

SHORT ENOUGH TO BE INTERESTING #3

SHORT ENOUGH TO BE INTERESTING #3 is brought to you by Eli Cohen, at 2920 Victoria Ave., Apt. 12, Regina, Sask. S4T 1K7 (See, I remembered my name this time!), for um, uh, er, oh yes -- APA-Q something or other, probably 39. It's not that I'm disorganized (in fact, membership in my union is a condition of my employment), it's just that Monty Python ended five minutes ago, and I'm on the lookout for raspberry-weilding murderers. Gobrin Press Publication #16, Feb. 28, 1976.

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It occurs to me that I haven't done any mailing comments for quite a while; on the other hand, if I was interested in catching up on my fanac I'd be working on KRAT instead of doing this, so why not go directly to #37 (Do Not pass Go, Do Not Collect Egoboo), which is the most recent mailing I've got. On the other hand (one of yours this time, since I've run out) there are a couple of things I wanted to mention:

MOSHE: Going back to #35, and your manifesto on ToC's, I'm afraid I don't grasp the problem. It appears to me, sitting in ignorance 2000 miles away (ignorance is a small town outside of Moose Jaw), that there are two possibilities re ToC's: Either no one is willing to do the work involved in typing one up, in which case there's no problem and no need to sabotage the effort, or there is someone willing to do the work involved. From what you say, I can only deduce that the problem is due to people bringing in their zines late, and the collation therefore taking too long. I don't understand why, if someone wants to do a ToC, it can't be done up to a certain time, so that anything after the cutoff isn't included (if anyone is really ambitious, the late zines could be listed next time). The work involved in typing and running it off can't be more than 45 minutes, and the cutoff time could be picked accordingly. The point is, I think a ToC is very useful for reference, particularly if you want to check a reference in a current comment; what possible reason could there be for sabotaging such an effort? (Let me repeat, if no one wants to do the work involved, fine; but you imply that there are such people, and you will go out of your way to make things difficult for them.) Kindly enlighten me. At the moment, your remark to the effect that "I will do everything I can to see that my zine is not included, by withholding my zine until the last minute" sounds, well, petulant.

DOUG HOYLMAN:(#36) As far as reveling princelings go, I was hoping Jerry would explain that one. See, despite his apparently calm, staid demeanor, Jerry Kaufman has a secret perversion -- if you get him stoned or drunk enough, he will begin to quote at great length from, I think the title is NEGATIVE MINUS, or some such, anyway, from this excruciatingly bad SF book. (It is possible that an expensive series of treatments from the famous Viennese Dr. A. D. Foster von Thrip has cleared this problem up, but on the other hand, it may only have been repressed to a deeper level.) In any case, the only line I could remember from these recitations was "One by one food and drink overcame the reveling princelings." Would you prefer, perhaps, "He was omnivorous as well as carnivorous"?

On to #37:

STU SHIFFMAN: I've been enjoying your, um, story implies somewhat more coherence than is superficially apparent, well, whatever it is, more Malone! I thought the chocolate chip cookies were a nice touch. Tell me, in this alternate world, would there be a Nixon & Agnew Laugh-In? ("As It Happens", a CBC radio show, was interviewing some Californian who wants to give Nixon a job as a political commentator; the interviewer, Barbara Fromm, suggested that given the former president's passion for football, perhaps he should do sportscasting. But the interviewee indignantly replied that he felt that would be pretty demeaning for an ex-President.)

LAURIE TRASK: Re Topher's Tarot readings -- the only ones I've seen were pretty vague about predictions, and usually indicated "likely" versus "possible" futures. What I found impressive were the analyses of the current situation -- one reading in particular, for a friend of mine that Topher hardly knew at all, in which he gave a frighteningly accurate description of what she was going through. I'm much more willing to believe in the kind of psychic phenomena related to extreme empathy than to precognition (which I think has very deep philosophical implications, not to mention quantum mechanical ones.).

JOHN BOARDMAN: I admit I don't know very much about astrology, but if you're going to continue picking on precession of the equinoxes, you can't have it both ways: Either the character classifications are so vague as to be unaffected by any such adjustments (the situation if every astrologer has his own set), or there is a framework that's pretty ~~generally~~ generally accepted, which is what I thought was the case. If that's true, what I was asking was how old that general framework is; if the sun-sign typologies ("horny, impulsive Scorpios") have only been codified recently, then the astrological symbols are just a purely formal name for a time of birth, and precession is irrelevant. If they're 3,000 years old, I'd say not only is the astronomy off, but the changes in cultural values make mincemeat of the classifications. I seem to recall that the experiment Campbell ran in ~~ASTOUNDING~~ ANALOG had astrology doing better on forecasts than the Weather Bureau, to no one's surprise, since I think the random prediction control also did better (the astrological set was better than random, by the way).

ALYSON ABRAMOWITZ: I don't have anything to say about PALOMARIAN RAMBLINGS, but I wanted to thank you for AlVega, which I very much enjoyed. Highly entertaining. The only appropriate response to Don D'Ammassa's flat tires would be to describe the 1970 trip to PgHlangoween, where we convinced a fringe-fan who hasn't been heard from since that he really wanted to drive to Pittsburgh for the weekend. The details are vague in my memory -- all I remember was the shock of discovering that the second spare tire was flat, after we ascertained that the first spare didn't fit on the wheel. But this episode is only a ~~minor~~ incident in the chronicle of NY to Pittsburgh car mishaps. Ask Bruce Newrock sometime.

JEAN JOHNSON: Gee, I'm glad someone can make sense of my comments. I have a good deal of trouble myself, sometimes.

JERRY KAUFMAN: Funny thing about TRITON -- I was at a Bruce Cockburn concert in Vancouver last week, with Susan Wood, Rick Mikkelson, and Lynn Dollis (that is, I was with them at the concert, not that they were with Bruce Cockburn. I don't mean they weren't with it, just ... oh never mind.) As I was saying before that rude interruption, Cockburn started to introduce one of his songs by saying it had become literature, and then did a short rap describing the scene in TRITON where the song is sung, and about how he had credited Delany on one of his albums as an influence, leading to this reverse credit in the book. Meanwhile the four of us are hopping up and down ("Is it in DAHLGREN?" "No, it's in the new one, TRITON."). You just can't get away from this science fiction stuff. Anyway, while I found TRITON more interesting than DAHLGREN (the society is fascinating, and I think fairly well thought out), there's still no plot! Delany is marvelous at doing short set pieces, and can get quite a lot of narrative drive going when he feels like it, but overall the only thing keeping you reading is interest in the protagonist. Well, also interest in the background, unlike Bellona; but I didn't like Bron. As you say, he/she isn't a nice person. I think I'm still stuck with having been imprinted by too much Heinlein at an early age -- I'd much rather the book had been about Sam (I suppose that's the closest Delany gets to an anagram of his name in this book). As a side note, I think the genetics are wrong, but no more so than the astrophysics in NOVA. Vlet, on the other hand, is superb.

Gasp! It's the bottom of the page already! Good thing I ran out of things to say. Must go shopping tomorrow.