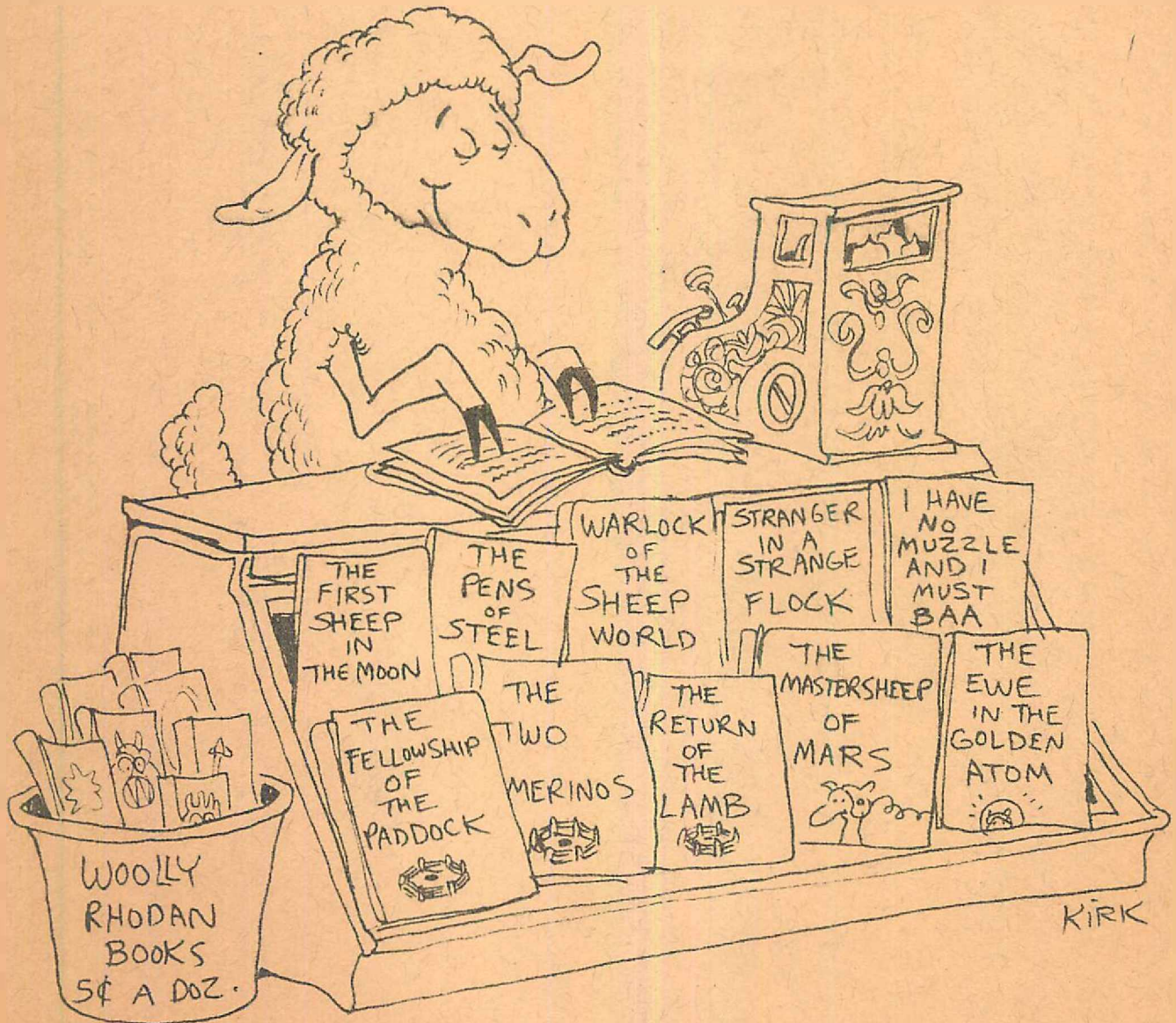
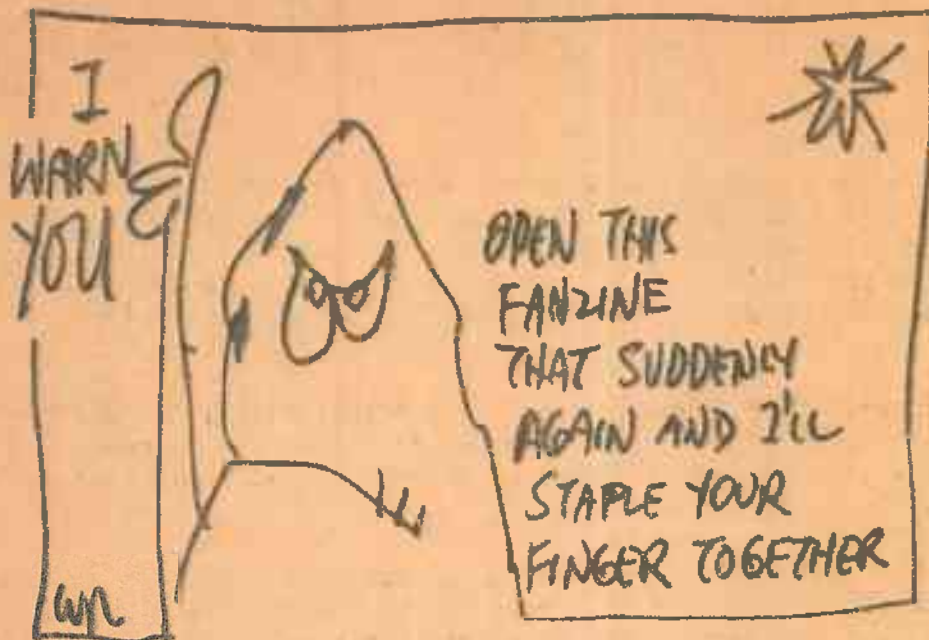


PROPER BOSKONIAN



HIGHMORE IN '76

Richard Harter, Co-Chairman.



Contents

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The Kentnik.....Tony Lewis
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Service To The Queen.....Ann McCutcheon

Artwork

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Staff Editorial Supervision

Alphonse (assisted by Tony Lewis - editor)

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Dave Stever, Morris Keesan, John Houghton, Richard Harter

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Oh yes, this is Proper Boskonian # 11

(Paula Lieberman says Hi)

notes from the past

You may have heard these rumors about Boston fans - the new breed they call them. The word is that there is a new kind of fandom up there. They are organized and bureaucratic and they make it work. They aren't much for fannish individualism, they aren't hooked into the publishing world, they don't play the game the same way fandom has always played the game, and they form a closed universe in themselves. Different, they say.

Don't you believe it. Deep down underneath the organization, the planning, the carefully orchestrated productions is the same spirit of fannish madness. It may take different forms - it may appear mundane at times - but it is there all right. Witness this issue of PB.

NESFA is, they tell me, the ultimate fannish corporation. You are a NESFA member, you do things for the club. Your fanac is done in the name of the club. It is all planned and discussed and organized. The very antithesis of NESFA is a one shot, put out by a group of nuts on the spur of the moment. Guess what - this issue of PB is a one shot put out on the spur of the moment.

It all comes about when Dave Stever - who will possibly be the editor of PB when this issue is finally collated - suggested that we go over to my place and put out an issue of PB for the meeting. He wasn't really serious - I think. He was only idly speculating about what a neat idea it would be - I hope. I casually mentioned that Tony had given me a bunch of stencils which he was planning to run for the next issue of PB which never got out. I allowed as how it was theoretically possible that we could put out an issue over night to present at the meeting the next day. I wasn't seriously suggesting it, of course. It would be stupid, crazy, to stay up all night to put out an issue of the club genzine. Nonsense. But, he thought wistfully, it would be sort of neat. Never think those kind of thoughts - they get you in trouble every time. So here I am at three o'clock in the morning typing a goddamn stencil. See what I mean.

