

**rataplan**



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## STARTING

I have no idea how to really begin this issue, a lot has happened since the previous issue of this fanzine, so much that I am faced with the prospect of writing something which will be almost a novel to tell it all. Winning something like DUFF is an honour and it is an experience but one way and another it takes up a lot of time. Take a chunk of a couple of months out of almost anybody's life and see what happens for the next year or so. Well maybe I'm getting a little carried away, maybe that sort of disorganisation doesn't happen to everybody but Valma and I have been suffering from it ever since we got back. Maybe you could dare to say that we are disorganised at the best of times but you will admit that we had a better start than most.

Somewhere in my room there are a few stencils lying, they are the first start that I made to this issue many months ago. I'm tempted to dig them out and use them but half the point of something like this, my ideal fanzine almost, is that it hangs together from beginning to end - no matter what the various parts are - and a gap of something like four months half way between one line and the next doesn't help the sort of impression I would like to present in this collection of pieces of printed on paper.

I suppose that some of you might like to know what Valma & I thought about our little trip to America, to DISCON II and the paper friends we had built up through the years. What can we say?

There is very little that words can do to express the sorts of emotions dredged up when we remember meeting somebody for the first time, when we remember some little thing that happened at DISCON or even maybe the smell of the New York underground. If we had the money we'd be back tomorrow, not for the sights or the sounds or the excitement but for the friends. Not that we don't have enough friends in Australia... it's simply that there seemed to be something special about to many of the friends we made - and then we had so little time to get acquainted really.

Hmmmm, but I'm not going to go on about this because if I do then I might take up pages and pages with examples and places and that's to be left to the report which I hope to leave until I have time between now and AUSSIECON. It is my firm intention to be able to sell off copies of the report at the Con - all it will need is a lot of time and hard work which I suppose I can get from somewhere. If Bruce Gillespie can produce a mammoth issue of SF COMMENTARY in micro-elite type when he complains that he has no spare time at all I should be able to manage a little report of about a hundred pages when I grudgingly admit that I have Monday evenings free.

In the meantime there is always this to keep my fingers exercised.

## CONTINUING

One of the more interesting things that I did in the US was to sit on a panel at BUBONICON. The subject of the panel was something to do with Geographic Differences in Fandom. The Americans on the panel seemed to come to the conclusion that there really wasn't much difference between the various regions in the country - or even including Canada if it came

to that - despite various slight differences. It occurred to me then and even more so later that while Australian fans are reasonably the same as their American counterparts as people there are a multitude of ways in which they act differently as fans. In other words, being a fan in Australia is not - for most - the same thing as being a fan in the US. There are some obvious reasons for this, the lack of a large number of fans, the lack of more than two conventions, the lack of a professional sf industry which is the basis for so much US fanaticism.

In the US fans are used to having writers around, they can get somebody to be a convention guest of honour with little difficulty and if they are living in the same city with a few writers they are likely to take the presence of that person for granted. In Australia, in Melbourne, the only stuff we know is the stuff we go up to Space Age and buy. It is the only contact we have with the field at all. There are a couple of people around who are writing and selling but it is very difficult for me, at least, to think of David Grigg as a writer and anyhow, even if I reckon he is already writing better stuff than a lot of what I read he hasn't sold in the US yet and that means he hasn't got anywhere yet. And then there is always Lee Harding. By US standards he is almost a non-entity as far as a writer goes. He surprised me the other day by admitting to having sold over fifty (I think that's the number he gave) stories.

It concerns me that there are very few recognised writers in Australia. In various fanzines I occasionally see references to A.B. Chandler, it takes me a while to realise that they mean Bert Chandler. Bert has been writing since the early years but since he was, until very recently, at sea most of the time we could never think of him as a resident pro. Since I've been editing FANW SLETTER I've been realising that there is some writing activity in Australia - a piece occasionally sells, but then the amount of news of sales and the like I mention in a year would at the most take up half a column in almost any issue of LOCUS.

Oh well, we here in Australia suffer from a small population and consequently suffer from the mass markets that can support nothing like an sf industry. Also we suffer as always from the sort of Imported Culture syndrome - "If it isn't written by one of the masters and it wasn't printed by Ace or Tandem or whatever then it isn't worth buying". There is nothing that we can do about this until Australians realise that the new nationalism in places like the theatre and music (after a fashion) can be applied to science fiction. I sometimes feel that we are beginning on this but other times I get less optimistic. If it comes you can bet that the whole face of fandom in Australia will change. Instead of the sorts of people we have now doing the sorts of things they are now. More than anywhere else Australian fans are little groups of friends who have gathered themselves together because of their initial interest in sf and even more than elsewhere they stay together because of mutual friendship rather than because of a continuing dedication to sf.

Of course I should point out that I like it the way it is but then my basic interest lies with my friends who are also fans and not with sf, even if it is



good stuff to read.

#### POINT OF INFORMATION

Typical Jet Engine Exhaust Emissions: At full take-off thrust the typical jet engine exhaust contains a little over ten pounds of nitrous oxide ( $\text{NO}_2$ ) for every thousand pounds of fuel burnt.

#### FURTHER POINT OF INFORMATION

As you may have already noticed, Valma and I have bought ourselves a nice new *IBM Selectric II* with the variable pitch and everything (except the correcting thingo which we didn't think would work too well on stencils and the like). The face I just happen to like the most is the spitting image of the one that my manual has so you won't notice the difference if I'm typing on that machine. The other faces I throw in from time to time will be the only clue. Also, I expect that the letters will be typed in the italic face. This is the reverse from normal fannish procedure but what the hell.

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Interesting to read the comments from Joan and Ray on music (especially since Ray talks about little else these days). They shouldn't mourn the loss of folk music, though, because there are quite a few composers writing modern folk music. Quite a few of them write songs that any competent guitar player and singer could perform with friends. Bob Dylan has written songs that have been recorded and listened to avidly by hundreds of people, but the best of the modern folk musicians seem to originate in Canada. Joni Mitchell, for one, is one of the best musicians to appear in the past decade; her songs "The Circle Game", "Woodstock", "Chelsea Morning", "Big Yellow Taxi", and "Both Sides Now" have been recorded by many performers, and most can be learned by any guitarist by ear. Besides which, she doesn't write anything but good music. There are several reasons why she is such a good artist: 1) she writes terrific lyrics; she has an understanding of the rich and varied symbolism which is traditional in folk music's naturalistic origins, and she has a terrific feel for rhythm and rhyme patterns; 2) she is an incredibly talented musician, and writes fantastic arrangements for the songs like those on her last three albums; and 3) she has an unbelievable singing voice, high-pitched but with an incredible range, switching sometimes from a throaty bass to a piercing soprano, but just a beautiful voice. Her later albums feature songs that no one could perform but her (such as a darkly poetic and oddly moving song called "Cold Blue Steel and Sweet Fire", from her *FOR THE ROSES* album, an unusual backup and a unique vocal performance, conjuring up hazy, unclear images in the listener's mind; or almost anything from her most recent album, *COURT AND SPARK*), but her earlier songs hold up just as well. Also from Canada is Gordon Lightfoot, a classical guitarist who scored a big hit with a song called "If I could Read Your Mind" in America; there is a song on the same album called "Sit Down, Young Stranger", about a young man trying to



reach some kind of communication with his unapproachable parents (the last line: "The answer's in a forest, carved upon a tree/John loves Mary, does anyone love me?"), and another album features a beautiful, mellow love song called "Beautiful". His newest album, *SUNDOWN*, is virtually a tour-de-force; nearly every song is an experience. There is a soft love song, "Somewhere, U.S.A."; a slightly sad Morning-After song called "Carefree Highway"; an old-fashioned folk melody, "High and Dry", which is enjoyable to listen to and finely written lyrically at the same time; and one song, "House Made of Stone", which has a haunting instrumental chorus that keeps running through your mind months after you've heard it, establishing the haunting atmosphere of the song. Lightfoot is the Compleat Musician.

In America, one of the best folk singers is John Prine, who learned guitar-picking listening to Hank Williams recordings in his Virginia childhood, but whose voice has an uncanny resemblance to Bob Dylan's. John is a skilled lyricist, who can write songs that have great emotional power, yet who can also create great comic songs with his flair for absurd, unbelievable imagery (in "Rocky Mountain Time", his description of a greasy-spoon diner: "The waitress hollered at me/So did the food"). John Denver and Bette Midler have recorded his songs; Denver did a very good recording of Prine's song "Angles From Montgomery", about an old woman in the West, whose lines have a simple but powerful strength (the first verse is: "I am an old woman/Named after my mother/Old man's another/Child that's grown old. If wishes were lightning/And thunder were desire/This old house would'a burned down a long time ago.)

Bette Midler recorded another Prine song, "Old People", about the best song ever written about growing old in the U.S. of A. The narrator is a woman living in the city, who has lost one child to marriage, another to road, and another to the military ("We lost Billy in the Korean War/Still Don't Know What For/Doesn't matter anymore"), and comes to the realisation of how empty and meaningless her life is. (Refrain: "You know old trees just keep getting stronger/And old rivers get wider every day/But old people they just get lonley/Waiting for someone to say/Hello in there"). Another song of his, "Paradise", is an old-fashioned folk song on a modern subject, and received a brief public notice when John Denver's version was played on the NBC TV news here. The subject is strip-mining for coal in Prine's boyhood home. The verses are remembrances of the happy times John and his father spent in the area in his youth, but the chorus runs: "Oh papa, won't you take me to Newlenberg County,/Down by the green river where paradise lay./ I'm sorry, my son, but you're too late in asking/ Mr Peabody's coal train done hauled it away." The song ends with the realization that, in today's transient world, one can only find paradise in one's self. There are probably few, if any, people who can write songs today that carry the emotional impact of Prine's serious music. Yet he is one of the best composers of humorous songs working in America today. On his latest album, *SWEET REVENGE*, there is a song called "Dear Abby", which is a series of letters from people with incredible problems writing to a gossip columnist and all receiving a stock reply; and another song called "Don't Bury Me", which opens with the line, "When I got up this morning, I put on my slippers,

walked into the kitchen, and died"; it's a rollicking country song where John, in his last words, tells what he wants done with his remains. (The same album has a heavy tragic song called "Christmas in Prison", an old-fashioned country song about a man in love and in prison.) His first album, JOHN PRINE, had a wild song called "An American Flag Decal Won't Get You Into Heaven Anymore" ("...they're all filled up anyhow from your dirty little war"), sung by a man whose car is plastered with flag decals, who accidentally walks into a porno bookstore, picks up a Reader's Digest and sees a flag decal fall out. His protest song (well, semi-protest song), "Illegal Smile", details all the hassles any unconventional person goes through in any society, then goes on (and you really can't appreciate this without the music): "But fortunate-lyyy, I have the keeey, to escape reality. And you might see me tonight with an illegal smile, it doesn't cost very much, but it lasts a long while. And won't you please tell the man I didn't kill anyone, I's just trying to have me some fun.") One song has a verse which goes: "I heard God and Buddah/We're singing at the savior's feast/And up in the sky/An Arab rabbi/Was feeding Quaker Oats to a Priest". There's a sharp indictment of the religious state of the world, and the middle of the song is wildly funny. Prine has a knack for couching serious statements in whimsical terms, which can make almost unbearable tragedy easier to swallow. At first his singing tended to be a bit rough, but while the songs on his other two albums, SWEET REVENGE and DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH are less powerful than the best of his earlier work, his voice has settled into a much more effective instrument for conveying his lyrics.

(( So far in this issue I have tried to keep out of what other people have been saying. I had hoped that my will power would be a little stronger than it has turned out to be.

Anyhow, I have found everything that Roger has written so far interesting for the simple reason that it is all in a field that I know nothing about and which I care little for and will most likely continue to display the most shocking ignorance of. On the other hand, I cannot help myself from wondering out loud (on this occasion) what all this has to do with with music. Roger, and just about everybody will immediately jump up and scream that it means an awful lot and I might bend a little and agree with them. HOWEVER in my humble opinion people who play and sing and listen to folk music (and it might be a point worth think about if the music these people make is folk music in any strict definition of the word) have much realisation that while they are still playing in the mainstream of Western music they are slowly but surely relegating themselves to the position of those who made folk music in the middle ages and now have to be made presentable to people with tonally trained ears before their songs can be appreciated. Not that people shouldn't be allowed to make themselves and their art obsolete... And maybe I'm being a little harsh and a little premature considering the popular line of thought which really does seem to regard the traditional music as the only real music.))

Sadly, only Lightfoot has hit the pop charts in America with consistency, although Joni Mitchell is finally making hits with her own recordings. The biggest audience for music in America is for bubble-gum pop rock,



and trash. Elton John is an incredibly talented musician, and some of the lyrics of Bernie Taupin writes for him are deeply moving and bitingly satiric in their social comment; yet his big hits have been set in a rockin' and rollin' framework. So the best song ever written about the nostalgia from the Fifties is "Crocodile Rock", which as a single record had the significant second verse cut out. (It comes from a fine album called DON'T SHOOT ME, I'M ONLY THE PIANO PLAYER). The problem is that to be a superstar, one has to espouse the Rock-n-Roll SuperStar Myth; one has to jump around and shout onstage, and Elton would look kind of ridiculous doing that while singing a soft love song like "Your Song" or "Friends" or "Blue for Baby and Me".

As for Classical Music, there are some Genuine Classical Groups. Like Emerson, Lake and Palmer, who play electronic, rock and roll versions of classical songs as well as their own compositions. They have done many fine songs, like "Luck Man", "Still, You Turn Me On", and "From the Beginning" which are all finely orchestrated; their classical performances, though, tend to be a bit loud and feature long, crashing drum solos, and at a recent large Rock Concert in California, Carl Palmer's piano rose into the air and started turning somersaults while he played it. For real! Former rock-n-roller Neil Diamond uses classical orchestrations to back up his moody, often introspective songs, and they work well in both socially conscious songs like "Done Too Soon" and "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother", or a pleasant melody like "Song Sung Blue". A group called The Electric Light Orchestra perform classical music using violins, bass fiddles and organ as well as electric guitars; and Rick Wakeman, a stunning keyboard performer, has composed fantastic classical compositions and arrangements on his albums, THE SIX WIVES OF HENRY VIII and JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH. Walter Carlos' SWITCHED ON BACH and soundtrack from A CLOCKWORK ORANGE are still selling very well, even if none of the songs from any of these albums ever makes it very big on the American singles charts. Songs like "Billy, Don't Be A Hero" do much better here.

