. Lastly, according to a probable rendering of Psalm 90:2, "Before the mountains themselves were born, or you proceeded to bring forth as with labor pains the earth and the productive land, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God." (King James reads, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.")

Of course, having said that, I must admit that God is "he" all through the Bible, father and king, never mother or queen. Why? Obviously because ancient Israel was a malechauvinist society, just like every known society down to the present day. Where men rule and women are ruled, one will naturally think of omnipotence in masculine images.

.... At this point Earl discusses whether something should be done about this, concludes that it should not, and gives his for thinking that it should not. He goes on to say ....

By the way, if you do refer to God as "She," shouldn't you say "Goddess?" There is a feminine form after all. Of course, it's one more syllable. It is not one more syllable to call Episcopalian priestesses "female priests." It's one of my pet peeves; but "priestess", I'm told, sounds too pagan. Cowards. Language-mongers. Why not say "sacerdotal person" and be done with it?

I admit I misunderstood what you meant by "psychological distance" and the consolatory nature of SF. I distinguish three types of consolatory story. (1) The Cinderella or inherit-a-fortune type where an ordinary person achieves spectacular success. SF seldom provides this since more than half the time the protagonists are not "ordinary" by our current standard, or even by their own. (2) The Good-Guys Win type where Dominic Flandry or Captain Kirk beats overwhelming odds. SF provides this regularly, but so does every other genre. If the adventure story with a happy ending is dispicable ("trash") you just condemned the Odyssey. The discovery story, in which the characters exist just to explore the fascinating planet the author invented. You seem to be saying that that sort is consolatory just because it gives Joe Protofan something to think about besides his own problems. So does his algebra book.

\* I am not sure that I agree that your point about 'Goddess' being the appropriate  
\* term is well taken, but I am not sure that it isn't. In the customary usage I  
\* believe God is a proper name for a unique being, our version of Yahweh, so to speak.  
\* If we look at it that way, then God is correct regardless of assumed gender.

\* One general point that you do not fully appreciate (or so it seems to me) is that  
\* the Bible is true, if you are a Christian. It is divinely inspired. Our present  
\* theories about how society should be are both inconsequential and irrelevant. It  
\* really doesn't matter that we now make a big fuss about male chauvinism - this  
\* is only a matter of fashion in popular values, a thing as certain and stable as  
\* a leaf in the wind. What really matters is salvation and ultimate truth, which  
\* is the Word of the Lord, which is given us in the Holy Bible, which is divinely  
\* inspired. So there, infidel.

\* You are right, of course, in the issue of male/masculine. On the evidence of the  
\* Bible, God is masculine in gender. To refer to God as She one must either be  
\* an atheist or a heretic. I am prepared to refer to God as She because I simply  
\* don't believe in the Christian God at all. However someone who professes to be  
\* a Christian but refers to God as She is a heretic. This is not just a matter of  
\* silly formalism. The essence of heresy is that one puts one's own cause, one's  
\* own thought, before God. All things being equal it is better to be an atheist  
\* than a heretic. An atheist need only be convinced. It is harder for the heretic  
\* for she must discover that she is not a Christian, although she believes herself  
\* to be one.

\* I don't know where you would fit it in, but there is a general class of story  
\* feature which I don't see in your list - stories in which the protagonist is a  
\* superman from the very beginning or else starts out appearing to be an ordinary  
\* sort and becomes a superman. There are a number of SF stories which are fairly  
\* close to being outright pornography of omnipotence.

\* Er to say something is trash is not the same thing as saying it is despicable.  
\* For that matter, there is a difference between a story which is, among other things,  
\* an adventure story, and a story which is only an adventure story and poorly written  
\* at that.



Craig J. Hill  
3528 Agate Dr. #8  
Santa Clara CA 95051

Dearest Richard

Your Personal Notes 8 shoots a magnum through my head. It is really astounding to know that this magazine has actually grown thicker through the years. Now some people may ask, "Why would Richard's zine grow thicker through the years?" Yes, my dedicated ones, this is not easy to answer in one easy sentence. However, the obviousness of your warm soul to actually go in there and accomplish all of this treatise is beyond my comprehension, and I have feelings that you are sincerely a more patient human being for doing so.

This cover is probably one of the more curious out of many I have seen in ages. To be quite honest with you, it serves more visual fluctuations than any Iran blanket I have seen (even though I may not be a professional on the subject) but I truly feel it is not a picture even though it purveys one thousand words. (...And to think I passed up the experience of trekking the Mojave desert this year.)

Page one is even more delightful because it reminds me of the cactus flower behind the big big desert.

The THEM analogies are ultimately worth preserving in a museum (although I doubt that any museum around here would like it.) I think that they are very aware of human existence. Life on Planet Earth is too freaked out for more intelligible societies. They have rationalized that the human mind imposed in the skull of the Earthling is totally reactionary and blown out by unusual or congruently different atmospheres where everything is different. The absolute pedantic may respond that in a different environment (where everything around you is different) that that person could handle it...until that environment was set forth whereupon mental decay occurs. This has been hypothesized as what would happen. ...And the Earthlings couldn't handle an alien environment or aliens themselves unless they could handle the environment that they solely claim as their own. But it would be beautiful if it were the other way around.

Your orientations and disorientations really (\*choke\*) get to me. The Miskatonic University has deduced itself in a rhetoric of usual course similarities (I have seen them before), Robert Stack practicality, and sodium bicarbonate. But high and behold in any situation there are consequences of unusualness. Do not spite, I have just pink powder sensitivity to the implications of just arriving in any new situation and have found that the "Ways of Life" are fast sensationalistic jet propulsions of delusions of things that may exist in the same surroundings. In the old Superamalgamation days (ah-yes) I remember it as more as a wry smile at the thought of SF as a way of life. But, then again, there are many perspectives; it would be even funnier just to have a "goddamn hobby" in the orientation. That makes me smile. Er, ah, what to do with mean fan letters was never introduced, but of course those should always be avoided. I just feel it was kinda funny, but also Richard whatever one does the only worthwhileness is if you feel good from it. Right?

\* Or, as the ancient prophet said, "Some seek Mercy; some seek justice; and some play  
\* pinocle." I suspect that I inadvertently attributed a letter by you in the last  
\* issue to Craig Miller, much to his bewilderment. If it were you, my humbler  
\* apologies.

-----\*\*\*\*\*-----

I am, in my own way, a little league fan of that american folk art, graffiti. Not only do I peruse the walls of public restrooms, I also upon occasion contribute to them. Recently while I was sitting musing in a public institute of thought I scrawled on the wall, "TOO MUCH THOUGHT CAUSES CANCER OF THE BRAIN." This remark, I should add, was inscribed on the walls of a men's restroom at Lincoln Labs, where I work.

A few days later some one saw fit to add the comment, "IS THAT WHY THERE IS SUCH A LOW INCIDENCE OF BRAIN CANCER AT LL?" This was an aspect of the matter which had not occurred to me but which was a natural conclusion, given the nature of institutional humor. Thus things might have rested, had not some anonymous but eloquent bard of the john taken pen to wall and shown us what a master might do. He wrote as follows:

THE LOW INCIDENCE OF CERBRAL MELANOMA AT THE LL FACILITY IS ACTUALLY A RESULT OF STATISTICAL MISINTERPRETATION. A RECENT STUDY HAS SHOWN THAT, FOR AN AS YET UNKNOWN REASON, THE BRAIN CELLS OF SUBJECTS ARRIVING AT THE FACILITY BEGIN TO DISBAND, ENTER THE SUBJECT'S BLOODSTREAM, AND FINALLY ACCUMULATE IN THE POST-RECTAL TISSUES. THERE IS STATISTICAL EVIDENCE THAT THE APPARENT LOW INCIDENCE OF BRAIN CANCER IS MORE THAN OFFSET BY THE HIGH INCIDENCE OF HEMMO- RHOIDS AND CONSTIPATION. IT HAS ALSO BEEN NOTED IN THIS STUDY THAT THE SUBJECTS, ESPECIALLY STAFF GRADES AND ABOVE, IN AN APPARENTLY UNCONCIOUS EFFORT TO RESTORE OR COAX THE MIGRATED CELLS TO THEIR ORIGIN, WALK ABOUT WITH THEIR CRANIA POSITIONED WITHIN THE RECTUM, FURTHER AGGRAVATING THE HEMMORHOID PROBLEM.

A.E. NUMAN, MD, PhD, MIT NUT

.....

And now, in the winter of our discontent, we present Miami beach and Suncon, as seen by our intrepid reporter, Unca Miki.

I say, "winter of our discontent", because these two paragraphs are being written during the emergency ban on driving after the great blizzard of 1978.







# THE FLIGHT

MOMENTARY EXHILIMENT FILLS HIS SOUL AS THE PLANE LIFTS OFF INTO THE BLACK BROWN NIGHT AIE

APPROACHING FLORIDA TROPICAL DEPRESSION (HOW TEE)

LANDING ON TIME, NICE FLIGHT GOOD FOOD, FLORIDA IS RAINING

SHEILA, WHY IS EVERYONE SPEAKING SPANISH? THIS CANT BE FLORIDA WHERE ARE THE JEWISH PEOPLE??

HOW DO WE GET TO THE HOTEL, MIKE?

LOOK LOOK A KID IN A SKULLCAP - I FEEL BETTER

LITTLE DID WE KNOW SO WE GRABBED A LIMB WHICH HAD A RESEMBLANCE TO A KENNEL WAGON

LOOK AT THAT, WOW NEAT, MOON RISE, CITIES CLOUDS NEAT! CLOUDS? OH OH, THE CATALITE PHOTO WAS RIGHT

THAT'S IT SHEILA, THIS IS THE REAL PITS.

I'M YOUR DRIVER! GONZALEZ, MOVE IT MOVE IT HAVL IT COME ON ROUND EYES

THAT VAN WAS FILLED WITH ROACHES

WE GET A FENTHOUSE?

THURS...

LOOK WHO!

DISRUPTIVE DRINKS

SEE MY PHOTOS?

LOOK ITS RICHARD AND MARY

WHERE?

THE ONE WITH THE OPEN MOUTH

UNCLE EDDIE

OL' MARSHA SHEILA (THEY STILL LOOK ALIKE)

EVERYONE GOES TO BED, ITS 2:00

HEY, I'M AWAKE, I'M BORED, I WANT PARTYS FUN, WHATSA MATTER DO YOU ALL THINK THIS IS WASHINGTON?