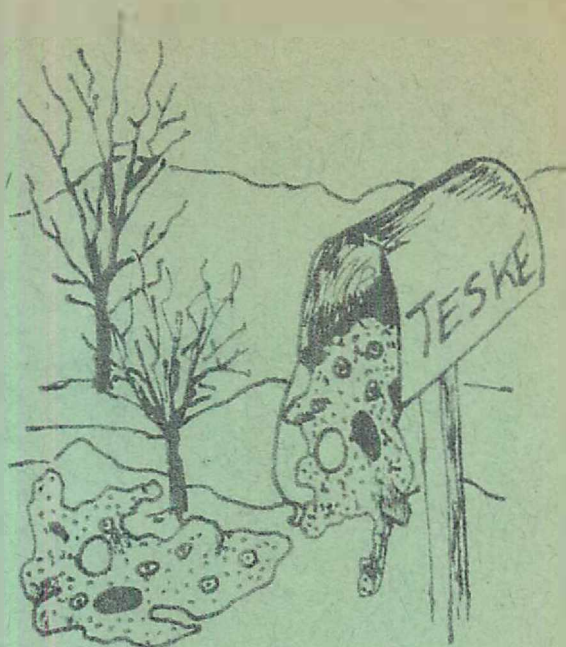
Actually I have high hopes for PB and a great fondness for it. I held the post of editor for several years and put out what I thought were a number of good issues. For any number of reasons my energies and interest declined and I turned the whole thing over to others. Tony Lewis took it up and found that, after an issue, his available time and energy and interest were not up to it. (I consider this a shame - Tony could have put a great zine.) Now someone will take the job over. I hope it works out well and that the new editor has a long and successful career as editor. (Particularly I hope he has a long career - it would be unfortunate if I were tempted to take the job again.)

Well I look at the above and it doesn't read too badly for being typed in the middle of the night while running off a one shot. Maybe there is something to this fannish madness nonsense. I wonder if I will think so later in the morning....

Sam Woke...

In the beginning was the Meskon but now the Meskon is not. In the early years of NESFA the membership would, on a Summer weekend, repair to the wilds of Centre Harbor NH to partake of the hospitality of Ed Meskys and Nan Meskys. Events at this gathering included eating, a tour of Belknap College, a tour of the town dump, swimming in Lake Winnepesaukee, watergun fights, and all the other serious and constructive activities NESFA is famous for.

Unfortunately, Ed's increasing blindness made it impossible for him to host these get-togethers which we all enjoyed so much. For the last year or so there have been NESFA trips to conventions, a beach party or two but nothing like a Meskon.



Last Fall (11-12 August 1973 to be exact), NESFAns Linda and Al Kent invited NESFA up for a weekend to a farm in which they are part-owners, located in Raymond NH. Some of the old activities were not possible: visiting Belknap and the dump, swimming in Lake Winnepesaukee. But others took their place: feeding the ever-hungry samoyed dogs. Cutting firewood, making ice cream (see below). Traditional sports as NESFA-tag and red-rover were revived and a good time was had by all.

Feeding such a mob is a herculean feat and casserole dishes of the glop variety are always in good taste. Here, for historical as well as gustatory records are some of the major meals that went a ways towards filling the stomachs of ever-hungry NESFAns (and don't forget the dogs.)

TEXAS RED CHILI (as they make it in Wayland MA) Ann McCutchen

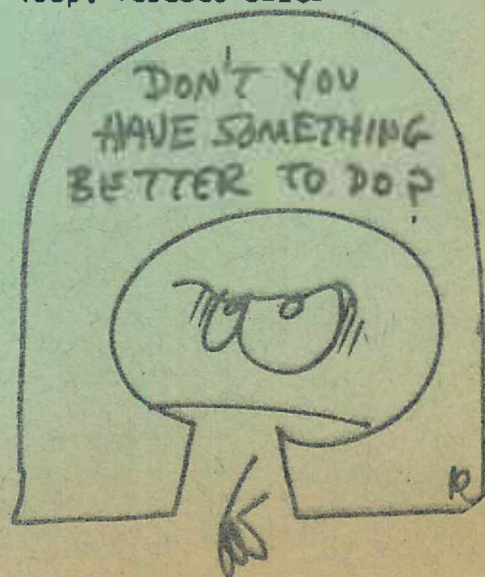
3 lb. coarsely cubed bottom round beef
1/8 lb. finely diced suet
1 tbsp. oregano
6 tbsp. chili powder (~1 can)
2 large garlic cloves - minced
1 tbsp. salt
1/2 cup corn meal (or 1/4 cup masa harina)
1 1/2 qt. water

1/2 tbsp. cayenne pepper
1 tbsp. powdered cumin seed
1-1/2 tbsp. tobasco sauce

Fry suet until crisp in bottom of Dutch oven. Add meat and brown. Pour in water and add other ingredients EXCEPT the corn meal. Simmer, covered, for one hour, stirring occasionally. Uncover, skim off fat, add corn meal. Simmer uncovered for another hour, stirring occasionally.

Serve with pinto beans, corn bread, cold drink, etc...

Serves from 10 to 20 depending upon how hungry they are.



BEAN SALAD of Watertown
Leslie Turek

Canned beans: 2 lb. red kidney beans
2 lb. chick peas
1 lb. green beans
1 lb. wax beans
1 cup olive oil
1/2 cup red wine vinegar
2 large onions chopped fine
(1-1/2 cups)
1/2 cup chopped scallions
1/2 cup chopped green pepper
2 tsp. garlic - chopped fine
salt and pepper to taste (1/2 regular salt
+ 1/2 Lawry's seasoned salt is nice)

Before making salad, drain the beans and rinse them under cold running water, then let them dry. Mix everything together gently. Let sit for a few hours before serving, if possible. Keeps about a week if refrigerated.

HELGA'S SUMMER SQUASH

Wash and slice 3 yellow summer squash in 1/4" slices. Melt 1/2 stick of butter in a heavy frying pan - stir in a chicken bouillon cube, add the squash and cover. Do NOT add water. Cook over low heat, stirring occasionally, until soft but not soggy. Salt to taste.

(transmitted by Leslie Turek)

FRENCH ICE CREAM of Belmont
(Sue Lewis)

4 egg yolks	2 cups scalded light
1/2 cup sugar	cream
pinch salt	1 cup heavy cream
	1 tsp. vanilla

Beat the egg yolks lightly and combine with sugar and salt; beat until thoroughly blended. Scald and add the light cream.

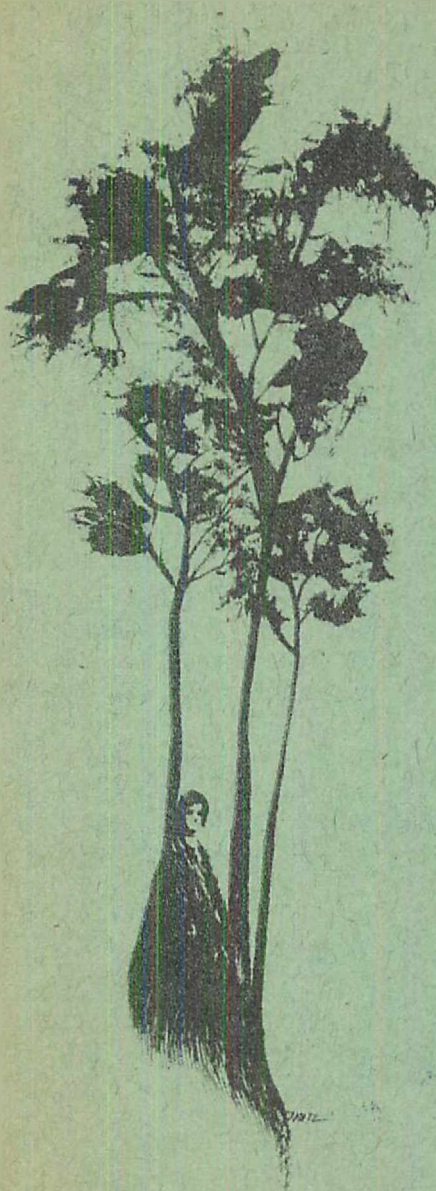
Strain the mixture through cheesecloth and heat in a double boiler, stirring constantly, until it coats the spoon. Strain through double layer of cheesecloth and chill.

Combine heavy cream with vanilla and add to mixture.