((And they do just as well everywhere I reckon. Anyhow Roger, I hate to have to tell you this but from the above paragraph I get the idea that you don't have a very clear idea of what classical music might be - not that anybody has really, but your ideas seem to be even less enlightened than most.

For a start the only person out of the lot I would let anywhere near classical music would be Carlos and that would be only because he was pretty faithful to the composers he borrowed from. On the other hand while Rick Wakeman might be a "stunning" pianist he seems to know next to nothing about how to compose a halfway decent piece of music, even by the oldtime standards which I don't happen to be too fond of. Due to a stroke of absolute bad luck I was forced to sit through a playing of JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH and it is one of the most staggering abominations to have ever been forced into my ears. That guy simply lacks a decent musical imagination and perception.

Getting onto Emerson,

Lake and Plamer, bashing out the themes from well known bits of classical music has absolutely nothing to do with the music as it existed in its

original form. And it doesn't matter much how exciting the music might happen to be if you want to claim it as classical.

As for Neil Diamond getting his music orchestrated by a real symphony orchestra. Big Deals.))

Reaching deep into our material folder the first article I seem to have pulled out is from Roger Sween and this is the article that I guess I should preface a little, mainly how this interesting piece happened to fall into my hands.

A while back I got an idea for a science fiction/historical novel or play set on the Ballarat goldfields in the 1850's. I don't have much personal experience in things that happened quite that far back so I went along to the main library in Melbourne and spent a lot of time trying to dredge up the dates of the various anti-chinese riots that took place. After a couple of days research I'd come across some interesting bits and pieces but no hint even of where the riots might have happened, let alone when. Now it occurred to me that this sort of information should be printed somewhere and there must be some way of getting to it but I had no success and the librarians couldn't help me much either.

A while later Roger and I began corresponding (I'll be printing one of his letters later in the issue most likely) and it turned out that he was doing a spot of work in the library area. I told him the same thing I've just told you and suggested an article to tell me where I'd gone wrong and the way libraries try to counter this problem. This article is the response.

(By the way you might be interested to know that I came across the dates of the riots later on, quite by accident in a book which dealt primarily with immigrants of various nationalities on the goldfields. Dealing with the Americans the author remarked that it might be more than coincidence that the three most remarkable anti-chinese riots on the goldfields all took place on various July 4th's. It seems you Americans have been giving us bad habits for a long time now.)

## HOW BOOLEAN CAN YOU GET?

*by Roger Sween*

Information retrieval, to begin with, is a misnomer when it is applied to the traditional library operations and when it is conjured up to indicate what is going to happen to us in the foreseeable future. The typical retrieval operation does not retrieve information; it retrieves documents. And just maybe, depending on how resourceful one is in casting his net and how sophisticated he is in dragging it in, those documents may include the information the person is after.

What libraries do is establish files of documents. They buy books, periodicals, audio-visual packages; they may acquire government publications, manuscripts, and other records. They then arrange these records in some kind of fashion and have keys with tags on them for finding specific citations in the files. When someone comes into a library, looking for information, their need has to be translated into the terms



of the keys, and has to be carried out among the files. Because libraries do not process documents as they receive them into information, they must alternatively process a person's need for information into a scheme that will net the appropriate document.

It is amazing how many people don't recognise what libraries have done. And librarians don't do much to clear up the situation. During the nineteenth century, the public library movement, notably in the United States, Britain, and Germany, moved rapidly to full service for the great mass of its citizens. In the U.S., prominently, this meant open stacks and a classified arrangement -- twin engines of democratizing the library.

Now for the sake of retrieval, there is very little need for a classified system. To put similar books together by subject may make retrieval slightly more efficient, but libraries got along for hundreds of years without classification, and it does seem strange that it was only after libraries became enormous, and classifying them became expensive, that they began to be classified. The reason was that with open stacks, classification was seen to be a helpful simplification for the public.

Where classification has been developed primarily as retrieval devices for closed stacks, books would receive as many classification numbers as their contents warranted; the notation by which they could be found was some other address altogether. But when book stacks were opened to the public, the classification took over as location devices in order to facilitate browsing. However, many library users look upon classification as a retrieval device, bypassing whatever catalogs and indexes the library provides, and going straight to the section of books where they think that they are going to find everything on the subject of their desire. Because of this naivete, I worry that libraries have deceived the user, and in their desire to be helpful and democratic by opening the stacks, they have really perpetrated a great disservice on library users.

To effectively and efficiently use a library, you have to have 1) a clear idea of what it is that you are after; 2) knowledge of the resources of the library as they are suited to answering your question; 3) knowledge of the ways in which suitable resources are labeled; 4) the ability to translate your need into the labels employed by the library; 5) the creativeness and ingenuity to include approaches that are not obvious; and 6) the mental dexterity to exclude citations that will deliver only garbage. I may have simplified the picture overmuch, but this is basically what the average library user needs in order to overcome more than the routine kind of information.

Every time I talked to a group who was being trouped through the library for some kind of orientation, I worried that I was lying to them. The library can only be explained to a class of people in a generalized way. Whatever specialized needs they had with all their own peculiarities were being glossed over in the presentation that I was making to the group. I tried to warn them that I was lying, but in most cases they didn't much care. It wasn't their idea to be in the library in the first place. Somebody else had thought that it was a good idea for them.



I began to think that the best thing that could be done for the users, besides putting all the material behind closed doors, or refusing to give any more orientation sessions, was to grab each one as he or she came in the door and say, "Do you have a question?" Then another librarian stands at the exit, nabbing everybody as they go out, asking, "Did you get your question answered?" Libraries do try to provide this kind of personalized service at reference or information desks, but it is amazing how few people take advantage of it. They don't like to bother the librarian, whom they regard as having better things to do, or they don't want to admit their ignorance, or they have tried using the librarian before -- locally or in another place -- and have met with poor results at best, hostility at worst.

So libraries stumble along, giving some kind of service; they're not sure just what. In the meantime, the files of information get bigger and bigger. With bigness comes difficulty. You would think that the larger the library, the more likelihood of a person finding what he wanted. But the reverse is true. With size comes complexity. Daniel Gore, the American gadfly of librarianship, reports in the February 1975 American Libraries, that users cannot find 40-60% of the books which the library owns. Yet in fifty years of library literature, this problem is considered in only half a dozen articles, and those mostly dealing with the question of duplicates.

Apparently we aren't doing so well in libraries. To do better I urge that the libraries do more not in explaining their collections or their organizations, but in explaining their services. Just what does a reference librarian do anyway? Well; a reference librarian is a person, something like you, but more virtuous, no doubt -- curious, intelligent, resourceful, reverent and brave. But the big advantage that a reference librarian has over an outsider is that the librarian has gone through training -- normally a year in the U.S., netting a master's degree, during which year's time the rudiments of librarianship have been inculcated -- and more importantly the librarian has the jump on the typical lay user of the library in experience. You may visit the library from time to time, but the librarian lives there. By so doing, the librarian ought to be up on the latest, which is an important consideration since libraries are machines with a million moving parts, and the parts change.

The ideal library search begins in a negotiated question. It is the professional duty of a librarian to help the user articulate his question, translate it into the terms of the library parlance, and then to help the user assess which are the likely places to look for information, and which are the likely documents found there. Now if you want a fact, that is, a piece of non-copyrightable data, the librarian can most likely take you straight to it. Libraries anticipate these kinds of questions and build up reference collections, running from a few dozen to a few thousand titles. In the reference collection are all the dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks, almanacs, outlines, histories, collections, indexes, abstracts, bibliographies, and the like that are compiled and organized to deliver facts. And a good reference librarian is the information retrieval system which can instantaneously, faster than a speeding bullet,

connect your request with the desired information.

But some times the facts are not so clear cut and obvious. I once spent eight hours trying to find information on when the attitude of prayer changed from the upright, open armed, lifted head expression of the ancients to the bowed head, folded hands, kneeling figure of the middle ages. The reason I didn't find it could have been that I didn't structure my search properly (I doubt that!), that the library didn't have the proper materials for answering the question (it was a secular university), or that the answer to the question does not exist. It is very hard to find negative information, someplace saying, "The idea that the American Indians practiced blood-brother relationships is not true."

Now in the twentieth century, we are expecting great things from the computer. The machinery is becoming more and more powerful as to capacity and sophistication. Librarianship for a long time has hankered after the computer as a means of helping to solve some of its problems, and gradually through the sixties computers were adapted to library needs, especailly for such technical operations as circulation control and acquisitions which require huge amounts of record keeping, and where, therefore, this expensive machinery could prove to be cost effective. One such thoroughly thought out operation was begun in the late 1960's at the Ohio College Library Centre (OCLC) in Columbus, Ohio. The idea was to use a central computer to store cataloging information with member libraries on-line to the computer for purposes of cataloging new material in their own libraries. If the catalog data was in the computer, use it; if not, do original cataloging and put the data in so that when another member came to catalog the same item, the data would be there for them. The idea grew. OCLC now has 480 members in 30 states. A couple of other cooperatives have begun in the U.S. and these may interface with OCLC. The Library of Congress, which we look to for leadership in this country, has been outstripped by a bunch of college and university libraries. OCLC may very well be in a short time the basis of a national bibliographic network. By the end of the year, the original computer will be backed up with two more, larger computers; member libraries will begin not only to add new entries, but they will go back to their files existing before OCLC, and imput their entire holdings. Once this is done, those libraries will no longer need card catalogs. Their key to their own collections, as well as to the book collections of all other members, will be in the computer.

Now it is one thing for a cataloger to call up a record, but it is another thing for a user to do so. What is expected is that users will have to be taught to use the system, or they will be driven to reference librarians who will negotiate all questions before the user goes off to look for the material or request it from another library.

As a first step in using the OCLC data base for retrieval, Battell Laboratories in Columbus (Ross Pavlac works there) is developing the software by which the computer can be queried. The programming is reported to involve queries by the terms in the traditional Library of Congress subject headings as well as by words in the titles of the books. Terms will be selected and requested to interact in a coordinate fashion.

Here is where we get to Boolean algebra.

Say a person is interested in all the case studies dealing with the topic of innovation. If he was going to proceed in the traditional manner, he would soon be frustrated because in the card catalog "case Studies" is a facet of other subject headings, treated for each as a subdivision. He would have to begin at the A's and go through all the subjects for which the case study treatment is likely: Agriculture - Research - Case Studies, Art - Study and Teaching - Case Studies, Biology - Research - Case Studies, etc. Now the topic of innovation is the other aspect of his desire, so the computer would be instructed to display at the terminal, which now replaces the card catalog, a listing of -- and here the wording becomes critical -- all references dealing with change, or innovation, or research, or discovery, or invention, or... however many terms one can come up with equivalent to "innovation"... and case studies. Schematically the search would look like this in Venn diagrams:

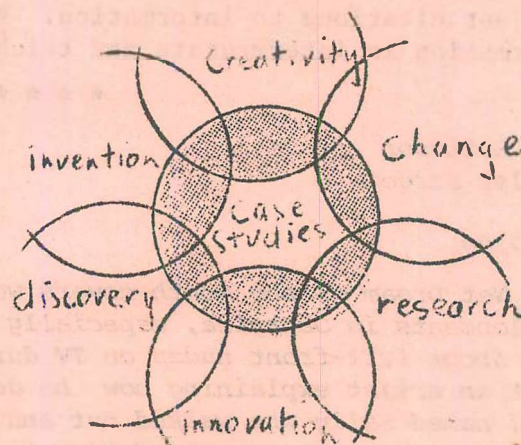
The search includes areas for possible retrieval through the "or" and excludes irrelevant material through the "and".

Where the areas intersect -- the shaded area -- are all (we hope) the relevant case studies on innovation. Because of traditional subject heading practices on which this OCLC project is to rest, I predict that the system will not be very precise in gathering information. The typical problem with subject headings for books is that they are shallow; they label the book as a whole, but overlook its

parts. For retrieval on the chapter level, more precise indexing is needed. But because a system like OCLC frees catalogers (indeed catalogers worry that they will lose their jobs because of it), it should now be possible to do deeper indexing of documents.

But the OCLC story is not the whole picture. A whole batch of other data bases are being created as standard bibliographic works are being placed on magnetic tape: Chem Abstracts, New York Time Index, Science Citation Index, Congressional Documents Information Service, etc. In fact in one case, the National Bibliography of Agriculture, publication in the paper form has ceased. It is simply too big and too expensive to produce in codex form. The bibliography is current only on tape, a situation which ought to cause all land-grant colleges and universities in the U.S. with agricultural programs to investigate the possibility of getting on-line to this particular system.

The complexity of using these various data bases exceeds that of the card catalog because their contents are more specialized and more





detailed, or specific. Also they are very expensive. The present technology does not allow for hard copy printouts of data over telephone lines at a very high speed, something like only ten characters per minute; you would be better off to get a number of citations batched by the computer where the data base is located, and mailed to you. The delay would save about 90% of the cost of a direct transmission because computer print trains go at a rate of upwards of 300 characters per minute. Most operational data bases, except for the New York Times Data Base, are intended for experts, research scientists, faculty members, and the like. With use, the cost may come down, but the complexity will remain, and it is an open question now whether undergrads and lay people will be using these data bases much.

There remains the possibility that large library collections will not need to be proliferated around the country. Instead we can have displayed or mailed to us what we need, and we really won't have to venture from home to get it. Perhaps also data bases will be established that are pure information -- the U.S. Census tapes is already an example of this -- and not just citations to information. But in the meantime retrieval of information is intermediate and tricky.