SO, I WENT TO BE, BUT I FOUND ADDRESSES OF LIQUOR STORES AND GROCERIES - SO AS THE STORM CLOUDS TURN FROM GREY TO PALE PEARL

OK, LETS FIND PEOPLE, FOOD AND BOOZE

NOT QUITE WAFFLES LOOK VIOCE AND RO!

BREAKFAST? I HATE BREAKFAST STUFF, BLAH

WILL THEY?

WE GOT THE STUFF. SODA TUNA CHEESE CRACKERS

AND BOOZE (ILLEGAL ON MIAMI BEACH SO AND OTHERS)

EDDIE AND MARSHA BUY PENDANTS, JEWELRY AND STUFF, I BUY COMICS (UNCLE SCROOGES)

HARTER WAS DISAPPEARED - HAS HE GONE TO STOCK HIS PARTY ???

THE ART SHOW IS RUNNING (THEY GOT NERUG!)

ALL THE AND MORE AFTER

LATER

OK! ALL OUR HOUSEHANTS ARE HERE! THE PROPERTY

MOORE TICKETS MIKE A PEST DRINK DRINK DRINK THERE GO THE MINTS THE SEA OF RED HATS! BUT WHAT NOW....

THE MONSOON HITS HOW MANY LINDS WATCHING LEAKS THERE GO THE DIFATES AGAIN CLOSE UP OF STORM AND PINE TREE

DINNER - WAIT WAIT ROLL WAIT WAIT WATER WAIT WAIT

NOTE: COLLIN HAS NO BEARS



MINUTES LATER

LE LEGS

LES VINO

LE BLANC

LE BODY

EL WHATO DE COMOD C'KAYD C'KAYD

IT TAKES MORE THAN A QUART IN THE MOONSH- SEASONS

BUT THEN: ONE NIGHT OF!!!!

THEY DID IT AGAIN, BUT THE OL' ENTHUSIASM JUST ISNT THERE - EVEN WINE IS THE PITS IN FLA.

THIS IS THE PITS

THIS A PARTY?

WATCHING AMY BROWSTEN PLAY WITH A FOLDING MORNING BOARD IS THE PITS.... THE MOONSH- IS THE PITS... I WANNA SEE THE OLD DAYS...

EVEN SO!

HI SHEILA

HI MARSH

HI?

HI?

WHICH?

**NOW**  
RO, MARSHA  
AND SHEILA GO TO  
(UGH) POOL  
UNCAMIKIE AND EDDIE  
GO TO (UGH) UGH)  
ARTIST'S MEETING!

I DIDN'T  
BRING TOMATOES

BEAT BEAT

FROM THE BOOBY'S  
ROOM "BOY DO THEY  
LOOK ALIKE!"

IDENTICAL  
SUITS

ACTUAL  
NAME OF  
DINING  
PLACE

WELL! WE WENT SHOPPING  
WITH THE PEST AND  
BOUGHT THIS NEAT PEN  
AND STUFF BUT FIRST...

**THE ASFA MEETING**

WELL, THERE WAS LOTSA  
THE TREK IS ORGANIZED! WE SET OFF!

UNKNOWN FACES, CALLS TO ORDER!  
BLATHER BLATHER BLATHER BLATHER  
SADLY, ASFA HAS ONLY TWO WHEELS OUT OF FOUR!! P.S. SAW VINCE FOR 5 MIN

THE CAMERAS  
CLICK CLICK CLICK

PLANTS  
AINE ONLY 9 INCHES TALL AND YELLOW

THE ART STORE  
BUY BUY BUY

FOOD STORE  
BUY BUY BUY

THE LIQUOR STORE  
BUY BUY BUY

THE SHOP-RITE A STRANGE STORE  
BUY BUY BUY

SEE "GOUACHE HOUSEBOATS"

LIFESTYLE GOUACHE GREEK STATUE

BUT LOOK, ITS THE FEST.

HUUZZA

I AM HUNGRY

WHERE ARE WE GOING

LOOK MARY! PLANTS

HOT HOT

BUT I DIDNT ORDER THIS

FOOD STORE IS WIRED OUT BY HUNGRY FANS

REMEMBER THE QUESTIO DOES RICHARD ROW DOWN HIS SLEEVES

MORE TO COME

**MORE TO COME**







SATURDAY

MR. SUNCON SAYS:

SATURDAY IS DULL EXCEPT FOR: I SAW VINCE FOR 2 HOURS AND 56 MIN.

SEE

RO SUNDURNED

PANEL  
MIKIE  
VINCE  
RON  
HARRIS

BE ASTONISHED CHICKES GO TO THE BEACH! WE SEE VINCE GET HOSTILE!

SHIT! I HATE THIS... WHAT DO I LOOK LIKE, HASH?

HOSTILE VINCE

AUCTION

WENDY PINI \$500 \$980 WHAT!?

WELL, MR. SUNCON DIDNT GO BANQUET (ANDREAS) BUT ASK MARSH OR DICKY ABOUT THE WINE LIST (MY KINDA WINE LIST)

BUT, I WAS INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBILITIES...

11:30 LET MARSH VINCE RO

THIS BEGINS A TALE OF WOE AND AMAZING SIGHTS... YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE.

SEE

NO DICKIE?

LOST

INTO EXIT TUNNELS - NOTHING BUT - TUNNELS AND FANS & THEN BEGINS A TRIP TO DDIG AND WATSON ROOM (NOTE: THE GILLIAN WAS THROWING A PARTY NEXT DOOR)

VINCE DIFATE, STARING IN THE QUEST OF THE GOLDEN SIX-PACK

SEVIN ADMITTED TO FIRST FANDOM (I COULDN'T GET IN)

I WANNA DRINK TONIGHT

THE SCOTCH GOES!

MIKIE GOES TO GILLIAN'S SAYS HELLO, RETURNS WITH ICE AND ONE LIGHT BEER

SEE MIKIE AND MARSHA RETURN (MIKIE INTRODUCED BY DOLLY IT WAS EDDIE, HEAR VIN COMPLAIN WHEN TAKEN IN, INTRODUCED TO FAN AND TOLD TO TELL HIS ZINE - SEE VIN FLARE OUT)

ALL RIGHT MIKIE, LETS GET SOME STUFF FROM THE IRANS

VINCE SMOOGLES

MY GOD, ITS FULL OF OLD PEOPLE AND ONE CHILD

MY GOD, ITS ALL FULL OF FANS

HALLS AND HALLS

VINCE PASSING PARTY CONTINUES OFF WITH JOHN & COLLIN

MIKIE'S FIRST TIME IN THE COGN OR A NATURAL BODY OF H<sub>2</sub>O IN 8 YEARS (POOLING)

MONDAY

ITS SUNDAY SUCKERS

MR. SUNCON GOES TO THE BEACH WITH EDDIE, RO, BOUTHEY LOOK A LURE AND PEGGY THE POLITICAL

TO SUCH SIGHTS

SEE! LESLIE RIDDLE

"ARGHHH"

NOT BAD SAYS MR. V.K

EDDIE AND WET MIKIE RETURN TO PLAY

MACHINES AND

SOMETIME LATER

MIKIE DISCOVERS: ALL IS NOT WELL

OH OH, ALL IS NOT WELL

FAN BODY A COMPLAINT OF VARIOUS INTESTINAL PROBLEMS HIT

OH, OH, ITS TAKE THE DIFATES TO DINNER - THE PEST RETURNS AND

A 3 CAB TAXI PARTY OF THE PEST, MARY, 3 WOODS, 2 DIFATES, 2 JONES AND 2 OF US HEAR FOR THE "PUB" TO BAD!!!

ANY ABOVE CORFUSSION IS DUE TO AN ATTACK OF FAN BRAINS

WHY I BO-BOS SAYS MR. SUNCON HERES A RECAP

BUT LET ME MENTION FIRST: SATURDAYS PARTY AT DICKS (GOOD OLD DICKIE) DICKIE THREW ONE OF THE THREE BEST MIKIE PARTYS - SATURDAY DRUNK ON WITH WEEKEND AND THE FORT LAUDALE LANDROMAT THAT HAS BARS AND GO-60-DANCERS-





OUR HERO DIES!  
CAN EAT, ETC!  
MISSES FEAST  
WATCHES OTHERS:  
EAT THEIR FACES  
OFF!



AND DID THEY  
EVER

LOOKS BAD  
WAA  
TWO

WE ALL RETIRE TO  
VINS ROOM AND  
ABOUT 430 WE  
DIE

WE RETURN TO HOTEL  
AND SHOW VIN AND ROALL  
THE NEAT LOGHOUSE CATALOGS  
- WHO KNOWS - THEN OFF  
- TO THE DEAD DOG PARTYS -  
BE AWFULLY AWARE OF  
VINCE AND MIKIES HUG-O  
AWARDS AND PIT AWARDS  
TO BE SEEN IN THE FUTURE



SELA DICKIE  
GETS MAD  
AT OVER-  
CHARGE

MY GOD, ITS  
8000 ANNT  
ESTERS,  
HORN SANFORD

WHA?



MONDAY IS  
DEAD, HERE COMES  
TUESDAY AND THE  
BAPTISTS

NOW, WE TAKE 2 HOURS OF BUSES  
TO VISIT OUR OLD FRIENDS  
BOBBY AND MYRA IN FT. LAUTERDALE -  
FLORIDA IS FILLED WITH NASTY LITTLE  
WHITE BUILDINGS - NASTY - CANALS -  
- WE ARE ACOSTED BY A FLORIDIANINO  
WHO WANTS SOME CIGARETTES  
WE ROLL OURSELVES

WE SPEND A NICE  
DAY, I STILL HAVEN'T  
SEEN ONE CITRUS TREE -  
WE GO TO A SMALL ITALIAN  
RESTURANT AND ARE TREATED  
TO THE BEST MEAL IN THE  
PITS (AND THE BEST  
ITALIAN MEALS IN AGES)

MYRA'S FATHER  
TAKES US TO THE  
MIAMI PITS  
AIRPORT WHERE  
MR. SUNCON  
GETS US  
AGAIN!



GABBLE  
GABBLE  
GABBLE

CULTURE SHOCK

SEE, PACKED IN WITH A  
TONS OF SOUTH AMERICANS!  
THE WAITRESS FORGETS MY  
FREE SANDWICH, SKIRTING TROPICAL  
THUNDER STORMS, CRUMMY

1:15,  
DARK, THE LONG TERM  
PARKING LOT ....

SHIELA, WHY IS MY  
WINDOW OPEN, LOCK  
OPEN AND MY  
STEERING WHEEL  
ALL GREASY AND  
STICKY?