Place finished custard in ice cream maker. Add ice and salt to bucket. Attach "volunteer" to crank and set crank to turning. Replace with additional "volunteers" as necessary. Add ice as necessary. Keep turning until fresh "volunteer" can no longer turn crank. Set aside to mellow for an hour or so (still being cooled by ice-salt mixture). Makes a little less than 1 quart of ice cream. This is much richer than almost all commercial ice creams (they use glycerin in lieu of egg yolks).

Cornbread recipes may be found on the back of most cornmeal boxes.

Breakfast pancakes were made from recipe in *Joy of Cooking*



THE ALPHABET CORNER

Wnoane
Kest
Noreascon
NESFA
SH



Harry Warner, Jr.
423 Summit Avenue
Hagerstown MD 21740
13 August 1973

Dear Tony:

The news about the Noreascon records is excellent. I'll be looking forward to my copy, and will try to contrive for it some sort of publicity that will liquidate the investment you'll thereby make in me.

Harry is referring to the two-record set of the Noreascon Awards banquet produced by N.E.S.F.A. and available from us at \$5.98.

Curiously, this puts me on a fannish lp before I've ever done anything about my old dream of putting other people on a fannish lp. I'd thought for years about a recorded version of *All Our Yesterdays*, assembling the voices of some famous fans, a couple of fannish dramatic productions, and so on. But every time I get close to action, I realize how much corresponding I'd be forced to do to get permission to reproduce my tape archives, the nuisance of wrapping and mailing copies to fill orders, the need for borrowing another tape recorder to dub stuff into proper order and so on, and I've always held back.

Meanwhile, I've been meaning to write you or someone (*the Clerk -ARL*) and express thanks for the place on the mailing list for *Instant Message* and for the special publication containing NESFA regulations and so on that you produced several months ago. I don't know how to respond, since they aren't the kind of fanzines that I can write lots to. I did send *Horizons* to the club for a while as a token of gratitude, but I gather it isn't collecting most fanzines. I don't know whether to be more impressed by the kind of activity that the NESFA continues to possess or by the mere fact that it hasn't followed the lead of most local fannish groups and exploded with a loud bang long before this.

Obviously we're sending you copies of our newsletter, genzine, and divers other works in order that we get a good mention in volumes 3 and 4 of *All Our Yesterdays* and, of course, the subsequent volumes. NESFA is not actively collecting fanzines as we really do not have the storage space. We retain some, let members have others for their own, and turn the remainder over to M.I.T.S.F.S. as they have both space and filing facilities for them. We do not throw any out. Please don't say that you won't write future volumes, we must know what happened after 1950. Most of today's fans hadn't even been born then, a sobering thought --ARL

~~I've been making this dogged effort to catch up on old loc obligations before the Torcon~~
and if I can combine two letters into one someone else will get a loc that otherwise
might not have been hatched. (I still don't know if I'll get to Toronto, because my
health has taken a manic-depressive character. But if I go, I don't want to spend the
entire weekend listening to tirades from fanzine editors who haven't had response to the
last four issues they sent me.)

The covers probably impressed me first and strongest about this new issue. It's rare
enough to find Mike Symes illustrating for fanzines nowadays, and it's even rarer to
encounter this kind of reproduction of his work. I can't imagine how you achieved on
a-parently a mimeo stencil the background effects of the back cover or the three-dimen-
sional effect of the front cover. The green on blue or whatever color combination this
may be seems like an extra stroke of genius. (I'm not colorblind but I have an annoying
inability to distinguish properly between certain shades of greens and blues, particularly
when they're pale or mixed with gray.)

*Mike Symes has been very busy, he is going to school full-time in addition to his Army
Reserve duties. He had a full-time job last Summer. This schedule does not leave much
time for fanac but I still pester him for what I can get. The covers were run green ink
on blue paper using the NESFA Gestetner 466. The machine was run at the slowest speed
using maximum inking. Each cover took an entire tube of ink. Luckily we have our own
electrostencil cutter so that we can experiment and cut the best electrostencil in such
cases without ruinous expense. --ARL*

I like your intention to emphasize local talent in future issues. If you can stick to it
maybe you can drag out from their hiding place within city walls all the potential fan-
zine writers in your area. I'd hate to think of them restricting their works to neigh-
bors just because it's so much fun to participate in the local apa, the way it has
happened in the Los Angeles area.

All the Cutiecon pages were very fine to read and look at. The art work struck me as
the best of its kind since Bjo was drawing all those sketches of LASFS fans that were so
delicately poised between caricature and literal portraiture. The text made me feel a
little more akin to the rest of humanity, since some of the people described in it
reacted with as much fear and mystification to various things as I experience. However,
it's pretty hard to adjust to the thought of someone in New Jersey possessing a spring
that is safe to drink from. There's a lovely little spring in the town park only a
couple blocks from my home, back here in the wilderness of western Maryland's hill
country, and for the past twenty years the people or factories of this microscopic
village have succeeded in keeping it permanently polluted and posted with signs from the
health people about its unfitness for human consumption. Sue Miller in both the video
and audio portions of these sketches behaved exactly as I assumed Sandra Miesel would be
in real life. I hope Sue isn't any more like Tim's image of her than Sandra turned out
to be.

I suspect the existence of at least two or three higher levels of meaning in The Royal
Saga of Stoneworthy than I can detect with my own equipment. No matter, it was pleasant
to read and I'm only slightly jealous at the thought of how much more enjoyment will go
to the people who know the keys to complete understanding.

On the other hand, The Rock Is Red completely baffles me. I can't even guess if this is
related to music or underground publications or local analogs or a game. I like the
circular kind of frames and the way they're fitted together, and beyond that I simply
refuse to indict my stupidity to any greater degree of complicity than should already
be obvious.

*Mike Gilbert has not sent along any explanations with the art work so I'm afraid that
I can't tell you what the artist thinks he has said in this graphic story. However, I
do not believe that the story contains anyone in fandom, in whatever guise they are
presented, but, here I may be very wrong. This issue contains the latest installment*

and, if it does not enlighten, perhaps will entertain you. Would it help any if I told you that Mike Gilbert casts his own lead soldiers?

I have been able to get some local talent into this issue. Ann McCutchen and John Turner are local NESFA Regular members. As I explained elsewhere, one of the stories was a prize winner in an SF Writing Competition sponsored by the Salem Public Library. The Kents, who hosted the Kentric, are NESFAns who live in Framingham, Massachusetts during the week and in Raymond, New Hampshire on weekends. Other contents show that I am not fanatical about non-NESFAn contributors. I would like to get more from Doug Hoylman who is, I believe, one of the best fan writers around. He has not appeared in many places mostly in Twilight Zone, Proper Boskonian, APA:NESFA and now in Mini-apa. There are a number of local people who can write as shown in their apa contributions and I am working on them for material.

So I'm glad to see you publishing fanzines again, and I hope the response from all over causes you to put out Proper Boskonian more frequently. You are quite brave to mail out a fanzine at this particular time, so close to a worldcon that few recipients will write before Toronto and so many will tell you in Toronto about their reaction that they will decide a later letter will be redundant. Even the postal people seemed anxious to get this distributed before the treks to Toronto begin. The postmark on my copy is somewhat blurred but it looks like August 9 and it reached me on August 11, a week or 10 days faster than most third or fourth class stuff moves between New England and Hagerstown.

Yrs., &c.,

As to the mailing date: I wanted to get the issue out as soon as possible to establish my credibility as Editor. Also, most of the mailing, over 80%, goes to NESFA members. There are some trades and some purchases but not as many as for most genzines. (non-NESFA contributors get copies also.) There is a simple reason for this. This zine is a NESFA production and is intended primarily for the membership. We like locs, artwork, stories, articles, etc. because these can be put into future issues for the enjoyment of the membership. Money can also be turned into services for the membership. However, most of our members do not seem to be all that interested in fanzines so, although we do not discourage it, we do not encourage trades as a general rule. There are some fanzines we do want and we trade for them.