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*Your Wet Dream of the Month covers would appear to have pressaged developments in Ostrylia, especially those with TV. I recently saw an item about full-front nudes on TV during adult viewing hours, something about an artist explaining how he does body profiles, and involving a model named Sally who walked out and laid herself down on the artist's viewscope (or whatever the device he uses in his work). The word is there were several hundred cards, letters and phone calls protesting lewdity on the tube.*

((Gee, I don't remember seeing that, I must look at the box more often it seems. However there is supposed to be enough nudity on Australian tv these days in such wonderful shows as "Number 96" and "The Box". I have seen a copule of episodes of each of these shows but missed the exciting parts and I've had to put up with dull plots and tired acting instead. Others, more dedicated to the antics on these shows, report that they have seen naked women with no clothes on from time to time but from what they have said it seems that the little notices the shows get in the papers to tell you what's going to happen next Wednesday or whatever should also include little notes telling everybody that Friday is the night that sex-symbol X will strip before the camera and then indulge in simulated sex with Sex Symbol B - both being women. It would do a lot for the ratings on those particular nights and also raise a lot of blood pressure.))

*But such goings-on does attract attention. Dave Singer used the cover of RATAPLAN 15 to attract new members to the RPI SF Club. Since the sex*

ratio is 9 to 1 there weren't many coeds around to scream sexist fan pig at Dave. Keep up those covers, and keep RATAPLAN coming. Frank and I both received copies with the \*A\* in red, but Dave Singer did not. How do you expect Albany State to bounce back and out-member RPI if we don't have a table filled with fanzines featuring the Wet Dream of the Month on the cover. By the way, your Dream for issue 16 either has bad bone structure in her right arm or else it was drawn out of proportion a wee bit.

((Neither John, this isn't an stf fanzine for nothing you know and the subject for the last cover was one of the sex-sirens from a far distant inter-galactic civilization. I have been informed that there it is fashionable to have such minor devaitions from the norm and that in fact such minor disfigurements are regarded as being highly evocative. You were lucky to have been permitted to see such a thing without paying the standard fee of 3 million Galactic Credits.

I hope that you enjoy the cover of this issue, if it doesn't help to add several hundred members to your club it will be because you didn't try too hard.))

I'm still waiting around for Helen Reddy to show up on a local radio talk show so I can call in to ask her about the reported case of Vegemite addiction. I thought I was going to get a chance during the song festival they had in Saratoga around Labor Day weekend but no such luck.

Can you get your grandmother to write another remeniscence? I'd like to see some more of those.

((So would I, so would a lot of other people according to the response the first article brought in. We'll see wh at we can do.))

A one-page portfolio!? Or was it strictly for the copies you mailed out of the country? Too, too short. Keep Valma drawing. The added illos and better use of space around your type is a plus feature.

((Why not a one page portfolio? I'm keeping Valma drawing and by the way, you've reminded me that I'm supposed to be putting art into this issue. With a break of about a year since the last issue, blush, I had regressed or something like it and forgotten to worry about that problem. Maybe also I'm studying from Bruce Gillespie and his beautiful fanzines full of nothing but type.))

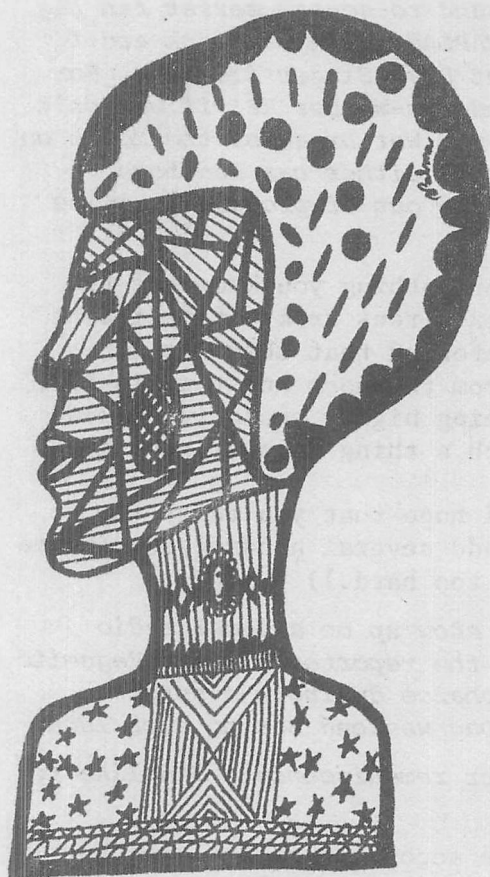
By the way, is that \$1.60 for 4 issues \$A or \$US?

((of course it's real money, Australian money. Your Mickey Mouse money doesn't spend too well over here and when it does it seems to go not very far at all. The last time I looked \$1 (US) was worth about 75¢ Australian.))

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I think I might owe you an apology as in some letter of mine I said some really freaky things. This, you might no doubt guess, was due to





(probably) one of Alan Fitzpatrick's wild apple cider tasting/orgy/parties. Al and myself have this thing about apple cider and whenever he gets in a supply of the stuff I can smell it a mile away and usually end up drinking it for him. Wasn't there some great argument about wineo's? Hmmm - I'm all for apple cider...

((You can drink whatever sort of rot gut stuff you like. On the other hand I excuse you from any blame that I might have held against you. Anything done under the influence of apple cider AND Al Fitzpatrick simply has to be forgiven.))

Nice cover by Steve Campbell. You should have put it on the outside of RATAPLAN and let the postman oggle all the way to the letter box. No slight on Valma of course but I like her cartoons better than her usual, abstract fillers.

((I hope you enjoy being put right next to one.))

I'll try to restrict myself to commenting on subjects that interest me and I know something about (there's a difference). But wait, what's this? Bernie Bernhouse with an article about commuting and then you go on to describe Sydneyites as "horrible zombie types"! Time for an argument about train travel - and no prizes for guessing who spends three hours a day travelling on the blasted things. Why... it's even a subject I know about!

When I lived in Melbourne I travelled from Sandringham out to Mount Waverly every day. I would reverse the position and call the Sydneyites inhuman and the Melbourneites "H.Z.T.'s. Melbourne travellers are at least lucky in that they have comparatively new cars compared with those in Sydney whose (apart from some double deckers) carriages can be found to date back to 1928.

((Ha! You obviously haven't seen historic pictures of Jolliemont railway yards dated about 1922 with exactly the same rolling stock that most Melbourne travellers have to ride in today.))

Anyway... during my train travelling in Melbourne a gang of young toughs got on my carriage late one night and proceeded to demolish nearly



all the fittings inside with such instruments as hammers, knives and screwdrivers. I was politely asked to stand up so they could smash up the seat with a hatchet which they proceeded to do with great enjoyment. The fruits of their labours (stuffing, broken glass, torn fabric, etc.) was tossed out the door at suitable locations (over bridges, etc.). True, this may not characterise the commuting Melbourneite who is better known for playing a radio loudly in your ear, treading on your toes, dropping the questionable contents of a pie and sauce on you and generally giving a zombie like stare at you when you sit across the aisle.

((You and I seem to have travelled on a totally different transport system. Even though I ride the Sandringham line I have never been asked to stand so that my seat could be demolished or had things dropped on me or had radios played in my ear (except when it was mine - with earplug - and then there was too much interference when the engine was pulling instead of coasting). And it seems to me that if you stare at people sitting across from you they will only Zombie back, especially if they are young and female and pretty. This is unless you are like myself, handsome and suave...))

You also have those (unseemly word left out at this point) dog carriages or whatever the damn things are called. If they aren't oppressive I don't know what is! Incidentally, only four stations of the city circle in Sydney are underground. All are relatively minor anyway when compared with Central. None of the 100+ metropolitan stations are underground so your criticism of taking four stations out of the whole system strikes me as being a rather puny reason for not wanting to live in Sydney.

((Outside the city circle I suppose that your trains aren't any worse or better than the ones in Melbourne. However I simply don't like the tin can feeling of travelling underground in packed trains and I really discovered this when Valma and I got to New York where the trains, with very rare exceptions, are all underground. Once is a bit of an experience but more than that gets truly oppressive... AND Barry Smotroff assured us that it wasn't peak travel. However I discovered the solution to the New York trains, reading books. Just so long as you keep a track of the stations, I hadn't realised how much I relied on the scenery to tell me where I was on the Melbourne trains.

Anyhow, apart from trains I reckon that I could think of a few more reasons not to go and live in Sydney. I like the fans in Sydney (and Brisbane and Adelaide) a lot but much prefer the insane fans in Melbourne. Melbourne and Minneapolis have a few things in common apart from the "M" and I think one of them might be that both groups of fans are "crazy".))

And this is by way of introduction to an article by one of the "crazies" who has taken a strangle hold on Melbourne fandom since the previous issue of RATAPLAN. Not exactly a strangle hold, but he's a nice person to have around. In fact I will extend myself a little and say that if it weren't for he and his brother Derrick, Melbourne fandom at the moment might be a rather dull place. Well, we have this WorldCon thing coming up soon and it might cause people to go slightly mad every so often but it's not the sort of thing one is generally proud about and wishes to mention in



fanzines. So I won't mention exactly how Robin Johnson has been acting recently.

## MARRIAGE SHOULD WORK

*by Don Ashby*

Proposition: Marriage should work. First postulated by Ken Ford at a seminar on optimism versus pessimism in romantic love.

I will examine this postulate without going into the possible ramifications of the possible changes of emphasis brought about by changes in stress and inflection.

It is of course a statment that is obviously and demonstratably true. I will, in the course of this disertation prove this, and prove that is is true in all cases. The romantic idea of love always works and its application and success is on the increase. We are heading into a happier world.

When attempting a problem of this kind, it is necessary to have a model. A model that delineates the parameters of our terms of reference-

A couple meet either socially, or in the course of their employment. Something happens: a mysterious alchemy that causes them to continually seek each other out. They do not feel at ease or correct unless they are in each others company. This is called falling-in-love.

After a time, they marry. They then represent a unique combination in the animal world: a place of peace and security where the duo can find strength and fulfilment to face a hostile world. Troubles come, but putting up a united front they can over-come them. In a world of stress, turmoil and imperfection marriage is the perfect answer to happiness.

I am sure you are waiting for the BUT, the catch 22. Well think again, is there really one, are you sure you have not been guilty of misinter. pretating the evidence, natural cynicism leading you to erroneous conclusions? True love exists, it can be found by you today: standing in the rain, waiting for a bus or at a party. Eventually, everyone meets that certain someone.

Evidence for the continued and rising prevelance of romantic love can be found in many areas: the media, national census statistics, the increase in de-facto relationships and rise in homosexuality.

Let us first examin the media. Audio-visual presentations on television and plays and cinema continually expound the reality and truth of romantic love. All the popular series and singleton presentations are based around themes of Romantic Love. Films like "Love Story", "Romeo and Juliet", "West Side Story" and the more recent films like Russel's "Marla" and "The Music Lovers" all show th e ultimate triumph of Romantic Love.

The Audio-Visual presentations that dump on the Love mythos are generally under the heading of the avante-garde school, intellectual embittered men



and women who are emotionally and psychologically disturbed, these films are very rarely popular; they are frequented by the emotionally sterile and the intellectually atrophied.

Even in the humble media: the adverts, the travelogues, love is a constantly present element. People fall in love over Levi Jeans and Benson and Hedges cigarettes. The advertising people realise the actuality and omnipresent existence of true love in our society.

Then there is the news-papers and magazines, ever full of fictional and non-fictional examples of the triumph of love and its' place in the nuclear family and in society. To suggest that these publications are perpetrating some giant hoax is stretching the ground of credulity a bit far, even for the most hardened skeptics amongst us.

The doom mongers and the cynics in our society point to the divorce rate as evidence of the failure of marriage and the Love ideal. However, their blind intent to discredit all that is wholesome and good, all that is constructive and creative, in our society makes it impossible for them to see the evidence in any clear and realistic light. The increase of separations and divorces shows clearly that more people are falling in love and that they are doing it more often. You can see of course what I am getting at; person A falls in love with person B. They get married and settle down. Then person A falls in love with person C and person B falls in love with person D. Person A & B separate and A marries C and B marries D. As you can see there has now been three cases of true love, before there was only one. Before divorce was made easier this could not have happened. An increase in the divorce rate shows that the romantic ideal of Love is in fact more successful than it used to be (this could be due to it's promotion through the media).

If you examine the Romantic Literature it becomes plain that many of the great love stories resulted in suicide by one, or both parties (Anthony and Cleopatra and Lady Chatterly's Lover). People have attributed the increase of suicide to the loss of identity in society and increased loneliness etc. However it is of course because more and more people are discovering the grand passion, the ultimate in the true love situation. They are killing themselves for love. Apart from the obvious point that true love is on the increase, it shows a more subtle fact; the normal curve of the love experience is shifting towards heightened awareness and greater depth of experience. More and more people are discovering the grand passion, if the curve is normal: then less and less people are not falling in love. Romantic Love is on the increase.

The reference to the rise in de-facto relationships in terms of the increase of Romantic Love is to obvious to go into. People can't wait to get married, as they want to squeeze as many different True Love experiences into their lives as they can.

The relevance of increasing homosexuality to the rise in the success and quality of true love is not as obvious as the above. People are discovering that True Love exists across the sexes and within the same one. Thus the type s of Romantic Love situations is increasing. There is now more variety as well as an increase in quality.

That ancient and venerable scholar of human nature, Chaucer, had one of his characters wear a locket that said "Amor Vincet Omnia". At last his words are coming true, more and more people are discovering this. Romantic Love is conquering the world.

Some of you are no doubt saying to yourselves, "It hasn't happened to me yet." Well consider this: part of the beauty and delight of any future pleasant experience is the anticipation. You have all that delightful anticipating to do. In this world everybody is destined to discover their own true love. I leave you with this last thought; if you have repudiated what I have said and do not agree with me, consider that belief or disbelief can make something so, or not so.