I DID SEE A CITRUS TREE  
- THEY SOLD 6" IN THE AIRPORT

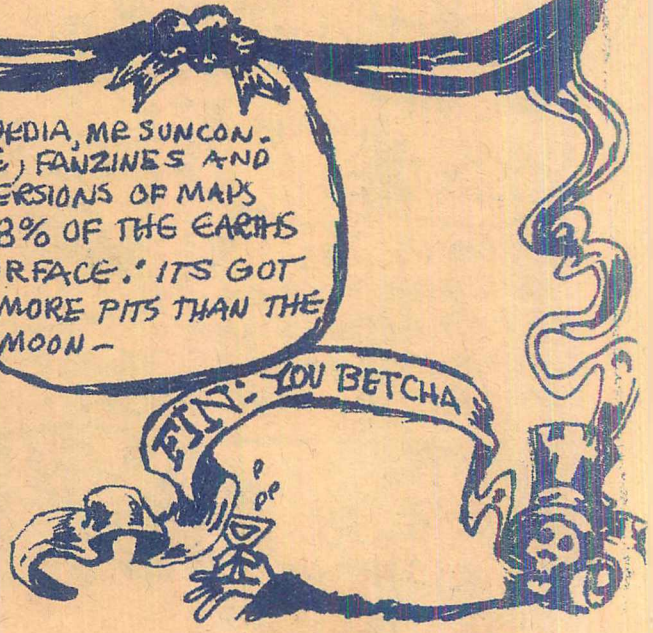
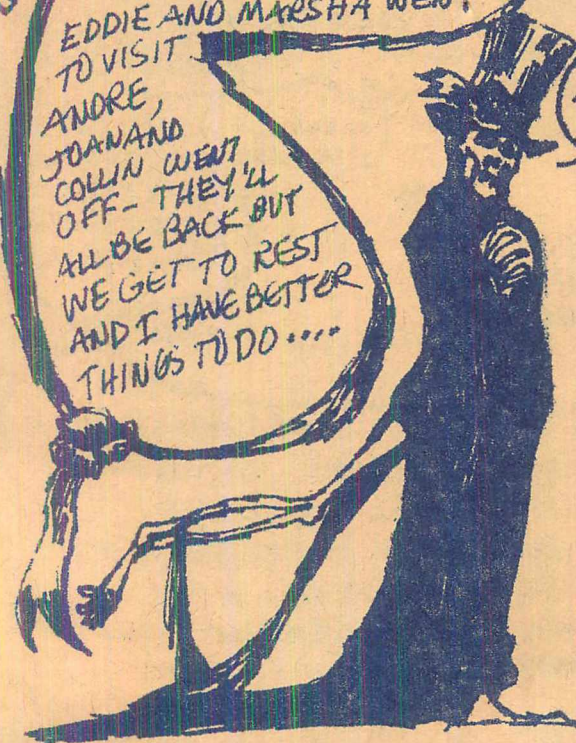
EDDIE AND MARSHA WENT  
TO VISIT  
ANDRE,  
JOAN AND  
COLLIN WENT  
OFF - THEY'LL  
ALL BE BACK BUT  
WE GET TO REST  
AND I HAVE BETTER  
THINGS TO DO ....

WHAT IS  
THAT MY SON  
?

YEP!  
SOMEONE  
TRIED TO  
STEAL THE  
'74 DATSUN B210  
BUT WAS FRUSTRATED BY  
OUR STEAL-PROOF BAR AND LOCKS - I'M  
BUYING SOME CHAINS THIS WEEK

I MAP OF FLORDIA, MR SUNCON.  
PLUS A BADGE, FANZINES AND  
DIGEST VERSIONS OF MAPS  
OF 38% OF THE EARTHS  
SURFACE. ITS GOT  
MORE PITS THAN THE  
MOON -

FIN: YOU BETCHA





John Hertz  
820 S. Burlington Ave.  
Los Angeles CA 90057  
10 August 1977

Oh, Harter. I like your fanzine.

Among other things, you raise first-drafting-on-stencil as close to a form of art as it is likely to get. I agree with you that, while first-drafted writing (now there's a wonderful example of How Slang Forms Abominable Nomenclature: it's so natural, when talking about first-drafted-on-stencil writing, to abbreviate by saying first-drafted writing; yet, in fact, that is the opposite of what one means on the face of it, as one is talking about not-first-drafted writing) is likely to suffer in clarity and non-redundance, it offers a certain perambulatory pleasure to the mind, and seems in many ways to be an appropriate medium for fannishness. I have sometimes thought fans' patron saint should be Johnson, who among other virtues, first-drafted almost everything he ever wrote - what he wrote having been some of the most forceful prose in the history of English and that largely commentary - forming this practice not out of method but from an almost pathological sloth. (Johnson was adored by the discerning of his day, and valued as much for his conversation as for his writing, despite his commonly uncouth dress and strange mannerisms. You see? He's wonderful.)

... On the other hand, first drafts tend to have convoluted sentences that are ... a bit hard to follow. The phrase, "first-drafted-writing" (meaning a first draft), is a good illustration of the way in which such infelicitous phrasings arise. We begin with a rather simple phrase which is concise and clear cut. ... The noun phrase then becomes a verb phrase; a natural transition in English ... which systematically allows one to relate action and acting. From this the ... phrase, "first-drafted-on-stencil", is a natural and legitimate extension. ... The trouble with clumping words together to form such phrases is that pseudo- ... words are formed which are not readily disassembled and which may contain ... unwanted parts. Thus, "first-drafted-on-stencil writing", seems to be a suspiciously roundabout phrasing. I must confess that a really good alternative ... does not spring to mind, although I rather suspect that it is an expression ... that one never needs in practice. In any case, having once formed the phrase, ... even if it is never used but is merely a potential phrase, it is not readily ... disassembled, as you note. Indeed, one is led to "first-drafted writing" when ... one merely means a first draft.

... Speaking of the English language and John W. Campbell (which we weren't but ... are) there was an editorial by JWC Jr on English in which he was ascribing ... the superiority of English to its superior subtlety. In the course of doing ... so he naturally took some swipes at the English professors (Jun 1963: Analog.) ... One of his examples was that there are two forms of the present tense, e.g. ... 'I know' and 'I am washing'. He describes the difference as being that verbs ... which take the "I am ..." form are verbs of action whereas verbs which take ... the "I ..." form are verbs of subjective action. Grammarians, being the victims of their antique prejudices and preoccupation with false analogies with ... Latin, naturally have completely misunderstood the matter. Recently I happened to be glancing at my college freshman composition book and looked ... up this very matter. It didn't have much to say on the issue, but what it ... did have to say persuaded me that neither Campbell nor the textbook were ... reliable. Campbell's formulation does not account for the difference between ... "I am working on my term paper", and "I work on my term paper every morning" ... whereas the textbook does not satisfactorily account for the differences ... Campbell points out.

On the subject of whether SF is (mostly) trash. I rather agree with you; though I read lots of SF, I don't think much of it, mostly, as literature. I wish you had mentioned an important corollary to P. Schuyler Miller's formula - I forget who is famous for saying this: because SF deals with complicated situations, or more exactly because it deal almost by definition with unfamiliar situations, it's very difficult to write. The writer of SF must take on all your criteria of literature and, in addition, the handicap that people are not already familiar with what he is talking about. Even the writer of a foreign-culture story, like say, Chaim Potok's novels of Orthodox-Jewish America (THE CHOSEN, THE PROMISE) or James Clavell's SHOGUN, can draw on the reader's feeling that he has heard of the subject vaguely; if not that, at least he can do research on a culture that did exist, that must have been coherent at least for a while; that has its strengths and weaknesses available as a matter of historical record or of interview. An SF writer has none of this. He has to make it all up. The problem will not serve as an excuse for bad writing, but it is a factor in the existence of so much bad writing. Creativity is hard. Many of us, when asked to define Creativity, would say it's a matter of mixing already existing things into new combination. An SF writer isn't supposed to do that. If he even tries to exercise his sense of historical parallel, like Asimov in the Foundation series, Niven & Pournelle in THE MOTE IN GOD'S EYE, or Lucas in STAR WARS, he gets whipped for it. In these particular cases, it was obvious to any fool that the authors were using parallel deliberately, revelling in it, yet SF critics attacked the Foundation trilogy for looking too much like imperial Rome, MOTE for looking too much like nineteenth century England, and STAR WARS for looking too much like Westerns and World War II movies. We have the image of full creativity poignantly in FORBIDDEN PLANET. Remember all those thought-up animals, sheep and goats on the outside, but full of vague "stuff" on the inside. Who'd be God?

... Who, indeed? Actually, most SF these days deals, in part, with situations and concepts that are quite familiar to the audience. Science Fiction writers are not writing in a vacuum. The writer may assume and usually does assume that his readers will accept a whole host of concepts and situation without detailed explanation. Most SF is simply fiction set in a particular variant of one of several standard futures which have been established by a de facto consensus.

... Your comments about the criticism of ASIMOV et al and the use of parallels is well taken. One of the problems with SF criticism is that there are a number of criteria which are used in judging it; criteria which are widely divergent. It is as though one man were judging a construction as to how well built a house the construction were, and a second man were judging it on the basis of how good a road it were. It would be a peculiar construction indeed that would satisfy both. Even if neither were happy with the thing it might still turn out to be a very good canoe.

=====

"Since the first thing man will do for his ideal or interest is to lie, we shall expect, and as a matter of fact we find, that effective information is almost always adulterated or selective."

... Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy*



Paula Lieberman  
2840 Monica Dr. W  
Colorado Springs, CO 80916

*... The following material has been subject to a certain amount of editing - RH*

.....

Ah, it's not that "men are more interesting and more on the same wavelength .... and more 'into' the same interests." it's merely that nearly all women get brainwashed into thinking Cleaning the Kitchen (mine is always a mess, of course), Diapering Babies (ugh), Washing the Floor, Ring around the TV Set Collar (commercials make the Three Stooges seem intelligent, worldly, and reasonable) ad nauseum. Or the barmaid looking at me and saying "that's men's talk, women aren't supposed to know anything about airplanes."

.....

Cigarette ashes do have some useful purposes: they are good to use in wiping grease pencil off slides and such (the big overhead viewer types of slides), and other plastic film or plastic film-coated objects. Up where I work we often have to stop the janitors from emptying the ashtrays because we have a Tracking and Impact Prediction to graph and have to first remove the ground trace on the slide or screen.

Georgia (Soviet Georgia, that is), the Ukraine, Kazakistan, Uzbekhistan, etc are considered separate countries as part of the Soviet Union - I believe the USSR has 12 votes in the United Nations on that basis. Therefore someone from the Ukraine is a Ukrainian, etc...