NESFA, as a matter of policy sends copies of our newsletter to all newszines with a reasonable circulation. At present, I believe we are sending out copies to about eight of these throughout the world. In general, we handle each case separately. --ARL



George Flynn
27 Sowansett Avenue
Warren RI 02885
1 August 1973

Dear NESFAns:

It's bad enough that you threw out all the no doubt brilliant locs on the previous issue (including the only one I ever wrote on PB), but here you have an issue with little one can comment on. Wait a minute though -- this is #10, and the locs were all upon some aspect of PB#10; how long has NESFA had time travel? Mike Gilbert's stuff is great; if only he could spell. (I realize proper spelling is unfannish, but Mike's is unique. Perhaps his most memorable was in PB#8: "The Lady Red-12 was found in a bothel. -- no doubt a place where bothersome abominations are practiced.) Why was Tim Kirk going to Rhode Island? Will Layland the Fool be found in a crater again? And what about Naomi?

The confusion about issue number arises from the fact that there exists a Proper Boskonian #0. Thus comments about the 10th issue (#9) would be found in issue #10 (the 11th issue) -- clear? Could you believe that Mike's characters (and perhaps Mike) exist in an alternate universe with different spellings? Tim Kirk's projected trip to Rhode Island was connected with the holy relics of H.P. Lovecraft at Brown Univ. However, Tim is now in Kansas City. As to the rest, time will tell (or maybe not). -ARL

Ed Meskys
Box 233
Center Harbor NH 03226
13 October 1973

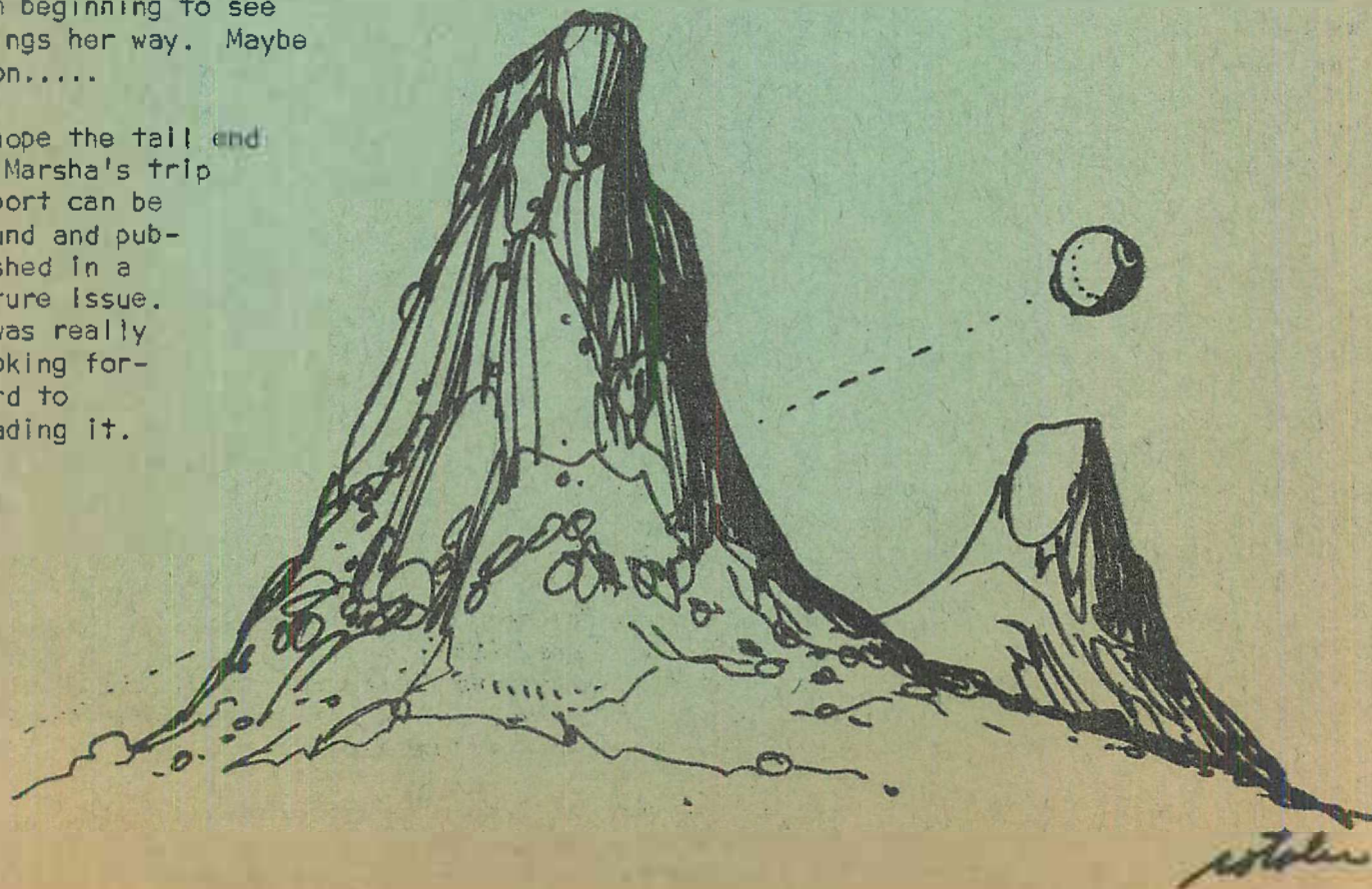
Dear Tony

It was good to see a *Proper Bosk* again. I just got it read to me and enjoyed it very much. Marsha had been telling me about Dian Girard's fairy tales and now I see what she meant. It was really great. I also enjoyed the other items, the editorial and Shiela's precon report.

I agree that a small regular *Proper Bosk* is better than an Irregular one. Nan keeps telling me the same thing about *Niekas* and I'm beginning to see things her way. Maybe soon.....

I hope the tail end of Marsha's trip report can be found and published in a future issue. I was really looking forward to reading it.

Best of luck with the new *Bosk*.



Archie Mercer
21 Trenethick Parc
HELSTON, Cornwall
TR13 8LH U. K.
5 November 1973
(Gunpowder, Treason & Plot)

Dear Prosperous Bokononians.

Thank you for PB No. possibly 10, or possibly pseudo-10 - offhand I'm not sure, circumstantial evidence within tending to be somewhat contradictory. The one copyright 1973, anyway.

Sheila reads OK, but only Tim Kirk receives any honours for artistic accompaniment this time. Messrs. Gilbert and Green - who are, one is left to presume, responsible for the column-sized hunks of pseudomontage not signed 'Kirk' - serve only to confuse. Attempting to decipher the handwritten text - without which the illoes lose most of their point is very wearying on the eyes. But the Kirks are superb.

See my remarks to George Flynn about Mike's spelling. Did you find the handwriting hard to read intrinsically, was a good part of it caused by repro? If the latter, Dick Harter and I must take the blame, not Mike and Hawie. Glad you liked the Kirk illoes though.

"Stoneworthy", though intrinsically readable (However much one may privately deprecate the reference to the rendering down of aardvarks) suffers inevitably by comparison with its professional equivalent, Italo Calvino's "The Baron in the Trees". This latter I recommend as being worth getting hold of. Calvino's Baron, owing to some juvenile vow, takes to the trees at an early age and never again sets foot on earth. Although he lives on to a reasonably ripe age, he manages all the time to live the life of a nobleman of the Renaissance in a somewhat unorthodox way. Once he even contrives to go aboard ship (staying in the rigging, of course) in order to participate in a naval battle.

I believe the Calvino story was written around 1965. I do not know when the Girard story was written. There is quite a bit in LASPS in-group humour in the Girard story; i recognized some of the poker-references but not others. -- ARL

A couple of shorter, later stories by the same author, that are supposed to form with 'Baron' a sort of thematic trilogy, are available in one volume the name of which I forget. All are translated from the Italian, but read well in English. One of the two shorter tales concerns a Crusader who is cut in two from crown to crotch, and each half continues to live on independently. The basic gimmick of the other escapes me. Neither, I thought, was anywhere near as good as 'The Baron'.

With which recommendation I conclude this missive. Thanks again. With which repeated thanks I really conclude this missive.