\* \* \* \* \*

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Against my better judgement I decided to start a letter to you. I phrase it that way because I enjoyed RATAPLAN thoroughly and will probably end up writing a several-page loc that will cost me an endless amount of time, time that should be spent in writing a story. So now you know. You've probably cost me the plot line and God knows how much writing income. I was so mad when I realised the above that I tried to tear my arms out, but once I got the left one out of the socket I found it damn hard to reach for the right one.

I'm all in favour of any suggestion that returns to the original meaning of awards. Anyone who saw the Glicksohn's faces when they received the Hugo knows that it meant something to them, but by and large Hugoes are becoming uncontrollable. Having an award or recognition from people of the area to the people of the area sounds like a good idea to me.

Actually, I like the Torcon committees idea of presenting certificates to all the nominees; if you've been nominated, that in itself is an honour.

Why don't we have Hugoes awarded for the best fan article, the best sercon article, the best sercon columnist, the best book reviewer, the most well-disguised hoax...

((Don't ask me...))

The idea of William Shatner trading quips on an awards show fairly stuns me. His personality is---um---shall we say, abrasive. Occasionally he is on one or other of the thousands of game shows that proliferate on day time tv around these parts, and usually manages to talk himself into a hole at least once. For example, the conversation on one show turned to the topic of intelligence. Shatner looked at the host and said "if you kept your mouth shut and stopped thinking, you might start to look intelligent", which may have been true, but...

Frank asks if Americans are always pushy; I can't, or course, answer objectively, but I suspect that it is true. The whole idea in going anyplace is not in seeing where you're going, but in how fast you can get



there. That's one of the reasons, though not the major one, that the train system in the US died, at least insofar as carrying passengers is concerned.

Personally, I like the train. I don't drive, and I like anything that will take me over the surface. I tried a plane once and I didn't like it; the only interesting thing on the entire flight was the pilot pointing out that from a certain height (if you were flying during the day) the cities disappeared, and the only signs of life were the cultivated fields. I looked and he was right.

((Agreed that you don't get to see much from the inside of an aeroplane but in a lot of cases it is preferable to get some place than to see the countryside. If Valma and I hadn't flown all around the US we wouldn't have had as much time as we did to see the people and to get a fair idea of what the cities are like. In particular it took only three hours to get from Minneapolis to Seattle and I imagine the trip would have taken something like three days. Maybe if we had had more time, but on the other hand I wouldn't much appreciate the country side if that was all we had to look at for three days, we only got to travel on the surface for any real distance for three times and I think that we really appreciated those occasions more because they were something special rather than the norm. Bob Vardeman took us for a day drive around a bit of New Mexico and the scenery was impressive, the same for the train ride from New York to Rhode Island and back and the drive that Jim Young and Bev Swanson took us for down into southern Minnesota was immensely enjoyable.))

In Seattle recently we've had a tremendous public debate over whether the "old Broadway High School" building should be demolished or left standing. It's only 30 or 40 years old, but some people consider it an historical site. It looks like a prison of the old style - stale, dark, oppressive. The windows allow what little light has wandered into the place to escape. In recent years it has been converted to a community college (sort of jumping-off place between a high school and a university) and probably is the only one in the country in which its residents plan prison breaks.

Back when I was attending, I was responsible for having broadcast a bomb threat, but that's quite another story.

(Which is no reason for you not telling us about it.))

It's old and it's ugly, yet people want to save it. The nice buildings that should be saved get torn down for parking lots.

One last note, before I discard the whole mess; next to the Old Broadway High School (that's become its name through popular usage) Seattle Community College has erected a brand new building, very nice looking, with columns and brick court yards and nice lighting and fountains and all. I was talking to a friend, who is a student there, and he agreed that the building was beautiful, as long as it was empty. "It's really nice, but they didn't have people in mind when they built it. As it is now, all the halls and stairways are headed wrong, and you can't help



but have a jam of people if any two groups are intent on reaching different destinations."

John Alderson leads me to speculation (!) about the truthfulness of Australians, but since I know that none of you people are prone to exaggeration, I'll accept his story. The only time I was ever out fishing was when I was twelve, and didn't know any better. Not only that, but I was taken out on the water by a Catholic priest and an Irishman at that. How was I to know?

I'll leave out the details, but mention that I did catch a fish. My sister (John was right, women don't belong out fishing) was stung by this fact, and set out on her own. A few minutes later she came back loudly asserting that she, too, had caught a fish. She had it on her line, but there was a certain aura about to suggest that the fish had help in snagging the bait.

Mainly it had been dead for about three days. Marietta had found it floating on the surface of the lake.

I found riding the subways quite enjoyable while I was in New York, but I only traveled at such peak hours as 11pm, 2.30 in the afternoon, and so on. I particularly enjoyed Toronto's transit system, though, which was clean and pleasant and rapid and had all sorts of things to recommend it.

A neuromuscular junction is the internal interplay that makes possible the phrase "if you had one more neuron you could make a synapse."

((I'm glad I asked.))

My only previous contact with spreads has been in covering my bed. I don't use cheese spreads, as they are not food; therein, I think, lies the crux of the problem. Many people use these cheese spreads (in the US, of "CheeseWhiz") and discuss it as though it were 1) edible and 2) digestible once eaten. The truth is that it builds up in your system, plugging first your gastro-intestinal tract and then "spreading" (hence its name) to block off the lymphatic system. Gradually, over a period of years, it builds up an interface between neuron and synapse until no internal communication is possible within the body.

On the subjects of bathrooms in general, my parents had a "loo" up in Alaska, where my father was an oil engineer and a gold miner on the side. When they moved into the house, that bathroom was painted a dull, flat black. At the time they didn't have enough money (or enough paint - it was a luxury item in Fairbanks) to redo the room so they did the next best thing. They cut all the best cartoons and humorous articles and jokes and comics out of the papers and pasted them on the walls of the john.

The only serious drawback was the fact that people would go in with the best of intentions and remain until everyone else in the house was reduced to a quivering pile on the floor, shaking violently and holding their genitals in agony.

But that's a terrible story, and I'd never tell it.



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Like Alex Gas, I do a lot of reading in the bathtub. I probably do 50% of my reading there. You see, because I'm a distance runner I soak in hot water almost every day after my workout, and often twice a day since I frequently do double workouts. So that's perhaps 30-40 minutes of reading time per day. The only time I ever got anything wet was when I was reading Kwalhioqua #1. Without taking my eyes off the page I reached up to turn off the water, but accidentally turned on the shower instead. Quite a shock.

Ray Nelson's letter is the sort of thing that could set me off for a few thousand words. Unfortunately, since this is the first RATAPLAN I've seen, his comments are a bit too vague for me to get a firm grip on what he's saying. To say that "there is no audience for anything in the established modern style" is just plain ignorant. True, there's not enough of an audience to make performances of modern music immensely profitable, hence few performances, but there most certainly is an audience. Every year the National Gallery of Art hosts an American Music Festival, which includes a solid week of concerts of mostly modern music. When I attended the performance of Hovanes' 17th symphony the place was packed and the reception was enthusiastic. Nelson is right about modern operas, a situation I curse whenever I think about it. Wozzeck (1925) is an operatic masterpiece as good as any but it is the only modern opera to make it into the repertoire, and not even it is as solidly established as it should be. This situation caused Prokofiev immense financial difficulty and no end of artistic grief since he was especially drawn to large vocal forms. Of his eight operas my favourite is Betrothal in a Monastery, but you could count on one hand the number of times it has been produced. But the reason for all this is not to be found in the attitudes Nelson describes. The reason I think is that most people are very lazy listeners. No piece of music can be fully understood with only one listening (a fact recognised by composers of the classical period when they established the sonata-allegro form, with its repeat of the exposition section), and most modern music requires especially attentive listening. Most people refuse to make the effort in the first place, or if they do, they give up after one listening. I remember when I first heard Prokofiev's 2nd symphony, I thought it was the most god-awful thing ever composed (Prokofiev had set out to write a symphony "made of iron and steel"), but now it is my favourite of his seven great symphonies.

((Which is all very well except that Prokofiev isn't a particularly modern composer. Like the rest of the world, music has progressed more in the last twenty years than it had in centuries before. Prokofiev is in the old neo-classical school and while that was ultra-modern twenty years ago it is a pretty dead issue now, except for Shostakovich.))

You are very wrong about Mendelssohn, having left out such masterpieces as the Violin Concerto, the Octet, and the 3rd and 4th symphonies.

Referring to a period of music as Victorian is very imprecise to my way of thinking, especially since Mendelssohn would hardly qualify. A barren period? What about Brahms, Dvorak and Tchiakovsky?

((Barren is a good word I would have thought.))

As for Ray Nelson's little groups of "amateurs" who "talk and perform for each other," this is exactly the sort of thing that Schöenberg, Berg and Webern did in Germany, and which also figured prominently in Prokofiev's development while a student at the conservatory in St. Petersburg.

((Which is all well and good except that I think Ray was thinking a little bit closer to modern times than the mentions you've made. However there are always, and have always been, composers who don't get on but then there are composers who do. Just because the composers in Rays area hate each other, or so Ray says, that is no reason for those in the Washington area or here in Melbourne to do the same.))

Perhaps I should clarify just where I stand in my appreciation of modern music. I despise electronic music, and think that most post-Webern atonality is inept. I love Harry Partch, some of Ives, Webern and all the others before Webern. My favourite composer is Prokofiev. I dislike Mahler, who I think was a very unimaginative and dull composer.

((Your loss all the way. Mahler might be long but he isn't dull, and as for unimaginative... I am stunned that anybody could get to be of that opinion. For me music really doesn't start until after serialism and electronic music is the forefront of where music is going.

Still, we had a good argument about this at DISCON, my apologies to those who didn't get a decent chance to chat with me but the temptation to convince Mike that Prokofiev is dull and unimaginative alongside Shostakovich was too much to resist. Even if I didn't succeed.))

Jan Jansen

L.V. Hullebuschstr 197

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So Peter Roberts just managed to swindle me out of 40 fra in support of "Britain is Fine in Seventy-Nine", and still grinning urges a lanky character on the other side of the room over to me, saying I was sitting there impatiently trying to rid myself of money supporting worthy causes and such like. A glance at the badge saying Gary Hoff/Australia, a glance at the booklet with Leigh Edmonds/Publications and here I am 120 fra poorer. Couldn't very well refuse after having received three issues of RATAPLAN, and it did quieten my nagging conscience somewhat.

Didn't get much of a chat with Gary - something that only strikes you when the convention is over - when you realise just how many faces you've just nodded to, waved to or possibly just passed by unknowingly, because of the continual pressure of meeting still others. Which does sum up the pleasures of a convention, doesn't it? Had a lovely time - especially with Ken and Pam Bulmer over here, friends of ever so long ago, and the whole contingent from Birmingham we've known from attending the last



couple of Novacons. Then the active fans here in Belgium I haven't seen the last couple of months... most of the enjoyment was in meeting these people, the programme went to hell right from the start, and blissfully managed to remain that way. Some lovely things did happen, like all the British fans trooping in to see the feature film "Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea" and being confronted with a french spoken version with flemish subtitles. A nicely presented programme booklet, having a full page for Ken Bulmer, four full pages on other foreign visitors, but mentioning Peter Roberts, who'd been invited as fan-guest-of-honour, only as a programme item: one long discussion in English! Phoning my wife late evening with the comment that I wouldn't be home after all like I'd told her, though this probably didn't surprise her in the least. Tasting brandy with Rosen's (?) ginger wine, a wonderful concoction Ray Bradbury prepared. Sitting in the corridor on the floor talking flemish to the left, french to the right and english to passers-by.

And yet there's that quiet nagging worry about the whereabouts of the flemish readers, members of the sfan-organisation that runs the convention... I only saw very few of them. Are they being scared off by the pleiade of international visitors, and the resulting speeches and panels in either english or french? Or by the fact that their presence entails that the most active organisers are too often, too long, in that illustrious international venue, rather than attending to the group they should exist for? I think they're overdoing it - partially by taking the easy way out and inviting outsiders, after all, our little part of the world doesn't contain very many 'big names; as far as fandom or sf is concerned, and we've run out of people to ask... plus the fact of course that being able to put forward a programme with a glittering alluring international flavour does things for organiser's egos.

The way the programme when to pot probably did things to their hearts as well! At least I certainly heard some curses, and they were in flemish.

Nevertheless, the fans from Ghent who ran the convention, this being their second go, and in spite of the slightly sour note above, should be congratulated for their work. I've seen many a fan from that group working from morning till late at night with narry a rest, and I can only feel relieved that I got off so easy. Something to be said perhaps for being old and tired, and especially this year, mostly out of the running because of a change in work-programme at the job.

Of course my passing along the 120 fra shouldn't make you think I'd be coming out there, at least not until they make a hole through the world I can just drop through. Though the flesh is willing, the purse is empty. Highlight of the convention? Stupid rather. Standing there with a couple of englishmen, whose names shall remain unknown, discussing the matter of foreign languages and the inevitable traductions this entailed, with the fan saying he needn't worry about having to translate knowing only english, a friend of his coming up to borrow (or collect) some money, digging up the wrong envelope, and being asked: "then what are you doing with those letters?"

Strangest meeting: on the board, leaving the convention, saw a notice



reading: "Anyone for a walk through Ghent? Contact Irene Kahn". Seeing me reading the notice, and looking around, a woman approached me, and asked whether I wanted to go along. I had to refuse seeing I was on the point of returning to Antwerp with some friends, but noticing she wore a USA ticket, asked her how she'd come to find us. Seems that being on the continent for a holiday, and on the way to the local Youth Hostel, she enquired of a girl carrying a suitcase whether she too was bound for the YH. As she was going to the sf convention, and Irene does read sf, they came on together. I rene didn't know of the con - just pure coincidence. Miracles still happen.

I guess I should say something about the RATAPLANs too. I've enjoyed them as much as I do most fanzines - but rather than attempting to write a regular letter of comment, I thought you might prefer hearing (that should be reading, shouldn't it) some loose commentary on a local event you might not otherwise hear much about.