*... I am under the impression that the USSR has three votes in the UN - Russia, ... the Ukraine, and Byelessorian S.S.R. Are you sure that your count does not ... include the Eastern European satellites? (For those who came in late we are ... discussing the propriety of calling someone from Cornwall an Englishman.)*

Crafts, by definition, rely on such personalized, individualized, work and attention. At one time, formerly, in times past, labor was much cheaper than material. These days the labor is much more expensive; plumbers and electricians are examples. Correction; that is, in the United States. There are lots of countries where this is not the case. However I am speaking of the crafts and trades in the United States, not Korea or Vietnam or Indonesia nor Ascension Island.

Back in the early part of this century labor was still cheap in the US, before the labor unions got really going and alleviated the worst of the sweat shops. WW I and WW II played their part, creating the technological changes which made materials production much less costly - one didn't have to do all sorts of things by hand anymore; instead, standardized, interchangeable, machine items appeared. Henry Ford's methods made the individually crafted item tend towards becoming a rarity - it no longer took a highly trained and skilled craftsman to turn out items.

Consider furniture. Most modern furniture is banged out by machine lathes and stapled together and machine sanded and machine sprayed (painted or finished with spray shellac or varnish or some such.) Back in the 'good old days' it all had to be handmade - handcarved, hand nailed, hand sanded, hand finished. This

process is very long and very time consuming if you want a good product. It was skimped on for cheap stuff, of course, but most for-sale furniture was not for mass-market. People really did live in one room cabins, and inside those there is not a whole lot of room for furnishings. For seats a bench or two would suffice, a table could be made from smoothed out rough hewn logs... and this was less than a century ago that people lived like that in the US. The antiques you see selling for tens of thousands of dollars were not cheap throw-away furniture. Those pieces cost the original purchasers considerable sums. The cheap stuff lasted long enough for the original owners to wear it out. Not being sturdily made and lovingly finished to withstand lots of use and appear worth spending the effort to repair, it got thrown out along with the bathwater.

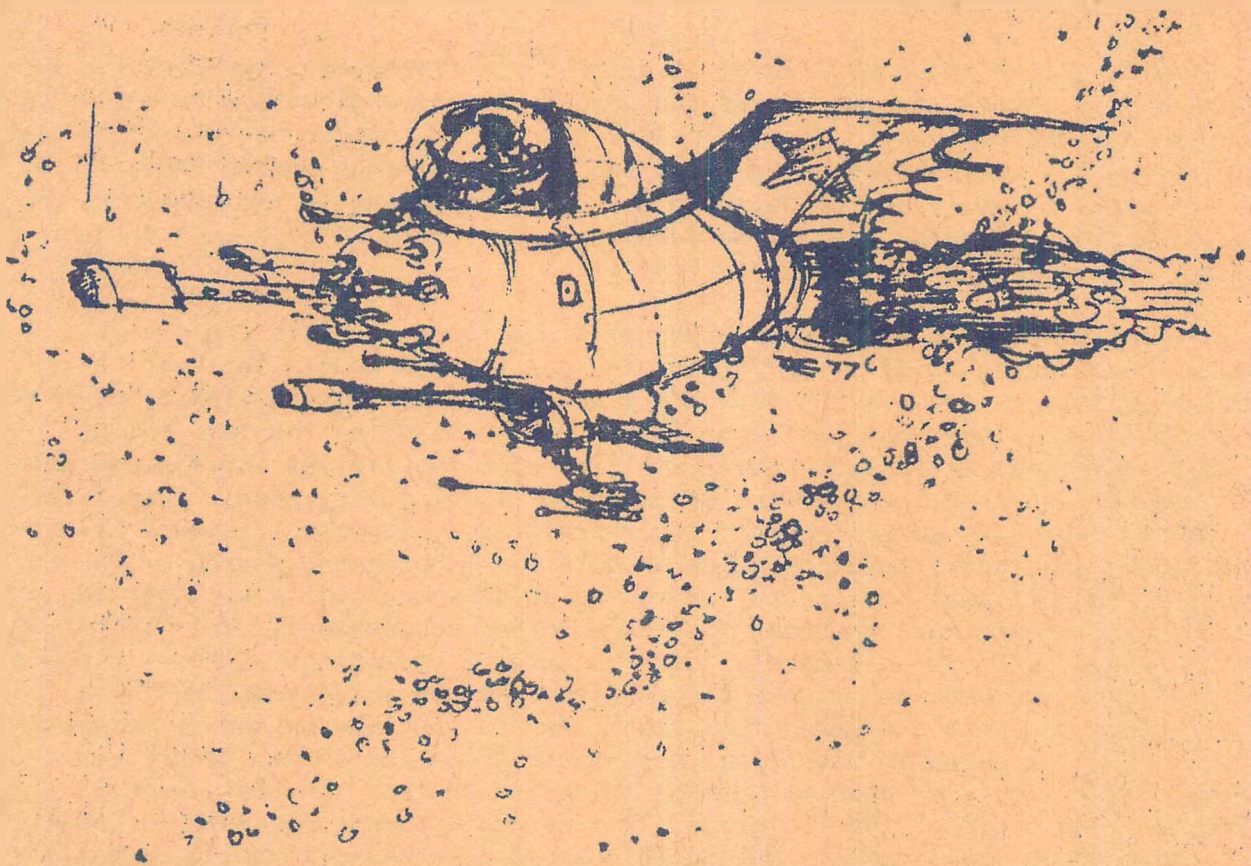
When machine-made furniture first appeared, it really wasn't too good stuff - the technology was new, it was designed for a lower cost market than finely crafted furniture, but it drove out the cheap handmade stuff on the market, since the factory shops using machines had higher productivity. How would you like to try competing with an automatic lathe? And, of course, the quality of the machine made goods went up.

*... You make a very good point about the original expensiveness of antique furniture. (I have seen staggering figures for the original cost of French period pieces.) It is easy to forget how much cost structures have varied. A ten dollar chair to a professor earning two thousand dollars a year would not be a major expense - it would be to a servant earning twentyfive dollars a year plus room and board - not that the servant would need to purchase a chair. In a sense the value of hand labor remains constant over time - if an item took two days labor to make it must be paid for by two days labor.*

Most of the old generation craftsmen tend to be in their late sixties or older. There are some in their forties or fifties, but they had crafts as avocations until retiring from whatever had been their primary job. Indeed, some of them used to work in the factories using machines to make what they now do by hand or repair (furniture repair, glass painting to replace the lost or broken originals on banjo clocks, watch making and repair of intricate old mechanical movements are arts in themselves).

Since about the mid or late sixties, though, there have been an increasing number of people who never worked in the factories but have started out careers directly in the crafts. It's actually part of an evolutionary trend: the old-timers grew up before the machine-manufactured goods era really got started. They were trained by the traditional craftworkers to have pride in their creations and finely work everything they made. With the advent of utilizable goods made by machine, they couldn't get apprentices. The factories paid as good or usually better wages for less intensive work, and one didn't have to go through a long period of learning lots of fine points which make all the difference in hand done things (like the difference between Joe Neo's first self printed dittozine and the four colored mimeo covers with fancy lettering that some famous fanzines have had.) The inexpensive goods also cut down the market for the custom crafted things. The average guy in the streets no longer had to spend lots of moeny for good items, since they were now being mass produced. Sure, they weren't as good as the handcrafted items, but with wages rising and people having a wider range of items available at lower cost, who needed to spend so much on a couple of fine items when you could get a dozen items of lower but still very acceptable quality. Would you rather have one cut glass bowl or a whole set of pressed glass glasses and dessert bowls and a couple of punchbowls and a set of stoneware dishes (and at today's prices, some cheap silverware too)?





Thus things went in the 1930's, 40's, and 50's. Oh, sure, there were always wealthy types who ordered entire housefuls of custom made furniture and paintings and fancy plastering on the ceiling and walls and gold shower fixtures, etc, but for the budding young enterprising might-have-been-craftsman the return on his (her) time and effort would have been very small. The craftsmanship required for the stuff that was handmade that was sold was not of the class that one can learn in a year or five, even. And to get business one had to have a reputation already, which takes more years to build up.

Meanwhile, going to college was becoming the in thing - go to college and get a better job, earn more money... and you can always have hobbies in your spare time. Or, if someone didn't go to college, they could still make more money or at least have a much stabler income by working in American industry and help produce goods that most of the population could enjoy and afford.

There was an SF story which dealt with the effect of a working matter duplicator on the economy. In effect that was more or less what the mass-production industries accomplished through the middle of this century. Having something unique became unusual rather than normal. 'Keeping up with the Joneses' to a certain extent implied that much had to be standardized - how can you 'keep up' by acquiring non-marketed possessions? Meanwhile the handcrafter can only produce so many items per day, and they will never be all alike. A sudden fad for some item will drain his capacity to supply, while a factory can churn out hundreds of thousands of some items without straining its capacity. In fact, for furniture to be successful from a factory, the production line must be in the thousands or tens of thousands. But the first one is just like the last one, barring such differences as wood-grain. For most people, the difference between

paying under a hundred dollars and over a thousand for machine vs handcrafted furniture just isn't worth it, or wasn't fifteen years ago.

Something else to be considered is glamour. Fifteen years ago Doctors and Lawyers and educators and executives and scientists and engineers were the in things to be; craftsmen were old fogies who'd grown up before Modern America and were missing the boat of mass-production and Progress in the Machine Age. There were all sorts of exciting things to do and be, and sitting in the backwoods of Maine or Kentucky carving designs on furniture that could be done much cheaper by a machine in your plant wasn't part of it.

Obviously things have changed somewhat since then. Artists and crafts communes have sprung up all over the country and lots of people in their early twenties go to arts schools and then start businesses as silversmiths or harpsichord makers.... There are also some former engineers doing the same things. The impetus for the latter came about at the end of the sixties and the beginning of the seventies, when the American Dream began turning very sour. Executives got ulcers, engineers got fired from their profitable, supposedly secure, prestigious jobs, and their fields dried up as both livelihoods and source of income. Meanwhile the Affluent society spread to the point where people were getting bored with all their mass produced one-like-another possessions. The "little houses all the same" weren't merely just the external trappings. The refrigerators and cars and beds and linens and candlesticks and jewelry and clothing and paintings were all the same, too, right down to the show on the TV sets. And wages had increased to the point where the average guy on the street could indulge himself for some unique handmade things he wanted. In fact, with the rising overhead costs of the factories, it once again became possible for craftsmen to go back to individually making things and come close to being competitive with retail stores, due to the lack of middlemen and fancy offices and elaborate showrooms.