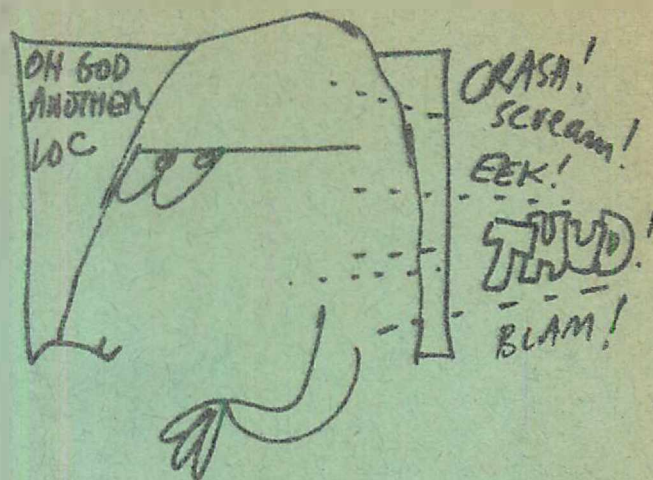
Things

/s/ Archie

(With which signature I really conclude this missive.)

We Also Heard From (in writing - many oral comments) Ken Faig, Jr.

Keep those cards and letters coming in, folks!



Little

Sweet

by

Stephanie D'aleo

FACE

This is the story that won first prize in the Science Fiction Short Story Contest sponsored by the Salem Public Library as part of its "Science Fiction Festival in October and November of 1973. The judges were: Donald York (head judge) - Associate Library of the Cambridge Public Library, David W. Johnson - staff reporter for The Salem Evening News and member of the Salem Cultural Arts Commission, and Anthony Lewis - editor of The Proper Boskonian, reviewer for Locus, and one of the founders of N.E.S.F.A. All three judges rated this story very highly and enjoyed it. We present it for your enjoyment and comments; we are certain that it will make you pause and think. -- ARL

A crib is a lonely place when you are two years old and neglected. Though my mind has already advanced to a mature state, my body still craves the fondling that is due all infants. But, I never get it. I sit for hours, thinking, staring through the decorated bars that mock my imprisonment. Balanced on the wooden railing, a silent puppet-clown seems to view my situation with little understanding. The smug brim of his blue cap emphasizes the blankness in his eyes. I cannot know whether he is apathetic or merely unaware; he is certainly not friendly.

So, I sit here alone, and frustrated. Beyond the bars, a tiny frost-edged window teases me with glimpses of life. At night, I watch the white silhouettes of snowflakes as they fall, and I imagine that I will never plunge through the white drifts like other children. When I do fall asleep, it is to the same nightmare -- I sit frozen in a rocking chair while other little girls run and skip about a large white room. They sing a loud, monotonous rhyme that echoes in my brain. I squint hard against the throbbing in my ears until the singing fades away. Somehow, the girls vanish except for one pudgy-faced girl who grapples toward me in slow-motion. Just as her hands reach my throat, I wake, trying to thrash my body from her grip.

But I ~~am~~ frozen! Even now as my parents hover over me for their daily visit, I desperately try to show them I am alive. My brain swells and pushes down to every reflex in my body, but I cannot move. I cannot respond to any impulse; my brain is isolated within me. My throat forms the screaming words that cannot escape.

It's as if she were going to talk.
We've been through this before, Rhonda.
I know...
We cannot expect perfection right away.
It's just that I blame myself.

Whatever for?

Remembering how close we came with Bobby...she even reminds me of him a little...

Which means you don't want to keep trying?

Well, we aren't exactly young... It is rather late for two people to start out this way... hoping for success.

Perhaps you're letting your emotions carry you away?

No... ah... I don't know... I'm just not as confident as I was before.

Come now, where is the intelligent, rational woman I married?

Oh... Hallam, I'm sorry... truly. Bear with me for a while... It must be my change... I'm just tired.

Tired of me is what mother is thinking. I can tell. Before, I never had to earn her love; it was given naturally. The corners of her bright eyes seemed permanently crinkled, so often did she smile down at me. She used to keep me upstairs with her, carrying me from room to room as she kept house. The fact is she doted over me so much, father would get angry with her: "Why can't you face facts, Rhonda?" he would shout, "there has been no improvement with her either. She is just as bad as Bobby. And I don't want to hear anything about finding a 'home' for them; they must be put away!"

By my first birthday, my father had almost convinced her. To prove it to her, he kept me on his examining table for a full week. Each test only served to reinforce his hypothesis. Finally it was confirmed: I would "never attain voluntary, let alone involuntary muscular ability; all apparent nerve endings were dead; all sensory activity was void."

Within a day, they set up my crib in this cluttered storage room. Bobby was already here, sitting quietly in an antique baby carriage. His eyes told me that he was glad for our similar fate. His hurt pride was avenged, since I had been father's favorite. Now, all I could see was the smirk of wicked victory in his eyes and I hated him for it; I wanted Bobby to die. I wanted his piercing eyes to close forever.

One afternoon I woke from a brief nap and found Bobby gone. Had he died? Guilt haunted me for several months until my parents discussed him one day. Father, giving way to my mother's pleas, had sent him away to another family. The young couple had a little girl who was sick in bed with fever. When Bobby was placed on the bed in front of her, she reacted violently. "His eyes are fire, mama, his eyes are fire!" she screamed, "take him away!" The parents blamed this "hallucination" on her feverish state. So, they left Bobby with her anyway. An hour later, the mother went into the room to give her child some medicine. Bobby was on the floor beside the bed, totally dismembered.

Painful -- It must have been so painful. I'm scared. I know something awful is going to happen to me too. I've never seen them move about so much, carrying all kinds of boxes upstairs. Father mentioned that they would have to hurry in case someone came by soon. Someone?

Rhonda, I'll open things upstairs. Why don't you change her cloths and then bring her up.

All right... do you think I could cuddle her in a baby quilt?

Is it necessary?

Well, it makes a more attractive appearance really.

Fine, fine.

Oh no... please, mama, don't send me away... please love me again! They'll shred my arms and legs from my body! Bobby deserved it... he had evil eyes! I'm a good baby please, oh, please... mama!!

Well, little doll face, I hope this dress fits you. I worked on it for two whole hours. A pretty dress will get a good family for you and a good price for us. We've got to get a good price... to make up for all the heartache. Hallam is right. I've got to stay with reality. Two failures do not necessarily mean a third. There young lady,

all set to go.

I'm not a fallure! You aren't looking. I'm in here, I'm alive! If you had any soul yourself you would see me... scream, oh dear throat, scream! Where are we going? Wait -- oh, my mind is spinning... I want to faint. The stairwell is pulsating, narrow, wide, narrow, wide. And this room, this purple room is spinning too... and... what is this room? There are shelves and shelves of children just like me. They don't seem afraid. They seem peaceful... I must be peaceful... resigned... peaceful...

Rhonda, place her on the counter here, we've got a customer... Good day, sir, may I be of some assistance to you?

I'd like to get my little girl a doll for Christmas. The wife said to try here.

I'm sure we can satisfy you. Take this model for instance... life-like hair, skin, nails. The head, arms and legs are fully jointed.

Amazing. Just like a real baby.

Exactly our trademark, sir!

They tell me you make them right here in your own lab. Is that so?

Yes, my wife and I are a team. We once worked with clones and life-formulas.

You mean test-tube babies?

Yes, we worked for years, trying to recreate an actual thinking being, but to no avail. So, we are gradually turning our knowledge into a commercial venture by creating human-like dolls with DNA substitute.

Amazing!

Presently we are at work on the tear duct gland. Our latest model -- we call her Sweet Face -- was an experiment for this. Pressure applied to her temple would have caused either tear duct to erupt... thus, tears. However, there were some complications with the formula. Still, Sweet Face is more special than the others here.

And why's that?

Simply because her structure can be adapted to any future developments we make with the other dolls... we want each model to be more human-like than the one before it.

Sweet Face can be improved after each model has proved a success.

What would the life expectancy of this doll be?

Well, it really depends on the care your little girl gives it. My little one, ha... she's rugged actually gone through several dolls this past year.

Sir, I feel this doll is an adequate challenge for such a child. Sweet Face has good strong joints. A very pretty doll, too. Is this dress hand-made?

Yes, my wife made it.

Did you know the front of it was wet?

