

SHORT ENOUGH TO BE INTERESTING #4

SHORT ENOUGH TO BE INTERESTING #4 is another piece of frozen minac on a stick brought to you by Eli Cohen from 2920 Victoria Ave., Apt. 12, Regina, Sask. S4T 1K7, for Apa-Q. Ghod only knows what mailing. Gobrin Press Publication #19. Oct. 23, 1976

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This unusual manifestation of fanac from the normally sluggish-with-cold North has been brought on by an accumulation of factors, principally the arrival of Apa-Q 54 and *sniff* an invitation to PgHLANGE-O-Ween. Memories of previous Pghlangeoweens welled up within me (freezing instantly, bursting the pipes, and causing extensive damage), and I felt an urge to communicate with all my New York friends. (We will ignore the fact that almost 50% of the contributions to Q54 were from outside NYC.) Why, I remember when Pghlangeoweens were held in Pittsburgh! I even remember convincing a poor fringe-fan that he wanted to drive to Pittsburgh and back (from NY) for a Hallowe'en party ... after escaping from the Curse of WPSFA with his life and most of his car, he was never heard from again.

I'm not sure how long #54 has been lying around -- I was entertaining visiting Australian Carey Handfield for two weeks, and it arrived sometime in there, I think. We managed to completely exhaust the cultural resources of Regina, to wit one play, two movies, and three bookstores. (I exaggerate; I'm sure there are more than 3 bookstores.) Anyway, we did get to see "The Man Who Fell to Earth" and "Tunnelvision", and the Globe theatre version of "The Night Thoreau Spent in Jail" (which David Miller snored his way through; on stage that is -- David, for those of you who don't get Saskatchewan fanzines, is an actor, when he's not busy making musical instruments).

A contributing factor to the appearance of this infrequent journal may be the fact that today I re-affirmed my American citizenship by sending in my absentee ballot. The process of registering and voting by mail is interesting, especially since it resulted in my getting registered twice, under two different numbers. I assume that they straightened this out, since I only got one ballot. Since this wasn't an important ballot, like, say, the Hugo ballot, I had no hesitation in voting for things I knew nothing about, like some weird proposition to let firemen gamble or something. Mind you, my poor ballot has only a week to run the gauntlet of the Canadian and American postal systems, so it may be all for naught. (I don't know what Canadian news gets covered down there, but the postal union and the P.O. are in the midst of another hassle over automation, or rather, a continuation of the one that helped shut down Canadian mail service for 6 weeks last year. So far we've had rotating walk-outs, injunctions and counter-injunctions, and at the moment everything's gone to a mediator, but with some disagreement over the "truce" conditions. I wonder if we could get Kissenger up here to negotiate a settlement ... We could, say, give Montreal to the union in exchange for a phased withdrawal from the rest of the country ...)

But I digress. Speaking of news coverage, by the way, the CBC decided not to cover the second and third Ford/Carter debates, feeling that "The Tommy Hunter Show" was of more general interest. They did, however, tell us who "won", on the news; can't remember now whether it was reported under politics or sports ...

I better get on to mailing comments before I run out of room:

MIKE BLAKE: Kratophany is a genzine, dammit! Why won't people believe me? It just has a dearth of contributors, that's all ...

ANNA VARGO: Re your parthogenetic fishies, I assume they have the option of the more usual method? I was just wondering where all the male fishies came from.//Oh, Chock Full of Nuts cream cheese on datdnut... nostalgia. There was one semester I lived on

them, mostly because that was the only restaurant around Columbia that wasn't packed at lunch time (and with good reason!). I think I OD'd on them after a while, and I bet it's been almost 10 years since I've had one. *sigh* Mind you, if anybody is going to airlift in food supplies, I'd rather have a bagel.

STU: I've got all of Saskatchewan fandom solidly behing Flushing in '80. The Word is, it's a sure thing. Frankly, it looks to me like by the time you finish giving out committee positions, we'll outnumber all the rest of the voters. I'm afraid I don't have too much help for your vocabulary problems -- you can always avoid "Toastmaster" by calling it "M.C.", thereby cowardly hiding behind an innocuous "M". However, be careful of the phrase "M.C. Person", whose initials could be misconstrued. (Ms.construed? Oh well, a Ms. is as good as a Mlle., as Walt Willis almost said.)// "Bayreuth is stranger than fiction." I wish I'd said that. May I quote you in KRAT?//On quotas: (oops, don't mean you, Loren, you can go back to ego-scanning) I detest institutionalizing racism, with all that goes with it -- forcing people to choose their group (why is someone who is 3/4 Caucasian counted as Black?), building a system that will freeze ratios no matter what changes come about in public attitudes, misusing statistics to "prove" points ...Aside from the difficulty of determining the ratios in a hypothetical "pools of eligibles", you can get x into the ludicrous situation that existed a few years ago, when Federal law required businesses to keep track of minority group employees while New York State law prohibited them from noting the ethnicity of applicants. So to satisfy Affirmative Action plans, they had to violate State laws. It would be better if each case of discrimination could be handled individually, but I suppose this isn't feasible. Provides lots of work for statisticians this way, so I guess I shouldn't complain. (There are some humorous aspects of this hypothetical "objective" classification of people -- Joan Serrano, for instance, clearly has a Spanish surname; Marta Randall clearly doesn't.)

JOHN BOARDMAN: You pose a lot of interesting questions. As to #17, Jon Singer is probably the best authority on the Avocado Pit's avocados; but I'm fairly sure Yarik has passed on, or gone to his reward, expired, met his maker ... Sorry, couldn't help that. Some spiritual descendants of these plants (4, actually) are in my living room, still in a state of shock from the snow we had on Yom Kippur.//As to mail: On Sept. 22 I wrote a letter to Statistics Canada, in Ottawa. It left my office on Sept. 23 at the latest. On Oct. 15 I got a follow-up letter asking for the response I had sent; on Oct. 18 I got an apologetic call from Ottawa, saying they had just received my letter of Sept. 22. Now, it's conceivable the letter got lost for three weeks in the Federal bureaucracy, but by Occam's Razor ... My caller, by the way, said that they have been told they're not allowed to criticize the Post Office.// It's obvious why 3rd class mail under an ounce is more expensive than first class -- it requires extra staff to process it. See, that small an object looks like first class, so they need special people to separate it out, and guard it to make sure it doesn't accidentally get mixed up with the first class and get delivered before it's been properly aged. You're right about the remedy, though -- clearly, once first class is slowed down to third class, and the rates boosted to offset the storage costs, the discrepancy can be eliminated. You know, when you think about it, it makes sense that as letters have to be held for longer and longer times before delivery, the rates should go up. An amusing fact: In Canada, domestic mail of all classes except 2nd can be insured; but if you're sending anything to the US, you can only insure parcel post. I believe the official explanation (as given to Susan Wood) is that "First class mail never gets lost, and therefore doesn't need to be insured." Right.

Break to watch "The Godfather" on TV; you know, it wasn't bad at all -- I rather enjoyed it. For one thing, it wasn't as violent as I was led to believe. But that may be because I watched it in black & white. Sudden Insight: Are all the complaints about excessive violence on TV a result of color TV becoming widespread? I mean, on b&w, if someone is machine-gunned and rolls around in the dirt, it's hard to tell the blood from the dirt (especially when you've got reception like mine).

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FLUSHING IN 1980!

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