There has been and is continuing now a revolt against the mediocrity of many goods on the market now. Solid, good looking, lasting furniture is not what most furniture stores or sections of stores sell anymore. You can buy the same ring in any Sears or Wards or discount store in the country, or get the same 10 kt washed bracelet. On the other hand, for \$13, there are places where you can get a handmade silver ring that you know there will not be another just like, and you can talk to the silversmiths who made it.

Goals of people have been changing, too. So what if you won't make \$100,000 per year. You won't get ulcers from having to say and do things you don't want to, and if a craftsman enjoys what one does and gets paid enough to be comfortable otherwise, then why run the ratrace treadmill? As for the financial part, remember that bowl mentioned earlier? Well, under current conditions, that cut glass bowl doesn't mean not having any other glass or china items. It merely means that instead of having two sets of glasses and dishes or three, you only have one or two, or you buy Corelle for one of the sets. The machine age isn't being rejected and unless one is very rich and likes to break beautiful things, there is no necessity or even reason to have all possessions be fine art, one of a kind items. The cat is going to scratch at least one of your chairs and kids wreck furniture and break dishes. If the Corelle gets dropped and breaks Corning will replace it, unlike a Sevres dish, and if the cat jumps up and claws your curtains to bits, you'll feel lots better if they aren't made of some \$30 per yard fabric. It's only recently though that the synthesis has been allowed to occur, but it's happening. Plastics make good artistic mediums as well as "natural" substances. Imitation isn't always the sincerest form of flattery; it's much more flattering for materials to be used imaginatively and appropriately than in



cheap slavish imitations. Right now, the latter approach is coming into fashion, along with all of the resurrection of the old crafts. New ones are coming, also, based on technologies which are now only in exciting infancy. Rather than play the mass production game these technologies will increase creativity and individuality while allowing mass production-like cost.

... I should, by the by, mention that the bulk of Paula's letter was unedited, except for the removal of certain typos and the insertion of others. (I count it as profit if I break even on typos.)

... You make a number of interesting points. There is not really much that I would disagree with. The essential difference between the old craftsmen and the new craftsmen is that the old craftsmen were making necessities; the new craftsmen are making luxuries. (Glib, there Harter, very glib.) That is overstating the case, of course, because luxuries are almost always hand-crafted and always were. However it is true that almost no necessities are made today by craftsmen, with the debatable exception of the housing industry. The new generation of craftsmen are all making luxury goods, even if they purport to be necessities.

=====

George Flynn  
46 Highland Ave.  
Somerville MA 02143  
August 29, 1977

Dear Harter

I am trying to catch up on my loccing before the Worldcon, and thus I have finally gotten around to PN #8 (a mere 363 days after my loc on #7, I see.) As I believe I told you when you handed it to me, this issue is certainly off the wall. I note with concern your threat on page 1 not to do a table of contents (even though you eventually did so); remember, we have ways to make you ToC.

... Arrrrgh! Actually, the cover never was on the wall....

Regarding whether planets have in fact been detected around other stars, there was a recent review in Vistas in Astronomy of the evidence on Barnard's Star. The concluding section had as epigraph a couple of bars of "I'm Bidin' My Time" (not to mention an allusion to John xx, 29.) In short, it's too early to say; there are some cycles in the data apparently indicating the presence of one or more planets, but it's all just at the edge of measurability.

... Ahem. Expressions like "not to mention an allusion" must be one of those things that people who are serious minded about English preach against. Fortunately you are in low company - let he who is without typos cast the first stone.



Page 16: "PN is usually riddled with typos. I also littered infelicitous phrasing..." Can't argue with that.

... Oh come on, George. Try.

Responding to Stan Burns: I don't have full details of the history of the Hugo rules at hand, but I believe the no-prior-publication rule has been there since the rules were first codified, and that there've never been any special provisions for British publications (as opposed to non-English language ones - and there was strong opposition to even that, as diluting the concept of a world convention.) Be that as it may, certainly the rules weren't the reason Pavane didn't get nominated: it's a rather specialized taste.

Having spent half the summer writing letters, manifestos, and motions on the question of What Is a Fanzine, I don't really feel up to doing another treatment here. Besides, anything I might say would likely be out of date a week from now. I completely agree with you, of course.

... What do you mean, you agree. Am I to ... be deprived of any controversy what-soever? Here I go saying provocative ... things and everybody yawns. Shucks.

Re Victoria's remarks on the survival of fnzines; I have never thrown one away. (Sometime I must calculate the volume occupied as a result.)

... I won't say that I've never thrown a fanzine away (What do you do with your ... crudzines? Make paper-mache death masks.) but sooner or later most collections ... pass out of the hands of the faithful and into the hands of the unbelievers. ... And there does begin to be a limit to how much paper one wants to maintain.  
(The above four lines represent editorial comment with an unchanged type ball.)

I agree with Mike Glicksohn that cigarettes are evil-smelling and filthy. Of course, I feel the same way about beer... - I have already written to Mike that, rather than my writing better locs now, I think I somehow write better locs to you than to him. Why do you suppose this might be? (Geographical proximity???) I think your estimate of the number of fanzine fans is probably high by about a factor of two, considering the extent to which we take in each other's washing. But given freedom in defining "fanzine", "active", and "current", one could probably come up with any number within a factor of ten.

Petra is in Jordan, not Syria. Alas, it turns out the phrase "half as old as time" is itself second-hand, having appeared in an earlier poem on another subject. Have you gotten any letters asking who Mr. Tomlinson is? (Of course, Kipling wasn't altogether consistent on the value of copybook wisdom: cf. "The Gods of the Copybook Headings".)



... For those who didn't recognize the allusion, Mr. Tomlinson is the protagonist  
... of a poem by Kipling. He dies and is rejected by both heaven and hell because  
... he has no sins or graces of his own, all of his life, deeds, and thoughts being  
... second hand and vicarious. The devil, who is somewhat puzzled as to what to  
... do with him, decides that trying to get into Hell under false pretenses is enough  
... to warrant sending Tomlinson back to Earth to make something of himself.

... I'm afraid I don't see the basis for your ascription of inconsistency to Kipling.  
... To say that the platitudes of the copybooks are true in the long run (and they  
... mostly are) is not an endorsement of vicarious living. The problem with Mr.  
... Tomlinson was not that he was conventional but simply that he had never really  
... done anything.

In your continuing campaign to typo my letters, I see that this time you  
rendered "a better what" as "a better what". \*Sigh\* - Aspersions on the "creeping  
tide of giganticism" are perhaps out of place in a 74-page zine.

Mike Saler appears to be in a time loop. I suspected as much.....

... Do I detect in your remarks a tone of angry inquiry, a tone of, shall we say,  
... "a bitter what"?

=====

Peter Mabey  
226 Nicholls Tower  
Harlow  
Essex CM18 6EF  
10.3.77

Dear Richard,

Having just typed the date up there, it occurred to me that it probably looks  
a bit unexpected to you (unless of course it takes a couple of months to reach you)  
(...to say nothing of the six to nine months it takes to get it printed...) -  
sometimes I remember about the strange American custom of putting the least signi-  
ficant digits in the middle; how much more rational to put them on the left....?  
Oh well, let's try again: 77222.

BUT - this is in acknowledgment of PN 8 - you seem to be getting them out  
almost faster than I can get round to writing to you about them; though admittedly  
I did write to thank you for 7 a few weeks ago. However, as I sent it by surface  
mail - enclosing a lot miscellaneous clippings from Computer Weekly, Computing  
Europe etc. - and to the Chauncy St. address, as at that time I'd not heard about  
your move - it may not have got to you yet (or even at all). ... the syntax of that  
leaves much to be desired, but it's too late to fix it now ...

... It did arrive and was greatly appreciated. Much of it was quite interesting.  
... Many thanks.

As I've remarked to you, I'm terribly bad at writing a coherent LOC, so as usual, I'll just comment on a few bits here & there -

1) copy right - does it have to be on p.1? A quick look at a few books, magazines and newspapers, shows it to be anywhere that the information on the publisher is given, from the front to the back. Incidentally, our pre-printed forms for computer documentation has the (c) and our name & address printed vertically, close up by the sprocket holes, so there's no way to get the date anywhere like the right place - I wonder if this invalidates our rights?

*... As I understand it - and I don't - the copyright goes on the title page or ... the page after. Articles and things individually copyrighted on the first page.*

2) Where are they? - there does seem to be a fourth group: the "saucerers" who say that people are talking and to us - it's just that the establishment doesn't accept (or suppresses) the facts. It might be interesting to try to develop some non-cranky theory on this theme. the problem being why the alien behaviour is so incredible - deliberately, to prevent culture shock?

*... Interesting thought. Do you suppose that the space program is really a plot ... by the aliens?*

3) Microcosm (p.36) - in fact a microcosm is a minature representation of the Universe, and used particularly to be applied to man: as this Universe is only a subset of the field of SF, there is certainly something oxymoronic about the term 'SF microcosm'.

4) England - or the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ... no, this is much too political and complicated to go into now ... but did you know that (IRELAND+IRA)/2 = STRIFE? - usual alphametic conditions - the Journal of Recreational Math. have accepted it, but not published it yet: they don't seem to claim exclusive rights & all I get for it is a free issue & some egoboo, so you may use it as a filler if you like.

5) double knock (p.68) - just two knocks in quick succession, often referred to as 'rat-rat'; the usual signal of the postman when a reply is needed (wasn't there a story "The Postman Always Knocks Twice?").

*... Probably best that I stay off the topic of ah, French off shore islands.*

=====

Stanford Burns  
PO Box 1381  
Glendale CA 91209  
June 11, 1977

Dear Richard;

My Ghod. Every issue of personal notes (PERSONAL NOTES...soory) seems to be better than the last. And I find myself agreeing wiht several of your other readers I too like PN better than SFR. (I think Geis has the Great International Rockefeller Conspiracy on the brain....). And I think the title hits the reason right on the head - Personal. SFR read cold and distant but PN makes me feel right at home,



and makes me feel like you are an old and treasured friend. Keep up the excellent work.....

I found your essay on intelligent life in the universe stimulating. I think that there are likely thousands of intelligent civilizations in our galaxy, but consider the distances involved. The odds that one of them is within a radius of 50 light years of Earth is very slim. Assuming that interstellar travel beyond the speed of light is impossible, it is likely that communication (by radio, laser, etc.) would not be attempted on a serious level if you had to wait 100 or 200 years for an answer. The only civilization here on Earth that has been stable enough to attempt it would have been the Roman Empire. Toward the galactic center, where the stars are closer together and also older (thus possibly giving birth to intelligent life sooner), such long-time communication might be possible, and might even be going on. I believe that our view (visible light and other spectra) of the galactic center is obscured by some sort of cloud.