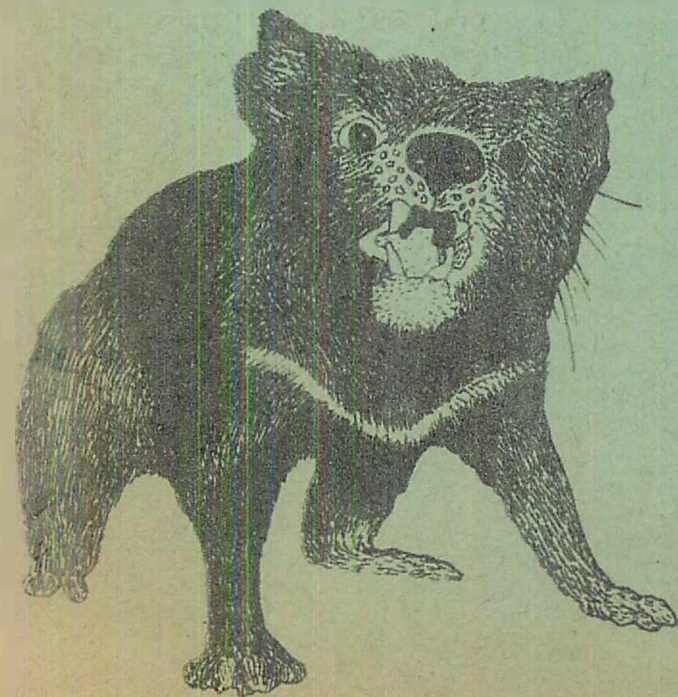
Wet? Oh, I'm sure it is only water. You see, my wife washed her up this morning for our opening. She is special to us.

Her eyes are kind of sad, crying ones... I'd really like a happier looking doll... With time, sir, I'm sure that could be adjusted too.

Well...how much are you asking?

Three hundred, sir. We feel this is a reasonable price.

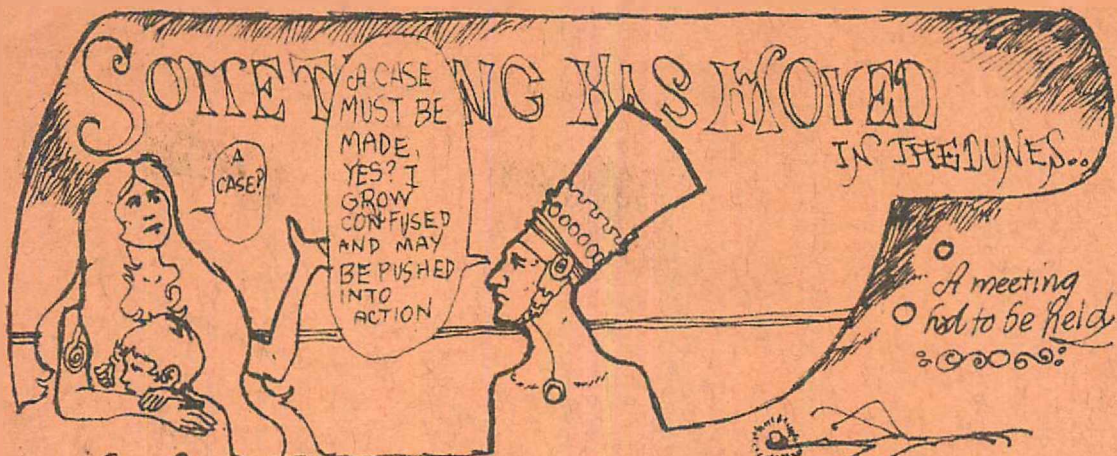
It is, it is, compared to some of the things they are



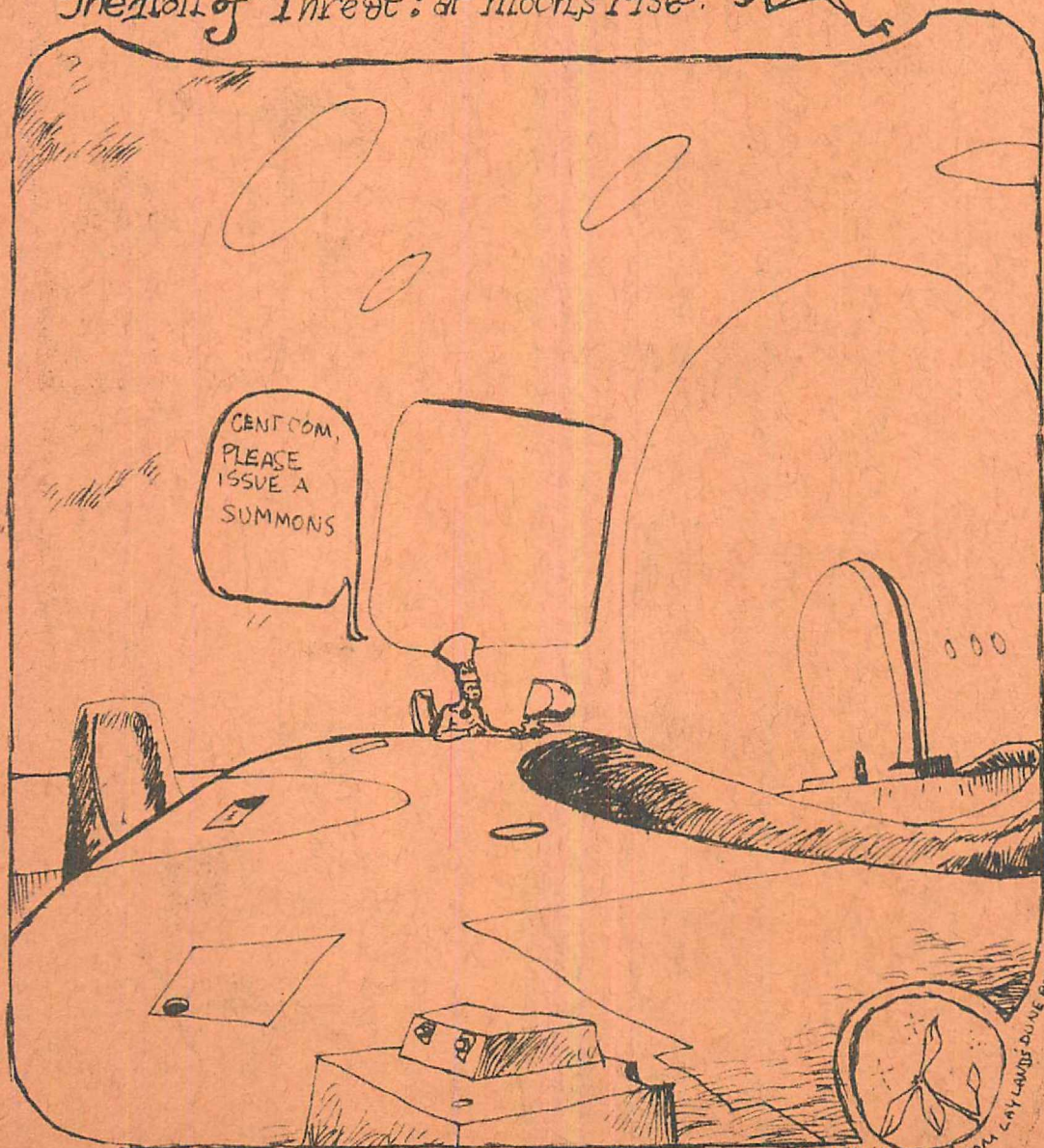
selling today... You know, I think I'll take her!!

Would you like a box for her?

She's pretty life-like, ha, ha... you sure it won't suffocate her? Ha ha!