((Yes, thanks very much for your letter which seems almost to be a small convention report. I must say that from it I get the impression that there might not be too much difference between conventions all over the world, some are bigger than others and some are more sf oriented than the others but trufans seem to go to almost all of them with only one real intention in mind, to sit about and talk with friends.

You've put me in a mind to ask others to write letters (or short articles in fact) along the same lines. I realise that I might be asking for trouble but what the hell. Having been one of the few honoured by fandom to go to far off conventions at fandoms expense I like to try to give others a little of the feeling that we are all together no matter where we live, and you've done that admirably.))

PS: I suppose you may have heard that there are two language groups in Belgium, french and flemish (as near to dutch as not to make any difference), and that the flemish though in numeral majority, are still in various ways being put in a minority, or having to put up with "french only" things. To prove the whole world is going fannish: a flemish activist group is planning to agitate against cinemaowners in capital Brussels who put on french films without flemish subtitles. They are going to let white mice loose during shows.

## THE GREAT BLIZZARD OF 1975

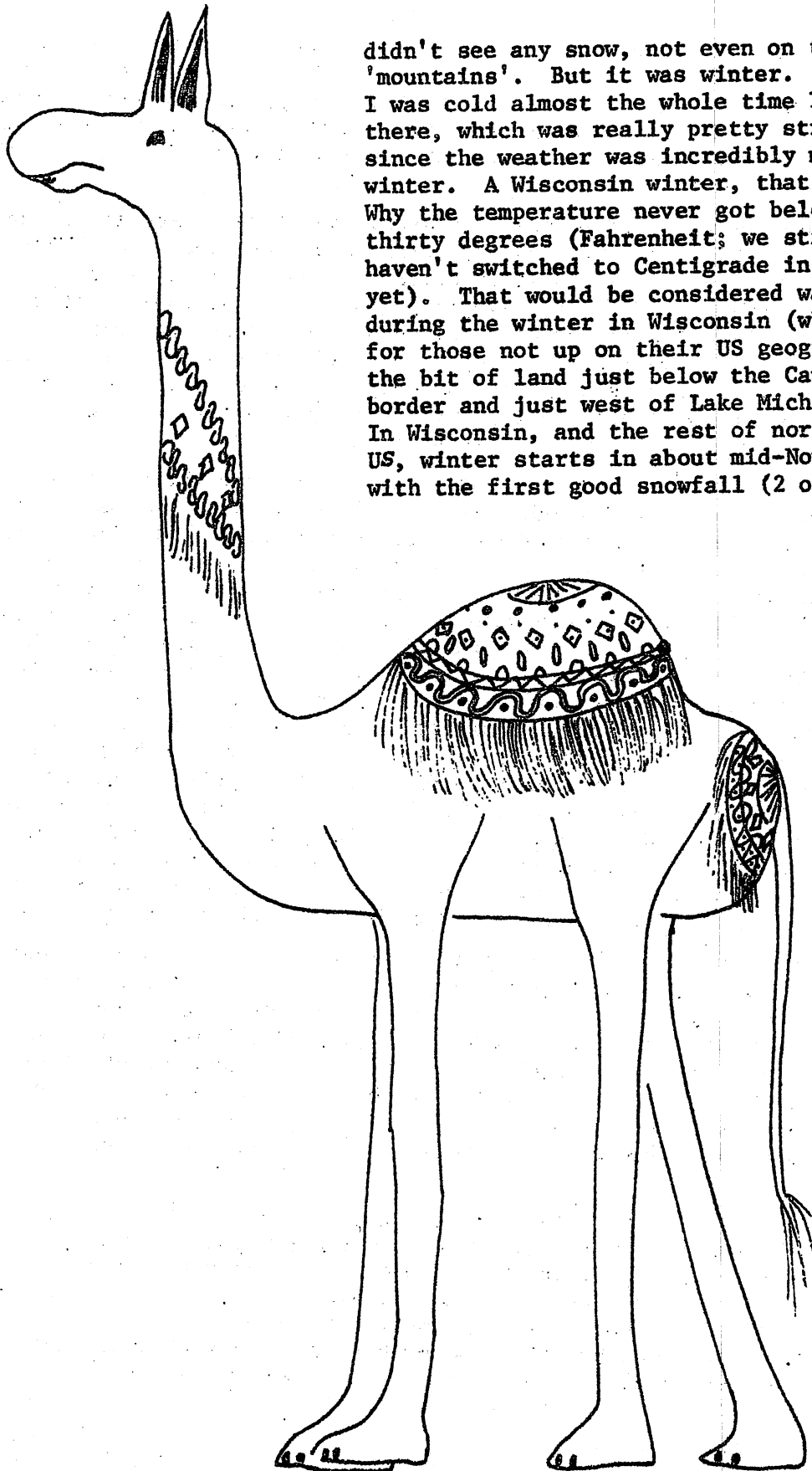
by Lesleigh Luttrell

The other night I had a dream. I dreamed that I was back in Melbourne, for the worldcon in August, 1975, and that it was snowing. Now I'm sure you are all thinking "what a weird dream!" Depending on where you live, you are either thinking "Snowing - in Melbourne!" or "Snowing - during the worldcon!" Well, that's your hemispheric chauvinism showing. Because in Australia, August is the dead of winter. And for anyone who lives in the northern part of North America, winter means snow.

I know it hardly ever snows in Australia. I was there in August and I



didn't see any snow, not even on the 'mountains'. But it was winter. In fact I was cold almost the whole time I was there, which was really pretty strange, since the weather was incredibly mild for winter. A Wisconsin winter, that is. Why the temperature never got below thirty degrees (Fahrenheit; we still haven't switched to Centigrade in the US yet). That would be considered warm during the winter in Wisconsin (which is, for those not up on their US geography, the bit of land just below the Canadian border and just west of Lake Michigan). In Wisconsin, and the rest of northern US, winter starts in about mid-November with the first good snowfall (2 or 3



inches, or so). Of course, the first frosts occurred earlier than that, starting in October and sometimes even September, but that just means there is a bit of a nip in the air. Most of the plants are still alive, the fall flowers keep blooming, the leaves on the trees change color and the people get out their sweaters. But a real native of Wisconsin won't put on a heavy coat just yet.

Late November is when winter really starts. The lakes start to freeze over, although the largest lakes may retain a bit of open water until December. The snow doesn't melt as quickly - some of it will probably stay on the ground all winter. People begin to get out their winter coats and gloves. The leaves have fallen off the trees, the birds, except for a few exceptionally hardy or exceptionally dumb species, have flown south, the grass is dead and the only green you will see for many months is your houseplants and the evergreens (which get dragged into houses in December to become Christmas trees).

The days get shorter and shorter until in mid December there may be only seven or eight hours of daylight, if it isn't cloudy. It makes people begin to think that maybe bears aren't so dumb after all, to sleep most of the winter. The snow begins to fall in larger amounts; 8, 10, 12 or more inches at a time. The temperature may occasionally get above freezing, allowing some of the snow to melt, but not all of it. In the cities, the snow is shovelled off the sidewalk and snowplowed off the streets. The city's snowplows artfully pile snow at the entrances to private driveways, so cars can't get out, or on the curbs, so pedestrians have to wade through drifts whenever they want to cross a street. Snow collects on the corners in piles 3 or 4 feet high; the largest of these piles won't melt completely until April. People put their snowtires on their cars, so they can get some traction on the ice in their driveways and on unplowed roads. In Madison, where I live, the city puts large barrels of sand on every street corner for use by motorists who have gotten stuck in the snow (thrown under the rear wheels it gives you some added traction). But this is still not really winter.

Winter starts officially on December 20 or 21. This is almost immediately followed by Christmas, so it isn't really noticed. At Christmastime, people's houses are filled with visitors, trees, decorations and presents. The houses are kept warm by the extensive baking of cookies and hams going on in the kitchen. If that doesn't keep you warm enough, there is always a snifter of 'Christmas cheer' to be had somewhere. And most likely your Christmas presents will include new socks, sweaters, mufflers and long underwear. So people don't really get too cold in late December.

January is another story. That is when the long underwear comes in handy. By now the lakes are completely frozen and the temperature seldom if ever gets above freezing. In fact there are many days at a time when it doesn't get above zero degrees F. Now, believe it or not, you can stay quite warm outdoors, even when the temperature is twenty below, if you dress right. What does an intrepid northerner like myself put on to walk the fourteen blocks to the university campus from my house? Well, you start with long underwear and an undershirt. Add knee socks, wool



pants, a sweater (possibly two since several layers of thinner clothing will keep you warmer than one equally thick layer) and boots. Before going outdoors, add a heavy coat, a wool cap, mittens and a muffler. Many people, like my husband, wear Air Force parkas with hoods that can be pulled shut so that only a bit of the nose and eyes show. In winter, half the people in Madison look exactly the same - blue parkas, blue pants, black or brown boots. This can keep you warm if the wind isn't blowing. But if it is windy, you just have to resign yourself to getting cold. The wind chill index, a concoction of wind velocity and temperature mysteriously mixed together by the local weather man, may get to minus thirty or forty. If this happens, I wrap the muffler around my face, pull my cap down so that only my eyes show, shove my hands in pockets and hope for the best. My husband maintains I shouldn't be surprised when none of my friends recognise me when I'm dressed like that, but I figure they should recognise my coat and muffler.

It used to be that you could count on getting warm once you made it to a building but last winter, with the energy shortage, most people kept the thermostat low. Now 68 is really quite a comfortable temperature, once you get warmed up again (and it's really more convenient not to have to take any of your sweaters off inside). But getting warm after being outside is the problem. If you have been walking fast enough, you might already be fairly warm, even hot, except for your face, hands and feet. What you do is hold your hands over the heat register until you can feel your fingers again, or else rub your hands together. They everything will be fine until it's time to walk home again.

At home I keep my sweaters on all evening, and occasionally push the cats away from the heat register to warm my feet. At bedtime, it is the patriotic thing to do to turn your thermostat (which controls the central heating) down as far as possible. To keep warm, you put extra blankets and cats on the bed. Then you go to sleep and dream about warm weather.

But not everybody dreams about the advent of summer. No, there are some perverted people who actually like winter because it allows them to engage in winter sports. Perhaps I am being unfair - some of them may engage in these activities just because you might as well do something to pass the time in the winter. But other people actually like these sports. These foolish people actually spend more time outdoors than they have to. For one thing, they go ice skating. (In Wisconsin, you can skate on the lakes all winter, if the ice isn't covered with snow - some people skate to school or work if that happens to be convenient. In Missouri, where I used to live it isn't nearly as cold and would-be-ice skaters listen to the radio every day so they won't miss the few days out of the winter when the lakes, most of them man-made, are safe for skating.) Ice fishing is another ridiculous sport. The ice fisher walks (or drives) out onto the lake, saws a hole in the ice, builds a tent over the hole and sits there for hours waiting for some fish to get stupid enough to bite. I think the fishermen are less intelligent than the fish, who have no choice but to stay in the cold lake.

The two most popular (and most ridiculous) sports are skiing and



snowmobiling. Now, I'm sure most of you know what skiing is - I think it's a fine thing to know how to do if you live in an area where you regularly get snowbound and may have to ski cross country to get out - but for fun! Almost every skier eventually ends up with a broken leg or something. All winter long, the campus is dotted with people on crutches, injured skiers for sure (did you ever try to walk on snow and ice when you were on crutches? - that's more a challenge than skiing down a hill). Probably the worst thing about skiing is that it is expensive. The equipment (skis, poles, ski clothes) costs a lot. And skiing is not something you can do in your backyard - you have to go to a ski resort to do it. From Madison, that involves only a short ride in your car and you don't have to stay overnight. But in other parts of the country, like Missouri, would-be skiers travel hundreds of miles to places where they can ski. And that can run into a lot of money. But it's true that ski resorts support many people in Wisconsin and elsewhere, including some fans, the Stopas, who own a ski resort just north of Chicago.

If you have never seen a snowmobile, I really don't know how I can describe one to you. Imagine a motor cycle on skis and you will have some idea of what it looks like. Snowmobiles cost hundreds of dollars, and they are of little practical use. During severe snowstorms, the snowmobiles are usually out in full force rescuing motorists stranded on the snow covered highways. But most of the time they are out riding their snowmobiles across private property and through woods, frightening people and wild animals. Every year I hear of at least one snowmobiler who drowned when he tried to ride his machine across a lake which wasn't frozen quite solid enough to support it's weight. I'm sure many others of these foolish snowmobile riders must suffer ill effects from riding about in below zero temperatures.

Of course, the proper way to spend the winter is indoors, wrapped up in sweaters or blankets, drinking tea or watching movies on the television. Winter is a good time to make large pots of soup and do lots of baking (not only does it keep the kitchen warm, but you have something good to eat when you are done). It is also a good time to work on fanzines and read lots and lots of books. That's what winter is for, not for roaming about outdoors when you don't have to.

Living through a typical Wisconsin winter makes you appreciate warm weather that much more. It takes a while for the warm weather to get started in the spring (snowstorms in April are not unheard of) but natives of Wisconsin can be observed to shed their winter coats in March when the temperature is barely getting above freezing, and to get out their summer clothes the first time the temperature gets above sixty. I'm not that acclimatized yet, I don't feel warm until it's about seventy, but I'm gradually getting used to the climate.

It's a good thing to be used to cold weather, because we aren't out of the Pleistocene (colloquially known as the 'ice age') yet. Sure, it's been a while since the last major glaciation, but we will probably have another before too long. The glaciers covered Wisconsin entirely (the most extensive ice sheet extended as far south as St. Louis) and I don't particularly want to be living when that happens again. But when the



ice starts moving, it will get colder all over the world. And maybe it really will snow in Melbourne in August. But I don't think that will happen in time for the '75 worldcon.

\* \* \* \* \*

I hope not Lesleigh, but it was down to nine degrees Celsius the other night and when it starts to get like that anything is likely to happen. It might get down to minus one or two later on in winter and that to my mind is cold enough.