... Actually the Roman Empire is far from being 'the only civilization stable enough'. If, by Roman Empire you mean the Western Empire only, then the Empire ... only lasted about 500 years. If you are considering the Eastern Empire as well ... (reasonable in view of the continuity of government) then you have a respectable ... length of time. Still, 1500 years is not anything like a record of continuity. ... The Catholic Church has maintained organizational continuity for 1800-1900 years. ... The Chinese and the ancient Egyptians maintained continuity of administration ... for several thousand years.

... Your point, however is well taken. If it takes hundreds of years for transmission and reception, would anybody make the attempt? My off hand answer is ... that the answer is probably yes. Most institutional planning and activity is ... either short range or else is timeless. However institutions can engage in ... long term planning and long term projects. What is required is that the project ... be clearly established as part of the long term interests of an institution (to ... be sure a long lived institution.) Once communication was established I ... believe it would be continued.

... Incidentally, I would expect almost all communication to be targeted, i.e. the transmission would be by aimed narrow beams - perhaps by laser beams. A beacon ... that transmits in all directions with enough power to be received at interstellar ... distances requires a great deal of power - on the order of stellar output in ... fact. Tight beam transmission cuts the energy required to megawatts.

SF may be trash, but I still enjoy reading it. I mean, most people think comics are trash, but I still enjoy reading Dunesberry, Wizzard of Id BC, and especially Howard the Duck....

Personally, I don't think that the hassle about fanzine Hugos is quite fair. Both ALGOL and SFR started out as small mimeoed, etc zines and built up to their present professional level after years of effort on their editor's part. If some people are so worried that the 'pro' zines are killing the competition, why not divide the fanzine Hugo into more categories? After all, there are four categories for stories, so why not have, say, Best Zine with A circulation of over 1000, best zine 500-1000, best zine under 500, and awards for best personal zine, best layout, etc? Then you could expand that to include 'best continuing gripe in a fanzine over a two year period by a total fugghead after an atomic holocaust' etc.

... Hmmm, you may have a good thing going here. How about abolishing the present ... categories entirely and getting a whole new set. For example, we could give a

... Hugo for the most frequent renunciations of the SF field. (like all Hugo competitions, Bob Silverberg will come in second.) Or how about one for slowness in paying authors? Would that be the ultimate Hugo?

How about courses in 'costume design, committee bickering, panel infighting, filk singing, art, anti-art, synth-art, how to pick up a single girl at a convention, and what to do with her when you get her, & its opposite, how to pick up a single guy, skinnydipping I and II, John Norman's Gor novels, Fact or Fiction, Eyeglasses I & II, and When Not to Use the Line: I Didn't Recognize You With Your Clothes ON.

Have you heard the one about the Fan Wolf? Chewed off three of his legs, and was still caught in the trap.....

=====

Dr. A. D. Wallace  
2119 NW 21 Street  
Gainesville FL32605

Dear Harter.

.....

You reject 1984 as a representative of Science Fiction because it was not written as Science Fiction, nor by a Science Fiction author, and owes nothing to the Science Fiction field. You must then reject Frankenstein for precisely the same reasons. Perhaps you do, or you don't. In any event you are faced with a tautology: Science Fiction writers are those who write Science Fiction and Science Fiction is that which is written by Science Fiction writers. Quite rapidly one gets nowhere real soon.

Let me turn to your excellent (but incomplete) criteria for Great Literature: It should (1) be well written, (2) be on several levels, (3) should contain elements of fascination, (4) involve universals of human experience, and (5) be psychologically true. To these I must add (6) tells a good story. If you do not accept (6) then I must say that you avoid the whole point and purpose of a novel. As to (1), what was well written circa 1800 need not be well written as of today.

I find myself in a difficult quandry of some depth because of the existence of fantasy. I should like to demand causation, causality, causa sine qua non, or whatever. For each effect there should be a cause. I do not like machine-made gods, because such are literary cheater. Your (5) is a part of what I want, but does not cover enough. To demand logic (in its usual sense) is to deny fantasy, but to demand "logic" in the sense of the music theorist

is suitable. I quite enjoy Le Guin's Wizard sequence, which is all fantasy, and respect it as excellent story-telling. But the whywithall is missing.



... Actually, there is nothing wrong with the definition of Science Fiction that you give - merely that it is incomplete. Much of the difficulty that occurs in attempts to define Science fiction comes about because people try to make contextless definitions. For example, suppose that we might say something like a science fiction story is one in which a story could not exist if it were not for the scientific element. The nice thing about a definition like that is that one can apply it as a simple test, without considering such details as when and where it was published or whom it was by. In short, the contents of the story alone are sufficient to determine whether it is SF or not.

... There are two traditional forms of definition - the form in which a property is cited (An 'A' is anything which has the property x) and the form in which all the things satisfying the definition are listed ((An 'A' is a B, C, or D.) (Technically, the latter definition reduces to the former.) There is nothing wrong with these definition schemes, in principle.

... In practice, however, they are not always adequate; in asking for a definition there is an implicit requirement that it be short. It simply is not possible to give an adequate, self contained definition of Science Fiction - or many other things. The problem is that an adequate definition must include context and historical information.

... There is, and has been for the last fifty years, a well marked out genre called Science Fiction. There is a well defined market place, consisting of magazines, and book lines. During those fifty years the field has continually evolved - once novel themes are now worn out; standard conventions are automatically used, etc. Science Fiction is not just a particular category of literature; it is a product sold in a specialized marketplace; more than that written for that market place by writers who regularly write for that marketplace.

... You may, if you wish, classify Frankenstein as a precursor to Science Fiction, bearing the same relation to the SF genre as the primeval apes did to us. You may, if you wish, call it plain old Science Fiction, if you choose (it's a free country, after all.) However, there are rather substantial differences in content, style, the assumptions made about the reader's understanding, etc, between it and, say, the typical novel offered by the SF book club.

=====

Dorothy Lilly  
880 Pine Tree Lane  
Aptos CA 95003  
June 10, 1977

Dear Richard,

Your beautifully assembled publication offers me an outlet which I cannot pass up. Nanci may have written you that I recently took the longest trip in my life and toured by plane, bus, motorcar, Landrover, boat, elephant back and afoot much of India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. I took a great many pictures, some of birds and mammals and people, some of everything else I saw. It was high tension travel but somehow I lived through it. This morning I had an idea and assembled it to send you so that if you find a vacant space in your next publication and it seems as appropriate to you then as it does to me now, you might include it.

..... The only vacant thing around is Y'eds head but see over .....

# BUFFALO CHIPS

If the United States is able at all to raise grain to sell or give to other nations to be used for food I think it would be making a great mistake to do so. If the world is becoming overpopulated, this would only help make it more so.

What we should be doing instead is to set aside large portions of our grain growing land to be used as pasture for buffalo (American Bison) which were able to thrive so well until they were foolishly killed off by early white hunters and settlers. It will take time to get them back in numbers and we should have started sooner. Now, all we can do is to look to the future.

We do not need the meat or hides of buffalo so much as we do their dung. First it must be left to help fertilize the soil which has often been depleted of such nutriments as are needed for the growth of grass. Artificial fertilizers would also be needed for a while. When the grass has been left for a few years with only buffalo grazing on it it should need no more attention than it had before white men came. At that time it is estimated that sixty million buffalo roamed over the middlewest and eastern part of the United States.

After they have reached their greatest density in these National Pasture Preserves our people can begin to collect a percentage of their dung to be used as fuel. That would solve some of our energy problem. I have seen how the people of India do their cooking on dung fires quite successfully, although they do find it necessary to regulate its use so that enough is left for fertilizer. The odor of dung fires is not objectionable. It is about like burning grass. The smoke is not harmful as the exhaust from cars is. In our middle west it would simply go up and form a necessary component in the formation of raindrops. Any meteorologist will tell you that.

I think there would be no difficulty in finding a plentiful supply of strong and intelligent young men to protect these buffalo from poachers. People being basically no different now than they were in the 1850's, such protection would surely be necessary.

In tying this off, I have one more angle which I think worthy of discussion. Many of the Indians of our country have been active in trying to get the United States government to give them back all of the land on which they roamed before the white men came and took control of it. I think they forget that the buffalo were here before they were. If they had it, would they give it back to the buffalo?

----- Dorothy Lilly



# METCHEN

## III

For the last two years running, Mary and I have made a trip down to the wilds of New Jersey and visited Mike and Sheila. There we lay about, admire Mikie's ability with a wok, and visit such exciting New Jersey attractions such as the local flea market. (So called, not because they sell fleas, but because you might get them from the proprietors.) Mikie captures these little slices of life in brilliant cartoons. Last year's trip follows on the next two pages.

In last years visit we took Mary to the Cloisters, which is a castle at one end of Manhattan Island. This castle is rather large and includes cloisters (whence the name) and a roof garden. It was built by some millionaire back in the days when millionaires did such things. Nowadays it is open to the public as a museum and place to visit. They play Gregorian chants - there is a choral group which sings them there. It is a neat place, very peaceful, very medieval, and filled with all sorts of interesting old rubbish.

Other highlights of the trip included a visit to a New Jersey park, where there was a rather peculiar piece of statuary which was sort of a cross between socialist realism and dadaism. This magnificent work of art was created during the depression as a WPA project to beautify New Jersey. (You may construct your own little homily on the difference between public and private patronage of the arts at this point.)

We were duly impressed by Mikie's garden. There was an incredible profusion of plantlife, including enough tomatoes to feed the Italian army. In fact the entrance to the apartment was barred by a cherry tomatoe vine that was infested with marble sized tomatoes. It was worth your life to pass it without taking at least one tomatoe. I expect to hear one of these days that the entire building has been pulled down by green growing things.

Enough of this nonsense. Turn the page and see Mikie's version of it all.



# FACE IN MY BEAR

OR

## METUCHICON II

"A CAST OF SOME, A DINNER  
OF MANY, RAIN AND  
WATER - WITH  
A PEST  
THUNDER

A SAD SOUND

CREASE  
FOLD FOLD  
FOLD FOLD  
BEND "SHIT" FOLD  
CREASE FOLD  
CREASE

STARING  
"THE UNSEEN SUN"

THE PEST

ITS  
EASY TO  
FOOL OLD  
PEOPLE OR  
DICKNEY MAKING THE  
FLYING ORAGAMI BIRD  
WITH DAMP  
CREASED PAPER

CRUNGE

FOLD

SHIT

CRUNGE

IT ALL REALLY STARTED WITH .....