The Hall of Threat: at moon's rise:

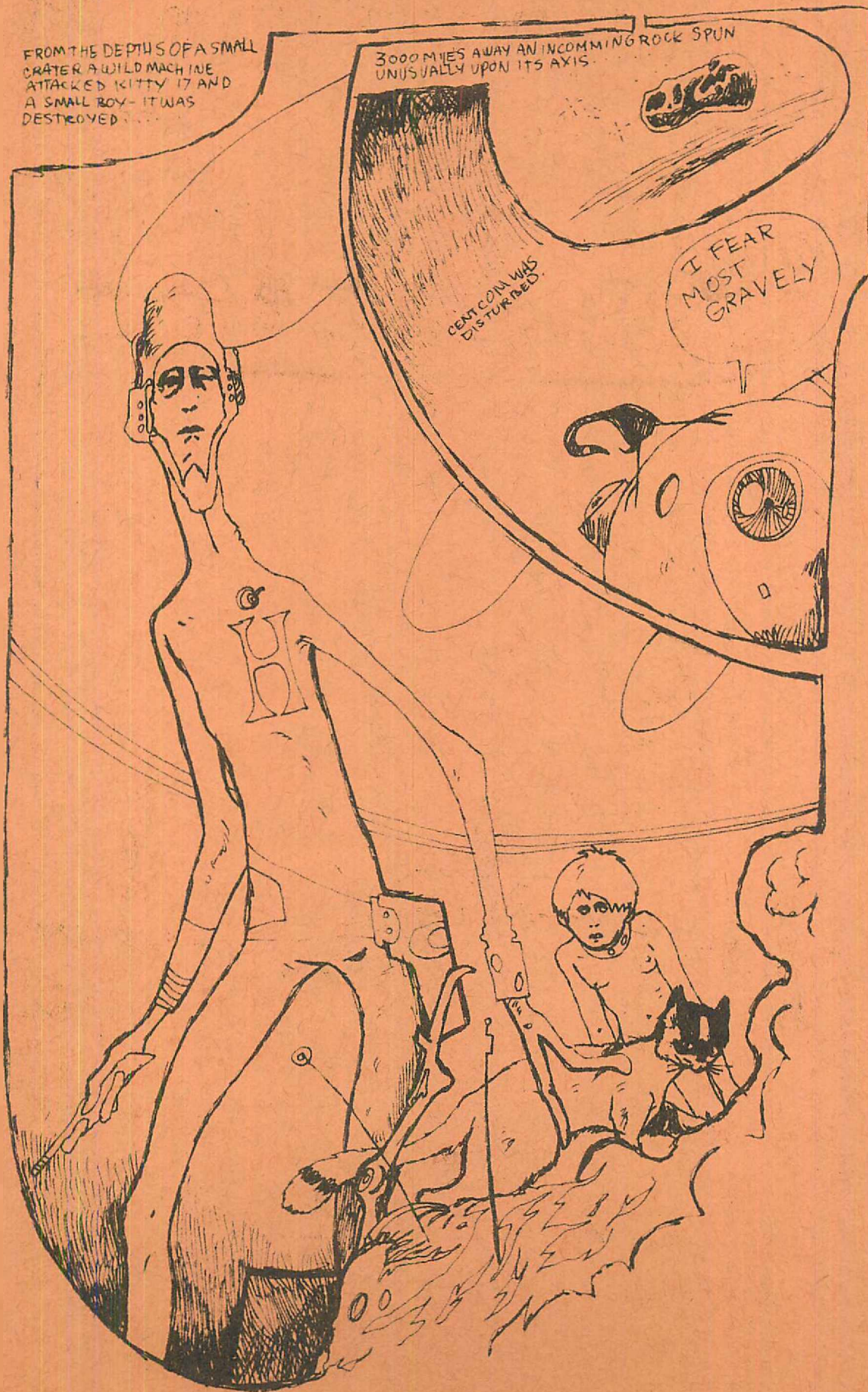


FROM THE DEPTHS OF A SMALL
CRATER A WILD MACHINE
ATTACKED KITTY 17 AND
A SMALL BOY - IT WAS
DESTROYED

3000 MILES AWAY AN INCOMING ROCK SPUN
UNUSUALLY UPON ITS AXIS

CENT COM WAS
DISTURBED

I FEAR
MOST
GRAVELY



THE EFFECTOR
LOOKED...

THE
COUNCIL
BEGAN

PLANIS B WAS FOUND
TO BE PREGNANT

HE WAS
ASTONISHED...

THE EFFECTOR
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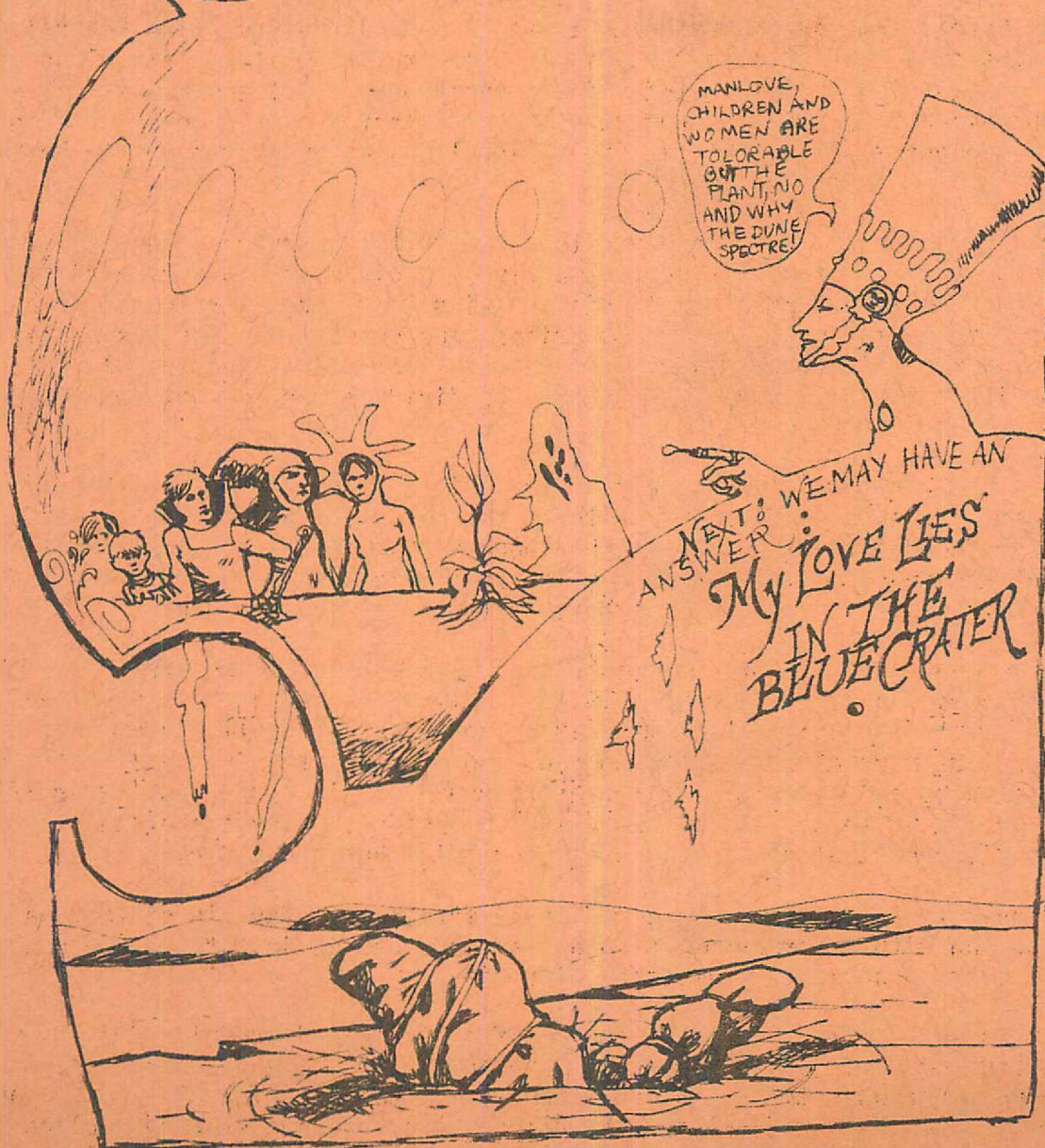
HE WAS
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PLANIS B WAS FOUND
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HE WAS
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In The Service Of The Queen

- Ann M. Callahan -

John Band sauntered into the hotel bar, and ordered a very dry martini the only way it could be done in England -- ask for a glass of gin with an olive in it, plus a shot glass of vermouth and a swizzle stick. He carefully added a small portion of the vermouth to the gin, finally adding it drop by drop. Another of the drinkers turned to stare at him. Band lifted his mirror-grey eyes and gave the man a calm, even gentle look. The man turned hurriedly away.