Actually one of the reasons it is cold to me is because I seem to forget that it gets cold in the winter and just walk to the station in the same clothes that I wear in summer, which is a shirt and a jacket if I'm wearing one. Valma, who comes from Brisbane where fifteen is COLD. She looks at me with hardly any covering on and tells me that I will freeze. She also tries to get me to put a jumper or something like that on to protect myself. She also takes me to the shoe shop and buys me pairs of boots which I like, not because they are keeping my feet warm but because I simply like boots.

By about the end of winter she has got me into the habit of putting some warm cloths on and the habit stays with me well into summer so that I will most likely trot off to work in a jumper or two and my nice fur lined boots when it's getting up around the thirty-five or forty mark. She thinks I'm just slightly mad.

I really cannot imagine snow in Madison, even though we were there, or maybe because we were there and there wasn't any at the time. Snow, to me, is totally unnatural and I still remember one time when we all pressed our noses up against the thirteenth floor windows at work and watched the snowflakes floating down. Of course they had all melted by the time they reached the ground.

Ben Indick  
428 Sagamore Avenue  
Teaneck  
New Jersey 07666

Thank you for SINGALONG. It is rather fun to hear from abroad, especailly such a charming broad. I enjoyed reading your little RATAPLAN and anytime you want to waste another 7¢ on me, please do so. On thing I would insist on are more reminiscences from your Grandmother. It was a lovely article, all the more remarkable for a lady of her years. I can just about remember what I was doing this morning, let alone decades ago. The horse stories were particularly amusing and charming.

I also enjoyed John Alderson's article. His last paragraph revelation was, to be sure, easily anticipated, yet his tale was none the worse. Indeed, he has a fine understanding for kids, and the ability to capture their essence.

((There's your encouragement John, I see that I have no article from you for this issue and it is missed.))

On the other hand, Alex Gas makes me rue many wasted years. I have

indeed read in the tub, but I have not made an assiduous study of the technic. Possibly my near-sightedness is a reason; if I wear my glasses, they get steamed up (I like HOT baths). If I do not, I have to hold the paper inches from my nose, and it results in an ink-smeared nose - or a speared paper. Why is it, anyway, that people love so much to read in the John? The usual technic is to read while enthroned (my nephew, four years old, has, according to my brother-in-law, learned the relaxing pleasure of such reading. Recently, he became enamoured of hero-comics, and he seems to prefer his Batman on the Can. Maybe he'll try it while in the tub next. He refers to himself, by the way, as SUPERSON).

People are always embalming Classical music; however, many young people, including my 19 and my 15 yearolds, seem quite able to enjoy rock, and classical; their problem is more with contemporary serious music. "Wop" opera, which seems to be the somewhat ungracious if not the downright unpleasant parlance in Australia, is not too big with these kids, but I do think it is something which has to be learned and endured, and then, quite astonishingly, it is enjoyable. So-called pop-opera, like J.C. Superstar, is usually just a fink, so far as I'm concerned. If you want serious opera, of a modern vein, start with WOZZEK as a good ideal, then go on your own way, but with no less earnest intent. And, for heavens sakes, don't just take any ratbag collection of tunes and call it an opera. The wops knew better and even they were interested most in pretty tunes when they wrote them. Anyway, with that fancy new Saarinen music hall in Sydney, you should be doing okay musically. (It IS Sydney? It IS Saarinen?)

((Well, another that reckons WOZZEK is a good opera to start on. I agree fully. Anyhow, what I would like somebody to tell me is, why is classical music embalmed with such reverence? Okay, so Beethoven was an alright composer but why are the Three B's Bach, Beethoven and Brahms? What's wrong with Britten, Berio and Barber (just to pick three names off the top of my head)? Our good mate Felix Werder will say that the reason kids don't get off too much on serious modern music is because they are brainwashed into tonal music (which is what rock and the classics is all about) from the day they are born, and I am tempted to agree with him. Has anybody come up with anything to the contrary?

As a matter of interest I believe that the term "Wop opera" has only become fashionable in certain circles since Felix began using it. It might be "ungracious" or "downright unpleasant" but it does carry the pretty loaded emotional content that most people mean it to have.))

Your zine and a few others I've seen from down-under are quite similar in many ways to ours in the USA, in tone, content, style, etc. I wonder whether others, from Europe, South Africa, Cairo and Tel Aviv are the same? Now, Mae Strelkov, that indomitable Argentine has a quality which does catch, the flavor of a land which is, to me, at least, exotic. Still, it's nice to read a zine from 20,000 miles away and feel snug and at home as in a pair of old shoes. (I only wear old shoes though, so I wouldn't know, maybe.)

((I reckon that you are probably right about Australian fanzines being



in the same mould as a lot of American zines. It would seem to be inevitable since I get to read so many of them. However I would like to think that something Australian (or atleast Different) comes out of RATAPLAN. Maybe I'm just kidding myself.

Which reminds me about the Susan Wood column on Australian fanzines in AMAZING which, though it was a tremendous boost to the Edmonds ego, did seem to have much more of an insight into Australian fandom than Australian fans often have. Fancy getting all that from simple fanzines!

Lee Harding tells me that the other day he was in the local newsagents when he spotted the latest AMAZING which happened to be the one with that particular instalment of Susan's column (since this is now the middle of May that might give you some idea of how long some magazines and books take to get out here. You might remember Lesleigh Luttrell's DUFF report where she mentioned the out of date magazines on the rack she saw when she was here. Well it didn't seem that way to me and it doesn't now, but it sure did when Valma and I had just got back from America... so much for long asides). He picked it up and flicked through it. Very unexpectedly he saw his name there and read the whole column while the people looked at him over their closed circuit television and the obnoxious lady came and straightened up the rack as a reminder that he should be spending money. But he was determined and ignored them, after all it is one thing to want to read your name in print and to want to read an amusing and informative column about yourself and your friends, it is another thing again to spend good money.))

Bruce D. Arthurs  
67th Transport Co.  
Fort Lee  
Va 23801

((Yes Bruce, I do know that you've changed your address. I don't happen to have your new one handy and I have to have some address to put up there, for the format you know.))

Well, golly gee, this is my first loc to RATAPLAN, and the damned thing has been lying on my desk for about the last month, whispering seductively, "Loc me, loc me." And now that I've actually started typing, it's started saying things like "Give me more, more" "Harder, harder," and "ohhh, that feels so good!" Personally, I think that this is a hell of a way for a family fanzine to act.

((Same here, I didn't bring my fanzine up to behave like that. But I guess it's too late now, just promise to be gentle with it, please.))

I used to have the same problem as you with keeping my hands dry while reading in the bathtub. The Army eliminated this problem for me, though: they don't have bathtubs. Unfortunately, they've also spoiled me for civilian life in one way; they have hot showers. I mean hot showers, with huge clouds of steam coming off, the mirrors all fogged up, and your skin turning bright red. It's a marvelous feeling to survive such an experience. But in civilian life, for some reason, the water is never as



hot; I can hardly get any steam off it at all. And the hot water boiler in a private home is never as large as the one serving the entire barracks, so you're lucky if you can get five minutes out of a civilian shower before the water goes cold. I could spend a couple of hours in the shower and not worry about cold water, I betcha.

((if you make it to AUSSIECON I'm sure that Valma and I would be willing to let you try out our shower which is far too hot for my liking and which fogs up the bathroom something marvelous and makes it impossible to see the mirror. And somehow the water seems to last forever. I don't like hot showers myself so maybe the facilities are wasted on me, but Valma likes it a lot. The steam just fills the bathroom and if I have occasion to go in there while she's having a shower I can hardly see where I'm going and I doubt that it would be possible to read even if the book was right in front of my nose. Anyhow, the steam would probably make the books go all mouldy or something so I don't try it.))

Grant Canfield  
28 Atalaya Terrace  
San Francisco  
CA 94117

Stephen Campbell's cover - in fact, the whole idea of a "RATAPLAN Wet Dream of the Month" as a cover - has inspired me. Enclosed is a "hot-off-the-drawing-board" Wet Dream of my own... and I hope you can use it. Enjoyed RATAPLAN very much... it just takes a good dose of soft-core porno to induce me to contribute.

((Thanks for the cover Grant, I'm absolutely sure that everybody will enjoy it as much as I have already. My apologies that I haven't got around to printing it sooner but you know how it's like with international flyabouts and lazy faneds, especially when they're combined. And if you ever feel in a soft-porno mood again you'll be very welcome, as will any other artists who can do as good a job (or reasonably close since we can't expect miracles) of drawing Wet Dream covers.))

Noel Kerr  
86 Liela Road  
Carnegie  
Vict 3163

I was quite interested in your reply to Joan Dick... "Maybe the poor fellow was too used to his artificially reproduced sound to be able to realise that music produced live just doesn't sound like that and no matter how vibrant the strings and how brassy the brass, there is always a missing element. So we are breeding a race of people used to artificial music, and, in fact, used to all sorts of synthetic entertainment." I agree, but don't you also agree that this would apply to most rock musicians who use amplification as distortion level to overcome their lack of musical ability? Can you imagine the panic some rock guitarists would get into if suddenly, whilst on stage, their amplifier broke down and they had to play straight. It would be enough to make the poor bod join the musicians union. I dare say that your remarks could also apply to electronic music, but who am I, the only jazz lover in Australian



fandom, to say this? I may well add that I also boost my tone controls to bring out the vibes, washboard (don't be rude), brushes, double-bass or whatever instrument I feel will give me a kick at the time. Sometimes I use a combination of volume and tone to get it. I certainly don't think I have destroyed the quality of the performance by doing it. In my case, if you are going to argue that music should be played at the same tone quality that it was recorded, who would be lucky enough to have the ideal seat at a live performance to hear the correct balance? Too close to the drums... the flute player on your left shoulder...

As well as Joan Dick I also liked and agreed with the letter from Ray Nelson. (Hey, Edmonds, you're bringing out the best in us squares). Why did you chicken out on giving comments to the criticism of rock music? This is not the Edmonds of old. Are you going soft on us squares?

((For those fans who are not too familiar with Noel Kerr as being more that the electrostenciller by appointment to Australian fandom, be informed that for the past four or five years Noel and I have been holding a running argument on rock Versus jazz. I like to think that I always come out on top but I suppose that the truth is that neither of us win because we are both absolutely sure we're right.

The reason that I didn't make some reply to Ray's mention of rock was more or less because I'm so far behind what's going on these days that I didn't even know what the brand of rock music that he was refering to was like. As far as rock goes my interest died about 1970 and only comes alive again when the Rolling Stones release another another album or I see a Hendrix record that I didn't know existed before.

The argument that electronic music or even amplified rock music is synthetic is one of those arguments which us people involved in electronic music get to hear far too many times. The answer is simple enough though, even an unamplified guitar is a machine and the addition of a couple of pick-ups doesn't remove it to the realm of synthetic music. It is beginning to make me wonder when so many people seem to have the impression that what seperates a machine from a musical instrument is whether you plug it into the power mains or not. And as for the point that over amplification of rock is only good for providing a smoke screen for inept musician ship - this might be true in some cases but it also reflects the failure of some people to realize that the electric guitar has to be played in a different fashion to get the effects which come out best on amplification to the manner of an acoustic guitar. Most rock music wouldn't be rock unless it was amplified.

So you play about with the tone controls too. I have the habit of boosting the bass when I'm playing rock, brings out the bass work better, and that's pretty important when one is listening to Cream or the Stones.))

## WAR STORIES

by Don D'Amassa

I. SUBVERSION AND SURVEILLANCE Shortly after Richard Nixon became

President, I was reassigned to a helicopter unit in Vietnam. Needless to say I was just thrilled to death, but luckily Phu Hiep was peaceful, and I saw little in the way of hostilities while I was there. At least, I saw little hostility from the Vietnamese.

My difficulty was that I was a fan. Shortly after my arrival, my mail began to catch up with me. Fanzines. Parcels of mail of a suspicious size. I was called before the unit commander.

"Private D'Amassa, it has been called to my attention that you have been receiving a large number of long envelopes from the United States, apparently containing printed matter."

"Yes, sir," I answered, not following him entirely.

"You wouldn't care to tell me what is in them, would you?"

"Newsletters, amateur press publications, things of that nature." I still was unclear as to his interest.

"What is the subject matter of these publications?"

Like a ray of sunlight, I penetrated my naivete and his guarded words. I was suspected of receiving subversive documents from the USA!

"Why, sir," I responded innocently. "They cover a wide range of subjects, politics, literature, religion, philosophy..."

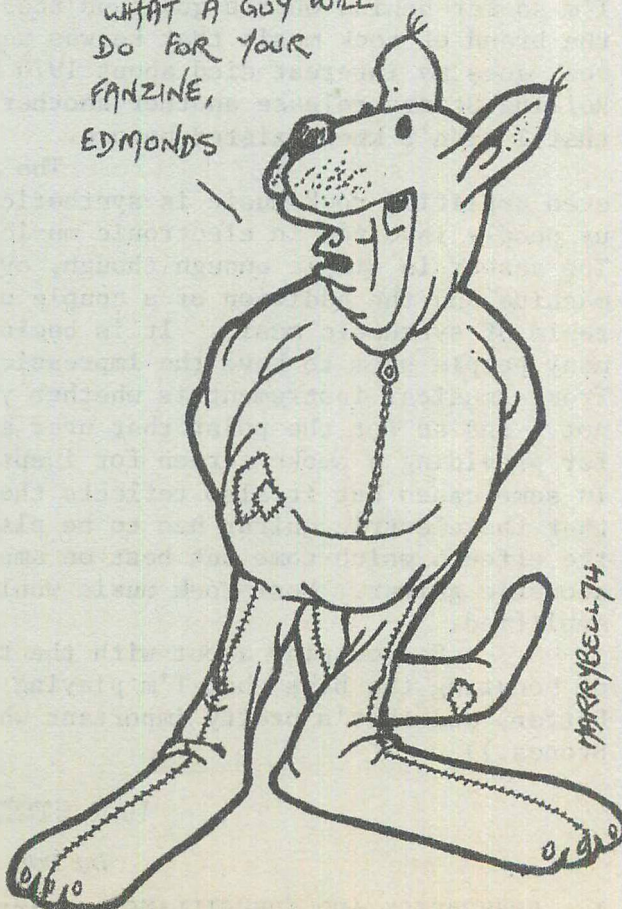
His eyes lit up. I mean it. They actually widened and intensified.