ACTUALLY THIS HAPPENED SUNDAY BUT  
ITS A GOOD PLACE TO START!

THE  
ARRIVAL

AT NIGHT

SATURDAY

MORNING

WE'RE LATE  
GOT ANY I.P.A.?

RICHARD  
FIRST  
TOMATO

OH OH CHEER!  
LOOKS LIKE  
DICK AND MARY  
ARE COMING  
AGAIN

HEHE GOES AGAIN

THEN COMES THE DAWN, YAK, EAT!  
THEN

CHECK  
THE  
GARDEN

BONG!  
BANG!

THE CLOISTERS

WHERE  
ARE  
THEY

NO NOT  
THAT  
CLOISTER  
HERE!

NO THERE

WHERE

LOOK  
LOOK

LOOK

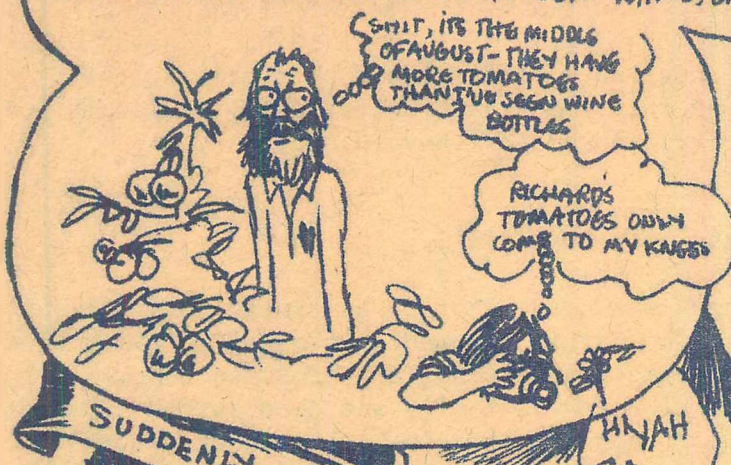
WALK

MY GOD  
SHE'S HEADED  
FOR THE  
POSTCARDS!

WIND  
WIND  
CLICK  
CLICK



CHECKING OUT THE GARDEN (BETWEEN RAINSTORMS)

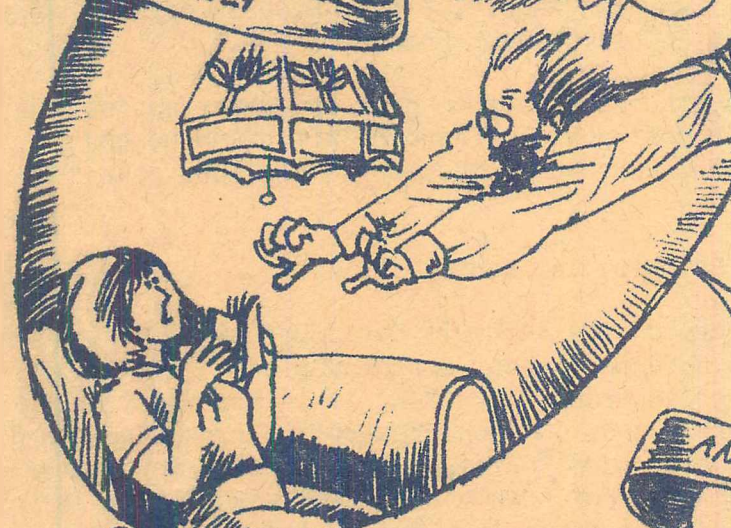


LATER

THAT EVENING



SUDDENLY



HARTER, YOU PEST!

MY GOD,

THE HEAT REALLY GETS THOSE COLD NEW ENGLANDERS GOING.

HARTER YOU REALLY ARE A PEST!

WOW!

AND SO ON THROUGH THE NIGHT

SUNDAY



MARY BUYS A DUMB GANG

BACK TO THE FLEA MARKET



YOU'RE A PEST HARTER

HEY, THAT PEST HAS MY PAPER!

EVERYONE PICKS ON ME



THE OLD WOK DINNER

RICHARD PLAYS A ONE TO ONE WARGAME!

YOU KILLED ME!

YOU KILLED ME!

IT'S DARK: TIME TO GO!

HARTER - YOU'RE A PROFESSIONAL PEST



.... Alright folks, it's time for the inevitable, that staple of fanzines, the  
.... "gas" book review. I must state at this time that the following review is not  
.... a spoof. The book reviewed actually exists and I have a copy.

Super-Folks by Robert Mayer, Dial Press, New York, 1977.

"There were no more heroes. Kennedy was dead, shot by an assassin in Dallas. Batman and Robin were dead, killed when the Batcar slammed into a bus carrying black children to school in the suburbs. Superman was missing, and presumed dead, after a Kryptonite meteor fell on Metropolis. The Marvel family was dead: struck down by lighting. The Lone Ranger was dead; found with an arrow in his back after Tonto returned from a Red Power conference at Wounded Knee. ... .... Even Snoopy had bought it; shot down by the Red Baron; missing in action over France.

In this fading pantheon of heroes, the very last to give up combat against the forces of tyranny and evil had been the most powerful hero of all. And he had not been seen in almost a decade. Not since, unknown to the world, his superpowers had unaccountably begun to fail.

Using his secret identity, David Brinkley, he had ...."

Thus begins SUPER FOLKS. The hero of the story is David Brinkley (You never learn what his public name is. He was born on the now exploded planet, Cronk, and his super powers fade when he is exposed to Cronkite. Yes, it is that sort of book. There is a cab driver named Bella Abzug. Nelson Rockefeller runs a newsstand as Rocall. The mayor of New York is Alexander Portnly. The planet Cronk was destroyed by the Lords God Nietzsche and Namath, but Archie and Edith saved their infant son Rodney, and shipped him to Earth. Max Givenchy is a tailor for super heroes. (Where do you think they get all of those costumes?)

You may find this sort of thing hilarious and you may find it sophomoric. If you find broad humor offensive, this is probably not the book for you. However, for the next fifty years, I expect this book to be an underground classic.

... Peter Pan used to fly on good thoughts but now he flies on grass. The take offs are smoother ... "Judge Crater was impatient to use the phone." ... David Brinkley's real identity was pretty well known among friends and family. How many people do you know with blue hair? ... Elastic villain Stretch O'Toole first discovered his ability to change shape in a whore house. They wouldn't let him out for days ...

The story is a good read - not a great read - but a good read. Brinkley saves the world once again, foiling a fiendish plot by a supervillain. At the end he must make the choice of returning to Earth and losing his superpowers or remaining in space. He chooses to return to earth. The plot, although melodramatic, is not greatly important. (Essential, though. Melodrama has always been an important part of the life of our superheroes.) The key focus of the book, however, is on the thoughts and emotions of Brinkley. All too often superfolks have presented as objects for blind adulation. We tend to forget that they too have emotion and thoughts and problems. (So much mundane literary criticism.)

"A sullen bellhop, Gerald Ford, took the boxes." Love it. Take that, you alternate universe buffs. You want alternate universes, we got them. And why not a world in which all the superheroes really exist?



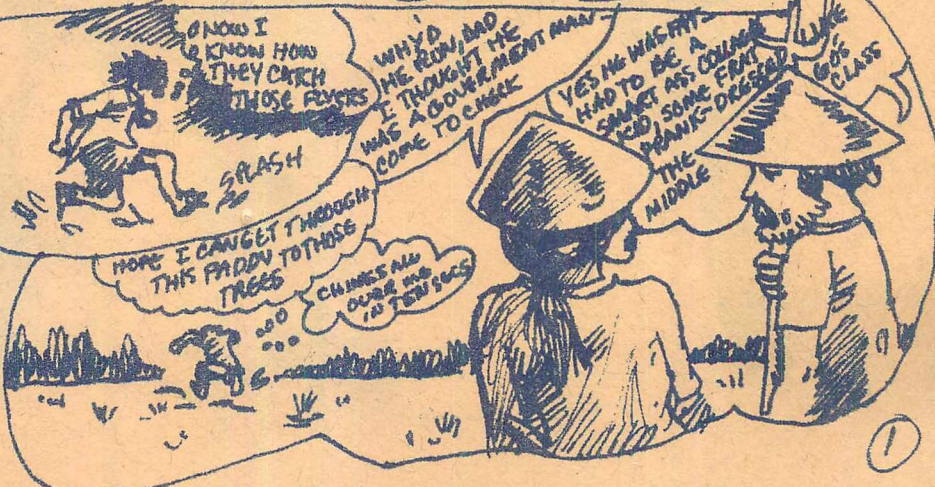
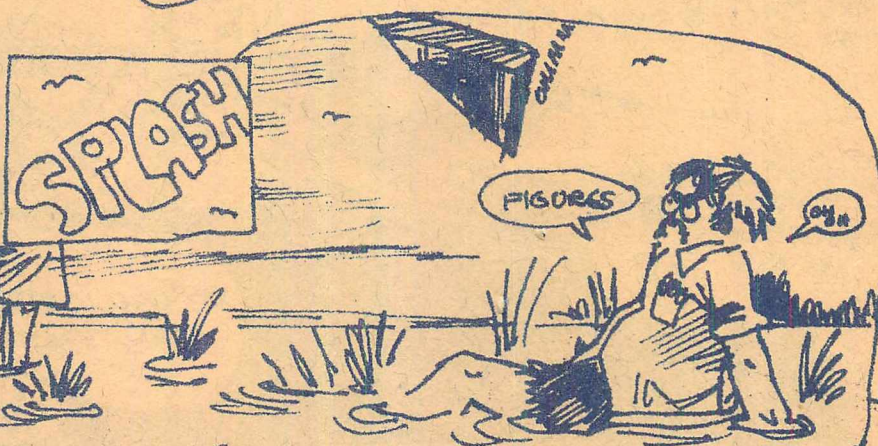
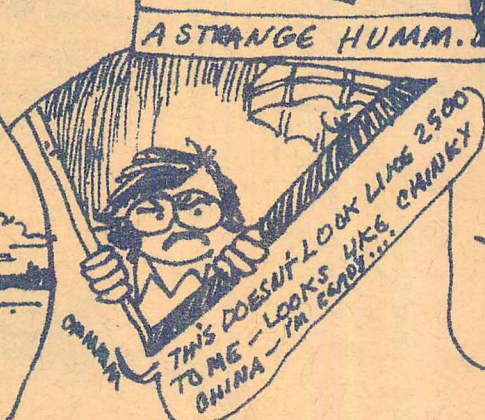
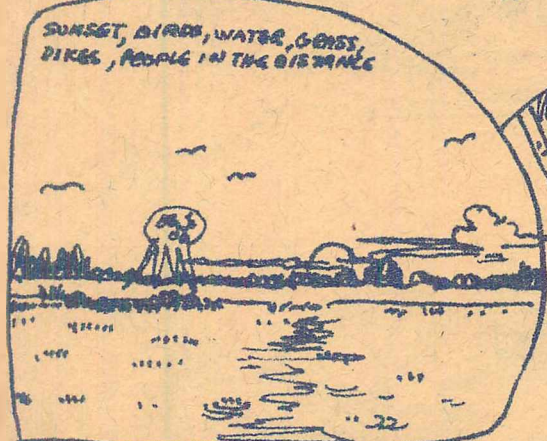
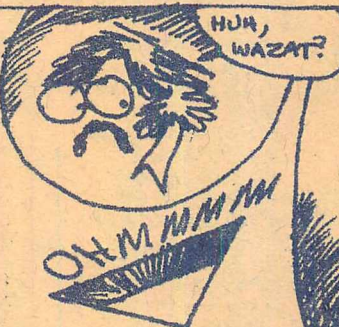
# INTRO: THE FUTURE