Band leaned back, sipping his drink, and examined the bar and what he could see of the rest of the hotel. It was an unusual, almost exotic, structure, with several outdoor gardens that seemed to seep into the building proper through the plate glass windows. There were odd turnings, angles, and heights everywhere. Yet somehow it fit into the Oxford countryside. He tried to remember the architect's name. Hobbs? Dodge? Roddson? No, Dodgson? Yes, that was it. This place was even supposed to be built according to some mathematical formula.

Band ordered some more gin, walked over to a comfortably curving couch, and relaxed. It would be some time before his contact arrived to give him his next assignment. He watched the people entering and leaving, giving them marks for looks, dress, and behavior. He tried to guess their occupations, and confirm or deny his appraisal by listening to scraps of conversation. His guesses were fairly successful, and, losing some interest in the game, he started to divide attention between the floodlit garden and the bar entrance.

As he turned back from watching a pair of incredibly short, fat men walk (waddle?) from the room, he caught a flash of white in the garden. When he looked more carefully, he found that it was gone. He thought that it was perhaps a small woman in an oddly-cut fur coat, one of the many pale, synthetic furs. Band started to wonder what she was doing in there, when the next customer entered the bar.

She was very young and slender, with long pale blonde hair combed straight back from her face. She wore a light blue dress with a full skirt and a white panel down the front. Band typed her as being pretty, in a conventional, English way, but then he examined her face more closely. She somehow looked older than he had first thought, yet the complexion and lines of her face were youthful, in a way that no artificial treatment could make them. It was her eyes, he decided. They seemed to suggest the peace and confidence that comes with knowing all the answers and reasons.

She walked over to the bar, and he immediately forgot her, for his contact, a dark-haired young man with a permanent, pleasant smile, entered just then. He spotted Band and trotted over, dragging a briefcase after him.

They went through the traditional pantomime of greeting and ordering drinks, while the courier, George or good old George, told Band something about his next assignment in the ambiguous, innocuous terms that shielded the information from the eavesdropping uninitiated. He chided Band on his last expense account, and started hauling out papers and forms from his briefcase. He pointed out items with a mechanical pencil, its light flashing from page to page. Some of the papers were returned to the case, the rest were efficiently placed in a large envelope and given to his companion. Then the two men got up, paid up and left the bar. In the lobby they parted company,

George heading back to his car, and Band up to his hotel room.

Even as he stepped into the entryway, just before he turned on the light, he felt that something was wrong. When he saw the blonde girl from the bar, sitting in the chair at the other end of the short hall, and pointing a gun at him, he was quite sure.

She spoke in a low, controlled voice. "I am Alice. You are John Band?"

He nodded, trying to gauge his chances of avoiding the gun, and tensing his muscles.

"You are agent 10, is it?" Her voice was more cautious now.

He nodded again, but before he could move, she had squeezed the trigger. A jet of water arched out, and ended by wetting the breast pocket of his suit. He looked down, stunned, trying to understand what had happened, what had not happened, and what it all meant.

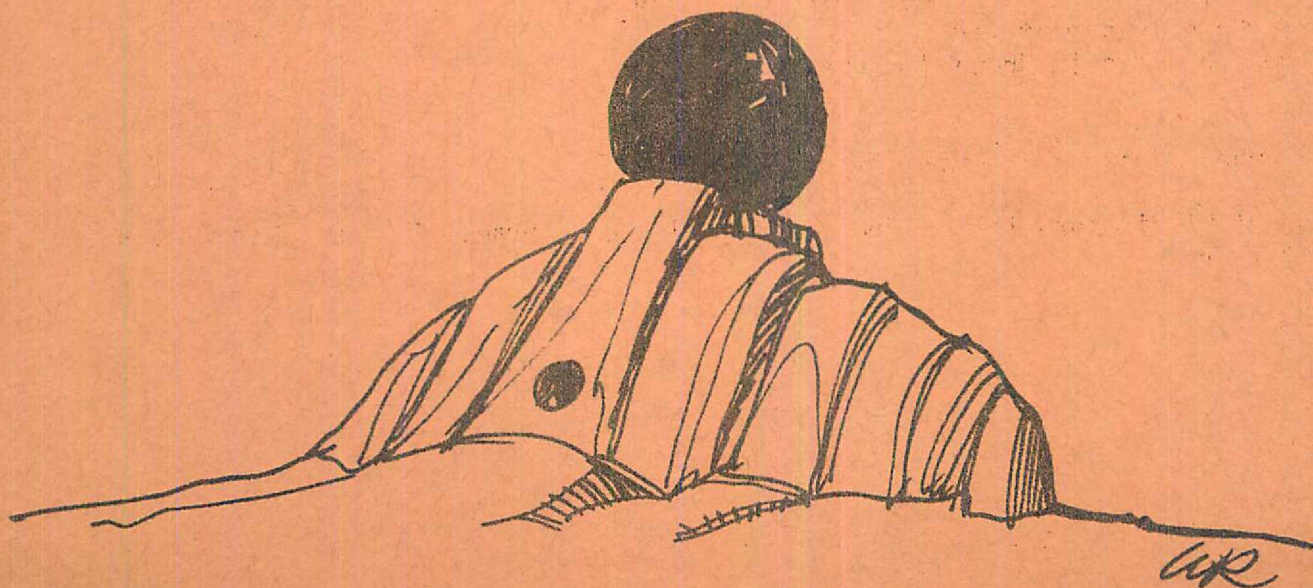
"I think," said Alice, standing up and coming toward him, "that this shows that I am your friend, or at least not your enemy, and that you should pay attention to what I say." She stopped in front of him, looking serenely into his face.

Band fought himself for calmness and control, he decided on a verbal attack, however feeble. "How did you get in here, and how do you know my . . . number?" His voice, he felt, showed little of his confusion.

Alice smiled vaguely. "Oh, that was really just mathematics. Everything can be related to maths -- shall we go into the other room? -- if you can visualize it. But it takes at least a lifetime to free yourself from . . . standard modes of . . . thinking."

In the living room, she sat down in a chair across from him, still insanely, unaccountably, holding the squirtgun aimed at him.

"But," she continued, "I -- we need the use of your services. It won't run into your next assignment, but this is most important." She paused and bit her lip, suddenly looking very young and uncertain.



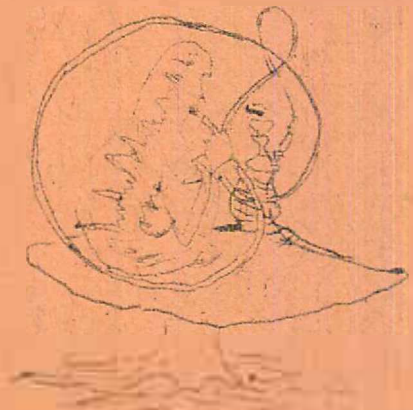
"There is . . . it is . . . A desperate problem. The Queen's life is in danger. And's heart gave a sudden leap, and his brain plunged once more into turmoil. He barely noticed as she continued. "He thought at first that it was the . . . usual problem. But there were accidents, too many to be probable. There are so many with motives-- well, everyone, really. Bernus thinks it's someone close to her. I'm afraid that it's Jack. He's never been any good, despite everything.

"John, you must help. Will you come with me now?" She stood up, with the gun still held on him.

"It roused his mind, and forced it to echo her question. He made a weak gesture, and looked at her face for some sign of understanding as he protested. "But this isn't my field! Surely there are guards, experts, Scotland Yard . . ."

"Alice smiled and shook her head. "Understand, please, that your flexibility, imagination, and resourcefulness are far more important than any ability to tell a fingerprint from a footprint. Come, please."

As they walked to the elevator, Band found himself noticing many trivial things clearly: the small table that looked like a mushroom with a lamp reminiscent of an oriental hookah; the pattern of leaves in the carpet, like those fallen to the forest floor, and the large gray tiger-cat that appeared suddenly from the shadows, its coat looking vaguely purplish in the hall lighting.



They stepped into the elevator. Alice inserted a key in one of the panel locks, and punched two buttons. The first, at the bottom, marked "SP", and the second, at the top, marked "RH". The doors closed, and the elevator sank. Band watched the floor indicator change. After it showed that they had passed the subbasement level, it started over again at the top. As it dropped again, an insane idea occurred to him.

He asked, "What does the RH stand for, Alice?"

She looked at him in surprise. "Why, Rabbit Hole, of course. It's still the only way to get there."