"Then you wouldn't mind it I looked through them, would you?"

I struggled with my conscience; my conscience won. "I'm afraid I couldn't do that, sir. Some of them are extremely personal, and distribution is extremely limited."

"I see." He walked about the room, hands clasped behind his back. "You know I could order you to show them to me."

THERE'S A LIMIT TO  
WHAT A GUY WILL  
DO FOR YOUR  
FANZINE,  
EDMONDS





"Yes, sir," I answered. "But they are my personal mail, you realise. I would have no choice but to complain about it."

"Well, I'm sure that you will show good taste in the matter," he said, dismissing me. But, as I was leaving he called: "Under no circumstances are you to show any of these documents to anyone else in the unit, without my express written permission." I nodded, not wanting to push my luck any further.

As it happened, the good captain was not as good as his word. All of my mail was opened before I received it, almost immediately following this discussion. I often wondered what he thought of the early mailings of APA45, or of the various genzines he was forced to pore over. But meanwhile, he was sending regular reports to S2 (security) about my mail and my off-duty behavior.

The entries in my file were almost pitiful. "Spends a great deal of time reading." "Receives printed matter from various sources, often dealing with political issues." "Receives publications containing obscenity, profanity, and nude drawings." "Receives mail from foreign countries, including Sweden." Their emphasis.

I surrendered to temptation. I addressed letters to my friends with cryptic organizational tags, such as:

Chet Clarke  
c/o Org for Pol Freedom  
Worcester, Mass.

More little notations began to appear on my file. "Active in unfamiliar political groups" and "Possibly linked with anti-war organizations."

The first seargent used to spend an unusually long time inspecting my wall locker on periodic inspection trips. Letters I mailed out began to arrive with slit edges and the contents rearranged. The unit commander called me in for frequent fatherly talks, asked me what I thought of pacifists, communists, and liberals. I began to adopt a sly look whenever he was in the area. I would fold up innocent pieces of paper hurriedly when he entered the room and act nervous. The S2 file titled "D'Ammassa, Donald E, PFC" continued to grow. "Subject is frequently secretive, evades questions about political activities."

At this point it might occur to the reader to wonder how I knew about all of this information in my confidential security file. The answer is simple, and is the point of the whole story. The clerk in charge of the security office's confidential files was... PFC Donald D'Ammassa. Obviously, when I left Vietnam, I carefully destroyed the file.

2. RATS, ROACHES AND OTHER PETS Assigned to our unit were two civilian girls (I use the term advisedly) from the US, who were in charge of our cultural entertainment. Joan, the senior of the two, had brought her small Pekinese. Although not even remotely attractive, Joan was one of the only two Occidental females in reach, and she had no difficulty finding dates among the officers.

Our commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Parlas, was particularly



smitten with her, and often took her along when he visited the neighboring Korean compound. Joan saw fit to bring along her Pekinese, but neglected to bring a leash. Shortly after they arrived, the dog scampered and could not be found.

Parlas had to return, and Joan had no intention of being left alone among "gooks", as she termed them, so the Korean commander promised to have the dog sent back when it was located. Joan accepted this disappointment with good graces, and next morning received a call from the liaison office. Her dog had been found and would be delivered to her quarters that very day.

Joan's duties prevented her from waiting, so she left a note on her door to put the dog inside and close the door so he couldn't escape again. Several hours later, she returned, but couldn't find her dog. Puzzled, she sat down at her desk and reached for her landphone, then stopped. A strange box sat on the desktop. Curiously, she opened it, and there inside was her pet. Or the bones at least. You see, dogmeat is a delicacy in some parts of Korea.

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Guard duty in Vietnam, even in the costal areas, is not a lonely vigil. There are too many small creatures willing to crawl inside your clothing or buzz around your face. The dragonflies are several inches long and, while not dangerous, can be startling when they run into your nose. Little sand crabs scurrying about on the beach think nothing of running up inside your pants, or into your blankets. And the flying roaches are so enormous, we used to duck as they flew by, sometimes playing baseball with the butts of our M16's.

One night I was lying on my bunk, reading, when a shadow passed over my book, then returned and hovered, moved off, passed again. I glanced up and noticed an enormous roach hovering just behind me. Now, we used to keep roach killer on a shelf beside the bunks, but it was largely ineffective so far as we could see, and served psychological rather than practical needs. Nevertheless, I grabbed a can from behind me and sprayed.

Much to my surprise, the roach folded up and collapsed, hitting the floor with an audible thump. I was amazed. How could the previously ineffective roach spray have suddenly achieved such marvelous results. I discovered the answer only when about to replace the spray can. My winged nemesis had fallen prey to Instant Spray Starch.

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I thought that the most frightening incident of my life was the morning in Vietnam when I woke to find an eight inch rat standing on my chest, staring into my face. You have to admit, that's not your everyday experience. But I escaped unscathed, and thought that everything from there on would be downhill. It wasn't.

Only a few weeks later, the gentleman in the room next to mine encountered a rat in similar circumstances. Let me tell you something about American



soldiers in a backwater post in Vietnam. There are only three sorts of entertainment: pot, booze, and whores. Almost everybody partook of the lattermost, and the bulk of our compliment was split pretty evenly in the first two categories. My next door neighbour was a boozier, and he never went halfway.

Well, he spotted this rat in his room, and he got a bit upset. So he grabbed his rifle, slammed in a clip, and took aim. The rat at this point suspected trouble and disappeared into the wall of the building. Now, those walls are hollow and awfully thin, so when a rat runs along inside, you can pretty well figure out where he is.

My neighbour opened fire. Running along the side of the building, he pumped round after round into the walls, hoping somewhere to intersect with the rats course. The first round echoed off my wall locker, disappearing somewhere in the far wall. The second passed under the bunk which I was sitting on. Then he was by my room and peppering my neighbour on the other side. He fired fifteen rounds before someone took the gun away from him. Give me rats anytime.

3. ENLISTED MAN'S BEST FRIEND The officers in our unit were extremely upset because we were not large enough to the authorised an Officers Club, and eventually did something about it. Using funds earmarked for hiring civilian Vietnamese for routine maintenance, they hired them instead to build a long, low building to house their illegal club. Helicopters from our unit then began making raids on stockpiles through the country, moving at night and without lights, and slowly the club acquired lounge chairs, plush curtains, air conditioning, a walnut bar, and a prefabricated meat locker.

At last the club was ready to open, but there was still a difficulty. Food stuffs were harder than other materials to acquire, and there was no way to find steaks for their electric barbeque. Then the mess officer had an inspiration. The mess hall supplied steak once a week for the five hundred officers and enlisted men in the unit. If the steaks were all saved for the officers, hamburger could be substituted for the enlisted men. A brilliant idea.

The drawback came when they discovered that there would not be enough hamburger to go around. The mess officer considered this further, and came up with yet another brilliant innovation. All of the left overs for several meals were collected and mixed in with the hamburger. This provided a nutritious, if somewhat nauseating foodstuff, and drowned in gravy would pass muster. For enlisted men, at least.

The enlisted men were all aware of what was happening, and you might wonder why no one complained. The answer was simple. In Vietnam, you didn't complain about anything your superiors did, unless you hankered for adventure and were willing to sit in an exposed doorgunner position on a combat helicopter for the rest of your tour. Or in extreme cases, a transfer to the infantry. No one said a word.

Because of the ever increasing incidence of rats in our quarters, I had bought a mongrel puppy from a Vietnamese villager for a handful of

piasters. I kept the puppy leashed to my bunk at night, hoping that this would at least discourage rats from my immediate vicinity. During the day, I let him run around the compound.

I was enjoying one of my infrequent days off, sitting in my room, when the puppy came running in, dragging behind him what looked at first like a large piece of cardboard. It wasn't. It was a porterhouse steak wrapped in butchers paper. He promptly started burying it in the floor of my room. I rescued it.

The puppy gave me an anguished look, whimpered, and raced out of the room. I stood there in utter amazement. Where could he have gotten a frozen steak? I was still fondling it, plotting where I could get hold of some charcoal, when the puppy returned. Dragging another steak.

I grabbed this one too, and was rewarded with a look of utter betrayal. Tough, puppy, I hadn't had a steak for months. With the ghost of a growl, the puppy turned and left.

I was about to follow him when Cheerman, my erstwhile roommate, walked in. Unable to speak, I handed him a frozen steak. His eyes bulged. "Where the (expletive deleted) did you get this?"

I explained, and before the last words were out of my mouth, guess what came in the door, and guess what it was dragging. Yup, you guessed it. We placed three steaks in our refrigerator and followed the dog.

He crossed the compound, passed through the officers' quarters, around the battalion headquarters, through the ammo dump, and arrived at the real wall of the Officers' Club. Then he disappeared. We crouched and saw that when the prefab meat locker had been installed, one of the seams had been warped somehow, and didn't quite meet. It was just large enough for the puppy to enter and the steaks to leave.

They never did find out what happened to the eighty-four steaks that disappeared that day from the Officers' Club. But at least a few enlisted men were able to eat steak after all.

\* \* \* \* \*

Mervyn Barrett  
179 Walm Lane  
London NW2

I have two recent copies of RATAPLAN - 14 and 15. I ask myself the question which, on paper looks, at least, ambivalent, "What have I done to deserve them?" And the answer I give myself after several seconds of concentrated thought is equally ambivalent (on paper). "Nothing. Nothing I can think of anyhow." Thanks anyhow. I will comment mostly on 15 on account of this is the better of the two. (With such a great beginning as an almost naked lady on the front cover and a woodpecker on page 2 I am immediately disarmed so you can breath a sigh of relief right now. There won't be any of that deep harsh sarcastic penetrating analysis stuff in this letter.)

A NOBLE SACRIFICE was the best thing in the entire issue. (That'll give



you some idea of the quality of comment you can expect from me.) On the other hand Bernie Bernhouse's thing about the subways in New York isn't very good since it's all about how the subway experience ought to be viewed but he doesn't really view it like that himself even though he's trying to convince himself he does - it's all phoney awareness and pseudo insight expressed in inappropriate imagery. Travelling on crowded subways is just a drag and that's all there is to it. When surface transport is so much slower - particularly during peak hours - one goes by subway. In London right now the branch of the Bakerloo line I'm on have the worst staff shortages in the Underground system with about 60% of the service cut. The alternatives for me though are buying a bike or a scooter or something or going by bus. A bus though takes twice as long so I use the tube and organize things as best I can to avoid the worst stretches of the line and the heaviest passenger density. I get to work a bit compressed but my psyche remains unscathed.

The Logie Award ceremony you describe sounds just about what one would expect of Australian TV - a bunch of jumped up pseuds and pathetic would be trendies trying to justify their existence by giving themselves awards for being the best of a bad lot. All showbiz award ceremonies are nauseous to a degree. The one's the film industry in this country has are no exception - more obscene perhaps when one considered how few English movies there are that are even watchable let alone good enough for any sort of award. But out they trip onto the stage of the Albert Hall to cry and posture and talk about how good the industry has been to them and receive some plaque or something from some cretinous zero like Oliver Reed or idolized second raters like Joe Losey. The Academy Awards given in Hollywood are still the only ones that matter. The dramatics might be just as phoney but at least they're staged better and the people getting awards are at least world names. Hollywood and America is still what movies are all about in spite of the breakdown of the studio system as it was. And the lesser awards particularly have the validity of being voted by the technicians in that particular group - camera work, special effects, sound recording etc - and Hollywood still has the best of all of them.

As for Miss anything contests I've only ever watched one of those for more than two minutes and that was under what I'd consider the ideal conditions for that sort of viewing. I was staying over at a friend's while she was away - cat minding actually - and she has a colour TV (I don't have a TV set at all) and I came home late one evening after an early movie and cooked myself a mess of savoury sausages or something which I ate, feet up on a chair in front, and washed down with a couple of cans of lager, while I watched the Miss World contest - with the sound turned off of course, the music and the compere are enough to make one throw up - and these nice looking girls walked around and it was all quite pleasant and relaxing.

((I hadn't thought of looking at beauty contests with the sound turned off, which shows that I'm not as innovative as I would like to think I am - I'll have to try it next time there's one on the box. Apart from an excuse to look at pretty girls I can't see much point in looking at



beauty contests I'll admit, and it is always a disappointment when they announce the winner because she's never the one I would have picked. This either means that I have abnormal tastes or the selection of beauty by a committee is about as disastrous as any sort of committee activity.))

Saying as you do on page 11, "my aging system is quite acceptable... etc" is either arrogant or fuggheaded or a justification of some sort. Recorded music isn't a substitute for concert going but it's pleasurable and an important adjunct to it. Even though recording isn't perfect and may never be, some decent equipment would bring out a lot of music you've never heard on your records. And what about music that you're unlikely to ever hear in concert.

((Well maybe it's partly justification of a sort, I would feel a little extravagant going out and spending half a thousand dollars or so on some equipment which would replace the system I have now. Not that my current system is unacceptable since it gives a reasonable response and I can hear the bass notes even if I don't get to feel them.

However, since I mostly listen to music for it's construction I really don't feel the need for a set of speakers which will faithfully and accurately give me a 30 hz signal since it approximates it very well, maybe I miss some of the peaks... ghod only knows what I'm missing but one of the people at work is a hi-fi nut and the way he talks about throwing the money away for the little extra it is enough to make me feel quite satisfied. He tells me that with what I've got it would be impossible to hear anything below 60 hz but my synthesizer goes down to 1hz and by golly I can hear it all the way up to where the clicks begin to form low notes. He also can't see how it would be possible to get decent high notes but a couple of people reckon that they can still hear them when the synthesizer runs out of range.