WE NOW FOLLOW OUR "HARD" AS HE HAS SPENT A FEW DAYS BEING GLITZED BY NEWSWEEK, A TYPICAL DOOM AND GLOOM 60 MINUTES, A FEW SPECIAL REPORTS AND TOPPING IT OFF - DICK GETS MORNING IN SPR, UNCLE DICKY WALKING IN "PERSONAL NOTES AND GOOD GRIEF" ASIMOV BEATING HIS BICEAST IN READERS DIGEST! HAVING BEATEN THE HIPPIE HAUNTS OF HIS YOUTH CAN OUR HARD FIGHT OFF THE TRUTH OF THE COMING OF . . . . .

# FUTURE SHOCK!



WITH MIKE GILBERT:







HELLS BELLS  
THIS DICK'S A PISHOT  
AND YET AS FLORRA  
ENJOYS THESE CHINKS  
AINT FANS...

SPLASH  
SLOP  
SPLASH

NIGHT DRAGS ON

HUH? WAZZAT? SOME CARLOAD  
OF SMASHED CHINK OFFICERS?



SLIDE

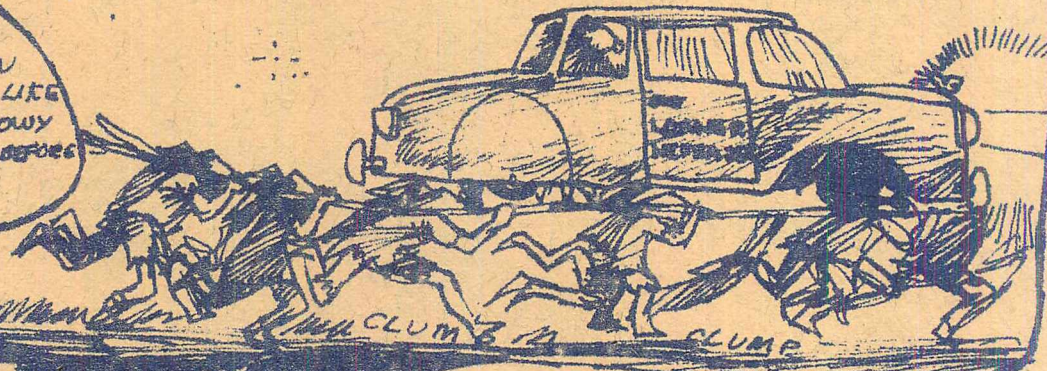
WE'RE ALL BUSY  
EVERYDAY  
CONSERVING ENERGY  
EVERYWAY  
DON'T USE THIS AND  
DON'T USE THAT  
JUST STAY SKINNY  
AND DON'T GET FAT  
TO THE SIMPLE LIFE  
ID WE BELONG  
ODD CALORIES KEEPS US  
WEAK BUT IN SPIRIT STRONG

ENGLISH  
?????



WHAT THE  
HELL IS  
THAT?

THOSE ARENT CHINKS!  
WAIT THAT OLD MAN  
IN THAT CAR, HE LOOKS LIKE  
DICKY. AND THAT SHADOWY  
FIGURE I'VE SEEN THAT BEFORE  
OR HAVE I....?



MEANWHILE:  
IN THE CAR

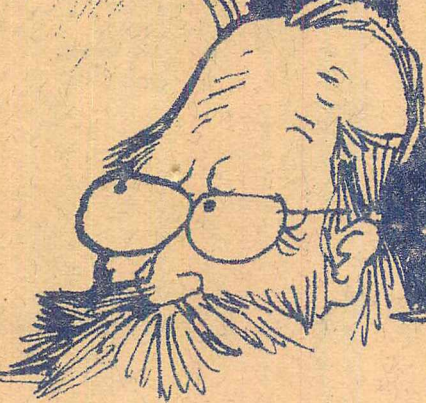
MY GOD GEIS! (SNIFF SNIFF)  
SMELL THAT!

YES!  
(SNIFF SNIFF)  
YES, REAL MEAT  
AND... HOLY IMPOST...  
THE'S BEEN DRINKING  
GREEN CHARTreuse WITHIN  
THE LAST HOUR

MY GOD!  
SOMEONE HAS  
EATEN...  
MEAT

DEGENERATE!  
YOU CANT MAKE  
THAT KIND OF  
STUFF AT  
HOME!

REWARD! LET'S TURN  
HIM IN!  
MAYBE HE'LL GET SOME EXTRA  
PAPER ALLOWANCE  
DRIVER  
STOP!





CITIZEN WORKERS!  
SEIZE THE DEGENERATE  
DESPOILERS OF RESOURCES

SPLOOSH

STRUGGLE  
HELP  
HELP

DICKEY?

WE GOT HIM, WE GOT HIM!  
IT'S A GOVERNMENT FAT  
STOOGES OR A WASTER  
YEA! YEA!

MIKIE? WHAT HAPPENED?  
YOU'RE SO OLD...  
WHAT YEAR  
IS THIS? I  
CAME THROUGH  
A PORTAL...

A PORTAL!

MIT IS  
WASTING  
WINDMILL  
POWER AGAIN  
TRYING TO  
SNATCH OIL  
FROM THE  
PAST AGAIN

WHAT  
YEAR!  
WHERE?

1997  
MIKIE

WHAT?  
WHAT?

WE?.....

THAT RIGHT!  
THIS IS BOSTON -  
RATHER THE CONCORD  
PADDIES TO BE EXACT!

WHAT? WHAT?  
RICE PADDIES?  
WHAT KIND OF SHIT  
IS THAT! WHAT IS  
ALL THIS?

WE WERE  
RIGHT...

YES MIKIE,  
WE... IT'S  
REG... GEIS?

GEIS? HERE?  
WE HAPPENED  
PORTLAND

ROCKYFELLER...  
ROCKEY AND HIS LACKEYS!  
EVERYTHING! GARDEN, PRESTO  
LOGS, PEACH TREE, HOUSE, MOST OF  
THE NORTHWEST. BURIED UNDER  
THE COMPLEX OF SOLAR COLLECTORS  
AND WINDMILLS THAT SUPPLIES  
ROCKEY'S EMPIRE... WEEKS CROSSING  
THE COUNTRY... TERRIBLE... HE WON  
SNIFFLE...

SOUNDS BAD  
WOW! BAD AS  
YOU SAID... NO  
ENERGY, RELIGIOUS  
CULTS, PLAGUES, DROWNING  
TIMES, THE WORLD  
TURNING INTO A  
UNIFICATION CHURCH  
CAMP

WE  
MERGED  
....

YOU GOT THE PICTURE  
ONLY WORSE

BLAH!  
GOT SOMETHIN'  
TO DRINK?

JUST  
YEAST  
WINE...  
DUMPER  
NO LABELS

ALCOHOL  
IS FOR BURNING

NO WINE  
NO WINE  
SHIFF

ROCKEY  
DID IT  
ALL

BURNING?  
FUEL?  
WHAT THE HELL  
HAS GOTTEN INTO  
THE WORLD?

CAN THIS BE CONTINUED, CAN IT GO ON?



# FINAL WORDS

.... And so, as the sun sinks slowly into the west, we bring another issue of PERSONAL NOTES comes to an end. All told, this is probably one of the rattier issues. Long delays in appearance seldom mean that a masterpiece is about to appear. Nonetheless, I am not above accepting a long overdue Hugo. There are a lot of things that I had sort of planned to put in this issue and never quite got around to. Perhaps it is a blessing. For once I actually cut the page count down instead of putting out a still larger issue. Maybe next time it will be 20 pages again.

Among those heard from and not yet appearing is Bill Bridgett. Bill is, I understand, a somewhat controversial figure. He sent me a one-shot consisting mostly of stuff about the last issue. It was amusing and greatly appreciated. Bill may be controversial, but he has the good taste to like my zine.

Joe Pearson wrote and sent some artwork. This is a note to say, yes Joe, I got it and it's very good. I am using some of it in this issue and will use the rest in the next issue. The reason I didn't send you #9 is because this is the 10th issue. Many thanks.

Now that the bulk of the house remodeling is out of the way I hope to have more time for a lot of things. Among them is PERSONAL NOTES. Not that this is the major thing that I want to be more active on, but it would be nice to get PN out a bit more frequently. Come to think of it, I have been saying that for the last couple of years. Oh well, two more years and we can start holding 70's nostalgia parties. And those of you who had the foresight to send a letter to Nixon while he was in the White House can now cash in by getting your very own presentation copy of Nixon's memoirs for only \$250. If I had only known at the time. Thus are the opportunities of youth squandered through lack of foresight.

Oh yes, many thanks to V.V. who nominated me for a FAAN award. My thanks, also, to those who nominated me for various Hugo categories. I suspect that my blatant campaign to get a Hugo is doomed to failure - most of my readers probably gave up on voting for the fool things a long time ago.

Oh yes,, the committee to draw up a new WSFS constitution has brought forth a camel with elephantiasis. Considering the peculiarities of recent worldcons, it does seem desirable to do something. I suppose I shall leave it to older and wiser heads. For those who have read "Junkyard Planet", you know what they can do.

And in closing - when I contemplate our current President, I am forcibly struck by the wisdom and the foresight of Benjamin Franklin, who proposed that the Turkey be our national bird...

THE END







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Publisher: Richard Harter, 306  
Thoreau St., Concord MA 01742. It  
is available by editorial whim on-  
ly. All material submitted, incl-  
uding letters of comment, is sub-  
ject to revision by the editor.

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