So maybe some hi-fi freak out there should tell me what I'm missing.

Also, it has come to my attention that to a lot of people a good system has little to do with the music that gets played on it and a lot to do with being able to exhibit massive amounts of money. Spending a thousand dollars or more to be able to play the "1812 Overture" is... words fail me.))

Michael Shoemaker

(back again in this issue thanks to public acclaim, or something like it.)

Your comments in RATAPLAN #16 about our "breeding a race of people used to artificial music and, in fact, used to all sorts of synthetic entertainment," is extremely interesting. I agree, and I think it extends to many fields and is probably symptomatic of something much larger. Previously I had noted something similar in sports. Now, more than ever before in history I think, more, many more, people watch sports than participate in them. We seem to have become a civilization of spectators. This has had a profound influence on the development of sports (at least in the US), all the way from the chaotic amateur-professional debate to the relative attention each sport receives.



Football, basketball and baseball, all three of which are team sports, are by far the most popular. Individual sports such as tennis, track, cross-country, wrestling, etc., are far behind. Although when the lure of big money and "a show" is present, the sport does better (such as Tennis, Golf, and Bowling). Another reason for the somewhat better popularity of Golf and Bowling (over Track, etc.) is that these are easier sports and more people play them, thus more people identify with them. Backtracking a moment, my point was that it is much easier for the Spectator to identify with team sports because they are more exotic and provide more of "a show", and promote loyalties and such suspense as "the pennant race" (as compared, say, to track, where an athlete runs a race here and there and on and on with far less structuring). So what does this all mean? It means our society is acquiring a perverse attitude towards sports. I call this the "Spectator attitude", and it espouses that the purpose of sports is to entertain the spectator. This is no mere theory, but reality, for in the last six months I have encountered this attitude three times in print: twice in columns on the sports page of large newspapers, and once in the bill currently before Congress proposing radical changes in the structure of sports in the US (which includes a sort of limited government control!) To clarify my position: Let me assure you, all pure, dedicated athletes, without vested interests in the all-might dollar, who have sweated blood and spent years in training will tell you the same as I: The spirit of sport is that when I, Mike Shoemaker, step up to that line to race an honourable and respected opponent I do my best to win and I do this for myself and for the people who have helped me make it to the starting line: my parents, my coach, and especailly my teammates, all of whom have helped me through the hardships and so own a piece of that victory! I run for them only and not for other spectators!

((Which is alright by me but I must have a very low interest in sport, even lower than cats or mice. The exception is that I get turned on by watching cricket and it used to amaze me that people would get together in their creams with all the equipment and umpires and the whole bit and play with nobody to watch but the batsmen. Then one day it occurred to me that they played it on little back ovals because they loved the game, if they were really good they might one day get to play at the Melbourne Cricket Ground but that wasn't half so important as enjoying themselves and playing a good game.

But don't mind me, cricket is my  
summer sport obsession.))

A few days have passed since I last touched this letter. I went to the National Gallery this evening with a friend to see the special exhibit of Escher woodcuts and lithographs, forty-eight in all. It was really strange. When we got out of the exhibit hall it took a while for our eyes to readjust to the normal landscape; we felt dizzy. Then we attended a concert in the East Garden Court which was the 3rd in a series of five Centennial Celebration concerts for Charles Ives. Of particular interest on the program were three piano pieces: "Varied Air and Variations", "Some South-Paw Pitching", and "Three-Page Sonata" (which is eight pages). These were very good, much better than Ives'

most well-known piano works. Next week a Soprano is going to do a program of twenty-eight songs! The week after that, the 2nd and 3rd symphonies. I don't suppose I have to tell you where I'll be spending my Sunday evenings for the next two weeks.

((I hope you enjoyed yourself, even though Ives isn't one of my very favourite composers, not to mention one of the least interesting composers I can think of off hand. I guess it has something to do with Americans that they seem to like him. People around here go similarly insane over nobody in particular who was Australian and somehow doing the same sorts of things. Even though none of them were as outrageous.))

My comments for Ray Nels on's letter must be read in the light of my last letter. Once again, I find his reference to certain composers as "Victorian" as ludicrous. This is a classification far more appropriate to literature than music. Witness the bizarre pairing of such divergent composers as Brahms and Satie, or Strauss and Debussy. As for jam sessions where composers get together and play their new compositions for each other, we had just such a thing here on campus last year. It was started by a French major who was also an amateur composer, not bad either. A similar group is forming this year. His statement about "modern music" being "fundamentally rotten" is the most ignorant, uncultured generality I've ever encountered. It has no folk roots? Has he never heard of Bartok, Kodaly, Ives, Vaughn Williams, etc? It has no social function? Has he ever heard of Gebrauchsmusik? Besides all of which... to say "it draws on no tradition of a society where 'everybody plays some instrument,'" is hardly an indictment of the music, but instead is a scathing damnation of a culturally decadent society. And with that latter I agree fully.

((Exactly! It might also explain why it is useless to point up new music as being useless because it has no folk roots. Who has folk roots these days? There may be a few but most are part of the global civilisation and as such get to indulge themselves in all the mush that is turned out for general consumption with no thought to anything but making money and keeping people entertained. As with sport, it is all bread and circuses stuff.

So if we are going to make some sweeping statement that civilization is "fundamentally rotten" then we maybe want to think up something which isn't. It might be that New Music is just as bad as all the rest, maybe now. However, whichever way it is there is nothing that we can do but try our best to give an honest artistic expression to something that is felt. It might be all very jolly for people to play dance band music or whatever but that is the beginning and the end of it, it puts a smile on the faces of the people and... what else? It seems to me that while this is an admirable thing to achieve there is much more that can be done and, to me, this is only possible by pushing sound further than what tradition (and Ray Nelson) demands to where it is possible to express those things which are not even possible under the flexible but restraining tonal system.

As I said, this approach might be as wrong as any other, but it must be tried or else we are stuck in the



museums listening to and reading Beethoven from our cobwebbed scores.))

And so much for letters even though my poor little letter file is close to being overflowing. This is something that comes from not keeping the letters for RATAPLAN and all those others separate. I remember reading in some British fanzine an article which said, among other things, that it is supposed to be a good idea to strip all the fat from your letter column. This might be a good idea, it might allow people to get straight to the heart of the matter but it doesn't allow any time for people to settle back before they get to the real meaty stuff. And then that's always assuming that you get some meaty material for your letter column. There are some more letters but I suppose I should not indulge myself too much and print them, they only go over the same ground, well, apart from this interesting paragraph from Sam Long:

250 points? Millimeters? Gad, that's a good 10 inches. I did some calculations last summer on rainfall; of which we had a good bit here at the Cape. Take a square kilometer on a side. That's 1,000,000 square meters. Pour 10 inches of rain into it. That's 25,000 cubic meters. Each cubic meter of water weighs a ton. That's a quarter of a million tons of water. Multiply this 250 million kilos by 10 meters per second squared (the acceleration of gravity) times 1000 meters, a typical cloud

height for the thunderstorm that must have caused that phenomenal rainfall, and you get 2,500,000,000,000 Joules. Now divide this by  $9 \times 10^{16}$ , which is the square of the speed of light in m/s, and you get hummm...  $27 \times 10^{11} / 9 \times 10^{16}$ , which I reckon to be  $3 \times 10^{-5}$  kilos, or about 0.03 grams. That's the amount of matter that, changed into energy, would release the same amount of energy as that fall of rain over a 1km square plot. Consider, then, that we can add a factor of 10 at least because the





typical size of a thunderstorm is more like  $10 \text{ km}^2$  than 1; and also most of the water that falls out of a thunderstorm has been raised more like  $10 \text{ km}$  than 1. So we may multiply our  $2.5 \times 10^{12}$  joule by a factor of 100 or more. Now a book I have to hand gives the yield of a "nominal" atomic bomb as being on the order of  $10^{14}$  joule -- just the size of the "nominal" thunderstorm. 'Course, the A-b omb would release its energy in a millisecond or so, while a thunderstorm does so on the order of 1000 or 10000 seconds or so. You see what kind of energies we're working with, and you wonder why we haven't been able to tame the weather yet? Actually, a rainfall of 10 inches is rather exceptional, because thunderstorms rarely stay in one place long enough to dump a really large amount of water on it -- unless it's up in hills and is associated with a large moist system, like the thunderstorms associated with the hurricane that dropped floods of water on the mountains of Pennsylvania a couple of years ago -- or that swamped Guatemala this past month.

All of which goes to prove that John Alderson shouldn't tell such tall stories.

ACTIVE\* APATHISTS\* NEWSLETTER\* bf-109

from Ken Ford

### KNOW YOUR LIMITS!

For full awareness of active apathy, one requires a full awareness of self. There are many ways one can get this awareness, none of them are any good. This being the case, I, myself, have personally devised a questionnaire to be filled in. I have also added my own answers at the end of this article, with the final analysis of my inner self being added by one Dr Fahr Quitt, an arab.

- Question 1. When you lose your temper do you,
- a) not lose it in the first place,
  - b) go and find it,
  - c) kill someone,
  - d) count to ten, or
  - e) throw a comb at a wardrobe?
- Question 2. If it becomes painfully obvious that you will never make it with the girl that you love because you are too fat, do you,
- a) lose your temper (see Q 1),
  - b) go on a crash-diet and become real skinny and ugly,
  - c) eat a lot of non-fattening cigarettes,
  - d) find another girl who will love you for yourself, or
  - e) kill someone?
- Question 3. Your best-friends' mothers' lovers' cousins' cats' food-dish has been stolen. Do y ou,
- a) ring the police,
  - b) go on as if nothing has happened (callous creature that you are),
  - c) dig a bomb shelter,
  - d) see a film, or
  - e) comment on the absolute cruelty of the world?



- Question 4. A letter arrives in the post, do you  
 a) open it,  
 b) read it,  
 c) answer it,  
 d) put it away, or  
 e) even bother to go and check the letter box in the first place?
- Question 5. If you had your choice of a career, would you be,  
 a) an aeroplane pilot,  
 b) a psychologist specializing in motivation,  
 c) a public servant,  
 d) a chicken sexer, or  
 e) a midget rapist?
- Question 6. This is the last question, do you feel  
 a) upset that there aren't any more,  
 b) relieved that there aren't any more,  
 c) rather silly,  
 d) rather randy, or  
 e) like killing someone?

-----

My answers: 1 e (I've done it)  
 2 f (wallow in self pity)  
 3 d, b or e, depending whether it's Tuesday or not  
 4 a, b and d, but not in that order  
 5 e with the proviso that the emphasis be on midget  
 6 d

Mr Fahr Quitt writes: "Ken is obviously suffering from a bad case of vitamin C deficiency. If I were his mother, I'd feed him up on oranges and vegamite. But because I am not his mother, there's really nothing I can do".

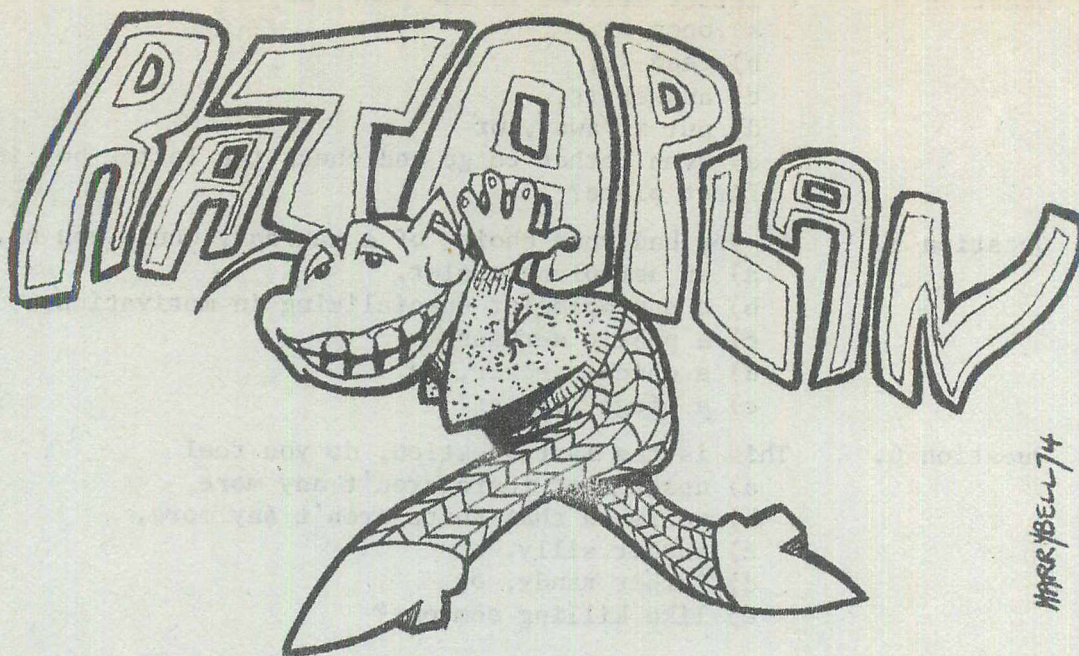
Post Script: If you want your answers analysed, send them to:-  
 Miss Dello International, Box 59A, King's Cross, Sydney.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### A SUPER ANNOUNCEMENT

For the last year Lesleigh Luttrell and I have been administering DUFF and that has meant writing lots of letters to each other about money. As Lesleigh finishes up administering soon and as we have enjoyed the experience of writing to each other about money and the like we have decided that there is no reason why we shouldn't continue doing it. As a result I herewith announce that henceforth Hank & Lesleigh Luttrell are the American agents for all the available Edmonds publications (under the U-Boat imprint) and I am Australian agent for their hugo-nominated fanzine STARLING. Americans who want to sub. to RATAPLAN can do so by sending \$2.00 (US\$ for 4 issues to Hank & Lesleigh. I don't yet know how much STARLING will cost Australians, but I should know soon.





## SEVENTEEN / EIGHTEEN

(one for the price of two)

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